

Virginity and Veracity: Rereading Historical Sources in the Mead-Freeman Controversy

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Abstract. In the Mead-Freeman controversy, Derek Freeman argued that historical sources support his view that the traditional values of the Samoan system of institutionalized virginity (or *taupou* system) were preserved and reinforced throughout the colonial era. A closer examination of two sources used by Freeman, authored by Augustin Krämer and Newton A. Rowe, demonstrates that the *taupou* system, as well as many of the values and practices associated with it, were in decline during this period. This latter interpretation, favored by Margaret Mead, is also supported by Freeman's own postgraduate diploma thesis, a source hitherto unused in the controversy.

In the ongoing Mead-Freeman controversy, Derek Freeman has used both ethnographic and historical sources to argue that Margaret Mead's portrayal of Samoa, and especially Samoan sexual conduct, was flawed. Freeman's critics have responded to his arguments about Mead's alleged inadequacies as an ethnographer. And they have replied to his hypothesis that Mead was "hoaxed" by young Samoan women, who told Mead innocent lies that she naively believed to be true, publishing them in her 1928 book *Coming of Age in Samoa* (Côté 1994, 2000a, 2000b; Orans 1996, 1999, 2000).

Freeman's historical critique of Mead has received less attention yet is no less significant. Freeman believed that Mead neglected the Samoan value on virginity for all girls that was embodied in a system of institutionalized virginity known as the *taupou* system, and that historical sources supported his view that Samoa was a sexually restrictive society before, during, and after Mead's fieldwork in the mid-1920s. But did Freeman use

these sources properly? Since the inception of the controversy, Freeman's critics have found that he sometimes omitted relevant passages in historical works that he cited, and some relevant scholarship was not cited at all.¹ He also relied heavily on partial quotations and ellipses, rarely quoting whole sentences, let alone entire passages, when using sources outside of his own work.

These omissions were not the result of carelessness. Rather they were carefully employed by Freeman to support his historical argument. However, this style could mislead even well-informed readers. Only by returning to the sources themselves and evaluating Freeman's use of them can the soundness of his argument be judged. Although it may seem that rereading historical sources is a subsidiary and perhaps pedestrian task in light of other issues in the controversy, these sources can be helpful in understanding how Freeman used evidence to build his case against Mead and how this material was presented to suggest great controversy. Because Freeman's critique was, to a significant degree, a historical critique of Mead's discussion of Samoan sexual conduct, a reexamination of these sources is essential to evaluating Freeman's argument. The diachronic dimension of the Samoan sexual conduct is also important in its own right, and a rereading of these sources will remind us of what is known about traditional Samoan sexual conduct and marriage, as well as their persistence and historical transformations during the colonial era.²

Mead, Freeman, and the Taupou System

Margaret Mead wrote of the importance of the ceremonial virgin, or taupou, in both her popular best-seller *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) and her professional monograph, *Social Organization of Manua* (1930),³ stating that traditionally the taupou and her public defloration were vital aspects of Samoan chiefly marriages (Mead 1930: 95–96). *Social Organization of Manua* also contains a description of the defloration ceremony as it was traditionally performed during the marriage of a high chief. Although "poor families" also valued virginity, according to Mead they did not usually have a defloration ceremony, nor were their daughters likely to be as chaste as those of high-ranking chiefs (ibid.: 95–96). In fact, marriages of lower-ranking and untitled men were typically by elopement, also known as *auaga*.

While Mead (1928: 98) described the taupou system as it existed before the coming of the missionaries in the 1830s, by the time she did her fieldwork in American Samoa in the 1920s, the defloration ceremony had been banned by missionaries. "Forbidden by law," it was gradually dying

out. She noted that "new influences have drawn the teeth of the old culture" (276), and that the system was in decline.⁴

Indeed, by the beginning of the twentieth century, public defloration was banned throughout the Samoan islands, and the few defloration ceremonies that took place over the next few decades were private. In appendix 3 of *Coming of Age in Samoa*, titled "Samoan Civilisation as It Is Today," Mead noted that by the 1920s the taupou and many other aspects of Samoan tradition had changed appreciably.

Deviations from chastity were formerly punished in the case of girls by a very severe beating and a stigmatising shaving of the head. Missionaries have discouraged the beating and head shaving, but failed to substitute as forceful an inducement to circumspect conduct. The girl whose sex activities are frowned upon by her family is in a far better position than that of her great-grandmother. The navy has prohibited, the church has interdicted the defloration ceremony, formerly an inseparable part of the marriages of girls of rank; and thus the most potent inducement to virginity has been abolished. If for these cruel and primitive methods of enforcing a stricter regime there had been substituted a religious system which seriously branded the sex offender, or a legal system which prosecuted and punished her, then the new hybrid civilisation might have been as heavily fraught with possibilities of conflict as the old civilisation undoubtedly was. (Mead 1928: 273–74)

Derek Freeman also argued that the *taupou* (ceremonial virgin) and her public defloration were keys to understanding Samoan sexual conduct, not merely in the past but more recently as well. He emphasized the continuity and persistence of the value placed on the taupou and virginity in general. Although he noted that major changes in the taupou system had occurred, such as the banning of public defloration, he believed that the values of the taupou system, in combination with the introduction of a strict Christian morality, were maintained for most of the colonial period, that is, from the mid-nineteenth century through the 1950s. For Freeman, Christianity reinforced the traditional value on virginity, with pastors now educating their congregations about proper courtship and Christian marriage. This emphasis on virginity became part of a "prudish Christian society" (Freeman 1983: 238) that did not change substantially until overseas migration, commencing in the 1950s, began to erode the values of the taupou system.

Mead and Freeman agree on the traditional importance of the taupou, the value on her virginity, and the defloration ceremony. Nevertheless, their views diverge on the amount and kind of change in the taupou system

and the value on virginity as reflected in actual behavior. Mead focused on change and did not believe that missionary sanctions and the new system of Christian marriages in church fully replaced the earlier sanctions for virginity in the traditional taupou system. She also focused more on behavior than ideology. Freeman gives more consideration to ideology and to continuity, arguing that the new missionary order complemented and reinforced, rather than diminished, the taupou system's value on virginity. Is Freeman correct? Did Mead misinterpret the historical trajectory of the taupou system and its values? Do historical sources support Freeman's argument?

This article examines two sources that Freeman used in his chapter "Sexual Mores and Behavior" in *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (1983: 250) to support the idea that Samoans had and continued to have a "cult of virginity" surrounding the taupou throughout most of the colonial period. This chapter is at the core of the controversy, since both Freeman and the media focused on Samoan sexual conduct. The two sources to be considered are Augustin Krämer's *Die Samoa-Inseln [The Samoa Islands]* (1994 [1902]) and Newton A. Rowe's *Under the Sailing Gods* (1930). In each case Freeman has taken carefully selected words out of context. Placing them back in their original context yields an understanding that is different in emphasis from Freeman's and sometimes at odds with it.

Krämer and Rowe only partially support Freeman's interpretation of the value on virginity and do not support his critique of Mead. Virtually all authorities on Samoa, including Mead (1928: 98) and Freeman, agree on the traditional value on virginity for the taupou and for all girls at the level of public ideology. However, most authorities believe that Samoan ideology about virginity for the taupou and actual sexual conduct for young men and women of all ranks were not identical and sometimes could be quite different. This is true of Krämer and Rowe. Thus, Krämer discussed the *decline* of the taupou system, and both authors described the modification of Samoan attitudes and behaviors toward virginity during the colonial period. Lifting words from their context, however, Freeman interpreted them as congruent with his view. In this article, these sources will be quoted extensively to provide a broader context for their understanding.

Freeman's postgraduate diploma thesis (1948), a source not previously employed in the controversy, will also be reviewed in discussing ethnographic documentation for the decline of the taupou system. Here Freeman states that, in Western Samoa, where he did fieldwork in the early 1940s, the taupou system was "virtually defunct" (245). In fact, on several key issues surrounding the transformation of the taupou system, Freeman's

unpublished thesis, in contrast to his publications on the controversy, is in substantial agreement with Mead.

The Taupou System, the Taupou, and Virginity in Samoa

Before examining Krämer and Rowe, a brief overview of the history of Samoan sexual conduct and marriage may be helpful.⁵ In reviewing this history, we will consider four features: (1) the taupou system as a marriage system, (2) the social role of the taupou, (3) cultural and religious beliefs about the value of virginity, and (4) sexual behavior itself. Although interrelated, each of these features is analytically distinct. The taupou system incorporated the taupou role and, to a degree, Samoan beliefs about virginity. Highlighting the significance of chastity for all girls, Freeman (1983: 250) claimed that Samoans placed a higher value on virginity than probably "any other culture known to anthropology." Yet, as a social institution, the taupou system was relevant to a minority of Samoan marriages, and the focus on it has obscured the overall nature of marriage in traditional Samoa.

The taupou system involved only the upper ranks of Samoan society; another type of marriage based on elopement (*auuga*) was used by lower-ranking and untitled Samoans. As the taupou system attenuated during the colonial era, so did the number of taupou marriages, the role of the taupou, and the significance of her virginity. Beliefs and behaviors about sexual conduct changed as well. Freeman emphasizes cultural beliefs about virginity embodied by the taupou, but understanding how these beliefs relate to the evolving system of Samoan marriage and sexual conduct requires a broader approach.

In pre-European Samoa, the taupou system governed the marriages of daughters of high-ranking chiefs, idealizing their virginity and protecting them from unwanted seduction. Chiefs used their daughters as resources to forge political alliances with other chiefly families in a marriage system that was polygynous. Beyond her role in forging political alliances, the taupou was also leader of the association of unmarried women (*auauma*), which entertained visiting chiefs and offered hospitality to them. The taupou made kava for chiefly meetings, was a hostess and dancer, ate special food, wore distinctive dress, and engaged in the heavy labor of her unmarried counterparts.

Marriages of taupou were arranged by chiefly families and included elaborate gift exchanges as well as public delection. These marriages were not necessarily permanent, however, and former taupou might be super-

sed by new taupou. Former taupou would return to their natal villages with their children and were not available for new chiefly marriages. For lower-ranking chiefs and untitled men, however, this system of marriage was far less salient, and for them avaga marriages based on elopement and individual choice, rather than prior family arrangement and elaborate gift exchange, were the norm. In avaga marriages, young men and women would secretly elope, often causing friction between the families involved. Their living together led to public recognition and acceptance of their relationship; their children were legitimate and any extramarital relationship by either party was regarded as adultery. Although virginity was nominally valued for young women of all ranks, in practice the lower the rank, the less virginity was valued. Marriage for lower-ranking families was also typically monogamous.

After 1830, Christianity became widely accepted and practiced by Samoans. Initially, though, missionaries were often shocked by Samoan sexual conduct. They did not encounter a culture committed to chastity for all men and women but rather one in which "indecent" sexual activities were common enough to become their highest priority for reform. While approving of the ideal of virginity as symbolized by the taupou, missionaries did not approve of many aspects of the taupou system and other aspects of Samoan sexual conduct. They strongly condemned political marriages, polygyny, concubinage, prostitution, adultery, ease of divorce, erotic dancing, sexual access in living arrangements, sexual activities during inter-village visits, and, of course, public defloration.

The missionary-led abolition of polygynous marriages in the nineteenth century created a surplus of candidates for the position of taupou and decreased their political value. Monogamous marriages meant that fewer taupou were needed by chiefs, and arranged marriages were now discouraged. Public defloration was banned, and punishment of taupou for premarital sex became less severe. More taupou eloped in order to have a greater choice in marriage partners. Although still a hostess, dancer, and political representative of her village and family, she had fewer responsibilities than in pre-European Samoa. The analuma declined in significance as well.

Missionaries, who had been instrumental in the decline of the taupou system, advocated Christian marriages and virginity for all Samoans. Virginity became the religious ideal for all young women, with premarital and extramarital sex strongly condemned (Schoeffel 1995: 103). Here Freeman (1983: 241, 1948: 108) is correct about the Christian ideal of virginity being supported by Samoans. In practice, however, as Freeman reports, church weddings were mostly for higher-ranking families, while avaga marriages

continued for the majority of families. There was also a double standard for men and women who were involved in premarital sex, as well as the differential constraints of rank on young men and women. clandestine relationships, publicly forbidden, were nevertheless fairly common, and children born out of wedlock were accepted into most families.

Focusing on public ideology, Freeman (1983: 238, 339) portrayed Samoans as living in a "prudish Christian society" as well as having a strict and "puritanical Christian sexual morality" during the colonial era. He believed that only after large-scale international migration from the 1950s onward did Samoans gain "acquaintance with the sexual permissiveness of Western societies. Some of these migrants have returned, and in consequence, sexual behavior has, since the 1960s, begun to depart from the traditional system" (350). But here Freeman's history is inaccurate, minimizing changes that occurred earlier in the colonial era.

As Christianity became more pervasive in the islands, Samoans distanced themselves from many of their pre-European customs, viewing their past as a "time of darkness." As a result of missionization and, more recently, the controversy over Mead's work, Samoans have become more self-conscious about public scrutiny of their private lives and are concerned about how Europeans perceive them. Former Samoan Prime Minister Tuia-tua Tupua Tamasese (1994: 76), in an article about Samoan tradition in the *Journal of Pacific History*, candidly asked:

Can or should we tell all we know about Samoan history and culture for general historical examination? The missionaries have imposed a Victorian prudishness on the national psyche to the extent that we have acquired a colossal hangup about ourselves and our culture. We have succumbed to a sanitized version of Samoan history, whether alien or indigenous, authored because it portrays an idealized Samoa. There is a strong sentiment about defending this idealization. There is an awful fear that if all is told the *pālāgi* [Europeans] will think less of us. Hence the penchant to camouflage, condense and edit.

This is not simply an academic issue. The awkwardness of discussing sex has led to practical difficulties in implementing family planning programs. In a study conducted in the 1970s, Viopapa Anandale (1976: 59), a Samoan researcher, noted that

the attitude of the Samoans to sex is, like their religious attitudes, rather ambivalent. Strict moral codes are laid down and seemingly enforced. However, for a long time we wondered why it was that so many unmarried girls were getting pregnant in spite of frequent

approaches by us [about family planning] until we discovered that these girls were far less ashamed of having an illegitimate child than to be known to be using a contraceptive. Using a contraceptive was an admission of her sexual activities, whereas a pregnancy was said to be caused by a chance encounter.

Over the past 170 years, the taupou system as a system of marriage has attenuated to such a degree that its significance today is largely symbolic and historical. Taupou marriages are virtually nonexistent. Taupou now are appointed temporarily and only for certain ceremonial occasions; older married women may now make kava at important chiefly gatherings (Holmes and Holmes 1992: 42). The value on virginity is now part of a religious ideology supported by churches and families rather than by a functioning taupou system. Avaga marriages and a double standard for men and women continue to compromise the ideal of virginity in practice.

Although there is broad agreement on many features of Samoan sexual conduct (Orans 2000: 616), it is a complex subject, especially when rank, gender, and historical transformations are included. The same is true of the apparent contradiction between the public ideology of sexual restrictiveness and actual private behavior. An extensive discussion of the seemingly paradoxical coexistence of the public ideal of virginity and a good deal of private sexual activity among young Samoans can be found in Bradd Shore's *Sala'ilua: A Samoan Mystery* (1982: 229):

The *tine muli* or virgin was an ideal status for all Samoan girls prior to marriage, even prior to the Christianization of the archipelago. The fact that the chastity ideal for unmarried girls frequently remains merely an unrealized ideal, and that *de facto* casual premarital sex is not uncommon, in no way negates the ideological fact that such casual relations are considered wrong in Samoa. The *taupou* institution in which a village maiden (village virgin) represents formally all the girls of a village was one way of symbolically asserting the cultural value placed on premarital chastity, and at the same time of reconciling that value with the perceived realities of human passion and weakness.

Shore also notes how the sexuality of Samoan males and females is ideologically structured. Males are tacitly expected and encouraged to engage in premarital sex, while young women are discouraged from it, protected from it, and punished for it (Shore 1982: 232; O'Meara 1996: 107–8). Shore (1982: 230) concludes that “culturally, then, openly expressed sexuality is a problem that is resolved, if awkwardly, by the strict denial of its legitimacy and frequently by the denial of its existence among the unmarried.

Such premarital cross-sex sexuality is relegated to the subterfuges of night, the bush, or is otherwise denied.”

The distinctions drawn here between the taupou system, the role of the taupou, cultural and religious beliefs about virginity, and the actual behavior of men and women are thus helpful in understanding changing patterns of Samoan sexual conduct and in disentangling the competing claims of Freeman and Mead. The missionaries and Christianity undermined the taupou system and the role of the taupou while adding the ideal of Christian marriage and religious institutions that would promote virginity. The system of avaga marriages and fairly common premarital sex has continued, despite social and religious restrictions. Let us now turn to Krämer and Rowe.

Augustin Krämer and the Changing Taupou System

Augustin Krämer (1865–1941) was perhaps the most important observer of Samoan custom during the colonial period prior to German rule in Western Samoa (1900–1914). Krämer resided in the islands between 1893 and 1895 and again between 1897 and 1899, for a period of twenty-one months. He was a surgeon major in the German Imperial Navy, as well as a scholar and artifact collector who visited Hawaii and Micronesia in addition to Samoa. Krämer would become chairman of the German Anthropological Society in 1911, and he helped found and taught at the ethnological institute at the University of Tübingen (Liebersohn 2003: 38). Krämer's deep interest in Samoan culture is described in his massive, two-volume *Die Samoa-Inseln* (1902), which he designated as a work of ethnology and ethnography. While others, including missionaries and members of foreign consulates, spent more time in the islands than Krämer, his work is held in the highest regard by virtually all scholars interested in Samoa. Freeman (1983: 115) himself states that *Die Samoa-Inseln* was a “monumental” work by an “erudite” scholar who understood the “particularities, intricacies, and subtleties” of Samoan culture (285), including Samoan sexual conduct. In fact, *Die Samoa-Inseln* is one of two social histories of the islands that Freeman recommends, the other being Richard Glison's *Samoa, 1830–1900* (1970).⁶

Krämer is cited several times in Freeman's (1983: 232) first book on Mead, twice in the chapter on “Sexual Mores and Behavior” in support of his critique of Mead. Krämer is quoted as stating that, within the traditional system of rank, proof of a bride's virginity was “indispensable.” Freeman also quotes Krämer at greater length in referring to the protection given the taupou and the honor accorded her, noting, “The esteem felt for maidenhood in the old heathen times reminds us of the Vestal Virgins, of

the Huarinaguadas of the Guansches, and of the Inca Maidens of the Sun, this esteem placing the Samoans on an ethical height that accords with the spirit of their traditions" (227).⁷

Thus, in Freeman's reading of Krämer, public defloration of taupou was essential to Samoan tradition and virginity a central value. Yet Krämer had more to say. Although he did state that virginity was "indispensable" for the taupou and that taupou were highly valued "in the old heathen times," he was also careful to note that by the 1890s major changes in the taupou system were occurring. In an extended footnote in *Die Samoa-Inseln*, Krämer (1994 [1902]: 1:46-47n) describes the taupou system as being in decline because: (1) taupou were eloping rather than taking part in formal, arranged marriages; (2) the public defloration of the taupou was a vanishing custom; and (3) when this ceremony did occur, the virginity of the taupou was sometimes counterfeited. In other words, the traditional taupou system was being transformed, and virginity as an ideal and in practice was no longer as pivotal in Samoan culture as it had once been.

Freeman does not quote or cite Krämer's footnote, but the relevant text in translation by Verhaaren is as follows:

Although f.i. [for instance] as late as 1897, a public defloration took place near Apia, that custom may now in general be considered extinct. Unfortunately the reason is to be found much less in the influence of the church but much more so in the inability on the part of the young girls. In the case of almost all *taupou* I investigated, names of sons of chiefs were given with whom they had eloped under the pretext that they were getting married; however in most cases they returned after three days. If they stayed together, a belated wedding feast took place, f.i. in the case of the son of Seamanutafa in Apia and a daughter of Tuilele of Leone who had previously lived together for a long time. If a public defloration takes place today, the girl is either still very young or the old women use other means, such as chicken blood, shark tooth, etc. It is frightening to think of the level of morality to which such a people can sink through the removal of such a custom. Of course I do not want to say that the custom of public defloration should be maintained; nevertheless the reproach must be leveled against the missionaries that they were not able to offer the people a substitute. The causes of family disputes because of which a young couple frequently elopes could readily be removed if the two were married then and there by a native missionary. But it has not come to my attention so far that this may have happened frequently. At any rate, also in this respect the old Samoa is past and gone! (ibid.)

Thus, in the body of *Die Samoa-Inseln*, Krämer described the traditional taupou system and the public defloration ceremony in detail, defending the explicitness of his description as being more open and objective than the more circumspect accounts of other colonial observers such as Antoine Montet, George Turner, and John B. Stair. In his extended footnote, though, Krämer emphasized how much the old Samoa had changed.

In *Coming of Age in Samoa*, Mead (1928: 273-74) briefly summarized changes in the treatment of the taupou, and Krämer's (1994 [1902]: 1:46-47n) description, although not cited by Mead in that book, is consistent with her view of the attenuation of the taupou system.⁸ This argument was more fully developed by Felix Keesing in an article in *Oceania* titled "The Taupou System of Samoa: A Study of Institutional Change" (1937), the only source that focuses extensively and exclusively on the decline of the taupou system. Keesing quoted the relevant footnote from Krämer in support of his argument. Yet the Keesing article was not cited or discussed by Freeman in his published critique of Mead.⁹

In 1996, in an article on the history of the taupou system that built on this earlier foundation, I noted that by the late nineteenth century the taupou system was being substantially transformed and that in the early twentieth century the system was in decline. As discussed earlier, polygyny was no longer acceptable; monogamy was the new ideal; political alliances formed by taupou marriages were on the wane; the number of taupou appointed was far fewer than in pre-European times; and the public defloration of taupou was not only forbidden by law but vanishing in practice. Krämer's observations were important to my argument.

After my article appeared, Freeman (1998) rethought Krämer's expertise on the defloration of the taupou and Samoan sexual conduct, publishing a rejoinder that focused on the counterfeiting of virginity during the public defloration ceremony. Freeman stated that Krämer "just did not know what he was talking about" (975), and that he was an "obviously suspect" non-Samoan source of information on these issues (976). Freeman was now attacking an author who had been vital to his critique of Mead. Replying to Freeman, I noted how valuable Krämer and other "non-Samoan" sources had been to Freeman by his own admission (Shankman 1998). I also called attention to a double standard of evidence in which Krämer was praised and cited when he supported Freeman's argument but criticized and dismissed when his account was at odds with Freeman's and might support Mead. And I reiterated the necessity of discussing Krämer's footnote on the changing taupou system, whether one agreed with Krämer's interpretation or not.

The Credibility of Augustin Krämer

Why had Freeman come to believe that Krämer was no longer reliable? What had happened to the "crudite" German scholar whom Freeman had previously credited with understanding the "particularities, intricacies, and subtleties" of Samoan culture? Freeman's answers were lengthy. He explained that Krämer had been primarily interested in manuscripts kept by Samoans about *gafa* (genealogies), *fa'alapega* (ceremonial protocols), and other traditions in text form. Moreover, Krämer was sometimes able to use his surgeon's skills on Samoan chiefs with elephantiasis to further his research. When Samoan elephantiasis patients came to Apia for surgery, Krämer took the opportunity to obtain and copy manuscripts about genealogy, rank, and ceremonial protocol. Freeman (1998: 975) believed that Krämer's translations of these manuscripts are "an invaluable source of information," but that on other matters Krämer was not as reliable.

Freeman continued his critique of Krämer, stating that

Krämer, for all his panache, was *not* an anthropologist in any Malinowskian sense. He lacked a command of the Samoan language, and he never lived for an extended period among Samoans. His knowledge of the *fa'aSamoa* [Samoan custom] was thus far from complete. This means that some of his statements cannot be taken at their face value.

... Krämer writes of "old women" resorting to "means like chicken-blood, sharks teeth and so forth" (cf. Shankman 1996: 563). The fact that Krämer attributes these actions to "old women" is the clearest possible evidence that in this instance he just did not know what he was talking about. The rite of *fa'amāse'i au* [the defloration ceremony], then as now, is specifically in charge of males of *le tū o le tane* [groom's side], and not of "old women" of the *taupou*. On this crucial point then Krämer was completely misinformed. . . .

In the polyglot port of Apia in "colonial times" (i.e., before 1962) all manner of extravagant stories about Samoan behavior circulated in the expatriate European community. Often these stories concerned the "strange" sexual customs of the Samoans. It is to such sources of ignorant gossip that the erroneous views of . . . Augustin Krämer are to be traced. (Freeman 1998: 975)

Freeman thus faulted Krämer for (1) his narrow research focus, (2) his lack of command of the Samoan language, (3) his lack of real ethnographic research among Samoans, (4) his misunderstanding of who performed the ceremonial defloration, and (5) his reliance on expatriate gossip about Samoan sexual conduct. Was it necessary for Freeman to go to such lengths

to discredit Krämer? Why not simply state, as I did, that on the issue of the counterfeiting of virgin blood, Krämer's argument is not definitive because he does not provide sufficient evidence about this specific practice? Freeman could then have focused on the broader issue of the decline of the *taupou* system, where there is sufficient evidence to make a convincing argument (Shankman 1998: 978). Freeman did not challenge the rest of Krämer's statements about the decline of the *taupou* system or cite additional errors by Krämer on the subject of Samoan sexual conduct. Instead Freeman attempted to undermine Krämer's credibility as a researcher on subjects other than genealogy, ceremonial protocol, and conventional Samoan tradition. However, a more careful examination of Krämer's ethnographic credibility does not support Freeman's assertions.

Freeman was correct to note Krämer's interest and expertise on Samoan *gafa*, *fa'alapega*, and other traditions; much of his work is about these subjects. Yet Krämer had much broader interests, as his table of contents and his two-volume work indicate. Moreover, Krämer's (1994 [1902]: 2:517-22) extensive bibliography suggests that he was very well read in work about the islands published in German, English, and French. And his careful review of the early history of European contact in the first part of volume 2 demonstrates that he was well aware of the historical transformations taking place in Samoan society.

What of Krämer's knowledge of the Samoan language? Freeman (1998: 975) believed that Krämer "lacked a command" of Samoan. Yet this assertion is misleading. Krämer (1994 [1902]: 2:702) conceded that his language skills were not perfect, but he insisted that they "must not be considered negligible" (1:4). During his second stay in the islands, and after a year and a half of learning Samoan, he believed he "understood Samoan fairly well" (1:6). Here Krämer may have been too modest. In the introduction to *Die Samoa-Inseln*, he discussed at some length his awareness of the difficulties of translating Samoan, including the multiple meanings of a number of words. As a precaution, he always worked on texts with a part-Samoan translator and discussed the complexities of the language with other Samoans. As Theodore Verhaaren comments in his English translation of *Die Samoa-Inseln*, Krämer (1994 [1902]: 1:v) gave great care to accurate translation of texts from Samoan to German and delighted in using the "native vernacular."

To better appreciate Krämer's Samoan language skills, consider the assessment of Paul Cox (1999), a Harvard-trained ethnobotanist who has worked extensively in Samoa and is fluent in both Samoan and German. Cox noted that Krämer, unlike many Western observers, not only used Samoan vowels and consonants correctly, but produced long sequences

of grammatically correct Samoan as well as perfect German translations of Samoan texts. If Krämer had merely transcribed the words of Samoan informants, he could not have taken his very detailed Samoan data back to Germany and shepherded them through the publication and proofreading process, avoiding the introduction of errors, without a very solid knowledge of the Samoan language. To say, as Freeman does, that Krämer "lacked a command" of Samoan is inaccurate. He had a solid knowledge of the language.

Krämer's knowledge of Samoan allowed him to travel throughout the islands, often alone. He made these trips not only to record *gafa* and *fa'afuaga* but also to study the many different facets of Samoan culture about which he would write. Anecdotes in *Die Samoa-Inseln* indicate Krämer's comfort with village life and his ability to appreciate Samoan custom and its transformations. While Krämer was not a "Malinowskian" ethnographer—who could have been at that time?—he was nevertheless an energetic scholar whose work is impressive even by today's standards.

Freeman (1998: 975) nevertheless believed that because Krämer did not live for "an extended period of time among Samoans," he was not a credible source on many aspects of Samoan culture. He noted that Krämer rented a house in the port town of Apia. This was the base from which Krämer worked, traveling extensively throughout the islands, including Savai'i and the Manu'a group, as well as being visited by Samoans in the port town. Krämer did not spend an extended period of time in any single village, but judging from his descriptions of his work, he did spend considerable time with Samoans. At this time, apart from the notorious European and part-European "beach" area of Apia, the port town itself was still a collection of villages that could provide a valuable window on Samoan tradition.

Freeman found a similar situation in Apia over four decades later, when he first went to the islands as a schoolteacher. He states that "in those days [the early 1940s], the town of Apia, behind the facade of its commercial buildings and government offices was still a congeries of villages conducting their affairs in the traditional ways of the Samoans, and there was, even while living in Apia, every opportunity to observe Samoan behavior and hold discussions with Samoan friends and acquaintances" (Freeman 1971: 23–24). Thus, by Freeman's own logic, even if Krämer had never left Apia, he could still have learned a great deal about traditional village life.¹⁰ Finally, what of Freeman's (1998: 976) assertion that Krämer relied on "ignorant" expatriate "gossip" in learning about "strange" Samoan sexual customs? This assertion assumes a need to rely on expatriate gossip because of Krämer's allegedly limited language abilities and/or because

he was unaware of how misleading expatriate gossip could be. Neither of these assumptions is warranted. In his description of the decline of the taupou system, it is apparent that Krämer spoke directly to Samoans, including chiefs. He did not need to rely on expatriates because he spoke the language.

Krämer was well aware of expatriate bias. He wrote that in the early colonial period, after her marriage to a high-ranking chief, a taupou might find herself cast off for a new wife, at which time she would return to her natal village, where, although she could not marry another chief, she might have relationships with European visitors. Krämer (1994 [1902]: 1:49n) states in a footnote: "For that reason perhaps the Samoan women enjoy a bad reputation in the South Seas regarding their morals. This is indeed unfounded, for as rash as a girl may be in entering a marriage (*fa'samoa*) [by elopement], and although she is very liberal and vain, she is by no means inclined to surrender herself for indecent profit." Krämer reiterates this point in evaluating the interethnic sexual relationships that occurred during La Pérouse's visit to the islands in 1787 (*ibid.*: 2:17), noting that young women were under the control of male relatives (see Tcherkézoff 2004: 28–49).

Although Krämer may have not been clear about the details of these relationships, they did occur. Samoan women had a reputation among some Europeans for appearing to be sexually permissive in certain contexts, and Krämer understood these contexts. In his autobiographical work, *Hawaii, Ostmikronesien und Samoa* (1972 [1906]: 156–58), Krämer again refers to European opportunities for relationships with Samoan women and how they might be misunderstood. Thus Krämer was well aware of the norms of Samoan relationships among themselves and with Europeans and did not need to rely on expatriate gossip.

From this discussion, it should be evident that Krämer knew the Samoan language, was a competent ethnographer on a variety of subjects including the taupou system,¹¹ and was not an unwitting purveyor of European gossip. By focusing on the narrow issue of counterfeiting in his critique of Mead, Freeman avoided Krämer's discussion of the taupou system in decline. Acknowledging Krämer's assessment of those changes would have undermined Freeman's (1983: 350) critique of Mead and his argument that the values of the traditional system of chastity persisted almost unchanged until the 1960s.¹² Freeman simply sidesteps discussing the attenuation of the taupou system and the social role of the taupou, while reiterating the ideological importance of virginity. Mead, on the other hand, better understood the changing historical trajectory of the taupou system and the changing role of the taupou.

The Decline of the Taupou System in Freeman's 1948 Thesis

Although Freeman avoided discussing the decline of the taupou system in his critique of Mead, he did ethnographic research on this subject in the 1940s. In 1948, Freeman wrote a thesis for his postgraduate diploma in anthropology at the London School of Economics under the direction of Raymond Firth. "The Social Structure of a Samoan Village Community" was a detailed description of the social structure of the village of Sa'anapu on the southwest coast of Upolu in what is now Samoa (formerly Western Samoa). The thesis was based on roughly fifteen months of noncontinuous fieldwork during 1942 and 1943, while Freeman was a schoolteacher and then a member of the local New Zealand Defense Force in the islands. Although Freeman had not received his undergraduate degree at the time he went to the islands, his thesis is over three hundred typewritten pages in length and contains much valuable information. It remains his most comprehensive ethnographic contribution on Samoa.

The thesis includes a three-page discussion of the decline of the taupou system that confirms the observations of Krämer, Mead, and Keesing, but goes well beyond them in ethnographic detail. Freeman (1948: 245) begins by stating that "the *taupou* system has now become virtually defunct in Western Samoa." He then reports on the factors responsible for its decline.

Principal among the reasons for this change has been the rigorous suppression of customs associated with it by the Christian missions. Economic factors have also operated. Like a *matua* [chief], a *taupou* is obliged to have her title ratified by the other lineages of her village community. This is established at a feast (*saofa'iga*) provided by the *taupou*'s lineage. Such a feast is a serious drain on a lineage's resources. Again, following the introduction of money into the Samoan economy, marked discrepancies have developed in the value of the property (*oloa* and *toga*) exchanged at marriage ceremonies. This has resulted in a situation in which a *taupou*'s lineage and village gain nothing from her marriage or formal election. (Freeman 1948: 245)

As a result, Freeman found that, of the five taupou titles in the village of Sa'anapu, none were occupied in 1943. That is, none of the chiefs who could have appointed a taupou chose to do so. As for taupou marriages, they had become so infrequent that Freeman (1948: 108) states that "this type of marriage, now relatively rare, does not here concern us." But if these chiefly marriages, involving prior arrangement and gift exchange between the respective families and villages, were relatively rare, what kinds of marriages were occurring in the 1940s?

Christian weddings had become the new ideal, but this ideal was not often realized. Freeman recorded information on sixty-four chiefly and nonchiefly marriages. Of the sixty-four, only three of twenty-two chiefs and one of forty-one untitled men had a Christian ceremony at the time of their marriages. The other sixty marriages began as elopements. Of these, fifteen chiefs had a Christian ceremony some time after the elopement, as did twelve untitled men. The other four chiefs and twenty-nine untitled men did not have a Christian ceremony. So ultimately, eighteen of twenty-two chiefs and thirteen of forty-one untitled men did have Christian marriages. But the overwhelming majority of marriages were initially of the *avaga* type.

Freeman continues his discussion of marriage by reporting that "most *avaga*" begin with a *moetoto*, or "sleep crawling." "Sleep crawling" refers to a practice in which a young man silently slips into the young woman's house at night and, without awakening the household sleeping all around them, engages in sex with her. It is one form that clandestine relationships take and may be part of courtship. It is also dangerous for the young man, who, if caught, could be severely beaten and his family fined. Nevertheless, Freeman (1948: 208) comments that "in many instances a *moetoto* is achieved with the connivance of the girl concerned." That is, despite the risk involved to the boy and possibly to herself, the girl may have encouraged the relationship. Here Freeman is suggesting that in many cases the relationship was consensual and that the girl might be willing, a point made in somewhat more detail by ethnographer Tim O'Meara (1996: 108).

In Freeman's published description of *avaga* in *Margaret Mead and Samoa* (1983: 240), he reiterates that girls may "actively encourage" their own seduction. However, Freeman now defines *moetoto* exclusively as forcible "surreptitious rape" (244), in which the young man clandestinely crawls into a girl's house and manually deflowers her in symbolic imitation of the pre-European defloration ceremony. In fact, Freeman argues that *moetoto* is characterized by aggression and that Mead misinterpreted this custom (245), stating that:

The intention of the sleep crawler is, in fact, to creep into the house in which a female virgin is sleeping, and before she has awoken to rape her manually by inserting one or two fingers in her vagina, an action patterned on the ceremonial defloration of a *taupou*. This achieved, the sleep crawler at once or, as is more common, on a convenient subsequent occasion, claims the female he has forcibly deflowered as his wife, telling her in private that she has no choice but to elope with him, and that if she does not elope he will bring shame on her family by letting it be known that she is not a virgin. (245-46)

Here Freeman adds a coercive dimension to what can occur in these liaisons, and O'Meara's (1996: 104–9) more complete discussion of moetorolo notes that both consensual and coercive moetorolo exist. But if force had become the defining characteristic of moetorolo for Freeman, what of the consensual moetorolo that he noted in his thesis? Mead did not fully comprehend moetorolo in *Coming of Age in Samoa*, but Freeman's published view of this practice seems at odds with the view in his thesis.

Freeman's thesis is valuable for its ethnographic contributions to the understanding of the decline of the taupou system, the important role of Christian churches in that decline, the relationship of Christian and avaga marriages, and the role of moetorolo in avaga. In fact, Freeman's arguments on most of these subjects in his thesis are very much in line with Mead's, providing more and better data. Yet Freeman's published critique of Mead neglects his thesis. And in the thesis, Mead's work on these subjects is neither cited nor discussed.

Newton A. Rowe

Newton A. Rowe, author of *Under the Sailing Gods* (1930), was a New Zealand district officer and trader's agent who spent considerable time in Samoa (1922–26). His book is a standard source on Samoa that includes Rowe's personal views about contemporary Samoa, New Zealand colonial rule, and the anticolonial movement known as the Mau. It is not an ethnography, and Rowe was apparently not fluent in Samoan. His observations were nevertheless of sufficient importance that his book is among the sources on Samoa found in the Human Relations Area Files. He was also in the islands at roughly the same time as Mead, although in Western Samoa rather than American Samoa.¹³

A sense of the book can be gleaned from Mead's (1931: 138) review of it in the *Nation*.

This is a sane, honest book, a careful attempt to set down for the world at large the series of shameful events which culminated with the shooting down of the young Samoan chief Tanasese in the streets of Apia, New Zealand Samoa on December 29, 1929. Mr. Rowe gives an excellent picture of the conditions in Samoa at the time New Zealand took over the mandate—in brief journalistic sketches of parties, meetings, slight episodes between official and natives, letters written to the insurgent press, contacts with visitors, all of which are used to provide a record of the mise en scene which will prove invaluable as precise historical data later.

Mead notes that Rowe did make "some slight attempt to deal with the early history of the country" (138), but that the book was mostly about colonial Samoa in the 1920s. Nevertheless, Freeman cites Rowe twice in his chapter "Sexual Mores and Behavior," confirming Freeman's view of the premium Samoans placed on chastity. Freeman (1983: 351, 26) quotes Rowe as stating, first, that Samoan women were "singularly chaste" in comparison with other Polynesian women and, second, that "a Samoan girl's moral code opposes her going with a man unless, by living with him, she may be recognized as his wife" (241). Rowe's quotations, as used by Freeman, seem to refer to relationships among Samoans in a traditional setting with an emphasis on restriction and propriety. However, they are taken from a very different context that Freeman does not mention.

Rowe's brief phrases about chastity and marriage are embedded in a three-page discussion of Chinese-Samoan interethnic relationships in the 1920s during New Zealand colonial rule. Rowe, like other New Zealanders, deplored these relationships between Samoan women and Chinese men. Like the German colonial regime before it, the New Zealand colonial government (1914–62) was deeply concerned about the number of Chinese and Melanesian laborers who had been brought to the islands to work on plantations in the early twentieth century, and especially their relationships with Samoan women.

The threat of "race mixing" led the New Zealand regime to revive earlier German laws against Chinese laborers entering Samoan houses and against Samoan women entering Chinese quarters. The new government also began repatriating Chinese and Melanesian laborers. In 1914 there had been 2,200 Chinese laborers and 878 Melanesian laborers. By 1918, the number of Chinese had dropped to 838, and the number of Melanesians was reduced to 200. Nevertheless, in 1920 the regime was still troubled by the specter of "race mixing" and imposed a strict law forbidding Chinese-Samoan marriages altogether. The government also encouraged Samoans to endorse its position on the Chinese "race menace," and a number already had done so independently.

Rowe (1930: 269–70) believed that even a reduced number of Chinese could cause racial "contamination" and were "Samoa's most present menace." He estimated that Chinese-Samoan children numbered between one thousand and fifteen hundred out of a total population of about forty thousand. Despite colonial laws restricting the interaction of Chinese men and Samoan women and the ban on intermarriage, avaga marriages were taking place, children were being born, and these unions presented "no difficulties at all" for Samoans (271). Rowe was critical of the Samoan custom of avaga that allowed a Chinese man and a Samoan woman to reside together

as a married couple, thereby subverting legal efforts by the government to prevent these relationships. He felt that Samoans themselves were active participants in the demise of their own "race." Rowe was also frustrated that government warnings to Chinese-Samoan couples were ignored and that the law banning Chinese-Samoan marriages was not strictly enforced.

This is the context in which Rowe's words, as quoted by Freeman, appear. While Rowe was aware of the traditional constraints on Samoan sexual conduct, the importance of the *taupou*, and the value on virginity, in the brief phrases that Freeman quotes he was discussing the Samoan use of *avaga* to skirt colonial law, not the *taupou* system itself. He saw traditional *avaga* relationships being modified as Samoans sought to marry Chinese and benefit from new ties with them.

Chinese-Samoan marriages were not only banned by law; they were frowned on by the Christian churches that had not missionized the Chinese because they were temporary laborers in the islands. Why then were Samoan women and their families interested in these relationships? From his colonial perspective, Rowe believed that Chinese husbands treated their Samoan wives well and were reliable providers. "The main attraction of living with the Chinese is that the coolies give the greater part of their money to the women, who are allowed to live in complete idleness, the Chinaman even doing such housework as is done" (Rowe 1930: 271). Rowe also noted that family interests played a role, remarking that "for their attitude in the matter the parents of the girls are perhaps to be blamed. But there is something of the procurer and procuress in most parents. And an alliance with a foreigner is likely to be beneficial to a family in Samoa" (271).

Rowe goes beyond a discussion of Chinese-Samoan *avaga* unions to a description of his own relationships with Samoan women. As a district officer, Rowe traveled to rural villages on official business. On one early visit he was surprised and shocked when he was offered the company of a Samoan girl for the evening.

My informant was a youth who could speak English fairly well. When the time came for me to retire for the night, he asked me if I would like to sleep with the *Taupou*. I was scandalized at this suggestion—not the immorality of it but because the *Taupou* is the village virgin, requiring to set all the other girls an example in good manners and chastity, and I supposed that such a proposition if known to the natives would result in annoyance to say the least. I refused indignantly; the more so possibly because the *Taupou* chanced in this case to be singularly unprepossessing. The wretched youth tried to explain that his suggestion was quite in order; but I would have none of it. In fact, he was

perfectly correct, according to Samoan custom, and was merely trying to pay me a compliment not often indulged these days. The custom—of which I was to later have actual experience—is intended to show confidence in the integrity of the guest. (Rowe 1930: 127)

From Rowe's writing we do not know exactly who these young women were, but there can be little doubt that relationships between prestigious European visitors and unmarried village women occurred fairly often, a view supported by Samoan historians Malama Meleisea (1987) and Damon Salea (1997). Indeed, a variety of sources refer to these interethnic relationships, ranging from informal liaisons to formal marriages, that took place throughout the colonial period in Samoa, producing an ethnically stratified, multicultural society by the end of the nineteenth century (Wareham 1997; Gilson 1970; Davidson 1967; Shankman 1989, 2002a, 2004). While Freeman focuses on missionaries and the ideal of Christian marriage, he neglects the more numerous beachcombers, castaways, whalers, traders, plantation owners, military personnel, government functionaries, and others who participated in interethnic relationships. They produced the significant "half-caste" population that came to play an important political and economic role in colonial Samoa.

Although a staunch defender of Samoans' valorization of virginity, Rowe did not believe that Samoans were necessarily restrictive in actual practice, of which he had experience. He was quite candid about interethnic relationships and the circumstances in which they occurred. Had Samoans been as "puritanical" as Freeman asserts, these interethnic relationships would not have taken place, and the children of these relationships would not have been welcomed into Samoan families. Had Samoans been as committed to their Christian churches as Freeman believes, families would not have gone against church teaching and allowed their daughters to marry non-Christian Chinese husbands. Freeman's emphasis on the ideal of virginity obscures the variety of relationships that were taking place in colonial Samoa and cannot explain why they were taking place. Although Freeman uses Rowe as if the latter were discussing traditional marriages among Samoans, Rowe actually discusses *avaga* marriages with Chinese.

Conclusion

Freeman's misrepresentation of Krämer and Rowe is part of a larger, well-documented pattern of misrepresentation of historical sources in his work. Instead of providing a more complete discussion of Krämer and Rowe, Freeman took their words and phrases out of context to create the appearance of historical authority and to enhance the idea that there is contro-

versy about Samoan sexual conduct and marriage. In his characterization of Samoa, Freeman selectively used the words of Krämer and Rowe to support his argument about the value of virginity for all Samoan girls, and the reinforcement of the ideal of virginity during the colonial era. Yet when considered in context, Krämer states very clearly that the taupou system was in decline and that taupou were eloping during the 1890s. The value on their virginity was diminishing in practice if not in ideology. Rowe notes that Samoan women were marrying Chinese men in large numbers during the early part of the twentieth century, employing avaga for personal and familial advantage rather than adhering to an abstract ideal of virginity, colonial law, and church admonitions prohibiting such relationships. He also acknowledges his own relationships with unmarried Samoan women that he believed were encouraged and sanctioned by Samoan custom.

Krämer and Rowe understood that at the level of publicly articulated belief, virginity was an important ideal for Samoans. But in practice Samoan sexual conduct had been changing in dynamic and sometimes unanticipated ways during the colonial era. Certain contexts, defined by Samoan custom such as avaga, permitted sexual activity that seems to the European eye to contradict public ideology. Krämer and Rowe both referred to contexts in which Samoan women were permitted and encouraged to have relationships with Europeans, Chinese, and other Pacific Islanders. But these important aspects of Samoan history and culture were not addressed by Freeman in his public critique of Mead.

Freeman read into historical sources an interpretation congruent with his criticism of Mead. In addition, he neglected his own previous work on Samoa that often supported Mead. In his 1948 thesis, Freeman wrote that the taupou system was "virtually defunct" by the 1940s. He also reported on the importance of missionaries in its decline, the rarity of taupou marriages in the early twentieth century, the prevalence of avaga marriages even among chiefs, and the fact that avaga marriages were often facilitated by the consensual nature of moetoto relationships. In his unpublished thesis, Freeman's arguments are quite similar to Mead's on most of these subjects. Yet incorporating this information into his published critique of Mead could have substantially modified Freeman's depiction of Samoan sexual conduct and marriage customs over time, reduced its dramatic contrast with Mead's portrayal, and lessened the impact of his argument. While Mead's work on the taupou system and the taupou is brief and problematic in some respects, her overall argument is sound. Freeman's critique is not a reliable guide to her argument or to the historical transformation of the taupou system. This is unfortunate because the complex history of colonial Samoa deserves better scholarship. Historical sources need to be accurately

quoted and contextualized, for it is only from this basis that interpretation can begin. Had Freeman used these sources properly, the Mead-Freeman controversy might have been less controversial.

Notes

An earlier version of this article was presented at the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania meetings in 2001. I would like to thank Sharon Tiffany, Martin Orans, Ben Finney, and Hiram Caton for their encouragement and valuable comments, and Derek Freeman for writing me shortly before his death in 2001 about the Derek Freeman Papers archived in the Mandeville Special Collections Library at the Geisel Library of the University of California at San Diego. I would also like to thank Steve Coy of the Mandeville Special Collections Library for his assistance with the Freeman Papers.

- 1 See, e.g., McDowell 1984; Orans 1996, 1999, 2000a; Côté 1994, 2000a; and Shankman 1996, 2000, 2001b.
- 2 One of the unfortunate consequences of the controversy is that studies of Samoan culture that have not directly addressed the controversy have been neglected. Just prior to the controversy, Brad Shore's (1981, 1982) ethnographic work offered new perspectives on Samoa, as did Sherry Ortner's (1981) more general work on gender and sexuality in Polynesia. Yet these works and others by Malama Meleisea, Penelope Schoeffel, Serge Tchekézo, Jeannette Mageo, and Tim O'Meara, for example, did not directly engage the controversy and have received less attention than they might have.
- 3 Mead spelled *Manu'a* as "Manua," and I have retained this spelling in the title of the book but not in my other references to the Manu'a islands. Mead (1930: 213) discusses her choice of orthography in her professional monograph on Samoa.
- 4 Mead's account of the taupou and the defloration ceremony in *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928: 98–99) mixes the ethnographic present with historical changes in the taupou system. The reason for this somewhat confusing presentation is that in Mead's original manuscript, "The Adolescent Girl in Samoa" (1927), the section "Samoan Civilisation as It Is To-day" appears as part of a single chapter. In *Coming of Age in Samoa*, it is a separate appendix.
- 5 This summary of the taupou system is taken primarily from Freeman 1983 and is explicated in more detail in Shankman 1996. For discussions of the history of Samoan sexual conduct, see Shankman 1996, 2001a, and 2004; Côté 1994; and Tchekézo 2004. In his rejoinder to my 1996 article, Freeman (1998) had the opportunity to discuss my broad interpretation of changes in Samoan sexual conduct and the taupou system during the colonial era. Instead he chose to focus on the narrow issue of counterfeiting and the veracity of Augustin Krämer's work without questioning my interpretation of the decline of the taupou system. As a result, my reply was largely a review of Krämer, which I continue in this article. I did not realize that Freeman accurately described the decline of the taupou system in Samoa in his thesis for his postgraduate diploma (1948) until I read it in March 2002 in the Freeman Papers archived at the University of California at San Diego. When I visited Freeman at the Australian

National University in 1984, I asked to see his thesis, but he did not make it available. To my knowledge, the thesis has not been used in the controversy thus far.

6 The translation of Krämer's work into English by Theodore Verhaaren in 1979 and its subsequent publication in 1994 by the University of Hawai'i Press were major events for Samoans and scholars of Samoa. In translation, Krämer's text runs to over twelve hundred pages. For a Samoan perspective on Krämer, see Tanasese 1994: 74.

7 This quotation was translated from Krämer. It is unclear who translated it from German to English, since the Verhaaren translation had not yet been published.

8 Although Margaret Mead did not use Krämer (or other ethnographers of the islands) explicitly in *Coming of Age in Samoa*, in *Social Organization of Manua* (1930) she cites, uses, and discusses Krämer's work. Mead took German in high school, and according to Patricia Francis, who has worked in the Mead archives at the Library of Congress, she kept numerous bibliographic notes on her reading of Krämer. Mead also apparently visited Krämer in Stuttgart in 1927 and wrote to him with a list of detailed questions that she hoped would clarify some of the work that she had already done in Manu'a, noting differences between her work and his in her monograph. After completing *Social Organization of Manua*, Mead asked that a copy be sent to Krämer.

9 However, in his unpublished thesis, Freeman does cite Keesing's article, which cites Krämer and Mead, as corroborating his ethnographic findings.

10 Freeman is probably referring to the years 1940 and 1941, because in 1942 and 1943, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Apia and the islands as a whole were overwhelmed by tens of thousands of American servicemen who were being trained for combat in the western Pacific. Since Freeman was in Samoa between 1940 and 1943, he had the opportunity to see or at least know of the many interethnic unions between American servicemen and Samoan women. Yet the war and its effects on Samoa are conspicuously absent in Freeman's work (Shankman 1996: 562).

11 On the traditional Samoan family, marriage, the taupou, and the position of women, Krämer (1994 [1902]: 1:33–42) incorporated earlier sources, but he often provides more detail than most of them. Given Krämer's knowledge of Samoa and the Samoan language, did he accurately describe how a ceremonial deflorator took place? In this section of his work, Krämer employs Steubel's detailed description of a ceremonial deflorator. Steubel, a German privy councillor in the islands just prior to Krämer's arrival, also was very interested in Samoan custom. His description of a public deflorator states that the groom "thrusts his index finger upward into the lady's sex organ" (ibid., 39). Thus, contrary to Freeman's assertion that Krämer "just did not know what he was talking about" when describing who performed the deflorator ceremony, Krämer's use of Steubel demonstrates his knowledge of the role of the groom's side in the traditional ceremony, and in this respect his account is similar to Mead's (1928: 98; 1930: 95) and other observers, including Freeman. Because Krämer did not make clear who the "old women" were who allegedly helped to counterfeit virginity in the deflorator ceremony or exactly how this might have taken place, Freeman's criticism is legitimate. However, as noted earlier, there is no definitive historical evidence on either side of the counterfeiting issue.

12 Another example involving Freeman's use of Krämer may help shed light on the

problematic nature of Freeman's use of historical sources. From the beginning of the Mead-Freeman controversy in 1983 until 1998, a period of fifteen years, Freeman regarded Augustin Krämer as a reliable source. He did not question Krämer's credibility in the second edition of *Margaret Mead and Samoa* when it was republished in Australia in 1996 as *Margaret Mead and the Heretic: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*. Yet in 1998, in response to my article about the history of Samoan sexual conduct (1996), Freeman (1998: 975) went to considerable lengths to criticize Krämer as an "obviously suspect source" with "erroneous views" about Samoan sexual customs. One year later, Freeman reversed himself again. In his second book on the controversy, *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead*, Freeman (1999: 178) expressed confidence in Krämer's expertise on "the sexual mores of the Samoans" in his continuing critique of Mead and Boas. Thus, in separate publications appearing only a year apart in print, Freeman had gone from rejecting Krämer as a reliable source on Samoan sexual conduct to praising him as an ethnographer with real credibility on "the sexual mores of the Samoans." The context of this statement involves Freeman's comment that if Franz Boas, Mead's mentor and dissertation advisor, had "consulted the readily available literature on Samoa, particularly the writings of Augustin Krämer, Otto Steubel, and other German ethnographers of Samoa, he would have realized that Mead had seriously misdescribed the sexual mores of the Samoans" (ibid., 178).

13 Rowe (1995: 246) apparently knew Freeman because he thanked him in print as one of three people who read and commented on his manuscript, later published as a book, about the history of the discovery of Tahiti.

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