



“IA AO SAMOA”

LE IUNIVESITE AOA O SAMOA (FAAVAEINA 1984) NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SAMOA

Centre for Samoan Studies

Report on grinding stone archaeological feature (*foaga*) Moamoa, Āpia, ‘Upolu

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Background

A possible archaeological feature was discovered by a local resident of Moamoa, Āpia and reported to staff at the National University of Sāmoa (NUS). On 19 June I went with NUS staff to investigate the archaeological feature and determine its possible significance.

The feature is located in a stream about a 15 minute walk up the stream bed from a ford-type car crossing. The stream is possibly Le’ele Stream or Sinamoga Stream coming from the western flank of Mt. Vaea (as noted on the “Islands of Sāmoa” map, University of Hawaii Press, 1990), but it is difficult to determine with certainty as several streams drain this watershed. The stream currently carries little water, but during the rainy season water depth may exceed 1 meter.

Archaeological research was undertaken in the area over 50 years ago. In the late 1950s Jack Golson, then an archaeologist at the Australia National University, conducted an archaeological reconnaissance of the western slopes of Mt Vaea (ie, the area where the archaeological feature was found) to locate a “stone tool workshop” that had been reported by P. W. H. Kelly, General Manager of Sāmoan Estates. The workshop site was not located, but Kelly gave 16 adzes (*to’i*) to the archaeologist and these are housed in the University of Otago museum. This research is recounted in Golson (1969:18).

In 1966 archaeologist Janet Davidson, then of the Auckland Institute and Museum, returned to Moamoa to investigate a large fortified site, inland of Moamoa, on a ridge between Papase’ea and Le’ele streams. The fortified site is called Luapu’ē. The Luapu’ē site consists of a ditch and bank defensive system and is approximately 330 m long. Davidson reports that downslope from Luapu’ē, towards Moamoa there are stone terraces, stone walls and house foundations (Davidson 1974:202).

The Grinding Stone Feature

The archaeological feature (Figure 1) is a grinding stone (*foaga*) used to make stone adzes (*to’i ma’a*). The large boulder has approximately 15 facets on it that are produced

from grinding rough-hewn basalt adzes (termed “blanks”) into smooth adzes for use. Similar features are found throughout American Sāmoa and Fiji, but this appears to be the first *foaga* of such a large size reported in the nation of Sāmoa. The location in the stream bed suggests that water was used as a lubricant when grinding rough adzes to smoothed completed tools. Although the age of the *foaga* is difficult to determine it is probably 500 or more years old, perhaps up to 800 years old. The age of 800 years might be supported as this is the time when basalt adzes were exported with increasing frequency from Sāmoa to Tonga and Fiji (Clark 2002). However, an age closer to 500 years might be more reasonable as during the centuries in a stream bed water would erode the facets produced from adze grinding. The 15 or more grinding facets suggests that a substantial number of adzes may have been finished here.

The presence of the *foaga* indicates that other, likely substantial, archaeological features are located nearby. *Foaga* found on large, immovable, boulders would likely have been located near to both the basalt quarry from which the rough-hewn adzes were obtained and a village settlement. Such a location would minimize time spent at a quarry and provide for finishing of complete adzes closer to the village. This, along with the previous archaeological research reported above, suggests that there may be substantial archaeological resources in the area, including stone tool workshops, house platforms, terraces, and other features found in villages.

Significance

The Moamoa *foaga* is an archaeological feature of great significance to the culture, history, and archaeology of Sāmoa. It is likely the first feature of such a large size reported in the nation of Sāmoa, and indicates the type of tool production and perhaps ancient “export economy” focused on Sāmoa’s superior basalt resources. The presence of the *foaga*, and previous archaeological research, indicates that other archaeological features are most certainly to be found in the nearby. Archaeological survey prior to land development should be a priority for the area.



Figure 1. Two views of a *foaga* or adze grinding stone. Multiple facets are visible. The knife in the closeup (right) is 10.5 cm long

References

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Ripoti o le Suesuega i Talaeli, e uiga I le Maa (Foaga) i Moamoa, Apia, Upolu.

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Faamatalaga o le Maa (Foaga)

O le maa (foaga) o loo i le vaiata i tuamaota o Moamoa na uluai maua lea e le susuga ia Dick Nansen ma ona alo i sa latou fagagaula i le vaiata mai le aso 30 Iuni, 2012. Na uluai faailoa atu leni maa i se tasi o matua o faiva o le Iunivesite Aoao o Samoa, le susuga Dionne Fonoti ma asia ai loa i le aso 19 Iuni 2013 ma le susuga Dr Ethan mai le Iunivesite Aukilani i Niu Sila ma le susuga a Tuala Terry Tavita, o le Pule sili lagolago o le Nusipepa o le Savali. O le auga o leni asiasiga ina ia matau foliga vaaia atoa ai ma le taua o leni maa (foaga).

O leni maa (foaga) o loo tatia i le ogatonugalemu o le auvai o le vaiata ma pe tusa ma le 15 minute le mamao i uta mai le alatele. O le vaiata leni e tafe mai le nofoaga ua taua o Le'ele (se vaega o Sinamoga) mai le itu i sisifo o le Mauga o Vaea (e pei ona faalia i le faafanua "Island of Samoa", Iunivesite o Hawaii, 1990). O le vaiata leni e le o se vaiata loloto ma seiloga e tetele timuga ma lologa ona faatoa sua lea pe tusa o le 1 le mita le maualuga.

E tusa o le 50 tausaga talu ai na faatino ai le suesuega i talaeli i le nofoaga leni. O le 1950 o le susuga ia Jack Golson mai le ANU (Australia National University) na faatino lana suesuega i le nofoaga leni e ala lea i le savalia, matau ma faamaumau vaega uma sa ia matauina mai lea suesuega. Na ia faalia ai sa iai se nofoaga sa fausia mai ai ni aupega mai

maa, e pei ona faalia i le P.W.H.Kelly, o le Pulesili o Fanua Tau Samoa. E 16 ni toi maa na tuuina atu lenei alii ia Golson ma teuina i le Falemataaga o le Lunivesite o Otago.

O le tausaga e 1966 na taliu mai ai le susuga a Janet Davidson mai le Falemataaga o Aukilani ma asia le nofoaga tele lenei i le vaitafe i Moamoa ma e tafe mai Papaseea ma Le'ele. O le igoa o lenei vai o Luapu'e ma e tusa ma le 330 mita le umi. Na faalia e Davidson (1974: 202) o le agai mai i lalo o Moamoa o loo iai ni paepae maa ma faavae o fale sa nofoia e tagata i aso anamua.

Foliga Vaaia o le Maa (Foaga)

O foliga vaaia o lenei maa (foaga) pe tusa lea ma le 15 pu o loo iai ma e foliga mai sa faaogaina lea mo le faia ai o aupega ma le gaosiga o toi maa. Sa faaogaina e faalamolemole ma faamaai ai aupega sa faaogaina. E tai tutusa foliga vaaia o le maa foaga lenei ma isi maa foaga sa maua i Tutuila ma Fiti, ae peitai e aupito i tele atu le maa lenei ua maua i Samoa. O le taatia ai la o lenei maa foaga i le ogatotonugalemu o le vaitafe i Moamoa e atagia mai ai o le vai sa faaoga e faigofie ai ona faalamolemole ma faamaai toi maa ma aupega na fausia mai ai. Ae peitai e faigata ona iloa le matua o lenei maa ae na o se taumatega pe a ma le 500 poo le 800 tausaga. O le 800 o tausaga e taumate o le vaitau tonu lea sa gaosia ai toi maa mai Samoa ma auina atu i Toga ma Fiti e pei ona faalia e Clark (2002). O foliga vaaia o lenei maa e atagia ai pe tusa ma le tai 15 toimaa na mafai ona fausia mai ai.

O le maua ai o le maa foaga i lenei nofoaga i Moamoa e atagia mai ai o loo iai foi nisi maa foaga faapenei o loo tanumia i vaega lata ane i lenei nofoaga. E faailoa mai foi i lenei maa, o le nofoaga lenei sa nofoia e tagata i aso anamua, e pei ona taua i luga.

Taua o Lenei Maa (Foaga)

O le maa foaga lenei i Moamoa e iai le talitonuga o le matua taua tele i suesuega i talaeli, e le gata e faamatala ai le aganuu tuu faasolo a Samoa, o le talafaasolopito o Samoa, aemaise o talaeli. O le uluai maa foaga tele lenei ua maua i Samoa ma ua atagia ai le maotua ma leva ona iai o lenei maa, aupega na fausia mai ai aemaise o ituaiga maa na faaoga mo le auina atu i fafo. O le taua foi o lenei maa e faailoa mai ai e iai nisi maa i lenei nofoaga ma e ao ona faatino ai se suesuega i talaeli i lenei nofoaga.

NB: O lenei Maa Foaga na asia e le vasega HSA254 Indigenous Heritage NUS i le aso Aso Toonai 24 Aokuso 2013 lalo o le taitaiga Dionne Fonoti ma Matiu Matavai Tautunu.