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# Acknowledgements



In October 1986, Kotu Island in the Lulunga district of the Tongan group of Ha'apai appeared as a low silhouette on the Western horizon as the small boat we were in weaved its way through a channel in the fringing reef into the large lagoon surrounding the island for the first time. The tide was low, and the boat scraped the bottom and ground to a halt long before reaching the sandy beach in front of the entrance to the village. A tall and slender elderly man with short-cropped, silver hair greeted us with a smile as we waded ashore; he then escorted us through the village to the home of his family, next to the central village green. This was the late Heamasi Koloa Pemo'ui, town officer and steward of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga on Kotu; I am deeply grateful to him for opening his home and heart to us when we first arrived and forever indebted to him for his unfailing commitment to sharing his long experience and many insights about the ways of the world and how to cope with them. I remember with appreciation his gentle encouragements to have the patience and perseverance to 'grasp well' (*puke lelei*) our long conversations and discussions about how the world works before moving on to other topics. The subject matter of this book bears the mark of Koloa's support and his own patience and perseverance. Also, I am grateful to his wife, the late Meletoa Koloa; his daughter Melen'a'a; and his son Rev. Lea 'a e Peni Koloa and his wife, the late Alamani Koloa, and their family for generously accepting the added burden of caring for visitors from afar during the first two field visits to Kotu in 1986 and 1991. Over the three decades of field visits that this book is based on, too many people from Kotu to name individually have offered their friendship and contributed their knowledge and views to make this book possible. My thanks go to all of them for their interest, openness and acceptance of someone coming repeatedly from across the world to 'study the Tongan way' (*ako e 'ulungaanga fakatonga*). Special gratitude goes to families on Kotu and on Tongatapu, with whom I have enjoyed enduring relations of mutual support. This has been essential for the book's perspective on the characteristics and dynamics of local sociality; the family of the late Siale and 'Ofa Koloa; the family of

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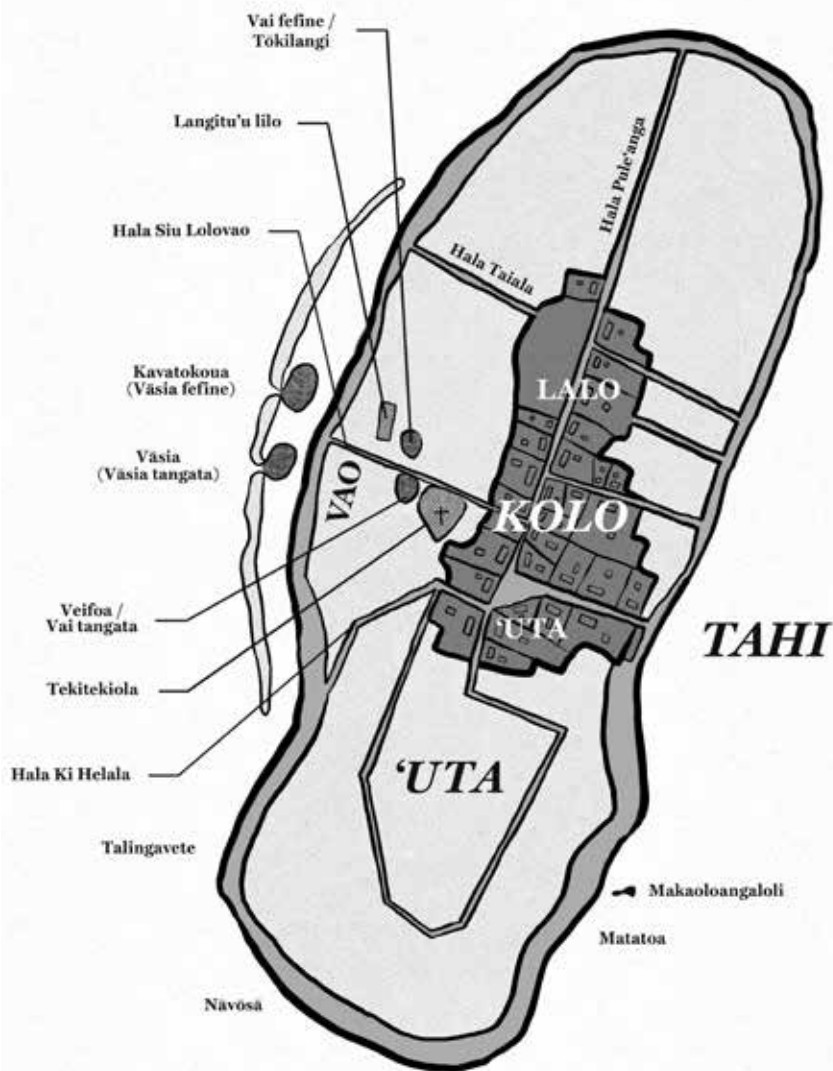
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Map of the Tongan Archipelago. © Arne Aleksej Perminow and Johnny Kreutz.



Map of Kotu Island. © Arne Aleksej Perminow and Kristine Lie Øverland.



Map of *Namolahi* Lagoon. © Arne Aleksej Perminow and Kristine Lie Øverland.