

THE PLATFORM MOUNDS OF AMERICAN SAMOA

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Introduction

Archaeologically, the most striking structures in American Samoa are the so-called pigeon-snaring platform mounds, tia seu lupe. Their isolated locations within forests, their overgrown condition, and their presumed lack of historical or traditional relationship to any village or land area make these structures worth investigating.

There have been three separate surveys by the author of American Samoa: in 1961-62, 1962, and in 1967. In all cases the only platform mounds seen or reported were located on the island of Tutuila. However, it is probable that similar mounds also occur on Aunu'u and in the Manu'a group, ^{and} ~~but when~~ it is ~~very~~ likely that ~~there are~~ many more ^{occur} pigeon-snaring mounds on Tutuila, ^{than are recorded here,} as many valleys, ridges, and forested areas have not been adequately surveyed.

of Samoa (Kikuchi, 1963)

Site Code

The ^{Grise's} site code system used in this paper follows ^{a revision} ~~the newly~~ ^{revised scheme} ~~previous~~ ^{at} ~~attempts~~ ^{by the author} (Kikuchi MS). The Samoan Island group is ^{first} designated by the letter "S"; Tutuila Island is designated by ^{followed by} "T". ^{separates these from} ~~dash~~ ^{and} the ~~site~~ map key number which, for Tutuila and Aunu'u, is 29. Thus, the primary code for all sites on Tutuila is ST-29. Any number or numbers, ^{another dash after} following the primary code refers to ~~the~~ ^{various individual sites} ~~on the map~~ or features on each map.

Platform Types

Recent surveys and archaeological investigations of the islands of Western Samoa have contributed a great amount of data on the platform mounds found there. The main emphasis in the last

decade has been placed on the interpretation of Samoan history as pertaining to Western Samoa. Any paper concerning the platform mounds of American Samoa cannot neglect the work already completed in the neighboring islands.

The most detailed attempt at the classification of mounds in Western Samoa was carried out by A.G. Buist (Buist in Green and Davidson 1969:39-40). Two broad divisions of mounds were defined; stone mounds and soil mounds. Within the first category are three subdivisions: large mounds, small mounds, and star mounds. Buist chose to classify mounds first on the basis of their composition and then according to size and, in the case of star mounds, according to the plan.

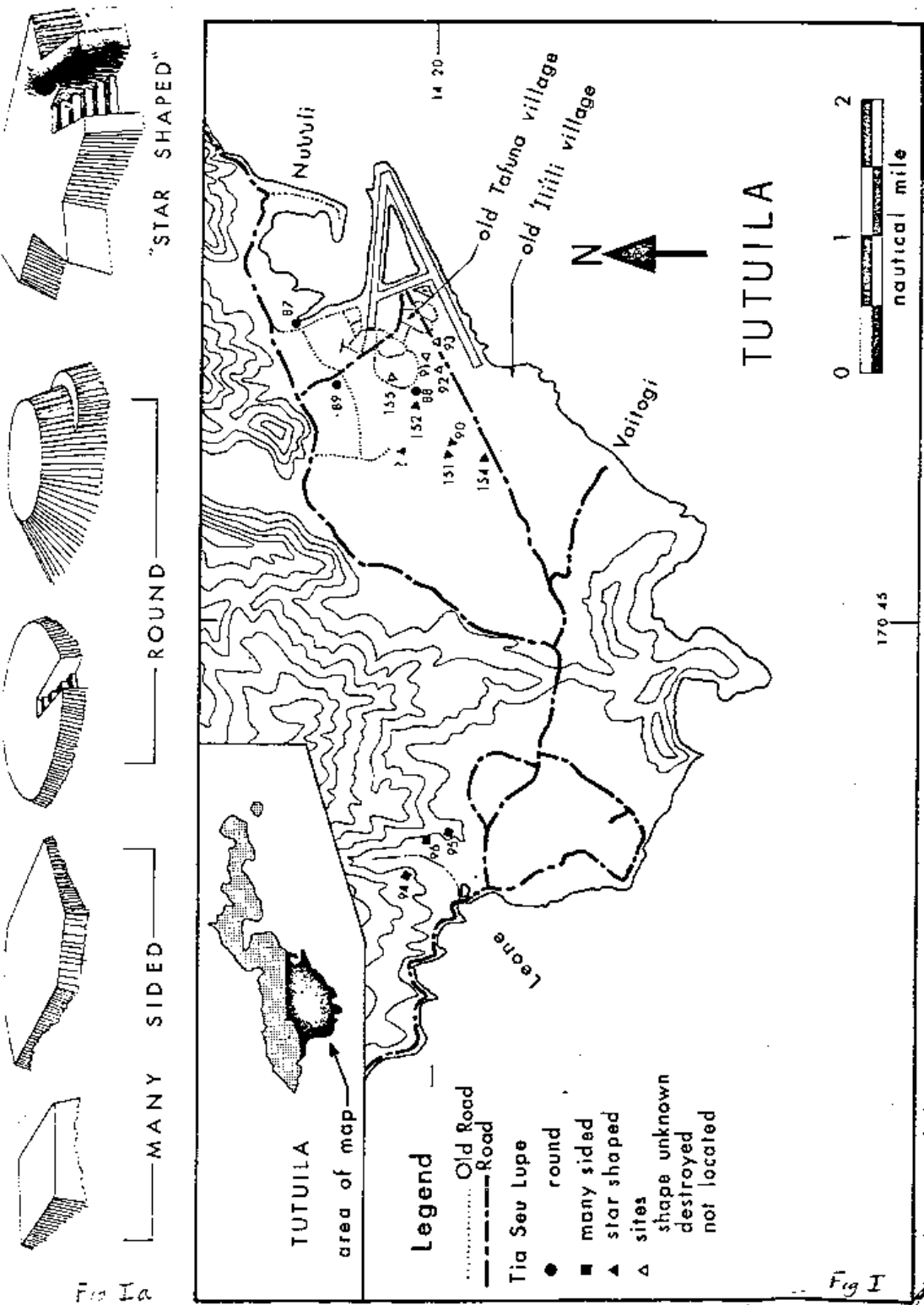
The first general classification of "pigeon mounds" was made by J. Golson in 1957 (Golson in Green and Davidson 1969:15). He noted three types of mounds: circular earth mounds faced with stones; three-sided mounds with a fourth side level with the ridge ground; and rectangular piles of rocks. Golson chose plan as the gross parameters of classification.

In the islands of American Samoa Peter H. Buck in 1928 was the first to record the presence of platform mounds (Buck 1930:329). He called these mounds "pigeon-snaring-mounds". The second attempt at describing and classifying the various platform mounds was carried out by the author (Kikuchi 1963). Parameters chosen were the plan of the mounds, rather than composition or dimensions; resultant was the three pronged classification of multi-sided, oval or round, and star-shaped mounds. It is these classifications around which this paper will be directed (see figure I).

Multi-sided Platforms

All pigeon-snaring platforms which are not oval or star-shaped are classified as multi-sided; they are usually quadrangular, pentagonal, or hexagonal.

Site ST-29-94. This quadrangular mound, was first reported by Buck (Buck 1930:321) as being situated on top of Mulimauga on the western ridge overlooking Leone valley. The platform was said to be about 6 meters square and built entirely of stone.



Three sides overlooked the valley below, while the fourth side was level with the ridge top.

Site ST-29-96. Roughly trapezoidal in shape, this mound was discovered in Leone Valley nearly half a kilometer from the main road and from the center of Leone village (see figure 2).

A large talus slide, whose finger of rock and dirt had flowed nearly 60 meters down the hillside, had been levelled to construct the platform. It is surfaced on its western edge with waterworn stones from the surrounding area. The site measures 45 meters long, 36 meters wide, and 1.8 meters high at its highest point. At present a neatly cleared cacao plantation is located along the edge of the platform.

A modern, or recently built sleeping or domestic house, fale o'o, was found on the top of the mound, while a stone-lined stairway was discovered along the seaward face of the structure. Behind the

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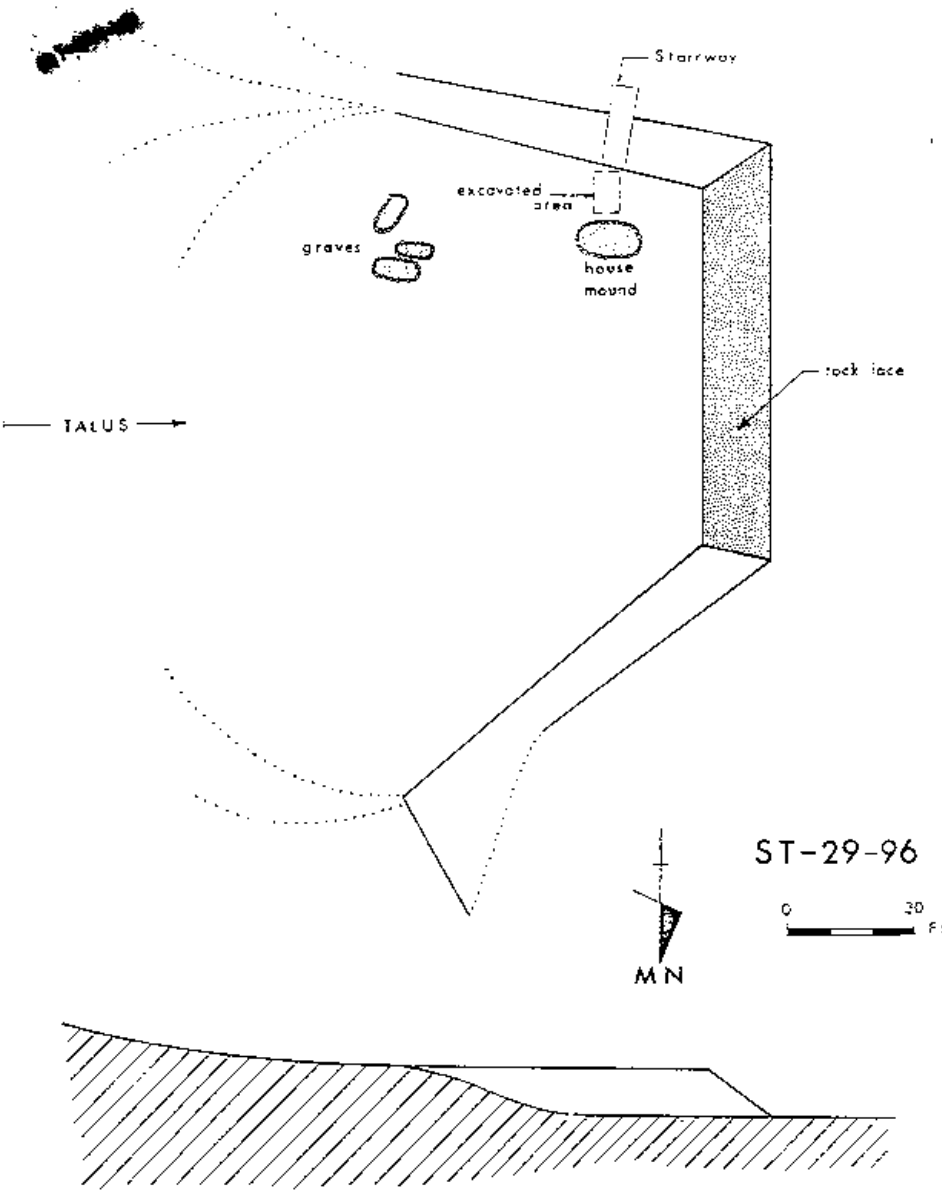


Fig 2

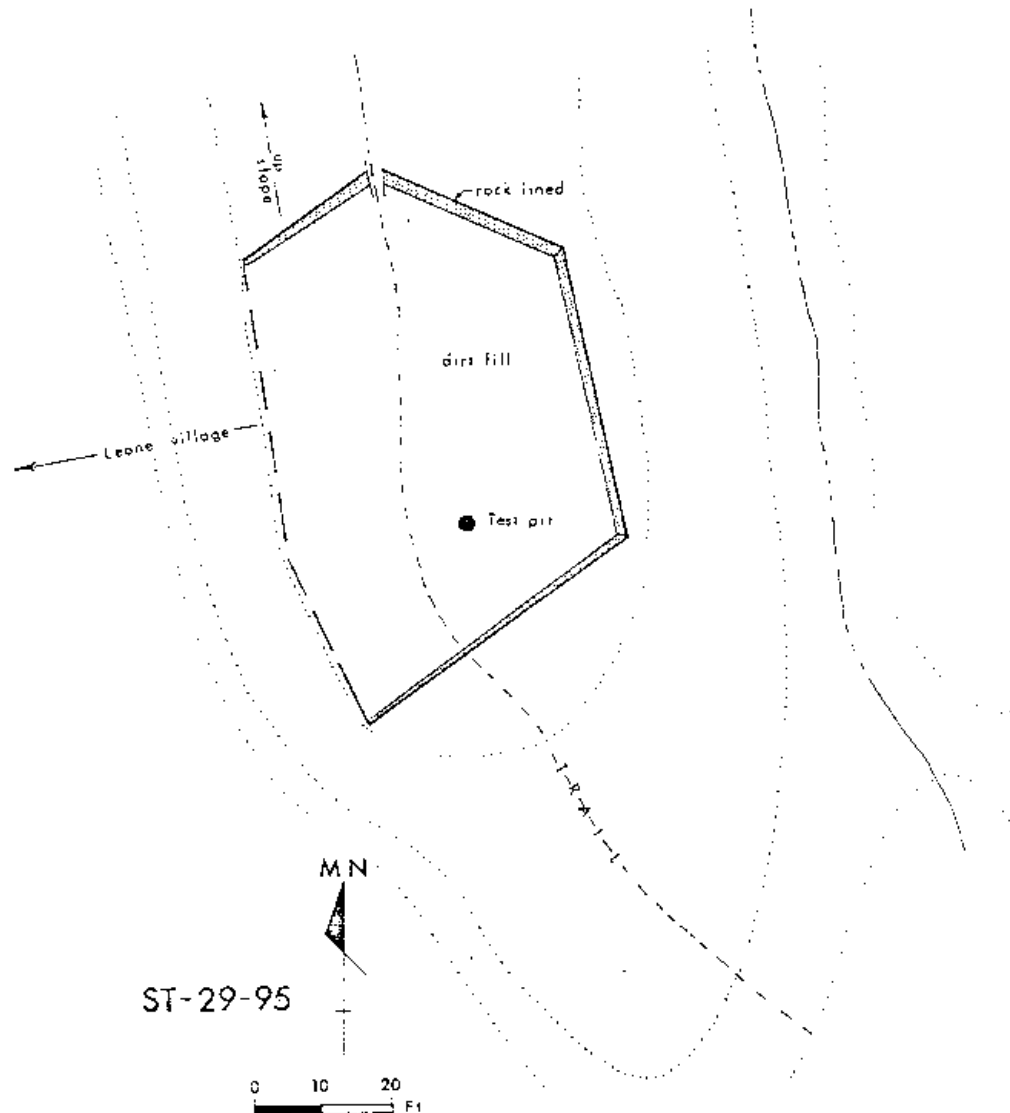
house and along the back slopes of the talus, several low, stone-lined graves, overgrown with tall grass and weeds, were uncovered.

A test pit^{was} dug to a depth of 95 cm. between the house pavement and the edge of the seaward face of the mound. Besides revealing the clay used in constructing the platform, a single layer of pebbles was noted at 30 cm. below the surface. This appeared to represent the pavement of the initial mound, which was subsequently covered by rebuilding. Except for pieces of rusted nails and a screwdriver just below the surface of the mound, there was no evidence of any midden or cultural material to indicate any prolonged use of this site.

Site ST-29-95. This is the only pentagonal-shaped structure that has been recorded on Tutuila. It is located on Sina ridge just east of Leone village (see figure 3). The platform has five clearly defined sides lined with large waterworn stones, built as a retaining and delineating wall. This low mound, measuring approximately 15.2 meters by 13.7 meters, was constructed on the top of a hill of volcanic cinders and tuff. The rain forest is just to the north of it, while the area on the east, west, and ~~the~~ south sides are cleared at the present time and used for growing dry-land taro. All three sides of the structure overlook the area from Leone village to the western-most tip of the island of Tutuila. There is evidence, such as tree trunks, to indicate that the platform was once located in a thicket of trees and bushes.

Several holes dug with a post-hole digger reached a depth of only 20 cm. before tuff bedrock was encountered. The level above this was composed of dirt-humus with a great amount of charcoal, the resulting mixture forming a very dark brown-black soil both over the mound and, where ~~tested~~ tested, outside the boundaries of the structure as well. The Samoans had cleared the land by chopping down the trees and burning the debris, thus the fine mixture of charcoal with the humus. No midden of any sort was noted in the excavations.

This site was built over a previously existing mound of natural tuff bedrock. It had first been delineated with stones, and then filled in or leveled. The accumulated humus was 20 cm. thick at the



test points and probably thicker in other areas of the mound. There seems to have been no need to add any height to the original structure.

Site ST-29-91. This site was located in the dense forest area of Tafuna. It was so heavily overgrown with large trees that only a rough estimate of its size and shape could be made. In spots, the platform rose approximately 3 meters above the ground below, while at the highest point, it rose approximately 6 meters. As to the length of the mound, only about 9 meters could be measured due to the density of the undergrowth. However, this figure should by no means be considered a true indication of the actual length. Protruding from the slope of a hill, the mound faced eastward, overlooking a grassy plain approximately 4.5 meters below. The back side of the mound rose only about one meter above the level of the ground. Because of the thickness of the undergrowth, no compass bearings could be taken so that the ~~precise~~ location of the site remains only an estimate.

Oval Platforms

Three ~~round~~ ^{round} to oval platforms were found; these were sites ST-29-87, ST-29-88, ST-29-89. All three structures were found in the general Tafuna area of Tutuila and are located closer to the mountain and steep hillsides than to the sea. Only ST-29-88 was found among mounds of the star-shaped category and was located in about the middle of the Tafuna plains.

Site ST-29-87. This structure is located near the Hansens disease hospital, which stands on the seaward side of the road (see figure 4). The mound seems to have been built of earth and its sides faced with stones gathered from the surrounding area. It measures 18 meters in diameter and is nearly 1.8 meters high in places. An internal stairway measured 1.5 meters in width and was 6 meters long, measuring from the base of the mound. It seems to have been stepped but, because of the poor condition of the stairs, this could not be accurately determined.

The original covering of this mound is said to have been of stone, and, according to local Samoans, the original land owner

Fig 3

area (see figure 6).

The oval platform, composed of a-a, clinkers or rough, scoriaceous lava was nearly 3 meters high. It was built on top of a natural bedrock of weathered pahoehoe. The top of the platform measured 7.6 meters in diameter. On the slope of the western face was a ramp, which appeared to have been built fairly recently.

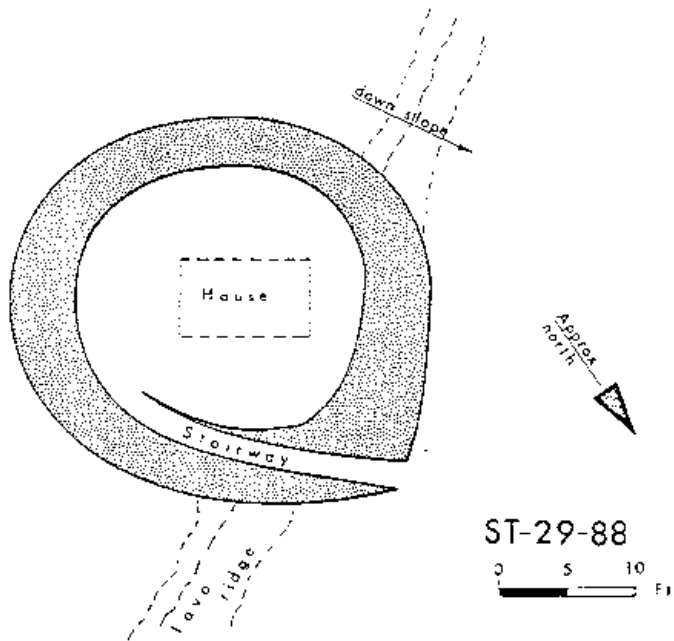
This side looked as if it had been deliberately sloped to allow access to the top of the mound. On the other hand, the eastern and southern slopes were quite steep, while the northern face was composed of two terraces at different levels. The steep sides have retained many of the original features of construction, whereas the more sloping sides appear to have since been altered.

The east side of this structure overlooked the lower lands, while the western face was only slightly higher than the terrain back of it. The forest once covered the entire region and still surrounds the site area today.

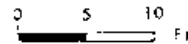
During the second World War the United States Marines used this mound as a platform for a watertank. They paved the top with very small angular basalt "road metal" and probably put in the rough stepped ramp on the sloped side.

Site ST-29-93. Before the author discovered this site in 1962 it had been partly destroyed by a bulldozing operation. Only a neat half of the pigeon-snarling platform remained intact. The cut face of the standing half of the mound had not crumbled, attesting to the interlocking nature of the rocks used in its construction.

The sectioned structure was a truncated cone nearly 4 meters high and about 9 meters in basal diameter. Only an estimation could be made of the diameter of the top; this appeared to have been between 3 and 4 ~~meters~~ meters. The mound was composed almost entirely of rough, weathered pahoehoe chunks showing zones of weathering stains from the middle to the bottom. The only artifact found was a single adze, discovered near the destroyed base of the mound. A month or two later the structure was completely leveled, to make way for a road.



ST-29-88



Star-shaped platforms

Four star-shaped platforms were found, while a fifth, though not encountered, was reported to be located in the same general area of Tafuna. These platforms are described as star-shaped because of the spokes which distinctly project outward from the main structure. It is not known whether these features were mere structural decorations or whether they served a purpose. All of these mounds are large in size, surrounded by the native forest, and are well built on the edge of some natural elevation such as a hill or rock ridge. In three cases, they were overgrown with very large trees. Every star-shaped platform except one had a stairway which could be ascertained as part of the structure.

Site ST-29-90. Located on a large finger of a-a lava flow, this structure overlooks the entire surrounding area (see figure 7). Since the platform was built on the lava flow, its elevation over the terrain was twice its height, that is, nearly 10 to 12 meters. No pathway through the rough clinkers to the mound could be found, although it is probable that paths once existed.

The mound measured 22.8 meters in length, 19.5 meters in width, and had three distinct spokes or arms and two further projections, which were not well defined. It was built completely of a-a clinkers from the flow on which it stood. However, although the sheer volume of rock that was required to build this mound should have left a noticeable depression somewhere along the flow, no such traces were evident. Thus, the building material must have been picked off the surface along the length of the flow or gathered from its sides. The faces of the mound were in nearly perfect condition, only a few small areas having crumbled. Because of the jagged nature of the clinkers and chain-reaction crumbling, it was impossible, at least for the author, to climb up the steep sides of the mound. No real stairway was observed, although it is very likely that one must have existed.

The top of the mound was level and showed no evidence of modifications such as pits or pavement. However, any pavement which might have existed would have filtered through the rough clinkers, thus destroying any evidence of its existence. Although

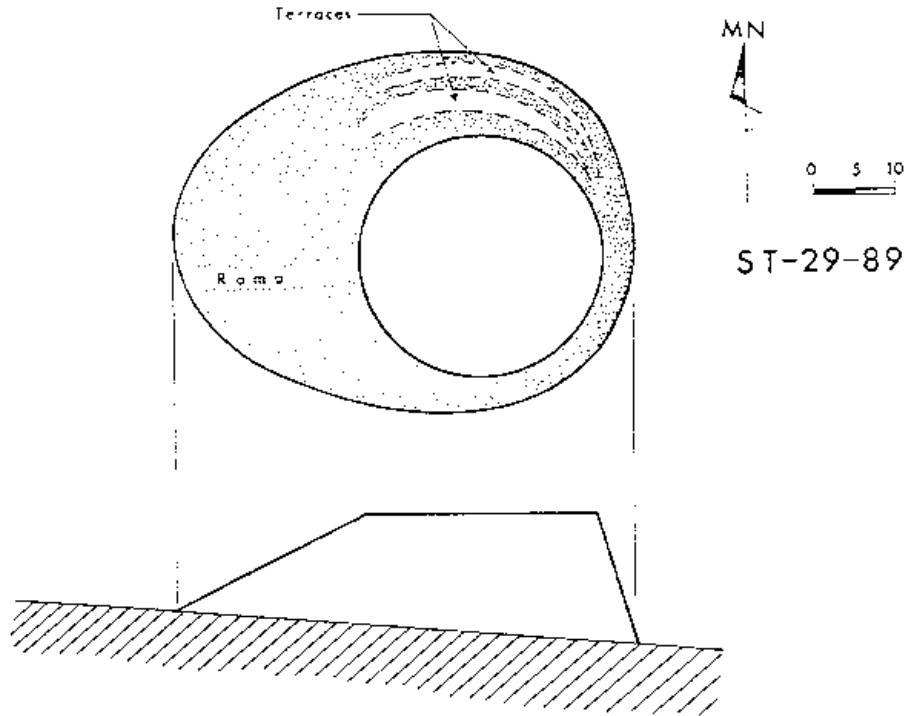


Fig 6

Fig 6

the mound was covered with a thick layer of plant growth, i.e. vines, bushes, and a few trees, the cleared mound had little or no humus on it.

The site was built over the middle of the a-a flow. Passage to and from the site is a most difficult venture because the lava flow is surrounded by a heavy forest and is covered with a low thicket of vines and bushes. Just below the lava flow is a low flat plain of weathered pahoehoe now used as agricultural land. Still in use but overgrown in many places is a raised path leading from the beach area to the inland villages. Winding through this area, it follows alongside the lava flow.

Site ST-29-151. This star-shaped platform was found only 60 to 90 meters north of site ST-29-90 and was in full view of it (see figure 8). Both platforms were hidden under a cover of bushes, trees, and vines, but, upon clearing, each was in full view of the other. The structure was in an excellent state of preservation. It differed from its neighbor in that it was not built on the a-a flow, which had missed the location of this mound by several dozen meters.

Whereas, as previously stated, ST-29-90 was constructed exclusively of a-a clinkers, ST-29-151 seemed to be composed mostly of broken slabs of weathered pahoehoe, although it was partly filled with a-a clinkers from the nearby lava flow.

The platform stood nearly 5.7 meters high at its highest point and measured 19.8 meters by 16.7 meters. It had six spokes, all of which were neatly delineated except for a few spots where the walls had crumbled. There was only one stairway leading to the top of the platform.

Site ST-29-152. This structure was found in the area north of the FAA antenna field, nearly 0.5 kilometer east of sites -90 and -151. Large trees and bushes grew so thickly on and around the platform that only a rough estimate of its dimensions could be made. This was done by rough pacing (see figure 9). Only small portions of the surface of the platform that could be cleared were studied. Definite spokes could be seen through the growth and the south side facing the ocean. This latter was nearly 3 meters high and possibly higher. It overlooked an expansive flat area, while the northern side was

ST-29-90

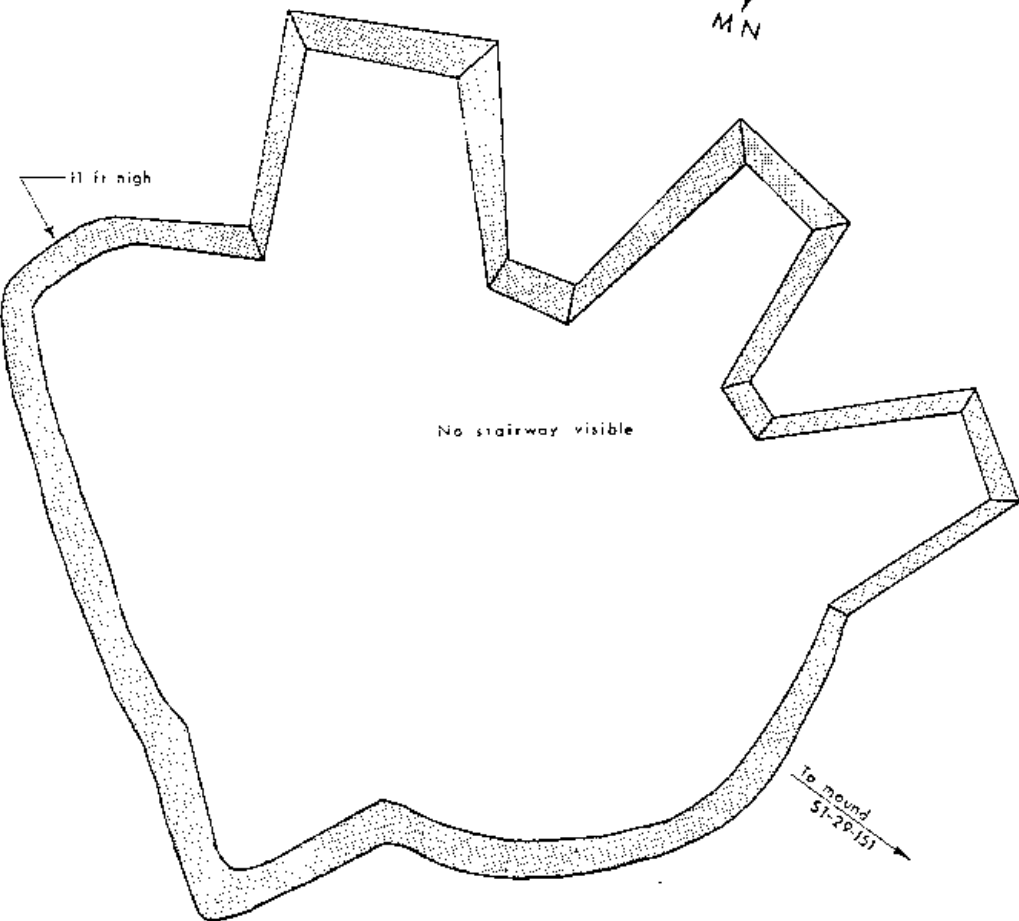
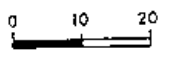
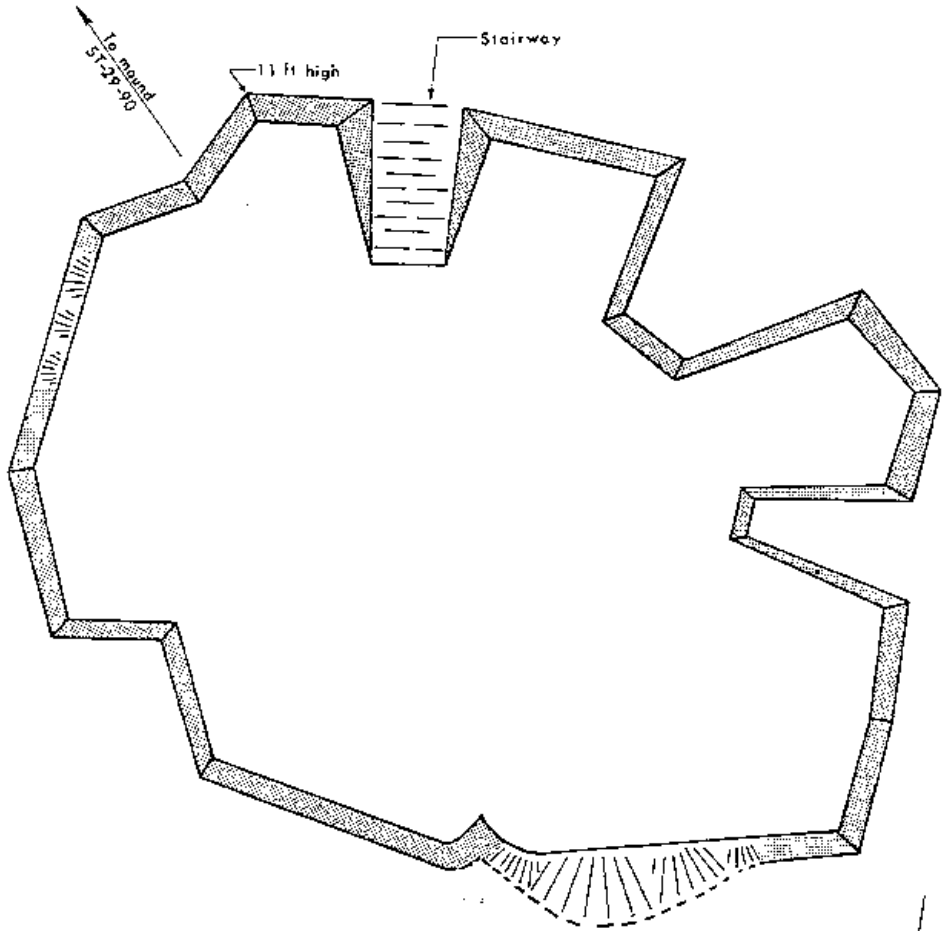


Fig 7



ST 29 151



Fig 8

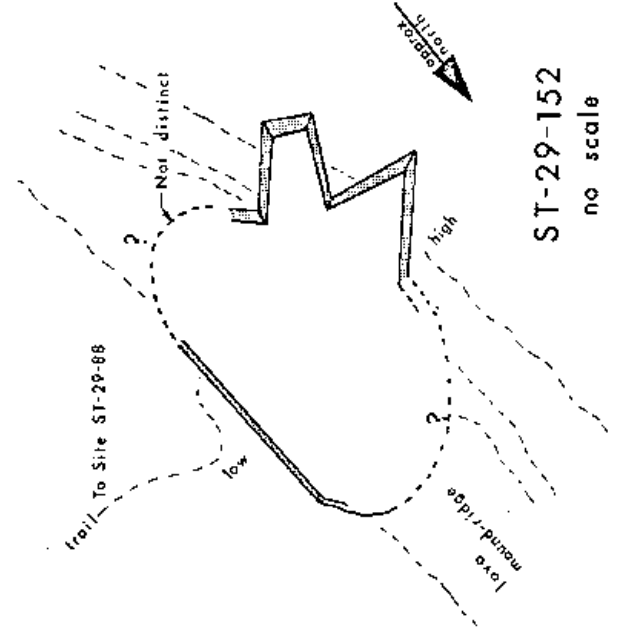


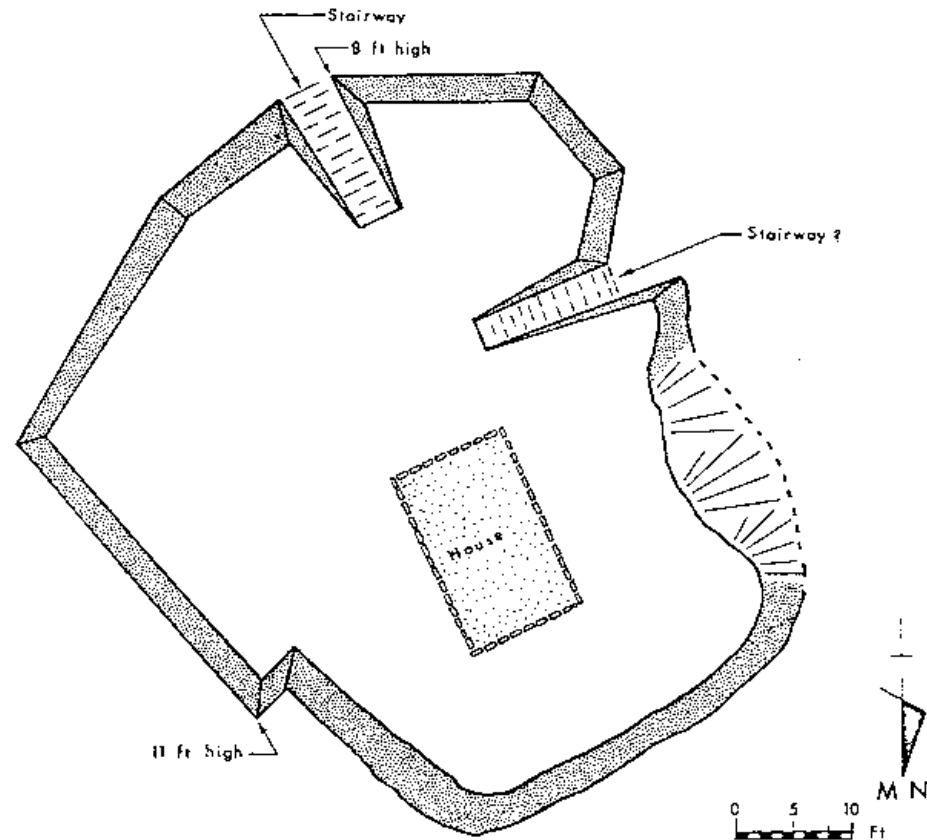
Fig 9

1.5 meters high and seemed to have been built on another raised ridge. Portions of the stairway and of the mound's face indicate that the construction was similar to that of -151, both being faced with slabs of broken pahoehoe and partly filled with chunks of smaller material, possibly clinkers.

Site ST-29-154. This star-shaped platform, was uncovered about 0.5 kilometers west of sites -90 and -151 and inland about 30 meters from the road that runs from the FAA antenna field to the village of 'Ili'ili (see figure 10). It is located on a natural hill, and, on its northern side, overlooks an extensive depression. This area probably once provided agricultural land for its Samoan owner. On top of the mound stands a modern fale o'o, once used by a later owner when he was working, away from his home in the village.

The mound was constructed of tuff and large slabs of pahoehoe, neatly laid out and used as facing. The interior of the platform seems to have been made of similar smaller chunks of tuff, pahoehoe, and a-a clinkers. The measurements are 18 by 17 meters and the height is nearly 4.2 meters at the highest point. There were two distinct indentations, both of which contained a stairway. Of the two, the one facing south was more distinctly outlined and in good condition, as were the entire south and east faces. However, the north and west faces were in crumbled condition, possibly due to poorer or less careful construction.

Another star-shaped platform was reported by a Bill Hart to be located in the general vicinity of the Tafuna area (see figure 11). Mr. Hart's description indicates that the platform was discovered on the trail running from the villages of Mapusaga and Paleniu to the farmland near the western most runway of the airport. It was said to have 8 spokes and 8 ramps leading to the top of the platform. The lowest side was 1.8 meters, while the highest side was approximately 6 meters in height. In the opinion of this author, the platform could be one previously described in this paper; since there is some doubt as to its actual location, dimensions and details, the platform will be noted, but not numbered.



ST-29-154

Unclassified Platforms

Site ST-29-155. This site was located in very dense forested between sites ST-29-89 and ST-29-152. The platform was entirely overgrown by a single banyan tree, the roots of which prevented the structure from completely eroding away. It was composed of rough blocks of weathered pahoehoe, and in its present condition was in the form of a 6 meter square, 1.5 meter in height. Like the other sites, it was built on the edge of a natural depression. Due to the weathered condition of the platform, it would be impossible to determine its original shape and dimensions.

Site ST-29-92. This site was searched for but never located because of the dense jungle and underbrush in which it was said to be found. It has been given a number, however, because of the insistence of reliable Samoan informants that it not only existed, but those who had seen it described it as being quite large.

Supporting Houses (Fale seu)

The author's first fieldwork in Samoa had as its base the ethnography of Samoa as recorded by Buck (Buck 1930). In Buck's study, he described the fale seu, supporting houses, as being structures associated with platform mounds used as pigeon-snaring-mounds. Buck (Buck 1930:534), presumably basing his comments on Samoan informants, stated that simple shelters, built on and around the mounds, were used by the men competing in the sport of snaring the wild pigeons. In order to be inconspicuous to the birds in flight, such shelters were constructed of green vines and were built anew each year. These makeshift structures would leave little or no evidence, as they were not made for permanency. The supporting shelters were four in number in some cases, and probably only one in others (see figure 12). They were placed

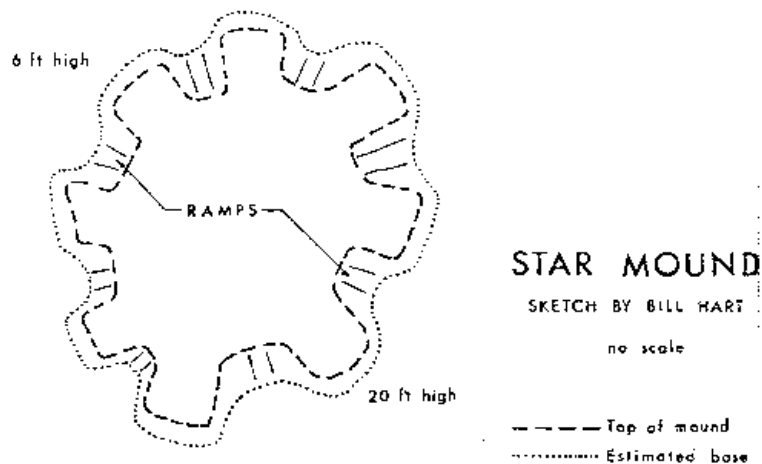


Fig 11

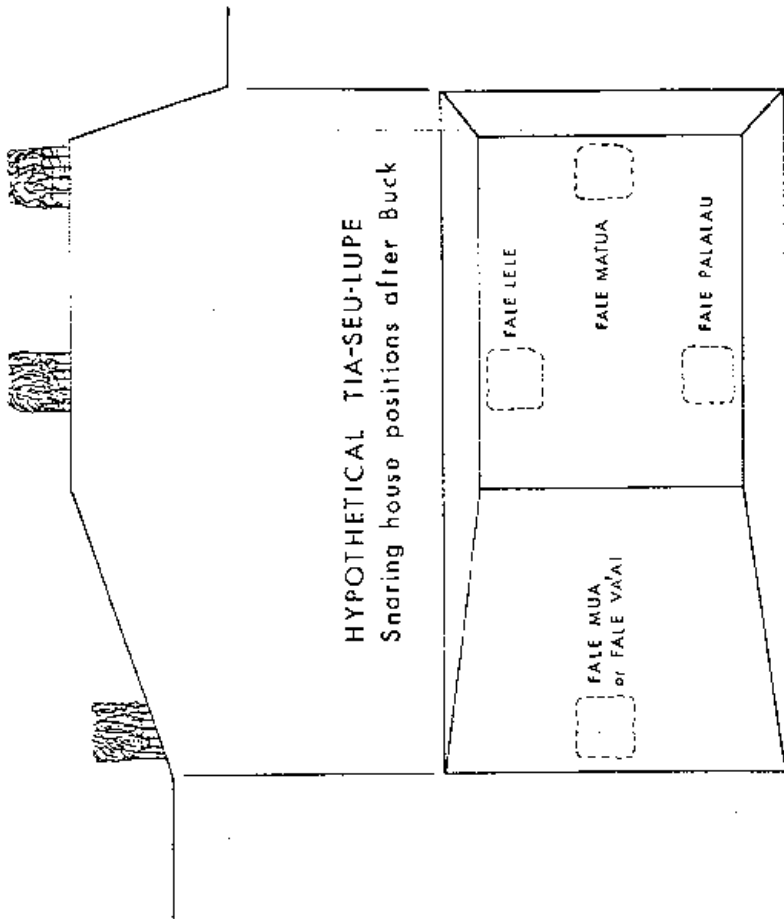


Fig 12.

in a set order. The fale mua (first house) or fale va'ai (lookout house) was located on the descending slope of the platform; the fale matua (principal house) was placed on the highest point on the mound; the fale lele (flying house) was built on the left of the mound, overlooking the downhill side of it; and the fale palaiu (meaning unknown) was built on the right side of the mound, looking the downslope on that side. Space was provided between the shelters in order to allow the fowler room enough to swing the net. The snared birds were kept in a rough stone cage enclosure.

The author did not, however, find any evidence of support houses on or around the platforms described for American Samoa. This, of course, does not preclude the fact that these structures may once have existed. The evidence, if it can be found, would be an important factor in determining the function of the site.

Buck also refers to an area set away from the platform in which the men supporting the activities could rest as well as prepare meals for the retinue of chiefs and supporters. The resting places, malologa, were as vital to the sport of snaring birds as were the platforms and supporting houses. One malologa was found by Buck some distance away from site ST-29-94, as indicated by the presence of ovens and cooking stones.

Summary and Conclusions

All of the platforms mounds found on Tutuila were located in forested areas; some were heavily overgrown while others were located in lightly forested or cultivated fields. Most were found on the tops of ridges, hills, slopes of mountains, or on the rugged lava plains. In the majority of cases, at least one face of each platform was built on the downslope of the elevation on which it was standing. Evidently one feature of the platform was its accrument of height above the terrain by artificial means, while another feature was its position overlooking an area of land, usually a grassy or low shrubbed plain.

Similarly Buist notes that the mounds found in Western Samoa were situated on cleared land, were usually isolated, and the majority stood on sloping ground (Buist in Green and Davidson 1969:39). Davidson notes that the star mounds were found dispersed in all types of terrain (Davidson MS). These platform mounds of Samoa are then all similar as far as their general locations are concerned.

The mounds of American Samoa were constructed of naturally shaped g-a clinkers, waterworn stones, broken slabs of weathered pahoehoe, tuff slabs, and earth. In all cases, the mounds were composed of materials which could be gathered locally from around the site area.

Similarly the mounds of Western Samoa were constructed of materials found at hand. Buist's classification of these mounds into soil and rock would infer usage of local materials in the construction.

Fourteen pigeon-snaring platforms (see table I) have been found or reported on Tutuila. Eleven, or 78%, were found in the Tafuna area, while only 3 were located in the Leone Valley area. No mounds were reported in any other locality on Tutuila, Aunu'u, or on the Manu'a islands, although their presence is not to be discounted until further surveys are made.

After the platform sites were plotted on a map (see figure I), a definite clustering of platforms by type or style, i.e. plan, became evident. All of the multi-sided mounds were located in the Leone Valley area. The oval-shaped platforms were located along the eastern coastal area of Tafuna and closer to the more mountainous country to the north. The star-shaped platforms were all found in the central plains area of Tafuna and within one kilometer of the coastline.

The mounds found in the Tafuna area were all attributed by local informants to the Tongan occupation of the islands, supposedly sometime during the 13th century A.D. No explanation of a similar nature was recorded for the mounds in the Leone region.

There is as yet no distributional correlation for the mounds of Western Samoa, although some sort of plan does seem to exist.

Site Listing

Multi-sided	Oval	Star-shaped	not determined
ST-29-91	ST-29-87	ST-29-90	ST-29-92
ST-29-94	ST-29-88	ST-29-151	ST-29-155
ST-29-95	ST-29-89	ST-29-152	
ST-29-96	ST-29-93	ST-29-154	
		X--Bill Harts site	

Table I

Buist states that the "soil mounds" usually occurred in groups of three or more, while the "small mounds" usually occurred in clusters in the same general area as that of the "large stone mounds" (Buist in Green and Davidson 1969:39). Scott in his survey noted that the "large mounds" were also found in isolation as well as in clusters (Scott in Green and Davidson 1969:72).

Various hypotheses have been made concerning the use of the platforms, the so called tia seu lupe, of Samoa. Nearly everyone working in Samoan prehistory refers to them for the sake of convenience as mounds or pigeon-snaring mounds (Buck 1930; Golson 1957; and Buist 1966, 1967). There has been speculation that they could otherwise have been used as: 1. house mounds, 2. community markers, 3. fortifications, 4. burial mounds, 5. ceremonial-religious structures, and 6. pigeon-snaring mounds. The latter two entries cannot be separated into two distinct functions and in the following analysis they will be discussed as overlapping in function.

Buist states that the "small mounds" may have been a type of house platform (Buist in Green and Davidson 1969:39), while Davidson states that the "...specialized mounds and the star-shaped forms do not appear to be house sites, at least not ordinary dwelling sites" (Davidson in Green and Davidson 1969:192). Their locations apart from the usual cluster of houses forming a village suggest that they were not house platforms. From inspection of the platform surfaces on Tutuila no indication of early house construction was observed by the author.

Davidson theorizes that these mounds may have been community markers indicative of perhaps earlier dispersed populations as opposed to the relatively nucleated populations of post-European times (Davidson MS). Similarly, Scott notes that the clustering of the "large earth mounds" are indicators of settlement areas (Scott in Green and Davidson 1969:71-72). The platform mounds of Tutuila were relatively remote from any population centers and the surrounding land did not reveal any scattering of domestic structures. However, the clustering of these mounds seems to infer, that they may indeed have been markers, not of populations or settlements, but of general territorial bounds, perhaps even areas of religious-ceremonial activities.

The idea that these could have been fortifications is very tempting. However, from observation of the land and from the location and distribution of the mounds, it seems that these structures protect no position and provide no barrier against an attacking force. These mounds, which vary considerably in dimensions and shape, are all small enough that they would be quickly surrounded, isolated, and neutralized. Their effectiveness as fortifications is much doubted in that they would have had need of a complex of ditches and walls to support them. To date none of these features has been found or reported to exist near the mounds.

The possibility that the platform mounds may have been burial mounds cannot be substantiated. Peters, who excavated a star-shaped mound on Savai'i did not find any evidence of burials. In my observation of the remains of sites ST-29-93 and -155, no evidence of any burial within them was noted.

In his journal of 1853, George Platt described the function of one of the mound types, the star-mound on Upolu (Platt 1853:52). Platt states that these mounds were used as platforms on which the bodies of the dead were laid and, too, as platforms on which the chief's could divine the future by catching pigeons. Platt does not discuss the individual corpses laid on the platform nor their status in society. Neither does he describe the ways in which the pigeons were used to divine the future. Platt's description of this structure type, however, definitely ascribes its function as being of a ceremonial-religious nature and one in which pigeon-snaring was a vital part of the ceremony.

The most common reply given by Samoan informants when asked about the use of the mounds was that they were tia or tia seu lupe, pigeon snaring mounds. Buck (Buck 1930:542) describes the mounds, the supporting houses, and the paraphernalia used in the chiefly sport of snaring pigeons. Churchward (Churchward 1887:139-141) notes that pigeon-snaring season was a time of great feasting and activity in the competitive sport. The Samoans insist that the mounds themselves are vital part of the equipment in the sport of snaring pigeons.

In the Tongan islands a similar sport of snaring pigeons from circular mounds was noted. The only difference between the Tongan and Samoan circular or oval mounds was that the Tongan mound had an exterior stairway and a depression or pit on the top of the platform in which the snarer hid. The similarity of oval or round platform mounds may indicate that the function of this plan type is, indeed, for snaring pigeons.

From Churchward's observation we can safely assume that in Western Samoa the sport of pigeon snaring continued up to the late 1850's. However, by this date Christianity may have driven the indigenous religious-ceremonial aspects out of the sport, thus manifesting only the superficial gross parts of the snaring activities.

The pigeon, lupe, played an important part in the religious-ceremonial activities of the Samoans. After the migrations from the Western Polynesian area to the island areas to the west the magical and probably divinatory nature of the pigeon was retained and perpetuated in these societies. Luomala discusses the role of Te Rupe in New Zealand, the Marquesas, the Tuamotu islands, and in Mangaia as associated with Maui the Polynesian demigod (Luomala 1949:153-154). The recurrent theme seems to be the transformation of Maui into a pigeon, who, in that form seeks some relative in the heavens or in the underworld. David Malo, the Hawaiian chronicler, described the role of Lolupe as a demigod who appeared in the form of a kite. Lolupe's special function was to search for the spirits of the dead and to bring them back for the priests' investigation. He was also part of the vital ceremonies at the death of a king, at which his job was to determine who among the leader's subjects spoke ill of him and thus caused the death of the king or chief, those responsible were consigned by Lolupe to their deaths (Malo 1951: 105-107). The similarities between the functions of Te Rupe and Lolupe and the description given by Platt are close enough that it can be assumed that there is a relationship here between the role of pigeon-snaring and the ceremonial-religious use of the platform mounds. However, the function of pigeon snaring cannot

be attributed to all the mound types described by Buist, but only to some of them, as some, can obviously not be pigeon snaring mounds e.g. "large soil mounds".

Only one platform mound has ever been completely excavated to this date. Peters excavated a star-shaped mound, SU-LU-53, on Savai'i and states that this form "...is undoubtedly late in the archaeological sequence," (Peters in Green and Davidson : 1969:221) although no dates were given or implied as a datum. The only description of any platform mound use comes from Platt, again describing the star-shaped mound. Therefore we can assume that the star-shaped mounds are the latest in the chronological sequence of platform types.

The position of the two remaining types, the oval and the multi-sided mounds of Tutuila, cannot thus far be definitely placed in any kind of archaeological sequence relative to the star-shaped mounds. But, the author hypothesizes that the oval shaped mounds are the earliest mound type, while the multi-sided probably overlaps the star-shaped and oval forms, with the star-shaped forms being the latest. The Tongan circular pigeon-snaring mounds are definitely related in form and function to the Samoan oval mounds, but, as there exists no archaeological data on them, we cannot assign any dates to them. Hopefully, excavations on the Tongan mounds will throw light on the dates and the relationship between them and those in Samoa.

The platform mounds of Tutuila were functional in the culture of the island. Although every platform was unique, they could still be categorized into three plan types. Each of these types was found generally clustered in three separate areas of Tutuila. The multi-sided mounds were found in mountainous area; the oval mounds were found on generally flat ground, while the star-shaped mounds were located on very rugged volcanic plains. The author suggests that each plan type may have belonged to a certain village or chief and that they may have varied in function, depending on their period of use. Subsequently there must have been an architect who knew how to construct these structures with a plan form in mind appropriate to the function of the site. We can further assume that the chief or village building these

structures could command enough economic resources to feed, house, and probably maintain the ceremonies throughout the construction and initiation. Therefore, we can also assume that strong village oriented economic, political, and religious powers were invested in the persons in power. The clustering of the mounds apart from the centers of population may indicate the separation of domestic and religious-ceremonial activities.

Archaeological investigations into these mounds plus further research into Samoan history and folklore may reveal significant data on the functions and positions of these structures in Samoa. With more surveys and more data on platform structures throughout Samoa, the assumptions, and hypotheses will alter. It is the aim of this paper to describe the platforms^{mounds} of Tutuila and to add toward the eventual synthesis of Samoan prehistory.

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