


THE TONGAN CREATION STORY


*There are an exhaustive amount of variations of the Tongan creation story, and each have strong support from various sources. All variations cover, for the most part, some version of the primordial origins, the first humans, creation of the Tongan Islands, the first rulers and some type of involvement from Maui. I make no claim as to what the “official” or “best” version of the story is but have instead taken components from several of the tales with the focus on ease of understanding for the students my class.

A LOVE STORY ABOUT A PIECE OF SEAWEED AND SEA MUD



In the beginning there was the endless primordial sea, Vahanoa and the world of spirits, Pulotu. From this sea, Limu (seaweed) and Kele (sea mud/sediment) would rise. Together they would produce a child who was a rock called Touia‘o Futuna.

OUR MOTHER WAS A ROCK... SERIOUSLY




Touia‘o Futuna would produce three sets of twins. (The twins are differ in name and actual person depending on what creation story you are reading). From these twins would come the three main gods of creation Tangaloa, Hikule‘o and Maui.

Tangaloa would take the sky, Hikule‘o took as his portion Pulotu (The Underworld) and Maui decided to seek adventures on the Earth.

SOME ISLANDS AND TANGALOAS, LOTS AND LOTS OF TANGALOAS


Tangaloa had several sons in the sky: Tangaloa Tamapo‘uli ‘Alamafoa, Tangaloa ‘Eitumatupu‘a, Tangaloa ‘Atulongolongo and Tangaloa Tufunga.



Old Tangaloa grew tired of looking down from the sky and seeing nothing but sea, so he sent down Tangaloa ‘Atulongolongo in the form of a plover to see if he could find land. All Tangaloa ‘Atulongolongo could find was a reef below the water, where ‘Ata is now. So old Tangaloa told Tangaloa Tufunga to throw down into the sea the chips from the wood carving on which he was working. Tangaloa Tufunga continued to do this for a long time, and on two occasion Tangaloa ‘Atulongolongo flew down in the form of a plover to see if anything had happened, but found nothing.


On the third occasion, however, he found that the chips had formed an island. This was ‘Eua. Later, Tangaloa Tufunga threw down more chips to form the islands of Kao and Tofua.

MAUI, A MAGICAL HOOK AND SOME MORE ISLANDS




Tongatapu and most of the other islands were the work of Maui. One day Maui visited Manuka and there an old man, Tonga Fusifonua, gave him a fish-hook. Maui went fishing with this hook, but when he tried to pull in his line he found it was caught. He exerted all his strength and succeeded in hauling the line in, to find that he had dragged up Tongatapu from the bottom of the sea. Maui continued fishing with this wonderful hook and so pulled up from the deeps the rest of the islands of Tonga, and some of those of Fiji and Samoa as well.

MAGGOTS, MAUI, A TANGALOA AND THE FIRST HUMANS



One day Tangaloa 'Atulonglono visited 'Ata in the form of a plover and dropped a seed from the beak upon the island. The next time he visited 'Ata he found that the seed had grown into a creeper that covered the island. He pecked at the root of this creeper until it split in two. Then he returned to the sky. A few days later he returned to find that the root had rotted and a fat, juicy maggot was curled up in it. He pecked the maggot in two. From the top section a man was formed called Kohai. The bottom section also turned into a man called Koau. Then the plover felt a morsel left on his beak; he shook it off and it turned into a man called Momo. Kohai, Koau and Momo were the first men in Tonga. Maui brought them wives from Pulotu and they became the ancestors of the Tonga people.

WE ALMOST FORGOT ABOUT A KING...YES IT INVOLVES A TANGALOA



One day Tangaloa (The Original, Tangaloa OG or Tangaloa Classic) descended to Earth and met a mortal woman Va'epopua. Together they would conceive a son named, 'Aho'eitu. Since he was created from a human and not maggots, he who would become Tonga's first true human ruler establishing the royal and divine lineage of Tu'i Tonga.