
Reshaping of Paradise: Wilhelm Solf's City Renewal in Apia, Samoa

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Abstract

During its rule the German Colonial administration in Samoa introduced significant changes to the urban fabric of Apia, its capital. One particular photograph of Apia's beachfront, dated "c. 1914", brings to mind that this beachfront might be showing a German or Swiss lakeside town. The park-like, cleared strip of land parallel to the shoreline, the clock tower and the buildings that make up the street frontage: viewed through the black-and white obscurity of the photograph, all these elements create a striking resemblance to small European lakeside towns in the early 20th century. Paradoxically, just the Samoans in the picture seem to be out of place.

This paper investigates the activities of town redevelopment in Apia, predominantly under the German administration (1900-14). It looks at the plans and motivations and compares them with contemporary European methods of city renewal, under aspects like artistic principles in town planning in accordance with romantic ideas about the aspect of towns, the clearing of hygienically problematic areas, and hygiene used as a pretext for getting rid of unwanted parts of the population to avoid a mixing of different parts of the population. Also, the paper aims at evaluating the urban development against German notions of Samoa as "Paradise" and as to be protected from any foreign influence.

Setting

There is a particular photograph of Apia, Samoa, dated "c. 1914", which captures our interest:

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Figure 1. Beach front in Apia, Samoa, ca. 1923.
(Alexander Turnbull Library, F 22290 1/2)

In the centre a large park-like Green is visible. An embankment to its left marks the boundary to the water, at its end a clock tower keeps watch. To the right stand aligned a number of substantial two-storey buildings, worthy of a small town. In the background the spire of a small church. And, in the foreground, a number of dark-skinned people look up into the camera – the photo having been taken from a point some meters above the ground. The calm setting breathes the peaceful air of a small Swiss or German lakeside-town: With the house shapes, the Green and the tower, this could almost be Lindau at Lake Constance or a similar town. But this is not Europe, it is Samoa – possibly around 1923. And the Samoans in the foreground paradoxically seem out of place in their own town.

After many years of political tug-of-war between the three forces involved – Great Britain, the United States of America and Germany – the German Reich took over Samoa as its “Protection Territory” (*Schutzgebiet*), by which the Germans meant “colony”, in 1900, with Dr Wilhelm Solf as Governor.¹ The interests of the copra trading company D.H.&P.G., often referred to as “the firm” or “the German firm”, had finally instigated Germany’s claiming of Samoa as a colony.² Germans had been in Samoa since the middle of the nineteenth

century, mainly as traders in connection with the company of Hamburg merchant Johann Cesar Godeffroy, the predecessor of the DHPG. August Unshelm, trade agent of Godeffroy, had arrived in Apia in 1857. The firm bought about 25.000 acres of land in Samoa and experimented with planting coffee, pineapple and cotton. Another product much sought-after in Europe was coconut oil, but the transport of the oil was too complicated and expensive to be successful. In 1867 Unshelm's successor, Theodor Weber – who later became German consul in Apia – invented a procedure to dry the oil into copra, which made it ready to be shipped much more easily. In 1870 Godeffroy's firm was in charge of 70% of the South Seas trade.³ Already in the 1870s the German community in Samoa had grown to a considerable size – enough to turn “Samoa” into an almost magical word in Germany; “its increasingly frequent naming in German newspapers and magazines filled the imagination of most Germans with associations like ‘dreamlike’, ‘heavenly’, ‘like paradise’, and, since one might not be able to get there oneself, with almost drug-like imperial yearnings.”⁴ Hermann Joseph Hiery, scholar in German colonial history, has described this time as “proto-imperial” phase and has pointed out how much the Imperial Navy initiated political actions for the German Reich in the South Pacific, often tolerated by Bismarck, but also at times far beyond his official line of politics.⁵

In 1900, Apia was still a small village. Samoa resident Robert Louis Stevenson had given a lively description of Apia in 1892 (written for children), which was still valid eight years later:

There is only one harbour where ships can come, even that is very wild and dangerous [...]. All round the harbour the town is strung out, it is nothing but wood houses, only there are some churches built of stone, not very large, but the people have never seen such fine buildings. Almost all the houses are of one story. Away at one end lives the king of the country. His palace has a thatched roof which stands upon posts; it has no walls, but when it blows and rains, they have Venetian blinds which they let down between the posts and make it very snug.⁶

Today's Apia has incorporated a number of villages into a town, but around 1900 it consisted of no more than some twenty-odd buildings. But the surrounding villages already belonged to the "Municipal district of Apia". This included places called Mulinu'u, Sogi, Savalalo, Matafele, Apia itself, and Matautu: villages, strung on a single road – the Main Street (Hauptstraße) – with a number of important roads (Fugalei, Vaea, Ifi-Ifi, Falealili) departing into the mainland, more or less directly south.



Figure 2. Municipal District of Apia (1900).
(Archives NZ, SEP 66)

The *Cyclopedia of Samoa, Tonga etc.* of 1907 pointed out the particularity of the place:

And surely there was never a spot on the face of the globe which in proportion to its population had so many nationalities represented as Apia, the capital of Samoa. Germans, Britishers, Americans, Frenchmen, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Chinese are all represented. But the white population is as yet very small, and Apia itself, though a thriving and expanding little township, is only in its infancy.⁷

The census of 1905 counted some 380 whites in Samoa, with Samoans at a number of about 33,000. Most of the foreigners lived in Apia.⁸

State of knowledge, sources and methods

Despite its small size, Samoa has had such a prominent appearance on the stage of colonial politics that it seems of particular interest to know more about its architectural development. Was there a particular German influence in the shaping of Apia? The introductory photograph seems to hint at this. But is this correct? What developments took place to make Apia look like a European lake-side town on this particular photograph? Is it possible to read and explain the reshaping of Apia after 1900 in terms of contemporary German and European city renewal – are those categories applicable?

The peculiar political history of Samoa has become known to a wider audience through Albert Wendt's novels and the writings by Robert Louis Stevenson, in this context particularly his political pamphlet of 1892, *A Footnote to History*.⁹ These writings are accompanied by more specialised political analysis or less known accounts of settlers, involved in the complicated and highly political struggle between the three powers Germany, Great Britain and the United States of America.¹⁰

Knowledge about colonial building activity in Samoa, on the other hand, is fragmentary. Some valuable information on buildings is to be found in the *Cyclopedia of Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti and the Cook Islands* of 1907, republished in 1983. The major contribution to scholarly knowledge in this field to date remains Gary Pringle's *Heritage Assessment. Apia, Western Samoa* of 1989.¹¹ Pringle traces building activity in Apia through more than a hundred years. His text constitutes the first available survey of architecture in Samoa;¹² it nevertheless still leaves many questions unanswered. This general scarceness of information reinforces the need for further investigation of primary sources which are photographs, maps, drawings and files, with a majority of the files from the German Colonial Government.¹³ An important source is the bilingual newspaper of Samoa, *Samoanische Zeitung*, 1900–14, published fortnightly, later weekly, in German and English by Emil Lübke between 1900–1914.¹⁴

The town redevelopment

Shortly after the Germans had taken over power in Apia, the Colonial Government started a process which would take them more than a decade – and which they were not able to finish due to the beginning of the First World War: the reshaping of the township of Apia. The first indication of this may be an article in the *Samoanische Zeitung* of 6 July 1901, in which the Governor, Dr Wilhelm Solf, introduced a plan for major redevelopments:

Tiger Bay. In execution of resolution No. 10 of the previous meeting the Governor presents a plan for the improvement of the Tiger Bay and for the raising of the district of Matafele. The Governor explains that he at first intends to broaden the Mulivai alley (*Mulivai-Gasse*) which runs parallel to the Beach Road (*Strandstraße*) to turn it into a main street that would almost extend up to the Cathedral in this new width.¹⁵

To achieve this aim detailed negotiations with – European – land owners, including the DHPG and the Catholic mission, were necessary. To be able to follow the changes of land-ownership and the dismantling and erection (or re-erection) of buildings in detail, one would need to draw maps of Apia for almost every single year of the German Colonial administration. The whole process of changing land-ownership, mostly amongst the Europeans, is confusing, since it seems to have taken place with astonishing ease, the same ease with which the colonists also dismantled buildings, in order to use – highly valuable – building material for other buildings. It seems that very few Samoans were involved in this process.¹⁶

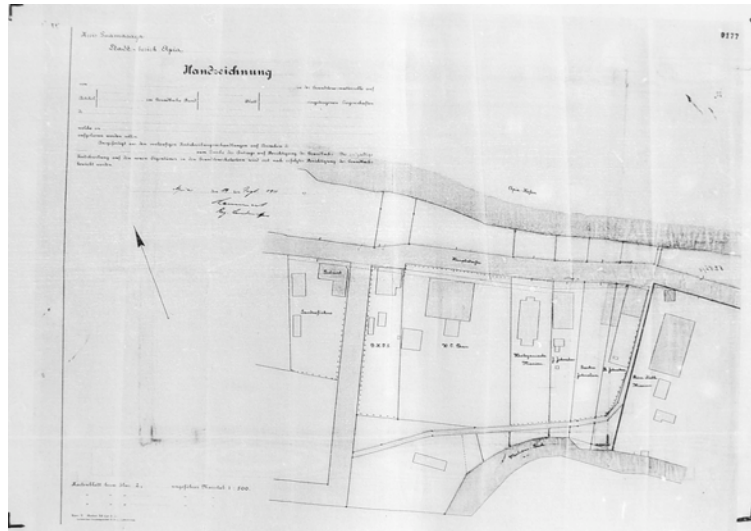


Figure 3. Beach front in Apia, Samoa.
Main Street/Vaea Street intersection, 1911.
(Archives NZ, AGCA 6051-401, 177)

The aim behind these relocations seems to have been the development of a “proper” town – wider and more regular streets being part of it: The Main Street was too irregular and not wide enough, also the Vaea Street was seen as too narrow.¹⁷ Therefore, buildings had to be shifted and re-aligned. This is indeed remarkable: that a street should have more stamina, so to speak, than a building.

The council meeting of 1901 also brought up Solf's plan to erect a Market Hall on these newly established premises, probably directly on the beach side of the Main Street. Mr. Carruthers¹⁸, a long-standing member of the Council, wished to go further and suggested driving out all Samoans from the so-called Tiger Bay area in Matafele. He wanted to dedicate the newly gained area to a park.¹⁹ In this same meeting, Governor Solf also demanded a broad path to be constructed parallel to the Mulivai Street, to which the Samoans should shift their huts, which, at present were standing “disorderly and all over the place”.²⁰ This follows particular ideas of order, which will be discussed below. Most of these actions can be traced in the governmental files over the following ten years. By 1914 elements of the proposal had been achieved but not finished. Nevertheless, this particular initiative does not reveal

anything about the beach front. The idea of clearing the beach front of buildings seems to have been embedded in regulations since the 1880s,²¹ but it is not until 1907, after Solf had come back from a long stay in Berlin, that governmental activity in this regard can be traced:

It will surely fill everyone with satisfaction that the Government has finally tackled the clearing of the beachside of our Main Street. The demolition of the former government building made further progress during the past week, and we hear that the taking down of the building next to the Post office has been ordered to happen before the end of May. Apart from the sanitary advantages, the townscape will gain considerably.²²

From the maps and photographs, from the files and other documents, it becomes clear that this clearing of the beach front took part in two distinctly separate areas. This is mainly because in two areas, the Main Road was built distant enough from the water to allow buildings to be erected on the sites in between: these are in Matafele and in Apia, left and right of the mound of the Mulivai creek, with the Catholic Cathedral positioned in the middle between them, right next to the bridge across the river. The area with more interest for this paper is the one in Matafele, since this is where the introductory photograph was taken – and where the main beautifications (by the Germans and later the New Zealand administration) were to take place in addition to simply clearing the beach of buildings. The local newspaper named the changes to take place:

A new, bigger Post office building, fulfilling the growing demands, is about to be erected, where the old police station of the fita-fita was. The beachside of the road will be cleared completely. The demolition of the old Government building has already been taken up. After that the old Post office will be demolished. The copra-shed of Zuckschwerdt & Voigt has already been taken down, as well as the beach shed of trader Mr Fabricius. It has been said that the so-called Tivoli store will also disappear. On this occasion we would like to draw the police's attention to the dilapidated state of repair of the building in Matafele, which houses the

Cosmopolitan Restaurant of the Japanese Mr Kobayashi. [...] We hope that this eyesore will as well be demolished.²³

This enumeration shows with what ease a considerable number of buildings were relocated, dismantled, or partly re-used. It gives the impression of a town very much in flux, and it raises the question what the gains of these developments were.

Not for all the land ownership changes during this redevelopment do land register maps exist. But the two maps below illustrate in an exemplary way some of the changes of proprietorship of the sites in Matafele, in 1908 and 1913. The most prominent fact is that the Government took over more and more of the private land – to get access to the beach, but also to gain bigger, coherent sites.

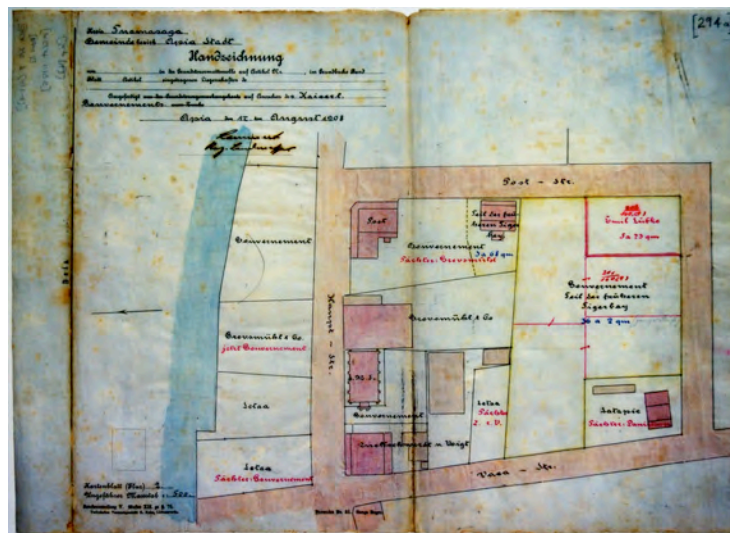


Figure 4. Changes of Proprietorship, Matafele between Vaea Street and Post Street, Apia, 1908.
(Archives NZ, SEP 143 AGCA 185)

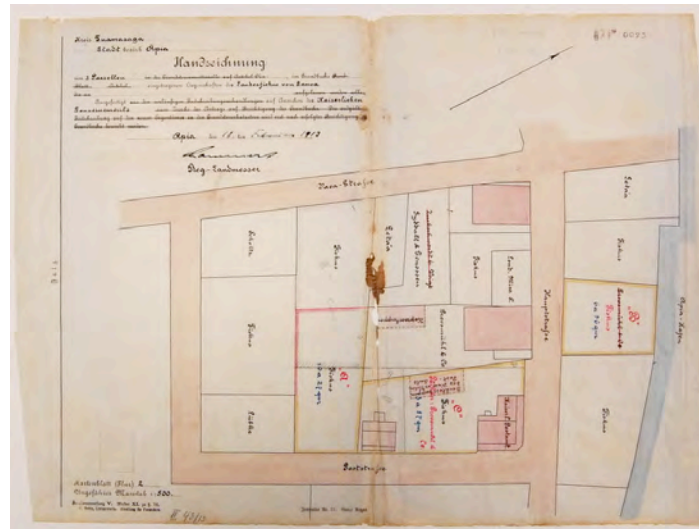


Figure 5. Changes of Proprietorship, Matafele between Vaea Street and Post Street, Apia, 1913. (Archives NZ, SEP 147)

One particular building to be mentioned here is the Central Hotel, since it forms the most German looking building on the introductory photo. It is reported to have burnt down in 1914. “Its replacement building [...] aroused considerable interest, being unusual for the tropics having a steep main gable and smaller perpendicular roof gables and dormer windows. Its design was attributed to Herr Stuenzner”,²⁴ who was a local builder, advertising himself as architect in the local newspaper.²⁵

Fortunately, the administration was working thoroughly enough so that material is handed down to us which shows and explains some of the changes that took place. They are fragmentary, but give an impression of the procedures. To find explanations for the reasons behind these actions is more difficult (unless one assumes that no deeper meaning or ideology was to be found behind these undertakings). Why all this expenditure, all the work and money involved, to clear the beach front? What are the main reasons? Three main areas are worthy of consideration since they were contemporary issues in Europe, especially in Germany: hygiene of the body, separation of unwanted parts of the population, and improvements of the aesthetic aspect of towns. One of the important reasons to clear the

beach front from buildings is one of simple functionality: since the climate in Samoa is hot and humid, the gentle breeze from the sea is necessary for general wellbeing and for the preservation of buildings which would deteriorate quickly without. For hundreds of years, the open structure of the Samoan *fale* had provided an adequate response to the climatic conditions of the islands,²⁶ but the imported colonial architecture did not sufficiently succeed to do so. The colonists began to realize that they were not able to build as if they were in a cool and dry climate. Are there any more ideological reasons manifest?

Reasons:

1. Hygiene

The driving out of Samoans from the inner town was repeatedly argued for in hygienic terms: not so much racial hygiene, although this may well have played a background role. But sanitary conditions of housing were argued to be a major concern. This topic comes up in the aforementioned Government Council meeting of 1901. Mr. Carruthers, local barrister and member of the council, thanked the Government for the planned improvement of the so-called Tiger Bay, which was wished for by all its inhabitants of Matafele, and suggested that the Government acquire all of the properties in the Tiger Bay – if necessary through a process of expropriation. He saw sufficient grounds of regulatory and sanitary nature to instigate such a process. He also mentioned an older municipal bylaw regarding the erection of Samoan *fale* near houses of colonists which could be used for expropriation if so be need. His main argument was “the fact that the natives due to the lack of privies close to their homes dirty parts of the beach near the Tiger Bay”²⁷ which, as he asserted, endangered the good health of the white people. He suggested the clearance of the whole Tiger Bay from Samoans and, instead of erecting the market hall in this area, as Solf had intended, to use the free space for a public square (Schmuck- und Erholungsplatz) for the colonists.²⁸

Carruther's accusation that the Samoans were dirtying the beach needs to be evaluated carefully. This proves difficult because two of the – colonial – sources available seem to contradict each other. What indeed were the hygienic practices in Samoa at the time?

Newton Alan Rowe, a New Zealand official dismissed from his position in Samoa because of his favouring of the Mau movement, described the hygienic practices of Samoans in 1930:

The Samoan is regular in his personal habits, and it is his custom, where he lives by the coast, to go to the beach at day-break each morning and deposit his faeces below high-water mark. When the tide is full he will wade out into the sea. With those villages inland or atop of cliffs, he scales the pig-fence at the back of the village and goes off into the bush. This state of affairs is possibly not ideal – and where there is excessive feasting there will even be irregularities – but it is difficult, apart from the building of communal latrines by the Government, to see how to effect any satisfactory improvement.²⁹

Rowe heaped scorn over the New Zealand administration's decree to erect privies along the beaches, describing them as "crude, and for the most part useless, privies, constructed of all sorts of junk, such as pieces of old soap-boxes"³⁰. These seem to have come up as a result of the criticized decree, thus, one should assume, after 1920. How then is it possible that Otto Riedel, the later manager of the DHPG in Samoa, described to have seen similar privies upon his arrival in Apia in 1893?

This did not look like a town. Rather like a somewhat improvised seaside resort. I felt encouraged in this impression by small cabins built over the water. I took them for cabins for changing. A bystander knowledgeable of local customs destroyed this illusion by explaining that they were indeed used for cleanliness, but that it was less than recommendable to swim close to them, since the tides did not always fulfil the expectations of taking care of hygiene. Sewerage and water pipes were not available yet.³¹

At this stage, the apparent contradiction cannot be resolved. Thus the argument needs to limit itself to stating that there was a concern amongst the Europeans that the Samoans did not live up to their expectations of hygienic standards. This can be understood in light of the

just recent progress in the understanding of hygiene and the introduction of hygienic practices: the “primitive” behaviour of the Samoans may have reminded the Europeans of their own fragile development. Sewage systems had been introduced in European cities from ca. 1860 onwards, but only recently had detailed knowledge about the danger of impure water and an understanding of the chemical reaction of faeces developed. Even educated hygienists had, for a long time, insisted that filth had therapeutic qualities, so French Parent-Duchâtelet in 1852: “In his view, they explain the good health of gut-dressers and sewer men”³². French scholar Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie explains:

As far as cholera and, particularly, typhoid, were concerned, the influence of Pasteur that began to be felt after 1890 sparked off a real debate on the pollution of water by microbes. Herein lies the radical change. Since Lavoisier, the old mythology of water had been called into question; nevertheless, the classic distinction between stagnant water and running water still persisted, with the latter being considered healthier. Under Pasteur’s influence, ... the notion of bacteriologically pure water became fundamental, at the same time as a new obsession with pure water (this time ‘scientifically’ based) was spreading in certain quarters, with people constantly washing their hands and refusing to drink water unless it had been filtered or boiled.³³

In 1881, microbiologist Robert Koch had found a simple way to research pathogenic microorganisms. Koch’s so-called *Plattenverfahren* (plate procedure) became the cornerstone of bacteriological research and the world-wide fighting of epidemics. Around this time, Pasteur, Koch and many other chemists, doctors and biologists made enormous process in the discoveries of epidemics and their possible treatment.³⁴ This sketch indicates that Carruthers may have correctly pointed to the health risks underlying unhygienic conditions, but he could have instigated more hygienic facilities or practices. Instead, he simply suggested expelling the Samoan inhabitants from the centre of Apia, a suggestion that the council followed. Did it not come to mind that an improvement of hygienic conditions could have improved lives of the Samoans in general? This is the more peculiar since the Germans sent a number of

medical expeditions to the South Pacific, with famous medical practitioners like Robert Koch, who not simply researched epidemics and endemic diseases, but also cured people in great numbers.³⁵

But it also needs to be remembered that the driving out of a part of the population, of course, is not unique to Samoa, indeed close to European city planning in the 19th and 20th century where repeatedly the poorer population has been driven out of redeveloped areas: Much of the reorganization of the major cities, no matter if Paris in the 1850s (by Haussmann), or Berlin in the early 1900s, deplorable hygienic conditions of the poor inner city population have been used as reasons or pretexts to remove people altogether, be they workers, Jews or here – Samoans. It is therefore not surprising that amongst the many photographs of Apia, there is only one at hand which shows the interspersion of Colonial buildings with Samoan fale.



Figure 6. (Turnbull Library, PAGII-3799-10, Apia 1902)

Can segregation be understood as a clear political aim of the German Colonial Administration or did it just happen “by chance”? For this to be verified, another aspect needs to be investigated.

2. Ideology of racial superiority?

As the reports of Government Council meetings have shown, it would be wrong to assume that Governor Solf had been the only one to take initiative towards the re-shaping of Apia. It was primarily Carruthers who strongly argued for the forced removal of Samoans from the town. It is even arguable whether Solf was interested in matters of town-planning at all: in his private papers, there is hardly any mention of architecture or questions of urban planning.³⁶ Nevertheless, since it was the Governor who had to approve such an extensive plan, and since the Germans believed they would remain in power for a long time, it makes perfect sense to assume that indeed he had an interest in Apia's development – and therefore to look for indications of his own position in terms of the race-relationship between Samoans and Germans/Europeans. About this, Solf wrote: "I grant my opponents that in my plans for the development of Samoa the natives play a totally different role than those settlers wish who see the Samoa Islands as *corpus vile* for their intentions of earning and prey."³⁷ In most of the literature, Solf is recognized as a very able diplomat and a reasonable Governor.³⁸ Also Malama Meleisea who investigates Samoan history from the Samoan perspective, asserts:

It has been suggested Governor Solf was a man ahead of his time, who ruled Samoans fairly and wisely. In comparison with the Governors of other colonies during the period, this claim is probably true. ... Solf protected Samoan land rights, prevented Samoans from being forced to labour on plantations, restricted white settlement of Samoa, and gave the country a period of peace and prosperity.... Indeed, in 1923, when Samoan leaders were becoming dissatisfied with the New Zealand Administration, a telegram was sent to Japan, requesting to him to return as Governor once more.³⁹

Nevertheless, Meleisea is very critical of one of the ideologies of Solf which may be crucial in answering our present question.

Governor Solf was opposed to intermarriage between 'afakasi [part-Samoans] and Samoans from the beginnings of his administration, and this attitude was to persist among colonial officials until the 1950s. His racial views were characteristic of the time, even for a man of his culture and education. Culture was perceived as evidence of the evolutionary attainment of a race or indeed a class. ... Despite Solf's professed admiration for the Samoans – he still regarded them as inferior and as possessing inherently different characteristics from Europeans. Furthermore, he had a fairly low opinion of the Europeans who wanted to settle in Samoa; they were, he believed, generally persons of low status in their home lands who he felt would give themselves airs and try to exploit the Samoans.⁴⁰

More than many of his contemporaries did, Solf certainly appreciated the Samoans in their manners and attitudes, but he did not intend to mix races and to make Samoans into Europeans. Therefore he may have been inclined to keep the whites clearly segregated from the Samoans, an assumption which is reinforced by the fact that the Germans saw the Samoans as a race which had to be protected. Well-known contemporary ethnologists Augustin Krämer and his wife, Elisabeth Krämer-Bannow, even argued for protecting of the Samoans almost in a “nature protection area” to isolate the Samoans from negative European influences – an attitude which on one hand respects the characteristics of a culture, but on the other hand denies it the right of progress.⁴¹

3. City Beautiful: artistic principles versus alignment

A different aspect of the development of Apia clearly was a German interest in the beautification of the township. It becomes obvious however that it was not the Governor who drove this development but rather an association of citizens: The *Verkehrsverein* – a club for beautification and tourism, founded in 1907 – may help to understand some motifs: they did what their counterparts in Germany, which sprang up around the turn of the century, would have done. They asked for a pleasant environment – a public park, benches, a promenade, shady trees, a bandstand, and a clock tower which symbolizes the public wealth and pride in

their little township. In February 1909, the *Verkehrsverein* of Apia decided to erect a bandstand in conjunction with a town clock. Both are elements of the beautification – and maybe of searching for some kind of culture? Both were to be physically separated later on, but it is interesting to note that here they are mentioned in one breath: “The plan to erect a bandstand in conjunction with a town clock has been welcomed enthusiastically, and the matter has been transferred to a committee for drawings and an estimate.”⁴² In the same meeting it is reported that the planting of shady trees had been a full success since these trees had already begun to shoot out. A little later in the year, July 1909, the next general meeting of the *Verkehrsverein* brought following declaration: “that the committee see it as their main task to build the bandstand as soon as feasible.” Architect Albert Schaafhausen, as a member of the *Verein*, had directly been asked to convey a design for the bandstand. This was shown in the meeting and a second design ordered from Schaafhausen.⁴³ They were in good faith to be able to collect enough money for it. Governor Solf apparently had consented to the bandstand being built opposite the church, between the company buildings of merchants Zuckschwerdt & Voigt and Grevsmuehl & Co.⁴⁴ It is worth mentioning these elements of rather “street furniture” than “serious” buildings since they show the longing for a Europeanised or somewhat cultivated hometown to show people’s pride; and, on the level of visual experience, the clock tower and the free promenade with trees together with the lined up buildings in the background are the three strong elements in the image that remind of a small European town.

With his *City-Planning according to Artistic Principles* of 1889, the well-known Viennese architect Camillo Sitte had laid a cornerstone to the appreciation of city-planning as an artistic activity, something that had not been recognized in the many town extensions of the late 19th century. He and his followers started a whole movement, first and foremost in the German-speaking countries, but quickly spreading around all Europe, to consider design a necessary part of the extension of towns and cities. By many critics, Sitte has been understood as a romantic medievalist, since he took many of his models from medieval cities. He did favour the picturesque. But, as George Collins and Christiane Crasemann-Collins were able to show, he was more interested in underlying principles of beauty in town

planning. His major concern – along with his followers – was to act against ‘soulless’ town-extensions, against alignments and for beautiful vistas.⁴⁵

Where does Apia fit into this picture? In asking what motivations there were behind this major reshaping of an already existing coastline, we should see that hygiene will only have played one part in this: and, as the contemporary sources, especially the *Samoanische Zeitung*, witness, the *Verkehrsverein* played a major role in pushing for the aspect of beauty. Also, the documents suggest that in 1914, the Government was about to install or enforce a bylaw on alignment, and it also seems that they attached significance to the ‘proper’ alignment of houses in the town. There were complaints in the local newspaper and in Government files about “dangerous corners”.⁴⁶ The Samoans of course did not ‘properly’ align their buildings, and, as mentioned above, were criticized for the disorderly arrangement of their homes.⁴⁷ This seems to have been a common idea around 1900. But Sitte could have provided the town council with arguments *for* the ‘improper’ and ‘disorderly’ placement through his research of medieval European towns, and Paul Schultze-Naumburg, one of Sitte’s followers, said in 1906: “But this wonderful aim [of making the small town look like a city] is only achievable through new alignments. Since as long as lines are lively, the rows of houses can never be nicely arranged like a front of soldiers.”⁴⁸ To get back to Sitte: Knowing well enough that an appreciation of art as an end in itself, “as perhaps the highest aspiration of our cultural endeavours and of human activities in general”, was not a universal given, he suggested the more mundane, but nevertheless important, effects of artistic consideration. Thus, he pointed out that

since the arts also possess a social and economic significance, it might be that even hardheaded city officials will eventually discover that it would not be so bad for once to invest some sums in the artistry of town layouts in hopes of reaping civic sentiment, local pride, and, perhaps, more tourism.⁴⁹

Conclusion

If until 1900, the town had more or less consisted of one street – *the* Main Street, with buildings on both sides, the new development saw the extension into the land: a new, parallel street was built behind the Main Street, and, the beach front was one by one cleared of buildings. This reshaped the town significantly. All this included the driving out of Samoan inhabitants from some of the central areas of Apia, along with major expropriations, land sales, demolitions and relocations of many buildings, and the erection of new ones. The German administration started the process of ordering and reshaping Apia, but they did not manage to finish it. This was left to the time after the First World War, when, in the 1920s, the New Zealand administration in parts finished what had been planned and begun before 1914: the clearing of the beach front and its transformation into a sea-promenade that – ironically – made it look like a German lake-side town.

Lorry-loads of rocks and coral had been dumped down all along the Beach, and each Saturday afternoon white men laboured in their shirt-sleeves before an audience of Chinese, black-boys (Melanesians), and Samoans, 'beautifying the waterfront' When then I returned to Apia again shortly before Christmas, 1923, and stayed at the Central Hotel, these labours ... had now born fruit: to be seen immediately across the road. There was a very solid circle of white coral, near the Clock Tower, that seared one's eyes to look at; hideously angular paths, some of which led nowhere; and a general orderly chaos, quite beyond written conception.⁵⁰

As indicated before, Samoa seems to have served as an incarnation of paradise for the Germans. Therefore, one could assume, did researchers, politicians and administrations alike not want to alter the behaviour of the inhabitants, and therefore did they treat them with a certain respect. Solf has been quoted to have said:

Samoa is still so small and so remote that it has fortunately no commercial future; we German officials do not have to see – and to help – our so-called progress

destroy one of the most attractive races in the world. If every acre in Western Samoa were put under cultivation the result would still be utterly negligible as far as the German Empire were concerned. My congenial duty, therefore, is merely to guard it as what it is – a little paradise – and to do my best to keep any passing serpent out of our Garden of Eden.⁵¹

Is it possible to say that Apia was understood as an exclave, as ‘not-part-of-Samoa’? Meleisa supports this assumption through quoting a critical position: “The establishment of a European-controlled municipality in Apia ... had lasting effects on the Samoan thinking. The area of the municipality had become known to the Samoans as the ‘Ele’ele Sa (the forbidden ground), a term used in bitterness and reproach.”⁵² Therefore, regarding Samoa as the paradise and making Apia more European seem to be only two sides of the same coin. It is as if, to keep the idea of paradise intact, it had to be kept at a distance, so that it could remain a dream but did not have to be lived in by the colonists – the settlers knew it was not paradise anyway. But any attempt by Samoans and European settlers alike to upset this dichotomy would have called a dream into question.

Endnotes

¹ Although Great Britain differentiated between “protection territories” and “colonies”, in German literature Schutzgebiet and Kolonie are usually used interchangeably. F. ex. Johannes W. Grüntzig, “Medizinische Expeditionen in die deutschen Kolonien”, in: Magdalena M. Moeller (ed.), *Emil Nolde. Expedition in die Südsee* (Munich: Hirmer/Berlin: Brücke-Archiv, 2002), 43.

² D.H.u.P.G. = Deutsche Handels- und Plantagen-Gesellschaft, or: German Trade- and Plantation-Company, established 1878, succeeded the company Johan Caesar Godeffroy and Son from Hamburg, that had been active on Samoa since 1865. Otto Riedel, *Der Kampf um Deutsch-Samoa*, (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag, 1938), 43.

³ Hermann Joseph Hiery, “Die Deutschen in der Südssee. Ein Überblick”, in Magdalena M. Moeller (ed.), *Emil Nolde. Expedition in die Südsee* (Munich: Hirmer/Berlin: Brücke-Archiv, 2002), 13-34, in particular 20-1.

⁴ Hiery 2002, 25.

⁵ Hiery 2002, 24-9.

⁶ Robert Louis Stevenson, letter to Adelaide Boodle, 4th January 1892, in Sidney Colvin (ed.), *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Heinemann, vol. 4), 144–145.

⁷ *Cyclopedia of Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti and the Cook Islands (illustrated), published under the patronage of his Excellency Dr. Solf (the Governor of German Samoa), his Majesty King George II. of Tonga, his Britannic Majesty's Consul at Tonga (Hamilton Hunter, Esq., C.M.G.), etc. etc. A Complete*

Review of the History and Traditions and the Commercial Development of the Islands, with Statistics and Data never before compiled in a single publication, first printed and published by McCarron, Stewart and Co, Sydney, Australia, 1907; reprint R. McMillan, Papakura (NZ) 1983, 3.

⁸ *Cyclopedia of Samoa*, 3. For precise numbers see Report on Samoa by the German Colonial Government, ca. 1901, Archives NZ, AGCA 6067-602.

⁹ See for example Albert Wendt, *The Mango's Kiss* (Auckland: Random House, 2003), and Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa*, 1892, reprint with an introduction by Malama Meleisea (Auckland: Pasifika Press, 1996).

¹⁰ For an account of the history of the D.H.u.P.G. in Samoa, see Riedel 1938. For the political development see Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: traditional authority and colonial administration in the history of Western Samoa* (Suva (Fiji): Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1987).

¹¹ Gary Pringle, "Heritage Assessment. Apia, Western Samoa" (Master thesis, University of Sydney 1989).

¹² *Cyclopedia of Samoa*.

¹³ Many of these documents are located in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, and in the Archives New Zealand, Wellington. Moreover, personal files of German Governor Dr. Wilhelm Solf are kept in the State Archives, Bundesarchiv, in Koblenz, Germany.

¹⁴ The *Samoanische Zeitung* is kept by the newspaper archives of Alexander Turnbull library, Wellington.

¹⁵ *Samoanische Zeitung* (1), 6 July 1901.

¹⁶ "The negotiations with the Catholic Mission about retention of land necessary for this enterprise has been successful [...] The Government also has bought land which belonged to the half-caste Pita, situated behind the sites of the Government, of the D.H. & P.G. and Mr. Dean, in the Tiger Bay. The Government is also prepared to give away from their own, vacant land opposite the Government building, as much as necessary to build a broad street from the beach to the widened Mulivai Street through the Tiger Bay. Since the best route of such a street would go directly through the building of the D.H. & P.G., the Government is prepared to pay the D.H. & P.G. an allowance to help them relocate their building." *Samoanische Zeitung*, 1, 6 July 1901. Detailed critique of the Land and Titles Commission between 1903 and 1914 is to be found in Meleisea 1987, 64-88.

¹⁷ Cf. Archives NZ, AGCA 402: correspondence of the German Colonial Administration in Samoa with the Colonial Office in Berlin, as well as with the D.H. & P.G.

¹⁸ "Mr. Carruthers, an Australian barrister and solicitor, had already come to Samoa in 1877. He was appointed municipal magistrate in 1880, charged with the preservation of law and order in Apia, which at that time was somewhere described as the "hell of the Pacific". To-day there is no place in the Pacific with a community freer from crime than Apia." *Cyclopedia of Samoa*, 96. Carruthers had often chaired council meetings and was a generally accepted authority.

¹⁹ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 1, 6 July 1901.

²⁰ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 1, 6 July 1901.

²¹ Pringle 1989, 45, states this which the author has not been able to confirm.

²² *Samoanische Zeitung*, 7:16, 20 April 1907

²³ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 7:15, 13 April 1907.

²⁴ Pringle 1989, 45 and ill., 47.

²⁵ See his advertisement in *Samoanische Zeitung*, 3:50, 19 March, 1904.

²⁶ Krämer, Buck.

²⁷ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 2, 6 July 1901.

²⁸ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 2, 6 July 1901.

- ²⁹ Newton Alan Rowe: *Samoa Under the Sailing Gods* (London and New York: Putman, 1930), 184-185.
- ³⁰ Rowe 1930, 184.
- ³¹ Riedel 1938, 28-29.
- ³² Jean-Pierre Goubert, *The conquest of water. The Advent of Health in the Industrial Age* (Editions Laffont 1986), transl. by Andrew Wilson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 58.
- ³³ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Introduction to Jean Pierre Goubert, *The Conquest of Water*, 3.
- ³⁴ Grüntzig 2002, 44-45.
- ³⁵ Grüntzig 2002.
- ³⁶ Bundesarchiv Koblenz, files N 1053.
- ³⁷ Wilhelm Solf in a letter to Professor Passarge, Berlin 29 October 1906 (Bundesarchiv N 1053/28, 2-4).
- ³⁸ Hempenstall, Vietsch etc.
- ³⁹ Malama Meleisa (ed.), *Lagaga. A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva/Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1987 [= 1987b]), 120.
- ⁴⁰ Meleisea 1987a, 162.
- ⁴¹ Hiery 2002, 31.
- ⁴² *Samoanische Zeitung*, 8:6, 6 February 1909, 2.
- ⁴³ Unfortunately, neither plans for the bandstand nor for the clock tower have been found in the course of this research in Archives NZ in Wellington, although Pringle, Heritage Assessment, was able to show the bandstand on the front page. There is no account of the clock tower to be found at all, although it seems to be general knowledge in Samoa that it was built around 1920, donated by Olaf Nelson.
- ⁴⁴ *Samoanische Zeitung*, 9:30, 24 July 1909, S. 2. Report on the general meeting of the Verkehrsverein, 17 July 1909.
- ⁴⁵ George Collins and Christiane Crasemann Collins, *Camillo Sitte and the Birth of Modern City Planning* (New York: Random House, 1965).
- ⁴⁶ Cf. Archives NZ, AGCA 402: correspondence of the German Colonial Administration in Samoa with the Colonial Office in Berlin, as well as with the D.H. & P.G.
- ⁴⁷ The lining up – or: erecting of buildings in straight lines has already been commented on by Mike Austin in: “Loyalty and Disloyalty in the Architecture of the British Empire and Commonwealth: The Mau Movement and the Model Villages in Samoa”, paper presented at the SAHANZ conference in 1996, but with his remark he referred to the model villages instigated by the New Zealand administration in the 1920s.
- ⁴⁸ Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Der Städtebau* (Kulturarbeiten, vol. 4) (Munich: Der Kunstwart, 1906), 168.
- ⁴⁹ Camillo Sitte, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles (Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen*, Vienna 1889, translated by George Collins and Christiane Crasemann Collins) (New York: Random House, 1965), 133.
- ⁵⁰ Rowe 1930, 160.
- ⁵¹ Solf, quoted after memory by Lloyd Osborne in Rowe 1930, XII.
- ⁵² Meleisea 1987b, 102.