BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Glenn Petersen. *Traditional Micronesian Societies: Adaptation, Integration, and Political Organization.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009. Pp. 288. ISBN: 978-0-8248-3248-3. US$42.00 cloth.

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TRADITIONAL MICRONESIAN SOCIETIES is a welcome addition to the literature on a vast area of the northern Pacific that is less well covered than the southern islands. Petersen presents Micronesia as a social entity characterized by matriclans, with hierarchies of chiefs as leaders. He argues that a "breadfruit revolution" was part of the settlement of this area.

The term Micronesia is widely used to refer to islands in the northern Pacific, to complement the terms Polynesia and Melanesia as a tripartite division of Oceania. Petersen presents an argument for Micronesia as a single entity, "a category because in the dynamism of the historic survival of its peoples, they drew upon a set of shared strategies eminently adapted to the environments in which they lived" (16). It is not a cultural area, he argues, nor a construct that anthropologists, historians, geographers, and others have imposed (but for summary of arguments, see Hanlon 2009). Rather, Petersen sees Micronesia as a strong and single social entity of societies in the past. The shared strategies that unified the region included networks of dispersed matrilineal clans, "that perform in a great variety of adaptive ways" (226) around a clearly defined cultural, historical, and linguistic base. Petersen builds a generalized picture of social organization, which he views as applicable to all societies in this area of the northern Pacific.

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This perspective has resonance with the ongoing discussions about the New Melanesian ethnography (Godelier and Strathern 1991). Critics of writings about Melanesia as an undifferentiated entity stress the diverse practices and indigenous theories of being what Scott terms "poly-ontologies" (2007, 31). Thus, Petersen's suggested assessment of early Micronesian societies as a cohesive social entity based on matriclans may be considered a "new Micronesian ethnography" wherein kinship was the predominant link between societies, but such an approach overlooks the view that anthropology built its academic exclusivity around kinship, whereas Micronesians may not view themselves as so closely related.

Key social characteristics of Micronesian societies are in need of the close scrutiny that Petersen suggests (see Alkire 1972 for earlier summation). Although acknowledging that there is diversity in social relationships between the societies within Micronesia, particularly between eastern and western island communities, he focuses on the similarities between societies in the past, while noting many exceptions. Anthropological and historical texts are fewer in number and less well known than Melanesian texts; thus, Pacific scholars and students alike are less familiar with the communities in this vast area of ocean. Very few Micronesians have written ethnographies of their own societies. The author draws on the work of linguists and prehistorians to examine the pre-European past of these small islands, "traditional societies" as the title of the book suggests, but makes few references to ethno-historical views, myths, and legends that Micronesians themselves refer to when thinking about their past. Goodenough's Kachaw cult (1986) is the one exception. Use of the term traditional societies presents a further problem.

Many readers and students have trouble locating the boundaries of Micronesia. Petersen addresses this dilemma by arguing for a set of related languages, in two waves, but he has trouble including societies on the western and eastern margins of the area. The Marianas, and Guam as well as the Gilberts/Kiribati, and Nauru are only briefly mentioned in the text, with summary information appended in the final chapter (he does not mention Banabans of Ocean Island); this suggests that the author is uncertain about the boundaries of the entity labeled Micronesia.

I have long voiced my concerns about which societies belong within the label Micronesia. When teaching Pacific Studies in the "South Pacific," namely in New Zealand, to Samoans, Tongans, and Pakeha (European-descended) students, I have found they have little awareness of the Pacific north of the Equator, nor how those communities have impacted on their own societies in the past. Micronesia is a mysterious term. Bringing illustrations from my own fieldwork in the central Pacific, from Marshall Islands,

Nauru, Kiribati to Wallis and Futuna, Fiji, Cook Islands and Society Islands, I may have confused them more than clarified what and where Micronesia societies lie, their similarities and differences, and their shared histories and social ties. There is no one text to which to refer these students for clarity.

A further dilemma from a south Pacific perspective is that many authors, media commentators, musicians, etc., treat Micronesia as coterminous with the US Trust Territory (USTT). I have to point out to my students that these US Trust Territories are only part of the cultural area known as Micronesia. The six former United Nations Trust Territory states—Palau, Marianas, Truk, Ponape, Kusaie, and Marshall Islands (as they were known)—were entrusted to the United States by the United Nations in 1946. Nauru, Kiribati, and Ocean Island Banabans, are societies generally included under the heading Micronesia, culturally, historically, and linguistically but did not belong within the Trust Territory/ "American" framework. They and the Marianas and Guam are generally considered Micronesian but fall outside the generalized social features discussed in this book. Petersen reveals his own bias when he uses the term "Micronesia" several times as a short-hand for Federated States of Micronesia from his long-term associations with Pohnpei. The boundaries of Micronesia are debatable.

Whether residents of the area consider any relevance of the term Micronesia to their lives is not addressed. At the time of the creation of the Congress of Micronesia in the 1960s, many Trukese, and also Marshallese students at school in Hawai'i, debated the creation of this overarching political body, while residents on Namu, a Marshallese atoll where I was living, saw no relevance to an entity labeled Micronesia when a visiting aspiring politician sought their votes for him as a Senator in the Congress of Micronesia. Subsequently, I have found that residents of various Marshallese atolls prefer to refer to themselves first by their atoll affiliation, such as ri-Namu, or ri-Majol. The distinction between atolls in the Ralik (sunset) chain and the Ratak (sunrise) chain are apparent in local thinking as well as in local dialects and local histories. The twenty-six atoll communities only partially recognize their label as belonging to the Marshall Islands. And Micronesia is barely an identity concept.

In a monograph focusing on "traditional Micronesian societies" the reader might expect close attention to the detailed records from the earliest writings about Micronesian societies in the mid- to late1800s when Europeans began writing about them. The German *Sudsee* expedition accounts of individual Micronesian societies in the period 1910–14, such as Kramer and Nevermann's Ralik Ratak (1938) or Hambruch (1914–15) for

Nauru, provide us with a vast amount of social detail from which to derive comparative reconstructions of political prehistory of the area. I refer to these as "transitional accounts" because they indicate the bridge between precolonial and neocolonial impacts. Instead the author draws mainly from post 1950s anthropological writings. The term "traditional" in the title of this book is problematic.

Petersen suggests two waves of settlement across Micronesia. Drawing on historical linguists' and prehistorians' analyses, he proposes that the earliest wave is unclear because of the paucity of archaeological work. But those travelers probably came from the west, whereas he proposes that the second wave entered Micronesia from the south through the Santa Cruz region and the Lapita region. This latter wave consisted of a number of "loosely connected" and "highly mobilized peoples who voyaged within extended interaction spheres" and for whom patterns of interaction were by no means identical (43, 44). Thus, he links Pohnpei with Chuuk to the western side and Kosrae on the eastern side, as settled at the end of the first millennium BC. He proposes that these eastern Micronesian populations spread westward to bring breadfruit, matri-clans, and chiefly systems to western Micronesian societies, thereby changing former patterns of social organization. This second wave provides the base for his argument for the cultural coherence of Micronesian societies as a result of the breadfruit revolution.

Breadfruit Revolution

The author's construct of a breadfruit revolution is based on his view of the development of new hybrid forms of breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*) derived from *Artocarpus camansi* and *Artocarpus mariannensis* "that thrive on Micronesian atolls" (56). That hybrid form may have provided a major source of carbohydrates on Pohnpei, alongside *Dioscorea* yams, etc., because it was widespread across Micronesia and as far as eastern Polynesia, particularly the high islands and atolls of Marquesas and Tuamotus and Tahiti.

Botanical evidence has established that both seeded and seedless breadfruit were first domesticated in the western Pacific, perhaps New Guinea, and spread by humans beginning 3000 years ago (Ragone 2006, 2). The ongoing work of the Breadfruit Institute on Kauai (Hawai'i) on DNA and early profiles has revealed that both seeded and seedless hybrid varieties were best adapted to atolls and most common in Micronesia, as well as in the eastern islands of Polynesia (Ragone 2006, 4). Hundreds of named varieties have been recorded. In 1968, I recorded seven varieties of seedless and three varieties of seeded breadfruit growing and producing many

fruit prolifically in season on Namu, a drier northern atoll of the Marshall Islands. Of these the Bitaakdaak variety was considered "king of the breadfruit." We ate breadfruit daily during the season, March to July, with a few fruit ripening in October (Pollock 1992, 46). During the rest of the year, we had no alternative food other than a daily pot of rice with coconut cream (Pollock 1970a).

Breadfruit is a common food resource that is well documented from archaeological, botanical, historical, and social perspectives (e.g. Bellwood 2005; Ragone 2006; Pollock 1970a). Captain Cook experienced a marked change in food gifts in Tahiti in 1769, when the abundance during the breadfruit season ended in May; thereafter, he found it difficult to obtain local food supplies (Pollock 2012). As travelers crossing the Pacific by canoe carried their favored varieties to their new islands, the range of varieties has become extensive (Pollock 2013). Favored attributes include length of fruiting season, seeded alongside seedless varieties, and suitability to island environments, whether high islands or atolls. This process of dispersal has been ongoing over 2000 years—there is no evidence of a sudden breadfruit revolution in Micronesia.

Breadfruit trees, both seeded and seedless, can only be reproduced by human agency, that is, vegetative reproduction (Ragone 2006). Shoots from the roots must be planted by hand and nurtured for ten years before the tree produces fruit. The occurrence of a hybrid form is unclear as to "where or when this process took place" (Petersen, 56), but many varieties have been carried across the breadth of the Pacific to provide fruit, leaves to wrap foods cooked in the earth oven, a shade tree, and wood for canoes. Vegetative propagation enabled very close selection of varieties, leading to the diversity within and across Pacific societies that Ragone has reported in recent times (2006).

Breadfruit was only one of some ten starch foods on which Pacific communities have relied for their main food supply (Pollock 1992). It contributed to local needs alongside yams, taro, and other starch foods on which Micronesian atoll populations have continued to rely. The practice of fermenting breadfruit in pits not only provided a supply of food beyond the season but also provided an acidic, more flavorful taste than did the ripe fruit (Pollock 1984). As populations increased, these pits were used more frequently; thus, fermented fruit lasted for shorter times. Whether an increased supply of breadfruit on Pohnpei contributed to the building of Nan Madol on Pohnpei (AD 1300–1600) is not yet evidenced in the documentation.

The ramifications of breadfruit hybridization to support an argument for linking communities across Micronesia need further consideration in light of the plant's botanical evidence, reproduction systems, and usage as food.

Matriclans and Matrilineages

Matriclans and matrilineages linked to maternal founders have been reported for many societies across Oceania, but they are not the only, nor necessarily a cohesive, form of social organization across the region of Micronesia that Petersen suggests. I will illustrate with examples from the Marshall Islands and from Nauru.

Petersen's promotion of matriclans and matrilineages as the dominant feature of traditional Micronesian society that spreads westward after the second wave of settlement may more closely represent the anthropological theory of the mid-twentieth century for Euro-American anthropologists than represent a key social formation of Micronesian communities. Petersen's reading of post-1950s ethnography suggests that kinship relations through maternal links were the key feature of traditional Micronesian societies. Existence of a common distant ancestor may appear in myths and legends of individual Micronesian societies, but those do not feature in this discussion of traditional social features.

Even within the Marshall Islands, which comprise twenty-six atolls in two chains, there are marked differences in the accounts of such traditions. For the Ralik chain, Liwatoinmour was a recognized founding ancestor represented by a rock on Namu, whereas for the Ratak chain her sister was the founding ancestor on Aur (Pollock 1975). And more such accounts of ancestry are still to emerge (Tobin 2002). There are no accounts that link Marshallese matriclans or matrilineages to neighboring islands, either Kosrae, Pohnpei, Kiribati, or Nauru.

Marshallese clans are less localized than matrilineages. Several clan (*jowi*) names occur across several atoll societies in both chains of the Marshalls but mainly for older Marshallese. On Namu atoll, I recorded seven clan names across the population of 600 in 1967. Names such as Mekauliej, Jemeliwut, etc., also occurred on Wotje and Utrik (NJP fieldnotes 2003, 2004). However, today they are just names, sometimes jokingly associated with characteristics drawn from myth, that is, Jemeliwut as Trickster, a well-known mythical character that Luomala (1949) recorded across the central Pacific. That clan name may be shared with Nauru, whereas Eamwit and Eamwidumwit are still prominent clans/tribes today; but the link has not been recognized.

The role of clans has undoubtedly changed over time as populations have grown (and reduced). Memories of personal clan affiliations are fading, because younger generations find little use for them (NJP fieldnotes, Wotje 2003). A woman should marry/cohabit with a man from another clan, but that social restriction is fading and remains in the memory of those few

members of atoll communities dedicated to "*manit in Majol*," Marshallese custom.

Marshallese matrilineages have stronger social relevance than do clans today as also in the past. German ethnographers writing about the Marshall Islands in the 1890s recorded details of matrilineages (e.g., Kramer and Nevermann 1938). They recorded the links between lineages and landholdings, as well as rules of exogamy and of residence.

The concept of matrilineality, however, has been used widely to encompass several key structural features of societies, such as links to the ancestors, exogamy, inheritance rights (mainly land), residence rules, and labor commitments—all showing variable ties to a mother. Furthermore, matrilineality is as much about relationships between siblings as it is about links to a mother (Pollock 2003). When we consider the obligations and practices of matrilineality across the atolls of the Marshall Islands, significant variations in social relationships emerge, along with probable variations over time. Earlier forms of matrilineages when island populations were very small may have represented smaller groups within matriclans. The two forms of organization have become more distinct as populations have grown.

Marshall Islands siblings share matrilineal ties (*bwij*) with their common mother. Lineages have no distinctive names, other than that of the main house/residential land in which they share rights of access, and the many work sites to which they have rights (Pollock, Morton and Lalouel 1972). Members of a matrilineage, female and male, share rights to named pieces of land (*wato*), often running across narrow atolls, or subdivided in the case of Wotje, or Laura, both wide islets. These are inherited through both matrilineal and patrilineal ties, as well as received as gifts from a person often glossed as "chief," called an *Iroij* (Pollock 1974; for Laura, Majuro atoll, see DeBrum and Rutz 1967; Tobin 2002). Siblings have access rights to reside in several households, usually within one atoll, allowing them to move frequently. Sisters maintain close links with their mother's household, with at least one brother resident from time to time; brothers must care for, provide breadfruit, coconuts, and fish, etc., for their mother, as well as for their sisters and wives, wherever they reside. The senior sister or brother, appointed by the lineage as *alab*, or land manager, represents the lineages' interests to the Iroij of those lands.

The lands that a matrilineage can access are under an Iroij who has responsibilities for residents on "his"/"her" lands. Each matrilineage's land access rights are managed by an alab who represents all those *rijerbal* (workers) of her/his matrilineage to the Iroij. The rijerbal live on their specific pieces of land, as entailed through the alab, make presentations of

food, particularly first breadfruit, to the Iroij, if he is present. In return the Iroij provides them (today) with material items, such as rice, fish-hooks, roofing material, or a walkie-talkie (in the case of Iroij Lejolan Kabua). He also provides them with spiritual benefits that include healing powers (Carucci 1997). The rijerbal and alab are bound to the Iroij by land, not kinship ties, although those may have been significant in the past.

The link between matrilineages and their lands is a vital part of Marshallese social organization. The lands not only provide a residence, as a space of belonging, for living alongside sisters and their mother and father, but those lands also provide the means of identity. Those who hold lands on Namu, for example, refer to themselves as ri-Namu (people of Namu). Because mobility has increased even more markedly than in the past, and extends to urban households, that identification with lands on a particular atoll has become the basis of political affiliation and social belonging even for those not always resident on their "home" atoll.

Marriage is exogamous to a matrilineage. A young woman must select her partner from another matrilineage, even for her first cohabitations (*koba bajjik*). On Namu, this rule presented dilemmas for young women with only six other lineages from which to find a suitable young man of the right age. In addition in the past, she should marry/reproduce with a man from the same atoll (atoll endogamy); my records for six generation depth on Namu revealed the prevalence of this practice in eighty-three percent of past unions (Pollock, Morton, Lalouel 1972). It was reinforced by cross-cousin marriage. Today the choice is widened through meetings in high school and other urban contexts. That past restriction on reproduction, I argued, served to keep access rights to land closely controlled by matrilineages. Also, it enabled a wider choice of sites for the couple to use as residences and work sites (i.e., for making copra). Nuclear family units moved frequently when pressures required. Matrilocal residence was not an operational concept. Sisters stayed close to their mother, whereas at least one brother should also take his share of responsibilities of providing for her.

Links to ancestors, and other beliefs, were known to a few knowledgeable residents but did not particularly pertain to any lineage. Lineages were heavily interwoven through the practice of cross-cousin marriage and alternative schemes of managing social relationships.

Matrilineages in the Marshall Islands were and still are only one aspect of social relationships. The major commitment is and has long been to a particular atoll; thus, identity, understood largely in terms of "place," in Marshallese society is recorded by the atoll where the person has their

main rights of access to land. A person is referred to as ri-Namu even if she is living on Ebeye. A Rongelap woman married to a Namu man, residing on Namu, still maintained her identity as ri-Rongelap (*ri-* refers to "rib of"). House sites are part of a social division of the island into halves known as *jittoen/jittoken*; the two halves "compete" in songs and compositions, particularly at Christmas time (Pollock 1970b). Fishing groups are important, because men share an outboard or *boomboom* today, as a continuation of groups of men who built large *tibnil* sailing canoes in times past. Work groups draw on residents rather than specific lineage groups. Church groups and women's groups have become strong affiliations that go beyond kinship groupings.

Thus, belonging to place is as important, if not more so, than belonging to a lineage. The place, whether the whole atoll or an islet within it or a residence site, provides the basis for social maintenance and well-being. That identity as, for example, ri-Namu or ri-Wotje, has gained significance as people move freely to the urban centers of Majuro or Ebeye, where island groups have specific locations among other urban populations.

Nauru

For the single island of Nauru south and west of the Marshall Islands, a raised reef with a population of less than 1000 at the time of German writings in the 1880s (e.g., Hambruch 1914–15), clans were known as tribes, as they still are today. Legends tell of close ties to atolls of Kiribati and nearby Banabans on Ocean Island. The 12 "Tribes of Naoero" are a significant part of Nauruan local culture history, even printed on souvenirs today (NJP, Frigate Bird Practices and Beliefs, in Eastern Micronesia, unpubl. data).

Every Nauruan's birth is recorded in the Nauru Bulletin according to the tribe of the mother. Between the twelve tribes numbers are uneven, with Eamwit and Eamwidumwit as the most numerous, according to the 1999 Census (Nauruan Eamwit may have linguistic links to Marshallese Jemeliwut). New female arrivals on Nauru were given distinct tribal names, for example, Ranibok (trash from the sea in Hambruch's translation) or Iruwa (stranger), which their children inherited. New male arrivals had no tribal affiliation (NJP, Social Impact of Mining on Nauru, unpubl. data)

Belonging to a tribe provided one form of relatedness, with households, districts, ritual groups, fishing groups, and warrior groups forming alternative organizations in context. Nauru had no matrilineages, probably because the population was too small.

Leadership

Leadership in Pacific societies has challenged many anthropologists and historians to question Sahlins' (1963) suggested dichotomy of Big Man in Melanesia, as distinct from Chiefs in Polynesia. Such generic categories have been extended by Godelier's addition of Great Man (1986). None of the writers has attempted to include Micronesian societies. Petersen proposes that Micronesian leadership involves "some degree of duality or multiplicity of chieftainship" (156), based on kin ties through matriclans as local control growing out of "continual interplay between hierarchy and equality" (158). Kin relations, he argues, are foremost; local residency and feasting provide a web of ties between and among communities across Micronesia (155). Petersen draws on his own extensive work on politics in Pohnpei to suggest these pan-Micronesian features of leadership.

Such generic features are not as applicable to eastern Micronesian societies, such as the Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Kiribati, as they are to Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Chuuk. Examples of the former linkages include Goodenough's Kachaw cult and perhaps the Frigate Bird cult (Pollock 2010). Kiribati falls outside the model on many counts, notably the absence of matriclans. Nauru's matrilineal tribes provide a base of leadership through chiefs drawn from the descendants of the senior sister in a sibling set. In the Marshall Islands, chiefly leadership by an Iroij varied between communities in Ralik and Ratak chains, but in neither case did Iroij have kin ties with the general populace (rijerbal).

The concept of apical stratification, as applied to a limited form of hierarchy, is more relevant to access to land in the Marshalls, not kinship. A chief (Iroij) controlled named pieces of land (*wato*) on several atolls in one chain, rights gained by warfare, marriage, and other arrangements (Tobin 2002). (It must be noted that the term Iroij is used for many concepts beyond human relationships, such as king of breadfruit or "king of the Birds for the Ak," frigate bird.) S/He allotted workers' rights to several matrilineages for specific pieces of land in return for goods and services and also allotted traditional ties such as ancestry, spiritual links, sharing feasts, and residence. Iroij were seen to have special powers derived from their high ranking ancestry. Four chiefs held lands on Namu, but only one actively fulfilled his duties to the people in the 1960s; that Iroij, Lejolan Kabua, carried a business card that claimed (on one side) that he was "king of the Marshalls."

Succession to chiefly titles was more complex in Ratak chain than in Ralik chain (for Laura, Majuro atoll, see DeBrum and Rutz 1967). A key principle applied in both chains, namely that an *Iroij laplap* (paramount

chief) should be "two-shouldered" that is both her/his mother and father should be of chiefly status. Where one parent was of lesser status, the chief was known as *Iroij erik* (lesser chief). The complexities of successions on Majuro atoll had led to eight persons holding Iroij erik titles and only one Iroij laplap for all the lands on one islet (Laura) (DeBrum and Rutz 1967). Iroij erik were not known in Ralik chain (Iroij L. Kabua, pers. comm., 1966). Therefore, land associations rather than kin relations predominated in Marshallese chiefly systems.

Leadership in other social arenas was also important. Control of knowledge, especially navigation and ancestral ties, as well as providers for feasts, healers, and midwives were all recognized for their particular contributions to atoll community life. Individual warrior leaders achieved significance in times past, according to ethno-historical accounts, whereas those elders with knowledge of myths, past leaders and events, useful plants, wato boundaries, etc., all held significant place in local communities. They were not specific to any matrilineage but were called on for their knowledge when applicable. They and the Iroij were recognized for their role in society, not kinship (Tobin 2002).

When we consider leadership on another eastern Micronesia island, Nauru, the transitional literature refers to the chiefly system that German ethnographers encountered. It was more hierarchical than apical.

Leadership on Nauru was stratified into three tiers, with descendants of older sisters, the *temonibe* class, providing the group from which a chief was chosen, whereas descendants of younger sisters, the *amenengame* class, provided the support group. All Nauruans were either temonibe or amenengame. A third strata, the *itsio*, included all non-Nauruans (arrivals from other Pacific islands) and those who lost land after war. They had to find a chief who could provide them with land, often through marriage with a Nauruan wife. Thus, access to lands was a key feature of Nauruan stratification system. It was not tied to residency in a particular district because Nauruans moved frequently between several households in different named districts where they had access to land. For ease of administration, German authorities reduced the number of chiefs in 1890 to one per district, as if Nauruans belonged to a particular district. This violated Nauruan principles (NJP, Social Impact of Mining on Nauru, unpubl. data).

Other Nauruan leadership roles included war leaders and those with specialist knowledge of magic, dance, healing, and plants. Male initiates in the frigate bird cult prepared for taking leadership roles by gaining access to magic; the *amenename* was the leader of the cult, as holder of magic, with several designated assistants (Kayser 1935/2005). The women's supportive mat-weaving groups came under their own leaders. A chief

communicated with these leaders about when and how to begin the annual cultic event needing magic and about the practices of catching and nurturing the birds. The birds were considered an integral part of each clan group, because they represented the ancestors and, thus, linked the past with the present (Pollock 2010). Such cults were an important social feature as practiced by Banabans of Ocean Island, in the Marshall Islands and Kiribati, and on Chuuk, and perhaps in Palau (see also Intoh and Eda 2009).

Kiribati leadership varied, with Tabiteuea and southern atolls differing from the northern people. Key ancestors were honored. Mat patterns were the property of special Kiribati women's groups (but not widely documented). Dance composers and leaders were highly significant in social life, particularly in Tabiteuea (see Autio 2011).

Thus, in eastern Micronesia, leadership was not directly linked to matriclans. Kinship was not the generic feature, although it played some part in some principles and on some occasions. Leadership through chiefly systems was only one dimension of social dynamics. Status links, decision making, and spiritual bonds were recognized in various sectors of society appropriate to a particular event or necessity, whether access to land, or propitiating the outcome of an encounter or arranging gifts for feasts. Women's and men's groups each had their own leaders, sometimes inherited, sometimes appointed. Differentiation from neighboring societies occurred sometime before the recording of transitional ethnographies. Legends are the main source of such early information (e.g., for Tabiteuea, Kiribati, see Autio 2011).

Summary

Traditional Micronesian Societies introduces *Pacific Studies* readers and students to the least considered sector of Oceania, Micronesia; Melanesian and Polynesian societies have a much wider literature. Anthropological perspectives on Micronesian societies through ethnographies have been largely ahistorical; thus, we must rely on transition accounts mainly by European, particularly German, ethnographers for a perspective on the nineteenth century and perhaps before and local legends. Petersen's construction of Micronesia out of post-1950s material provides an impetus for further reconstructions of what may be considered as traditional ways of life.

Just which of the atoll and high island societies should be included in such a volume remains inconclusive. Petersen relies heavily on American Micronesia, but these six former Trust Territories are not coextensive with the culture area of Micronesia. Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, and Ocean Island

remain tangential. The tendency to slip from extending the concept of Micronesia, as in Federated States of Micronesia, to the much wider cultural/geographic entity covering one third of Oceania must be carefully handled.

Reconstructing settlement patterns for Micronesia from all too few accounts by prehistorians is still in early days. Compiling a picture of the area from published archaeology and historical linguistics, as Petersen cites in Chapter 3, is still rudimentary. We need an enlarged picture that incorporates local legends and other key features that may indicate social connections between the islands. Navigation and orientation to the sea are not considered here yet are an important aspect of inter-connections between islands (e.g., Gladwin 1970; D'Arcy 2008; Diaz 2010; Genz 2011). I have suggested a gastronomic perspective to show how food systems, including breadfruit, have been dispersed across this area by voyagers out of Asia. Canoes full of travelers and their foods shared their produce and their genes as they settled on new islands (Pollock 2011; 2013).

The proposed reconstruction of social relations, especially matriclans, is based on very thin evidence for traditional—that is, pre-1900 times. Sibling sets that maintain structural and practical ties to a mother have been noted widely across Oceania. Moreover, both female and male siblings feature in myths of settlement and ritual in early times. The Kachaw empire for societies surrounding Chuuk, the Frigate Bird cult that was prevalent across Eastern Micronesia as a male initiation ritual (Pollock 2009), and Sawei exchange groups all provide some indicators of how formalized social ties between islands were established and maintained, involving both women and men. These need to be incorporated with the early ethnographic material and legends into a text that addresses Micronesia in the nineteenth century and before.

Matrilineages as an anthropological construct have been paralleled by constructs such as hierarchies with chiefs at the apex. A paramount chief may have derived respect from significant connections to ancestors, but whether those ancestors came from other atolls and high islands is not apparent (see, e.g., Sahlins 1985 on Stranger-Kings). Respect was also accorded to healers (including midwives), ritual leaders, dance composers (particularly in Kiribati), and resource controllers. Godelier's suggestion from Melanesia of adding Powerful men to Sahlins' proposed Big Man/Chief dichotomy also needs to be addressed for Micronesia.

Petersen's book challenges scholars to address the small but extensive links across a vast area of the northern Pacific Ocean. Rethinking the constructs of Polynesia and Melanesia, whether as cultural divisions of Oceania or as geographically convenient terms, is already happening; Micronesian

material needs to be included. Mobility and spatial concepts need to be considered alongside kinship and exchange as integrating features. The concept of New Ethnography raised by Godelier, M. Strathern (1981) and others for Melanesia offers a pattern for points of discussion raised by Petersen, Hanlon, Hezel (1983), and others for Micronesia.

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