Review: DEVERNE REED SMITH
STATE OF MELEKEOK
REPUBLIC OF PALAU

The Sacred Remains is a provocative ethnography. Parmentier presents a description and analysis of the political structure and processes of Ngeremlengui, Palau,[1] and offers a historical perspective that reveals the different models utilized over time. Although classed as Micronesian, Palau (Western Carolines) is a primarily Austronesian culture that was settled early[2] and remained in relative isolation for a lengthy period. As such, it provides "a rare glimpse of a fairly large-scale polity without a single overarching system of kingship" (p. 55). Its culture did not accord well with older anthropological models and approaches; therefore, only in recent years have central aspects of Palauan culture been clarified in the scholarly literature.[3] Although I may question the validity of Parmentier's approach, the richness of the data and his careful scholarship made The Sacred Remains a most valuable contribution to the ethnographic literature on Palau.

Parmentier conducted two years of field research (1978-1980) in Ngeremlengui, the community *(beluu:* hamlet, district, state) on the west coast of Babeldaob Island that was chartered by myth with the responsibility and authority to preserve the traditions of Palau. Establishment of modern Palauan political structure took place when, in one part of an epic myth, the goddess Milad gave birth to four children

(each a *beluu):* Ngeremlengui, oldest son and thus higher in rank and "sacredness" than its three younger siblings; Melekeok, second son, with a tendency toward boastfulness and arrogance, as is true of younger brothers; Imeliik, Milad's only daughter and cherished because all males require a sibling of the opposite sex to fulfill their exchange/marital obligations; [4] and Koror (Oreor), who, as the youngest son with access to fewer resources, must be more energetic and enterprising.

Palauans stress differences at every level. Migration histories tell of different origins outside of Palau; the migration histories of one's kin unit and how it won land, a title, and kin ties or alliances within a community and throughout Palau further distinguish one group from another. Differences are so emphasized that many people within Palau currently argue that one general history of Palau should not be written, for each state is too distinct in origin, history, and traditional ways of doing things to make an overall history meaningful. Instead, many states feel their individual histories must first be recorded. Similarly, many Ngeremlengui titleholders argue that The Sacred Remains is not the history of Ngeremlengui: the history of Ngeremlengui will not be written until the knowledge of the three remaining titleholders is recorded (see below).

In the following sections, I first review some of the central aspects of Parmentier's book; I next turn to a discussion of his approach to the Ngeremlengui data. Lastly, I examine some of the broader issues involved in the recordation of oral traditions. Both the nature and function of traditional knowledge have changed since the time of Parmentier's research. Because the recordation of traditional knowledge and questions as to who should write Palau's history (or histories) are major issues in modern Palau, Parmentier's contribution presents an opportunity to discuss current concerns. [5] Since Palauans stress differences, I should note my perspective is that of Melekeok, a *beluu* on the east coast of Babeldaob Island that is the seat of the paramount title (Reklai) of the northern confederacy and a traditional rival to Koror, seat of the paramount title (Ibedul) of the southern confederacy, and to Ngeremlengui.[6]

The Sacred Remains

Parmentier defines "history" as "a universal cultural category differentially manifest in societies, in which the relationship between past, present, and future states of a society is expressed by signs in various media which are organized by locally valorized schemes of classifica-

tion" (pp. 4-5). His specific focus is upon the "kinds of categories" that operate in the cultural configuration of history and on how such knowledge is recorded, transmitted, and manipulated by those who hold the right to possess this knowledge (p. 9).

The lush physical environment of Palau has been deeply enriched by an abundance of cultural and historical stone markers that are mute reminders of an ancient time to those of low rank, signs of popular legends or events to some knowledgeable people, and multilayered signifiers of meaning to those who hold the right to know oral traditions and the power inherent in such secret, manipulative knowledge. Such stones -some carved megaliths, others unmarked or marked by the gods or man-are termed *olangch* (objects that contain histories). Other primary *olangch* are: names (titles and their rankings, place names, names in migration histories, etc.), chiefly title land sites with their stone burial platforms, [7] and Palauan valuables. [8]

Employing a semiotic framework, Parmentier utilizes *olangch* as a modality by which to present the history of Ngeremlengui and its changing models over time. Such use of *olangch* is not simply an analytical device on Parmentier's part but an accurate reflection of how Palauans have merged their natural and cultural environments. As modalities of history, signs function in two ways: as "signs of history" (symbols of historical events) and as "signs in history" (their use, meanings, manipulation, conquest, or exchange). "Signs of history" are "representational expressions which, through their iconic, indexical, and residually symbolic properties, record and classify events as history, that selective discourse about the diachrony of a society" (p. 11). Such signs can originate in the context of the events to which they refer or, at a later time, as the "self-conscious reconstruction of the past" (p. 11). "Signs in history" refer to those signs of history which, "as objects, linguistic expressions, or patterns of action, themselves become involved in social life as loci of historical intentionality *because* of their function as representational vehicles" (p. 12). In Palau, Parmentier notes that, as in many preliterate societies, "signs of history" also are "signs in history" (p. 12). To quote Parmentier, "signs of history" and "signs in history" are "extensionally deployed in social action, and by encoding the layered course of historical change they make possible an intensional sense of cultural continuity through time. When functioning as historical signs, several kinds of objects and expressions are labeled by the general ethnosemiotic term *olangch,* 'external sign' or 'mnemonic marker' " (p. 12). Thus, external signs require two kinds of reading skills: (1) knowledge of *olangch* so that one recognizes what the object is or signifies and (2) the "predictive interpretations of 'prophetic signs' or 'portents'

(ulauch)" (p. 12). Knowledge of the latter plays a significant role in social action for interpretations are constantly "modified, manipulated, contested, and concealed' (p. 13).

Parmentier relates the use of physical objects as "signs in history" and "signs of history" to the ethnographic examples of the Golden Stool of the Ashanti (as described by Rattray [1923:287-293] and Fortes [1969: 138-191]) and the linkage between segments of localized ramages and *marae* structures in Tahiti (Sahlins 1958: 165). Parmentier's approach to *olangch* is guided by Sahlins's concept of "structural history" and Fortes's (1945:224) perception of history as being recorded by the structure of society itself (p. 14).

The basic problem in Palauan history is well perceived by Parmentier: "how can events, with their context-dependent and pragmatically valued quality, be recorded so that, on the one hand, the structure of society-in particular the hierarchical arrangement of its parts-can be invariantly reproduced, and so that, on the other hand, this repeated structure gains value from the cumulative weight of layered events" (p. 15). Parmentier suggests that "the trick of history" (p. 15) in Palau is the maintenance both of the invariance of structure (that a place's rank is timeless and of sacred origin) and the value of temporal precedence (for example, that a chiefly line is more ancient than other, lower-ranking lines).

Utilizing the unpublished oral histories collected by the Palau Community Action Agency, archival materials, ethnographies (the author's persistent failure to properly cite sources is a disappointing feature of the book), myth, legend, and data from informants, Parmentier offers a vivid portrait of the drama and dynamism of Palauan politics-a shifting world of villages and districts, titled chiefs and their political councils, with alliances formed, betrayed, or broken, all in pursuit of Palauan valuables that could be obtained through warfare and the display of trophy heads; institutionalized concubinage, marriage, and the exchanges that flow through affinal alliances; and institutionalized friendship or feasts. In chapter 3, the author identifies four significant Palauan categories-which appear in myth, chant, and historical narratives as well as in the geographic arrangements within *beluu* - that are basic to Palauan polity and history. These categories are diagrams in the Peircean sense (1931-1935, 4:447) through which "the cultural valuation of these signs as they organize patterns of social relations in Belau" can be established (p. 108). Similar cultural diagrams are found, for example, in Balinese temple organization (Geertz 1980) and in the residential organization of Tiv hamlets (Bohannan 1958).

The four diagrams that organize social relations are: (1) paths *(rael)*

that link elements in a linear order (such as those Parmentier discerns in migration histories); (2) balanced sides *(bitang)* that, to Parmentier, combine similar, yet opposed, members of symmetrical pairs (such as the division of a *beluu* into two halves: *bita el taoch,* one half-channel and the other half-channel, a mechanism that promoted cooperation and competition within the *beluu;* and *bita el eanged,* the alignment of *beluu* into two competing half-skies, a feature that Parmentier and others have noted was recent at the time of recorded contact); (3) four "cornerposts" *(saus)* that function to join four terms in a coordinated structure (p. 18)-for example, the four *beluu* created by Milad are the *saus* of the Palauan political structure (social or political units are described as being a "house" *[blai]* with the cornerposts supporting the structure); the four highest-ranking titles within any *beluu* also are the *saus* titles, having greater authority in decision-making matters than the lower six or seven title; [9] and (4) graded series, such as "large/small" *(klou/kekere),* a gradation that places elements in hierarchically ranked series (p. 18).

The next three chapters explicate the four models. Case studies of the histories of the Ngeremlengui district (once a major district of primary *beluu* and allied *beluu)* and of the founding of one of its *beluu* (Ngeremetengel) reveal the differences both in the models used and the histories told by those of high rank and those of low rank. Those of high rank (Imeiong) present a static view that reinforces the place's sacred descent from Milad; people of low rank relate a dynamic history of contests for power, wonderfully contrastive to the static view of royal charter. I particularly appreciated the abundant use of chants and stories given by Parmentier. The author points out in this "tale of two cities" (p. 255) that the latter version points to a realistic conception of political rank as reflective of actual power and indexed by factors such as population, economic growth, and the residential presence of high-ranking titleholders. Nonetheless, Parmentier observes that (at the time of his research) the Imeiong version is the legitimate one and, as such, it is the version taught in schools and used in land claims (see below). Political rank, then, depends in part on controlling *olangch* and in part on the strategic manipulation of the rhetorical implications of political modes such as "paths" and "cornerposts" (p. 256).

I recommend The Sacred Remains be read by all who are seriously interested in the Pacific. It will be of interest also to those concerned with problems of theory and structure. Its subject is complex, and the presentation is sophisticated. Because so much history is encoded in Palauan names and Parmentier does not treat other aspects of the cul-

ture in detail, it will be difficult for readers not familiar with Palau to follow at times. Its excellence makes it well worth the effort.

Discussion

In spite of the Palauan emphasis upon variation, I discern no major areas of disagreement with Parmentier's data. I am sure other reviewers have noted Aoyagi (e.g., 1979) is a female ethnographer, not male; my interest is in the utility of Parmentier's analytic approach and in the impact that ethnographic writings now have within Palau. [10]

My overall impression of the book is a curious one. There is a strong sense of the presence of two distinct dialogues within this volume-one a rich Palauan dialogue, ably interpreted by the ethnographer, from which I learn so very much; and a second one that does not relate to or intersect with the first dialogue. The second dialogue, addressed to colleagues, is but a reinterpretation of what already has been said in the Palauan data in much more eloquent and richly ambiguous terms. The discrepancy between the two levels of discourse, side by side, only reflects the limitations of anthropological models, typologies, and terminologies. Moreover, the second-level dialogue too often gives the impression of Palauans mindlessly following structural dictates. Although Palauans love to articulate their rules, what they say seldom is what is. Their genius always has been in the bending, stretching, manipulating, and denial of the rules, as Parmentier's data dynamically illustrate.

The sharp sense of two separate levels has been described by Dening (1980) as being a natural and inevitable division inherent in the ethnographic endeavor. According to Dening, dialogues about models are addressed to colleagues and are reflective only of the conversations anthropologists have with one another about a reality that has meaning only to those who construct models. This process bears little resemblance to the dynamism of the culture-the processual level. Perhaps I am naive or optimistic, but I think solid processual ethnographies do, in time, yield models of multilayered meaning to both the ethnographers and those studied. The excellence of Parmentier's data reinforces this belief, and I am indebted to him for providing them so richly. My sense of disquiet relates to the sharp gap between the data and the theoretical discourse.

Parmentier was interested in semiotics and in structural linguistics before he went to Palau (e.g., see Michael Silverstein's foreword, pp. xi-xvi). Earlier versions of Parmentier's work in Ngeremlengui (e.g.,

1981) reflect an even greater overlay of a priori theory and solutions to general theoretical issues than is present in The Sacred Remains. Palau was a "puzzle" in the anthropological literature simply because it was approached only with our concepts of unilineal descent and alliance theory (Smith 1977, 1981, 1983:3-g). Parmentier's analysis leads him to stress many of the same features I discerned in an earlier analysis of social structure-the significance of a quadratic approach (to understanding marital alliances rather than a focus just on descent, affinity, or cross-siblingship), the significance of process and context in shaping principles. Although my knowledge of Palau has deepened over the years, I have not yet adequately described the relationship between structure and process that I sense in Palau. It surely is a scholar's choice what path to take with his or her data; nonetheless, I think Parmentier would have made a far greater contribution to our theories of structure and process had he focused more narrowly on the data at hand. The utilization of the semiotic framework as a means by which to discern the cultural historical categories that are of significance within Palau especially requires the careful examination of how contexts and use are related to (or interact with) structure. In a culture that so highly values the art of ambiguity, we need to know how Palauans recognize and respond to "secret" or esoteric signifiers. Without such a balanced approach, we are left with a dialogue that has reality and conceptual meaning only at the same level of analysis as those studies of kinship terminological systems that derived meaning exclusive of their rules of use.

The Peircean aspects-"path," two sides of similar but opposed members of symmetrical pairs, four "cornerposts," and graded series such as large/small-are a significant step, for the categories *are* culturally important modes of spatial/social orientation. However, in a culture where process and contexts so shape principles (as noted by Parmentier), the second-level dialogue does not give sufficient attention to the processual level. In the classes of traditional Palauan medicines, most products are the sum of their parts; however, there is one class whose medicines are "more than" the sum of their parts. This suggests we have not yet identified all relevant Palauan categories that are basic to our understanding of structure. "Lineality" and "balanced opposition" are appropriate conceptual terms at one level of contrast. Yet a typology based on these terms tends to obscure other levels of analysis not yet fully described. The components within each of the four aspects differ in nature and function. Nero, for example, observes that power is differentially allocated among the *saus* titles so that the four titles do not

split into two equal halves but are graded according to differing responsibilities and contributions (1987:88-94). Similarly, a *bai* or *beluu* splits into two sides only when some action is required, such as decision making or increasing productivity. This is not quite the same thing as two fixed halves or sides. The typology is a valuable working tool; the problem is that it comes to have a life of its own, a convenient handle on a complex matter, and is utilized in print by other scholars not familiar with the culture. It precludes closer analysis of the components within each category, an analysis that would enable the analytic models to more closely approximate the reality of Palauans.

A few internal signifiers are missed in Parmentier's analysis, and possible internal reasons for variations in legends are not explored. This suggests a need for greater focus on the many layers of meaning and especially on how meanings are signified to a select few in certain contexts. The chants he gives us are a primary example of the complexity of layers. He would need to detail how certain words or the mention of a name signify another "path" (another history), recognized by only a few, so readers could appreciate the complexities involved.

Migration histories are a second such example. Parmentier gives one version of the migration history of the social unit whose history I now am writing. The version he presents (p. 259) is from the PCAA file; the donor was the paramount titleholder of the northern confederacy. The same titleholder gave different versions to several other ethnographers; his private journals contain yet other versions. The titleholder of each kin unit approves the history that is to be made public in Melekeok's current history project. The point of academic interest is that the Reklai, as would any titleholder, tailored the history to suit his listener. Within the Palauan framework, all versions are true if they were given by the Reklai. Moreover, other linguistic signifiers within this legend are not treated by Parmentier. For example, in the "Story of the Migration of Uudes," we read that a group of people "stopped briefly at the house of Tengadik to drink water and exchange a few words, then continued their journey" (p. 259). "To drink water" signifies a particular historic incident where "the water was muddy" (things were uncertain or unclear) and actions were taken to make the "water" clear and useful. The latter is but one example of second-layer signifiers embedded within this history.

The effect of rank on differential histories also is not explored consistently. For example, Parmentier reviews variations of the Chuab myth, a creation myth with which most local histories now begin (e.g., Nge-

burch and Tmodrang 1983). This myth tells of the creation of the physical/social universe and, for Parmentier, is evidence of the first lineal-based polity. Most versions stress that Chuab, a giant, was destroyed, and his body became the various *beluu/* islands. Why would Ngeremlengui informants deny this and yet other Palauan historians utilize it? My informants suggested it was because people of sacred charter do not like to admit their "low" origins (southern island from which Chuab came). This may not hold, but it fits Parmentier's essential points in a better way than does treating variation as "the ultimate step in rhetorical condensation" (p. 153). Moreover, in analyzing why one version has become popular Parmentier fails to note the impact of our writings upon the histories Palauans are writing. Familiar with our need for lineality and a "beginning," the Chuab legend may be more popular now simply because it has become an accepted "beginning" point for writing a book. [11]

Lastly, a greater emphasis on the process of the negotiation of meaning and knowledge is required. Since written histories now are used in the courts to determine land and title disputes, readers should be made aware that written histories-such as the PCAA oral histories file-are very new forms of traditional knowledge. Perhaps because knowledge is so powerful and those who contributed their knowledge to the PCAA project were aware of this fact, access to the files was restricted. The material did not circulate in the public domain. Kesolei, a Palauan ethnographer, has written on the nature of knowledge and secrecy in Palau, where only selected individuals hold the jural right to knowledge (1978). She notes that two people may give precisely the same recipe. Only that which is given by the jural holder of this knowledge is deemed "correct"; the other is not. In traditional Palau, knowledge that moved into the public domain was a by-product of negotiations between titleholders. No one person would put forth his own knowledge; negotiations took place with at least one other titleholder before decisions were made or strategies arrived at. There were stone platforms where the decision-making titleholders could meet apart from the other titleholders; messengers carried conversations back and forth in a silent assembly of the *klobak* (titleholders), the use of messengers being so structured that no one but the two chiefs knew the content of the negotiations. Parmentier's primary informant was one of the most esteemed historians in Palau; his death was still being mourned within Ngeremlengui and Palau in 1989, as it was by ethnographers, for he was also the primary informant for other books (e.g., Johannes 1981). Parmentier's book is cherished by some within Palau for people take it to be the *rubak's*

(respected elder) words, the *rubuk's* knowledge. The fact that any one person's knowledge has been made available-without the traditional process of checks and balances-is quite new. Although Parmentier has recorded the history of Ngeremlengui, other primary titleholders in this *beluu* take exception for, by tradition, there cannot be one history unless it is one of consensus and negotiation. The history of Melekeok as told by its traditional rival is, as Parmentier notes, a history from the perspective of those of high rank in Ngeremlengui. Now that it is in print, it becomes part of the political process of Palau without the counterbalancing it would have received traditionally. I regret the inclusion of some of the data without a more balanced perspective being provided by the author. For example, Parmentier relates how residents of one "hamlet near Melekeok" served as spies to report the Reklai's war plans to Ngeremlengui. Parmentier names the hamlet (p. 288). At no point does the author clarify that this hamlet was a "defeated land" *(cher)* in relation to Melekeok, of very low status. One political segment's draft state constitution deleted this hamlet from Melekeok. Other hamlets similarly have used ethnographic materials to argue a separatist path. Now, there are many informants in Melekeok who wish to use my current book as a vehicle through which to counter Ngeremlengui/Parmentier.

The nature and function of traditional knowledge have changed markedly since the time of Parmentier's research. "Secret" knowledge began to move into the public domain and to be recorded with the initiation of the land determination program in the early 1970s. I attended initial Land Commission hearings in Melekeok in 1973 and saw the tenseness and intense interest in the "secret" knowledge now becoming public record. Many families met privately to determine what would be said in public, reaching their own private understandings so that they would not have to state "secret" matters in public. Traditional knowledge became even more of a significant public issue with the increased number of court cases involving disputes over land title and with the creation of state constitutions in the early 1980s. In the course of constitution writing, elected officials had to turn to their elders for knowledge of traditional political structure and process, for boundary names, or for the determination of criteria of citizenship. The volumes of the German ethnographer Kramer (1917-1929) were consulted by elders who could not remember title rankings. Nero (1987) has reported that Koror State elected not to record its boundaries or other aspects of traditional knowledge for it recognized that to do so would remove the very fluidity and ambiguity required for chiefly negotiations. Furthermore, Koror

State recognized that popular knowledge of traditional matters would move power and authority from the domain of chiefs into the domain of a voting populace. Similarly, in the early 198Os, the Palau Supreme Court discouraged a plan to codify "custom" for it felt that such an effort would remove the fluidity and flexibility the court required to interpet "custom" and to mesh it with Western law.

Palau has changed enormously within the last five years; the *beluu* I once described no longer exists. The rate of change is astonishing, as are the changes in the people themselves. Many changes are attributable to an Americanized youth-the majority of the population--who watch video in the small *beluu* on Babeldaob that have some electricity; other introspective changes can be traced to the political uncertainty of recent years. Although the Supreme Court cautioned in the early 1980s that it could not handle the overload of land dispute cases within our lifetime and has since been restructured to alleviate its overload, almost every land parcel and every title is in dispute before the court or the Land Commission. A new category of individuals has emerged-those who hold knowledge about traditional ways of doing things and of specific histories have become "experts," appearing quite frequently before the court and Land Commission. As the systems blend, however, an "expert" who gives an accurate history of a social unit still may be challenged by an attorney or a member of that social unit for speaking a history to which the "expert" has no jural right. The issue remains not accuracy but who has the right to give this knowledge.

Adults commonly express an urgent interest in having Palauan culture and history taught in the schools. A wish to teach youth an appreciation of traditional values and an awareness of cultural loss with the death of each elder who possesses Palau's history are the stated reasons. The recordation of traditional knowledge is supported by more agencies now than in the early 1980s with elected officials (often U.S.-educated) expressing a need to know more of their own culture and titleholders of once-secret knowledge eager to leave a recorded legacy. The republic has created the post of "National Treasure" to honor historians and artisans of repute. Membership now consists of one historian appointed by each state (The Society of Historians), and they have created two volumes of Palauan history *(Rechuodel).* Since Palauans not only have assisted the works of foreign ethnographers but themselves have engaged in the preservation of their oral histories and traditions (e.g., Blaiyok and Metes 1989; Kesolei 1971, 1975; Ngeburch and Tmodrang 1983; PCAA 1974a, 1974b, 1976-1978; Society of Historians in process; Umetaro 1974), there is an increasingly strong demand that histories

written by Palauans or texts that present the Palauan perspectives of history be used in the schools and courts. Such texts would have more authority within the Palauan framework than do works by foreign ethnographers.

Given the nature of knowledge-both as traditionally and currently used-there are inherent political problems in creating a history for Palau. The states differ in their responses to this problem. Some feel it should be done by the traditional leaders by traditional methods. Other states argue that recordation and historic preservation efforts are Western concepts and should be done by Americans; some states seek doctoral anthropology students to record the knowledge of their titleholders and offer housing in return. Two states-Melekeok and Koror-have hired anthropologists to write their histories from their own perspectives. The volumes created by the Society of Historians (Division of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Social Services, Republic of Palau) are challenged now and then by traditional leaders who maintain their representatives do not have the rank and authority to speak this knowledge or to speak for the *beluu.* The first volume was presented to the titleholders in the *bai* of each state so that the book would be sanctioned by the traditional chiefs. This sanction increases its acceptance by the public. Some officials think there must be just one official history, with no variations acknowledged. Researchers who cannot fit within their framework or work on problems that are of internal priority would not be encouraged.

At this point, so distant from a few years ago when everything was secret within a fluid and ambiguous system, our ethnographies are welcomed but with increasingly mixed feelings. Our academic dialogues once were outside the Palauan system of knowledge and authority. Now, no matter how accurate our data or how solid our intentions, texts are legal and political resources that must be dealt with by those whom we study. Due to the strong wish to record traditional knowledge while it is still possible to do so, anthropologists are sought to assist in meeting this need. However, agencies and communities that are investing in the creation of their histories, often at the expense of building basic infrastructure, state they are overwhelmed with priorities and problems. Academic research that is not relevant to their own needs is not encouraged by all. Where they once willingly assisted our academic research without reservation, Palauans increasingly are asking that they first be consulted so that the researcher may coordinate her or his needs with theirs. Since knowledge of traditional matters no longer is a matter of negotiation before a silent assembly in the *bai,* they ask to be

included in our dialogue since it is they who must deal directly with what we write.

NOTES

1. The Republic of Palau recognizes two official languages: English and Palauan. Since "Palau" is the appropriate spelling for English texts, I adhere to the designated spelling. Located approximately six hundred miles southeast of the Philippines, Palau is a republic comprising sixteen states. It has yet to approve a Compact of Free Association with the United States.

2. Bellwood (1983) charts the expansion of Austronesian settlement into the western Micronesian area at 4000 to 3000 B.P. The dates have been somewhat confirmed by carbon 14 dates placing the settlement of western Micronesia not later than the first or second millennium B.C. Parmentier discusses early settlement/residential patterns in Palau on pages 28-39. Recorded contact was in 1783.

3. For example, see McCutcheon 1981 on land use in Melekeok, Nero 1987 on a history of the paramount titleholders of Koror, and Smith (1977, 1983) on Palauan social structure and adoptive practices. There also has been a considerable amount of recent archaeological work (e.g., Gumerman, Snyder, and Masse 1981; Snyder and Butler 1990).

4. The patterned flow of goods and services *(omeluchel)* across marital and parental ties is one whereby food, labor, rights to a woman's sexuality, rights to her children, and other services flow from the woman's side to that of her husband. The value of the tie is determined by the amount given over time; reciprocity and "payment" in the form of rights to land and Palauan valuables are given at various points in the relationship.

5. From July 1989 through January 1990, I was the Palau Ethnographer at the Division of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Social Services, Republic of Palau, based in Koror. I worked in conjunction with an archaeologist to develop recommendations for the preservation of the historic and cultural resources of Palau. The work was done under the auspices of the Micronesian Endowment for Historic Preservation, U.S. National Park Service, under a grant administered through the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project entailed research in Ngatpang and Ngeremlengui.

6. Since 1972, I have conducted six years of research in Melekeok. I now am resident in the community, employed by this state to write a book on their history and to create materials to teach this history in the local school so that the children of Melekeok may learn an appreciation of traditional values.

7. Titles adhere to the land. There is a specific land parcel associated with a title and an accompanying taro swamp. House platforms are of stone, height being determined by rank, and only significant and successful ancestors are buried therein to watch over the affairs of the living. Decisions made at this site have greater authority than do decisions made elsewhere.

8. Palauan valuables *(udoud er a Belau)* are small bars and cylinders of glass or mineral of unknown antiquity and origin, possibly entering Palau from the Philippines. Each piece now is named and has a history of previous owners and the transactions in which the piece was utilized.

9. The *beluu* differ in the amount of power distributed among the top four titles and in their alignment to one another. On the whole, power is differentially distributed to the top four titles (or top two), for the holders are the ones who maintain the structure through their decisions, their purchase of their seats in the meetinghouse *(bai),* and their responsibility to pay the fines for kin or community members who commit offenses. The two paramount titles (Reklai and Ibedul) are granted singular powers because the holders are the ones who pay the valuables to make peace and permit conquered peoples to return to their homeland.

10. I am indebted to Katherine Kesolei for her comments on an earlier draft of this review.

11. In the early 197Os, few titleholders knew the names and rankings of titles below the fifth or sixth, for only the first four are of common significance. With the increased use of Kramer's listings of titles (1917-1929) as basic reference works, all ten or eleven titles are fixed in rank. The system once may have been more fluid before recorded listings. In Melekeok, research suggests the lower five titles were unranked until the Reklai listed them for the Japanese administrators.

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