REVIEWS

Marta Langridge, trans., and Jennifer Terrell, ed., *Von den Steinen's Marquesan Myths.* Canberra: Target Oceania and *The Journal of Pacific History,* 1988. Pp. xxii, 222, maps, illustrations. A$22.00/ US$24.00 paperback.

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Marta Langridge has translated from German to English the twenty-two orally transmitted narratives that Karl von den Steinen collected in 1897 in the Marquesas. She and editor Jennifer Terrell have rendered a valuable service in making this collection known to a wider audience of readers, some of whom may not have access to *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie,* which published "Marquesanische Mythen," the German versions, in 1933–1934 (vol. 65:1–44, 325–373) and in 1934–1935 (vol. 66: 191–240).[1]

The translator states that she has been as literal as possible in her translations even at the risk of occasional awkwardness of style (p. xvi). The introduction, as well as the indexes, maps, and illustrations, substantially increase the usefulness of this volume. The leading feature of the introduction is a ten-page informative and multifaceted essay about the collector, the collection, the style, and much else. The numerous footnotes based on both early and recent publications about the Marquesas and mythology in general add further interest to the essay.

The translation into English omits very little from von den Steinen's often extensive discussions that precede and conclude almost every narrative. Omissions include synopses that repeat nearly exactly the content of a story as well as any comparative material from other areas that is widely available or more copious than von den Steinen had access to. Notes supplementing the collector's own numerous footnotes have been set off in brackets.

Langridge and Terrell have compiled a bibliography of the nearly forty authors (pp. xxi–xxii) that von den Steinen cited in his comparative analyses. Of the twenty-two narratives he collected they list only twenty-one, probably due to an oversight since the translation has all twenty-two.[2] Each story is identified by the title and number—and for each different version, if any, a capital letter—that von den Steinen assigned to it. It must be noted that his identifying number may cover more than one related tale that later collectors tend to present as separate stories. Additional information extracted from the collection summarizes the meticulous documentation that von den Steinen provided for nearly every story—the island of collection, locality, and the informant's name and sex (p. xix). For three of the four stories for which he gave only the title but not the narrator or the island Langridge and Terrell suggest where each may have been recorded (p. xix). Another page (xx), drawn from E. S. C. Handy's *Marquesan Legends* (Honolulu, 1930), gives the phonetic variations between the northwestern and southeastern groups of islands. There are two indexes, one of names (pp. 211–219), the other of subjects (pp. 220–222).

The volume is enhanced by two maps and twenty-one illustrations, most reproduced from von den Steinen's unsurpassed three-volume *Die Marquesaner und ihre Kunst* (Berlin, 1925–1928); a few are from other publications. One from Langsdorff, *Voyages and Travels*, that I found particularly interesting is a Nukuhiva song that has the Marquesan text, English translation, and notation (opposite p. 141), all obtained by Dr. D. Tilesius during May 1804 when, as a member of the Russian expedition under Krusenstern, he visited the Marquesas.[3] The covers of the Langridge and Terrell book depicting tattooed men add to its attractiveness as does the print job. The translator, editor, and others concerned have devoted much thought, effort, and care to this publication, and readers will appreciate it.

Von den Steinen (1855–1929) had already traveled widely in Polynesia and other parts of the world (but not as an ethnographer) before going to the Marquesas, where he conducted his first Polynesian ethnographic fieldwork. As a young physician and psychiatrist he had made a world tour between 1879 and 1881 to inspect psychiatric institutions in Mexico, California, Japan, Java, India, Egypt, and several Polynesian islands other than the Marquesas. Of all the places on his itinerary Polynesia had made the strongest and most vivid impression on him because, as he stated romantically, there man and nature lived harmoniously together in beauty and happiness as nowhere else on earth. Charmed as he was by the islands he nonetheless united romanticism

with realism, for he commented on customs of which he disapproved and on current political changes.

While in Honolulu in 1880 he chanced to meet ethnographer Adolf Bastian (1826–1905), who was on one of his nine world journeys. The two men had much in common. Both were trained in medicine. Bastian, after receiving his medical degree in 1850, had immediately gone as a ship's doctor to Australia, and von den Steinen was still on his three-year medical tour. When they met, von den Steinen was twenty-five years old, the same age as when Bastian had first gone to the Pacific. Now twice von den Steinen's age, Bastian had become a famed ethnographer, theoretician, philosopher, mystic, and prolific writer. The younger man, perhaps influenced by Bastian and his own cultural and geographical observations in Polynesia and other parts of the world, changed his career to ethnography and was later appointed to a position in the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde, of which Bastian was one of the founders.

Bastian, it must be added, had a gift for locating knowledgeable and cooperative informants. During his month in Honolulu he met not only von den Steinen but King Kalakaua. Hearing of the king's family genealogical prayer chant, the *Kumulipo*, he borrowed the king's Hawaiian-language manuscript, copied sections, and in 1881 published them with a German translation and commentary together with other cosmogonic chants. Kalakaua, perhaps responding to Bastian's interest and seeing an opportunity to strengthen his hereditary claim to the throne, then had his manuscript printed. In 1897 Queen Liliuokalani, his sister, published the Hawaiian text and an English translation. (See Martha W. Beckwith, *The Kumulipo. A Hawaiian Creation Chant* [Chicago, 1951; reprint, Honolulu, 1972].)

Von den Steinen, despite his attraction to Polynesia, did not return there until seventeen years after meeting Bastian. In the interim he became an authority on central Brazilian Indian tribal cultures and languages. During an expedition to the headwaters of the 1,300-mile-long Xingu River, which flows into the Amazon at its mouth, his "discovery of Indian tribes untouched by modern civilization, had a profound influence on the course of South American ethnology" (Alfred Métraux, "South American Literature," in *Encyclopedia of Literature*, ed. Joseph T. Shipley [New York, 1946], 851–863). Von den Steinen's three books about these Indian tribes (1886, 1892, 1894) not only influenced South American ethnology but revealed his gift for comprehensive research, which became further evident in the Marquesas. Needless to add, his books on the South American Indians encompassed mythology and art.

"One always returns to one's first love!" the forty-two-year-old scholar exclaimed in 1897 at the prospect of at last realizing his dream of returning to Polynesia, this time as an ethnographer. When he arrived, however, for his first and only visit to the Marquesas, he mourned, "*Etwas ein halbes Jahrhundert zu spät*" (About a half century too late).[4] His purpose was to purchase artifacts for the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde. During his six-month stay he found that most of the old artifacts had disappeared to collectors from ships stopping at the islands and that in the southeastern group residents were beginning to manufacture such artifacts for sale as might appeal to foreign visitors. What little he found for the Berlin museum was supplemented on his travel back to Germany by information he acquired while surveying Marquesan artifacts obtained by earlier collectors (among them whalers) that had found their way into American museums. He next examined European collections for more information. His results, published in *Die Marquesaner und ihre Kunst*, also "covered contact history, population, statistics, European literature on the group, and anything at all that could be relevant" (p. xv). His references are wide-ranging, with much from other parts of the Pacific. Included are myths additional to those published later in *Zeitschrift*. As yet these three volumes have not been translated into English, at least not for publication. The value of the work, according to Franz Boas (*Science*, n.s. 71:7–8), is in von den Steinen's "attempt to interpret on the basis of painstaking formal analysis the many directions art forms take under the conditions of technique and constant reinterpretation."

While searching for artifacts in the valleys of Hivaoa, Tahuata, Fatuhiva, Uapou, Uahuka, and Nukuhiva (and losing forty pounds because of his physical exertions) he took the opportunity to collect orally transmitted narratives from some fifteen informants, about equally divided as to sex. He described his experiences vividly and with flashes of humor in his publications, and his references to fierce disputes between informants enliven his accounts. He himself did not escape criticism; one man scolded him for a half hour because a certain detail in an informant's account was a "great lie" (p. 53, n. 1; see also "Reise nach den Marquesas-Inseln," published in 1898 and 1902 in *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde*). He also published three brief articles relating to the Marquesas in other journals.

Although much of von den Steinen's material was destroyed, I have been told, during the Allied shelling of Hamburg in World War I, the manuscripts on art and mythology were saved. During 1925 and 1928 *Die Marquesaner und ihre Kunst* was published through the assistance

in New York of Franz Boas and the Emergency Society for German and Austrian Sciences. I have not learned, however, whether von den Steinen saw all of *Die Marquesaner* in print before his death at age seventy-four in 1929.

The manuscript on mythology was not published until about ten years after *Die Marquesaner.* Unfortunately *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* published only the collector's German translations without the Marquesan texts, although von den Steinen had taken down the Marquesan for nearly every one of the twenty-two narratives. I do not know what became of his Marquesan texts or of the other myths, if any, that he collected that are not in *Zeitschrift, Die Marquesaner,* and one or two short articles.

Of his collection of myths he has stated that he recorded them with few exceptions in Marquesan, which he then translated into German. He began by writing down the Marquesan, which he then read back to his informants without understanding the meaning. Then an interpreter—English or French—assisted him until he became fluent enough in Marquesan to no longer need such help.

His myth collection as published in *Zeitschrift* and now translated into English by Langridge is not entirely devoid of Marquesan texts but they consist of only brief quotations, some translated but others of which he commented "(translation missing)" (see, for example, three songs interspersed in the narrative about Pua-Hina-Noa, pp. 201–205). He also noted when he did not get the Marquesan (for example, p. 75). As far as can be determined now, his translations into German are probably fairly literal; that he numbered each sentence of every narrative (except "Tutona and Kena," pp. 132–149) suggests that he had done the same for the Marquesan in order to refer back to it as needed. A "sentence" may consist of two or more closely related statements. He also used the sentence numbers in some of his analyses and discussions, for example, of "The Island of Women" (pp. 75, 81–83, 93).

Of the five islands where von den Steinen collected myths, Hivaoa and Uapou are probably the best represented. Much was from Atuona Valley on the southern coast of Hivaoa. E. S. C. Handy observed that to Marquesans it was the cradle and source of native lore and the great center from which traditions spread to other islands (*The Native Culture in the Marquesas* [Honolulu, 1923], 7; *Marquesan Legends,* 3). Most of von den Steinen's Atuona lore came from Taua-Hoka-Ani, a woman who told five different stories. One wishes to have learned more about this remarkable narrator than can be gleaned from von den Steinen's references and Handy's long genealogy of her (*Native Culture,*

342–345). The genealogy, beginning with Animotua (Sky Father) and Nohoana (Resting), names some 140 pairs with Taua-Hoka-Ani and her husband in the next to last generation. The female in the last generation died in 1921 but her husband was alive when Handy was in the Marquesas. The prominence of women as keepers of tradition is indicated by the numerous narratives they told von den Steinen and by their always being the reciters of genealogies on certain occasions, particularly during formal festivals. Two women standing together would take turns to recite alternately, one the woman's name, the other, the man's (Handy, *Native Culture*, 342).

Most of Taua-Hoka-Ani's narratives are very long. Her connected series about Vehie-Oa and his son Ata (cognates include Wahieroa and Rata) has nearly two hundred sentences. The part about Kae in "The Island of Women" (pp. 82–93) and its continuation about Kae's grandson Pota (pp. 93–96) has 254 sentences. Her connected series about Maui is also long, as is that by another outstanding narrator, Chief Vaikau of Fatuhiva. Taua-Hoka-Ani's version of "Aotona Journey," consisting of ninety-nine sentences, is the longest of the four the collector obtained—three on Hivaoa and one on Fatuhiva from Chief Vaikau.

Taua-Hoka-Ani's narratives are not, however, the longest in the collection. Two by unidentified informants from unidentified islands are "Tanaoa," which is over four hundred sentences long and conjectured by Langridge and Terrell to have come from Uapou (p. xix), and "Pua-Hina-Noa," which is over 350 units long and thought to have come perhaps from Nukuhiva.

The length of the stories and the number of narrators demonstrate von den Steinen's success (like Bastian's) in locating well-informed and willing informants. He encountered, however, at least one individual who was supposed to know "Aotona Journey" but, as von den Steinen remarked, "was very reluctant or possibly ignorant" (p. 16). That the informant was descended from the hero of the story and that it could be revealed only to other descendants point, it seems to me, to reasons for his reluctance. The collector, nonetheless, got a brief version from another man in the same locality.

It is no surprise, of course, to find long genealogies and narratives in the Marquesas, for they are also characteristic of other Polynesian cultures. Cognates of the numerous proper names of people, stars, objects, and the like are recognizable elsewhere in Polynesia and beyond. For most stories von den Steinen conveniently supplied a list of names with his translations and explanations as part of his content analysis, and he frequently stated in which numbered sentence a certain name first appeared.

After hearing many narratives about legendary voyages he critically examined them, he states in his foreword to "Aotona Journey," for material that "contained a historical core and could advance the inquiry into Polynesian migrations" (p. 11). His four versions about voyages to Aotona (cognate Rarotonga) therefore "extremely pleased" him, especially since they "concerned the rare direction from east to west." The purpose of the voyages was usually to fetch the highly valued red feathers of the *kula* bird for ornaments.

He cryptically refers to native tradition and scholarly nineteenth-century Western theory about Rarotongan legendary history, a subject to which he returns in his conclusion. Rarotonga, he remarks (p. 11), was apparently an important stopping place during migrations, and the famous migration canoe *Arawa* was supposed to have been built there. Rarotongan islanders claimed that according to their traditions they had come from Tahiti, Samoa, and Tonga, and that they had colonized the Manihiki group, which, von den Steinen comments, was considered "historically reliable." At any rate his entire discussion of "Aotona Journey" is the most detailed and extensive of any narrative in the collection. He presents a breathtaking amount of contextual information not only from the Marquesas but from Rarotonga (where he interviewed, among others, an old man), other parts of Polynesia, and beyond. The diverse topics he discusses as relevant to understanding "Aotona Journey" include details from ethnography, linguistics, ornithology, zoology, botany, legendary history, navigation, geography, and meteorology!

He concludes that whatever modicum of historical fact "Aotona Journey" possessed had been transformed into fantasy and myth (p. 31). Skeptical of the narrative as a direct source of history, he stresses the need for "scientific criticism and comparison" of as many versions and texts of a narrative as possible "so that we do not need to believe what they [islanders] believed" (p. 31). "Myths," he stated, "have become history everywhere and local history is considerably interfered with by tribal jealousy and the reciprocal claims of the guardians of tradition." He regarded "Aotona Journey" as "a modest but good example of the insurmountable difficulty of defining legend and history within a Polynesian tradition. . . . Nothing makes me more suspicious than the results of research on when and how New Zealand was settled by the Maori. I consider the statement 'middle of the 13th century' a fantasy." He would have relished current theories that also question aspects of the statement's historicity!

Most of the characters in von den Steinen's collection did not travel between the Marquesas and distant islands like Aotona, however, but from one named Marquesan island or place to another, or to different

levels of either the sky or Hawaii (cognate Hawaiki), a land beneath the sea. Wherever they traveled they found a way of life reminiscent of that on earth, were able to communicate with the residents, and, after meeting challenges by guardians at the entry, pursued their goals. In "Vehie-Oa and Ata" as told in Atuona by Taua-Hoka-Ani (nos. 7, 8), Vehie-Oa's wife, unhappy because another woman had seduced her husband, went down to Hawaii to live with the Lord of the Night. When Vehie-Oa longed for her, searched, and found her, the reconciled couple came up from the Land of Night to the earth to live again on their land, where their son Ata (Rata) was born.

Two stories localized entirely on earth profess to explain the origin of the strained relations between places or islands. In no. 1, the bad feelings between the people of Nukuhiva and Fatuhiva came about after Large Eel from Nukuhiva on a visit to Small Eel of Fatuhiva was killed and eaten by the people of Fatuhiva. After quoting four versions by earlier collectors, von den Steinen, interested in the opposition's view, recorded two versions from Fatuhiva. He learned that in dividing up Large Eel's body with each district getting a part to be eaten, the people of Hanahouua on Fatuhiva, who got the head, did not eat it but kept it as taboo (pp. 3–4). Since then people from there are welcome in Large Eel's home, Taipi Valley, Nukuhiva, but those from elsewhere are killed unless they lie that they are from Hanahouua.

In his foreword to no. 2, von den Steinen states that duels between Hivaoa mountains left the losers smaller and jagged (p. 6). The victorious warrior then dueled with a challenger from Uapou, and, according to Uapou, was defeated, and his body left as a rocky promontory and his head a rocky island nearby, while the Uapou winner, once a dwarf, became large. When von den Steinen inquired at Atuona about the historical truth of this Hivaoa defeat, it was "meekly acknowledged" except by an old man who claimed the Hivaoa warrior "paid him [the Uapou winner] back thoroughly later on." The younger men denied this as being impossible since the Hivaoa warrior had lost his head. After several hours of "fierce dispute" over this "tricky question," the old man left for home "excited and very angry." Uapou's defeat of Hivaoa was still a sensitive subject at least into 1934 and 1935 when Samuel H. Elbert collected myths and chants in the Marquesas ("Marquesan Legends," manuscript, my personal copy and one in Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu).

Nature mythologists of earlier centuries carried to an extreme their interpretation and explanation of myths the world over as representations of natural phenomena—especially those of solar, lunar, stellar, and other celestial bodies—rather than merely about their human actors. To

a nature mythologist it was up to a scholar to locate beneath the human layer the natural phenomena and events it represented. The general principle of applying a monistic methodology and theory to mythology is age-old; each era tends to have its favored applications without, nonetheless, ignoring other possibilities.

Von den Steinen, despite his critical rejection of narratives as direct sources about historical events, interpreted some as astronomical myths. Marquesans themselves, it is true, as is evident from several stories, personified natural phenomena as beings with whom they could talk and interact. In the Fatuhiva version of "Aotona Journey," for instance, the voyagers carry on a repetitious, rhythmical question-and-answer conversation with each monthly star that appears as they travel for a long time and over a great distance from Hivaoa to Aotona.

One cannot, however, always determine from von den Steinen's discussion of a story how much represents his own interpretation of it as a nature myth and how much may have been based on his informant's commentary. In the Hivaoa story "Pohu" nothing suggests, as the collector does (p. 44), that the characters are really day and night winds, moon, stars, small cloud formations, and evening mists. In "The Hunchbacked Moon Night"—remember that this is von den Steinen's title—the hunchback is a parent who hides the fishing catch in the hump, thus depriving the children of food (p. 97). One or more of them discover this at night and replace the fish with live eels that by eating the entrails kill the parent. To von den Steinen the selfish parent (who may be either the mother or the father) is the moon and the spying and revenging sons are stars. "In this naturalistic way," the collector concludes, "the form of the full moon and its waning is explained" (p. 98).

In "The Island of Women" (pp. 75–82), Kae, the first male on the island, teaches Hina, its ruler, human mating and childbirth. Previously women had mated with tree roots and borne only girls and had died when the child was cut from the body. When Hina and Kae age she rejuvenates herself in the ocean, but as he cannot he leaves on a dolphin, Hina's brother, to prepare for their expected son. Von den Steinen concludes, "As the natural elements of the story lend themselves to interpretation as an astronomical myth, the following points could be generally valid" (p. 80), listing six. The gist is that Hina is the moon, Kae the sun, and the dolphin the "tidal wave of the new moon." Agreements and differences between the Marquesan and New Zealand versions about Kae suggest to von den Steinen that the Marquesan was probably the original because "the person of Hina has been preserved in a purer form" (p. 82).

Von den Steinen's preference for interpreting a story as a nature myth

rather than as history is most evident in his discussion of "Vehie-Oa and Ata" (pp. 52–64). Rata (Ata), who was famous in many islands, was, notes von den Steinen, "often thought to be a historical person since he seems to be especially vividly remembered" (pp. 63–64). It will be recalled that in order to make a canoe that he needed to travel to avenge his father's murder, he chopped down a suitable tree, intending to return the next day to continue his work. The next morning, however, the tree was upright with every chip and leaf in place. This happened repeatedly until Rata captured the leader of the spirits who had restored the tree because he had failed to honor the forest god. After he had made amends the spirits themselves built and manned his canoe. Von den Steinen interpreted the tree as the sky covered with fleecy clouds that the sun, Rata's adze, had divided and absorbed during the day; the chips, leaves, and other debris were small clouds. This "natural and simple explanation" of the story about the magical tree showed, according to von den Steinen, that Rata could not have been a historical figure.

Marquesan narrators incorporated much ethnographic description in their stories. That von den Steinen, however, calls attention to these cultural additions only in passing may be due to the amount of ethnographic data in his *Die Marquesaner und ihre Kunst*. In the narrative collection his longest comment is to an unnamed Atuona narrator's direct description of tattooing in "Tutona and Kena" (pp. 132–149). This is also one of the few stories that von den Steinen did not divide into numbered sentences. Of Kena's tattooing he states: "More reliable information on the procedure of tattooing than I asked for specifically is given in a legend I collected about the hero Kena, renowned for his magic. The tattooing of the whole body takes only seven days here. We are given a clear picture of the sequence of the special operations" (p. 128). (Many a Marquesan being tattooed probably wished that his ordeal would be finished in seven days like Kena's!)

In 1923, nearly twenty-five years after von den Steinen's visit, Handy, in *The Native Culture in the Marquesas*, extracted relevant cultural information from the stories that he and others had collected during 1920 and 1921 or copied from manuscripts, among them those in the Catholic mission. The collection *Marquesan Legends*, published in 1930, came principally from Hivaoa, Fatuhiva, and Nukuhiva, with Atuona providing the most. Almost every Atuona story was from Haapuani, Handy's talented coworker and principal informant, who had listened as a boy to his elders and later to schoolmates and his wife's father. The other sources and their stories are named on page 4 rather

than with each Marquesan text. Handy, despite finding only a fragmentary knowledge of the old lore (*Native Culture*, 3), has in his 1930 collection about ten stories in Marquesan with English translations; two dozen English "resumes" (as he calls them) that are often complete stories or very long summaries with the collector's name, island, and frequently district; and a few pieces.

Among topics treated in his introduction to the collection, in addition to linguistic data, are differences between islands in vocalization, "trick" languages based mainly on transposition of syllables or imitations of Tahitian sounds either to amuse or hide meaning, and education of both sexes in legends under professional bards. Handy has much more information, however, on education, types of charts, festivals, and customs relating to chanting in *Native Culture* (314–341).

Two other major collections of Marquesan narratives besides those by von den Steinen and Handy are by Samuel H. Elbert and Henri Lavondès. In a year in the Marquesas (1934–1935) during which he visited several of the islands, Elbert spent much time on Tahuata and Uapou, where he obtained most of his narratives; a few came from Hivaoa. His unpublished manuscript, "Marquesan Legends," has about forty-nine stories, which are very long, like many collected by others; and two genealogies, one of Chief Kahueinui and the other of Te Vahine Mata. The stories were either told to him in Marquesan by elderly men and women or, in one instance at least, copied from a notebook in which one man had written a story as told by his father. Each story has the narrator's name, his or her locality or island, the date of collection, and, frequently, explanations inserted in the narratives or added at the end by the storyteller, Elbert, or both. Unfortunately, except for an occasional narrative, the manuscript contains mostly Elbert's English translations of his Marquesan texts. He has provided, however, both the Marquesan and English for the many chants and songs about legendary characters that are composed in old and new styles and inserted in the stories.

Elbert's foreword, while touching only briefly on many features of style and content, offers leads for future comparisons and analyses. He found, in general, that the stories portray the ancient culture through both concrete details about which narrators tried to be as accurate as possible and more abstract data relating to ethics, morals, taboos, and social hierarchy. Observing, as had von den Steinen and other collectors, Marquesan reluctance to tell any tale that reflected negatively on their valley or island, Elbert, nonetheless, collected several illustrative examples. The collection also includes the opposite side's viewpoint.

Importantly complementing and supplementing this manuscript is his publication in 1941 of a large number of chants and love songs with Marquesan texts, English translations, and often detailed explanations in "Chants and Love Songs of the Marquesa Islands, French Polynesia" (*Journal of the Polynesian Society* 50:53–91). Most are from Tahuata but some come from Uapou, Hivaoa, and Fatuhiva. Contributors include many who also told Elbert stories found in the manuscript. Elbert singles out Kave, Puko'i, and Mahana as especially helpful with chants. Each poem is identified as to informant, island, and the Marquesan name for the type of song.

Among topics Elbert deals with in his introduction to "Chants and Love Songs" are linguistic details, poetic qualities of the language, music and dance, as well as the attitudes, superior or inferior, of different islands toward each other's dialectical variations. Even more revealing are Marquesan and Tahitian attitudes toward each other. Many Marquesans have worked in Papeete, and some Tahitians now live in the Marquesas. Tahitian residents "consider their own culture superior and oblige the Marquesans to speak to them in Tahitian." Nevertheless, "Marquesans thoroughly enjoy speaking it" and composers of modern love songs like to use Tahitian words for euphony and elegance. Moreover, "as a *lingua franca* in eastern Polynesia Tahitian is very stylish" (ibid.: 60, 61). It is not surprising that the narratives also use some Tahitian words.

In "Chants and Love Songs," Elbert classified each example as ancient (61–75), early modern (75–85), or modern (85–91) and described at length its principal features. The ancient chants are simple, direct, and religious, frequently have the nature of causative spells, and often refer to gods and heroes, of whom Kena and the Lord of the Night are two examples. To Elbert these chants are more ethnology than art; and they do, I find, clarify certain elements in the narratives. In the early-modern poems Tahitian influence begins to appear. These songs use florid, figurative, and symbolic language, and at times exult rather morbidly in grief. Of special interest is the leading composer and musician, Moa Tetua of Tahuata, a blind leper who died about 1900, whose songs stand out for imagery and individuality; people gathered illegally at night outside the leprosarium to hear his concerts. Of his numerous compositions, four were performed for Elbert's collection by Mahana. In the modern category are love songs accompanied by dance, which were composed until about 1930 to celebrate special events or to tease young lovers. They have more word play than earlier compositions and show whimsical humor, eroticism, and praise of the beauties of nature

as well as an increasing number of references to Western culture and religion. The missionaries "relentlessly fought" the love songs "because of the erotic symbolism of some of the words." The wickedness of the love songs that Marquesans performed for Elbert at Tahuata was the subject of an entire sermon (ibid.:53).

Lavondès and his collaborator Samuel Teikiehuupoko have produced two volumes of narratives from Uapou, *Récits Marquisiens* (Papeete, 1964, 1966), each with an introductory essay. The Marquesan text with a French translation accompanies each narrative together with the narrator's name and valley, but not the date. The collection presumably was made in the mid-1960s.

While acknowledging narrative variability in past epochs, Lavondès stated that he wished to record impartially and nonselectively the currently known narratives, and to familiarize the now acculturated Marquesans with their rich heritage. It was also a duty, he declared, for French Polynesia to participate through the Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique d'Outre-Mer, Centre ORSTOM de Papeete, in salvaging knowledge of the old culture, begun by Handy and others at Bishop Museum. Contributing to this goal are the narratives and his copious footnotes about the culture reflected in the stories. He also wanted abundant material for linguistic study, and like many elsewhere he recognized the value of narratives for this. On the whole the language in the narratives, he stated, is archaic compared with the present language, and the younger generation does not understand certain words in some chants. It is unfortunate that the Marquesan texts of von den Steinen and Elbert are unavailable for study, since those two scholars also collected texts to learn the language and became fluent in it.

On Uapou Lavondès encountered not only vestiges of traditional culture but a small group of elderly men and women regarded as authentic narrators, unlike others who had merely vague ideas about traditional lore. The six stories in the first volume are from Lavondès's most gifted narrator, Kehueinui, who, having once written them down as learned from Pupe, an old blind man, later lost the manuscript. The portion of his repertoire that he wrote down for Lavondès—about half—proved superior in quality to the tape-recorded remainder.

The second volume has only two different stories. But for the one centering on the life and adventures of Taheta and his son Vaka-Uhi there are four versions by four narrators, one of them Kehueinui. To illustrate the need to get several versions of the same story, Lavondès describes how each version supplements the other three to clarify the plot and increase the chance of knowing the totality of the episodes. He provides

outstanding description and analysis of the four storytellers' backgrounds, abilities, styles, and the like. Each emerges as a memorable personality with a distinctive talent. Kehueinui, the most accomplished, showed skill in his sense of measure and balance of different developments. The second proved the most intelligent, reflective, mature, and modest. The third provided incidents not in the other versions but present in Handy's collection, included more archaic aspects, tended to be dry, and was least inclined to exploit literary possibilities. The highly verbal fourth spun out his version from his knowledge of traditional subjects and was unembarrassed by the contradictions and lacunae that he filled in with often clumsy inventions. Lavondès also points out that besides the opportunity to learn how differently each narrator told his version, one might also consider doing structural analysis when one has several versions of the same narrative. He also calls attention to how one can discern through comparison the narrators' transfers of stylistic features and ornamental elements from one story to another. Further, Lavondès indicates the stories are valuable sources preserving ethnographic data about the ancient culture. He recognizes, of course, how many Tahitian, French, and other non-Marquesan terms have come into the narratives.

Because few narratives were recorded before 1897, these four collections, ranging over a seventy-year period from von den Steinen to Lavondès, constitute the memories of some of the elders and their descendants. Von den Steinen, Handy, Elbert, and Lavondès have salvaged a vast amount of narrative lore, to which they added informative commentaries of their own or of their informants. The collections, although superficially described here, will, I hope, suggest innumerable topics for intensive study of the Marquesan lore as a unit and of its relation to other Polynesian narratives. One is struck immediately by the persistence in the Marquesas ever since the first few stories were collected of certain plots, particularly those relating to island geography. Also, each collector has interestingly described his principal informants' personalities, repertoires, styles, and the like, but more can be learned from further comparisons. The stories, as have been noted, are large repositories of ethnographic data, especially of the past. One can extend the list of possible studies of these stories and never come to the end.

The stories are very readable for even a casual reader who likes to know about a different literature and culture; one can easily become immersed in them, feel transported, and lose a sense of time. The collections are a rich heritage of the Marquesan people, and Langridge and Terrell through their translation into English of von den Steinen's Ger-

man collection have reminded us of how much he added to knowledge about that heritage.

NOTES

1. The introduction to the translation merely states, "They [the stories] eventually appeared, in 1934 and 1936 in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* . . . some years after von den Steinen's death" (p. xv). Because the page and volume numbers in *Zeitschrift* were not cited I give them here for anyone wishing to consult the original German.

2. "Contents" omits "Tono-Fiti," the collector's twenty-first narrative; "Pua-Hina-Noa" is his twenty-second. "Tono-Fiti," however, is included in the English translation.

3. The earliest publication of the song was probably in 1805 in a German journal on music, which I have not seen. For the reference see C. R. H. Taylor, *A Pacific Bibliography* (Oxford, 1965), 180.

4. Somehow overlooked was the introduction's lapse in translating the line as "perhaps a half a year too late" (p. xiv).