## REVIEWS

Richard Feinberg, *Polynesian Seafaring and Navigation: Ocean Travel in Anutan Culture and Society.* Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1988. Pp. xvii, 210, illustrated, index. US$30.00.

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The significance of Richard Feinberg's latest contribution from his continuing ethnographic studies of Anuta, a tiny Polynesian outlier, is, at least, twofold. First, he has given us an extremely well-written and comprehensive description of the sailing technology and seamanship of Anuta. Second, at a time when traditional boatbuilding, sailing, and navigational practices are rapidly being lost to the more easily learned Western techniques, Feinberg has endowed Oceanic studies with a permanent record to complement the previous literature on sailing technology.

The pioneering works of Alkire and Goodenough, and the later studies by Gladwin, Lewis, McCoy, and others, are important documents of the disappearing maritime masteries of the remote coral-atoll peoples of Micronesia, Lost, however, many decades earlier, were the great oceangoing vessels and sailing skills of the high-island Polynesians. In this regard, Finney and his Hawaiian colleagues have, through rigorous historical reconstruction, revived the forgotten art of the Polynesians with the fabrication and extensive, successful voyaging of *Hokule'a.* But what ethnographic evidence have we on record attesting to the maritime skills of the Polynesian?

Feinberg, inspired by Firth, has been studying Tikopia's Polynesian neighbors since 1972. Relatively untouched by outsiders, the Anutans have managed to maintain much of their ancestral lifeway, including

their traditional technology for boatbuilding, fishing, and seamanship. These are assuredly not Polynesia's Vikings. Anutan vessels are small (the island's largest canoe is thirty-two feet in length) and their journeys restricted to local fishing and limited interisland travel. However, the Anutans' adaptation to the sea is a topic of merit and Feinberg's study of these aspects of a Polynesian island culture is, especially for students of oceanic maritime studies, a distinctive addition to the literature on the Pacific islands.

Today, the Anutans rarely sail for reasons other than local offshore fishing, though one or two trips a year of thirty miles are made to hunt birds on desolate Patutaka. The seventy-mile interisland voyage to Tikopia is part of a more adventurous seagoing history prior to 1950, of which we learn from documentation and the collection of oral accounts of past voyages. Through these oral accounts of past voyages and from contemporary oceangoing activity, we discover that the sea and things of the sea totally intermesh with the cultural life of the Anutans.

Feinberg first presents us with a brief introduction to the island and the people, and thereafter, the volume informs of the cultural significance of the ocean in the everyday lives of the people of Anuta. Complemented by a splendid collection of photographs and drawings, we are taken through each stage of canoe construction, from tree selection, to hull completion, to rigging and equipment. Descriptions of hull shapes, lashing and caulking techniques, outrigger design and fitting, sail and rigging systems-- with each part of the canoe labeled and glossed--display the rigor with which the research was conducted.

Anutan seamanship, the practices of paddle and sail as a tacking strategy, is discussed. Differences are noted between Micronesian sailing canoes with their identical bow and stern for reverse masting: Anutan canoes have a defined bow and stern. The mast is never reversed, thus the outrigger always remains to port. Contrastive to the unique and effective method of tacking for the vessels of the Carolines, the Anutans sail and then paddle to effect the traverse. This strategy, since these vessels cannot sail close-hauled, is both time consuming and labor intensive. To compensate for the comparatively poor sailing qualities of their vessels, the Anutans sail when winds are most favorable to the particular design of their craft.

Lacking a fringe reef, the Anuta use their vessels primarily for fishing. Offshore piloting, not navigation, is basic to the requirements of seamanship. It is true, especially since the Anutans have long past given up long-distance sailing and navigation, that their seamanship is less sophisticated than that of the Carolinians. Courses are essentially set by

sun, stars, and wave configurations. Feinberg discovers only six named directions for the Anuta sailors and compares these to the more extensive sets of directions specified by Lewis and Gladwin for the Carolines and Firth for neighboring Tikopia. However, whether or not contemporarily employed, he discovers twenty-two important named Anutan navigational constellations. This may indicate a past of more extensive interisland voyaging and a use of the sea for more than offshore fishing. Lacking a complex and abstract concept of *etak,* the Anuta distinguish star paths and wave types and employ land-finding birds as a navigational tool.

An important discovery is the significance of birds in the many aspects of Anutan life. Canoes are like birds and the parts of vessels are named accordingly. The sky is dominated by the bird, voyages are metaphorically depicted as birds in poetry and song, and members of voyages are "birds of the ocean." Bird symbolism is rich and lends to a comparison of the emphasis of birds in the lore of other oceanic peoples.

Discussing the importance of the social relations involved with all aspects of life for a people surrounded by, and dependent upon the sea, the author provides us with an excellent analysis of the sociology of Anutan sailing. Folklore, initiation rites, social association, canoe construction and ownership, crew selection, and the communal aspects of fishing are assessed. Also noted are the culturally categorized differences between expert fisherman, expert sailor, and the navigator, who, as was true on Gladwin's Puluwat, are the most highly esteemed members of the island society.

The concluding chapter is one of personal adventure. During his initial field research in 1972, Feinberg' joined two canoes for the thirty-mile, three-day round-trip to Patutaka. In reflection, he calls the voyage uncomfortable and interesting. The reader may make his or her own judgments. Upon return, when the canoe was dragged to the beach, the bow broke off.

The Andrew Sharp-Peter Buck debate over accidental or purposeful voyaging is briefly addressed. Feinberg, from the Anuta evidence, argues for both possibilities. Anutans did get lost at sea and made landfalls different than those intended. In the past, some voyagers never returned or were never again heard of. But, we find documented in the appendixes records of successful Anutan voyages to Tikopia for the last 150 years, as well as some Tikopian voyages to Anuta. Further, the appendixes offer lists of Anuta canoe ownership since 1973, star paths to Patutaka and Tikopia, auxiliary navigational techniques, and a descrip-

tion of a voyage to Tikopia, all in the Anutan language (with translation). A glossary of Anutan nautical terms is also included.

Why do the Anutans sail? Why go to sea? Feinberg offers clues. For these island people, the sea is their life but they also value the strong, fearless, adventurous man. These values may be a throwback to warrior times. And then, there remains a curiosity and a lust for adventure that appears embedded in most Pacific societies. These people derive from ancestors who have left their mark on every habitable piece of land in the extensive Polynesian triangle. And Feinberg now leaves his mark on the literature of the Polynesian seafaring cultures.