

Book Reviews

Maude, H. E. *The Evolution of the Gilbertese Boti: An Ethnohistorical Interpretation*. Polynesian Society Memoir, No. 35. Wellington, 1963 (68 pp.) 6s.

This essay represents the most recent, and probably the most important, of Maude's contributions to the ethnography of the Gilbert Islands. The author has summarized and interpreted a great deal of previously unpublished data, most of it collected by himself and by the well-known Sir Arthur Grimble, one of his predecessors as Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. Maude's work makes available a body of material that can no longer be collected in the field, since many of the practices he describes were abandoned long ago, and since even the old men who informed him and Grimble about pre-Christian customs are now gone. Our knowledge of the structure of many Polynesian societies remains ambiguous because similar accounts do not exist for them.

"*Boti*" is the Gilbertese term for a place in the community meeting house (*maneaba*), as well as for the group whose members have the right of sitting in such a place. According to Maude, affiliation with a *boti* is governed by patrilineal descent from its founder. The first part of the essay deals with the establishment of the meeting-house organization by Tematawarebwe, the leader of a band of immigrants from Samoa, and with the traditional origins of the separate *boti*. The author next discusses the relationship of the *boti* to the residential group (*kainga*) that occupied its village land, and to the bilateral kindred (*utu*) that regulated the inheritance of land. The essay closes with a description of certain characteristics and activities associated with the *boti* as a corporate group: exogamy, totemism, the exercise of rights to fishing grounds and certain other property, the playing of a specific role in meeting-house ceremonial, and the reception of distant kinsmen from other islands. One section is devoted to the decay of the *boti* under pressure from the missions and government.

It should be pointed out that the traditional account of the origin of the meeting-house and its divisions need not be taken as a literal record. In Samoa, from where the *boti* organization is said to have been derived, genealogies and orders of ceremonial precedence are continually revised to fit the changing distribution of political power (Mead 1930: 21-23). Perhaps the true significance of the native histories lies in their revelation of the alignments of descent groups at the beginning of the contact period. More data on the mutual relationships of various *boti*, outside the meeting-house context, would be desirable. It would be interesting to know whether a close association existed between *boti* tracing descent from a pair of brothers, and the extent to which the high ritual status enjoyed by certain *boti* was reflected in secular affairs.

Maude makes it clear that traditional South Gilbertese society adhered to

an ideology of patrilineal descent (pp. 25-28). Individuals were affiliated with their mothers' *boti* for various reasons, however. The position of a headman without sons passed to a daughter's son (pp. 25-27). Children moved into their maternal *boti* if their father's sitting place, or descent group, became too crowded (p. 27). If the children of transferred individuals belonged to the new *boti* also, then affiliation was ambilateral in fact, even if the higher levels of genealogies included only male ancestors. Although land rights were inherited bilaterally and therefore, in Maude's view, independently of *boti* affiliation, the fact that particular plots continued to be associated with each descent group (e.g., p. 16; p. 19, fn. 32) may point to the sort of connection between the two that is reported by Goodenough (1955: 73-74). The author is undoubtedly correct in describing the *o* as an enclosed house site (pp. 32-33) rather than as an unrestricted descent group (Goodenough 1955: 73). I recorded this term as being used only in Maude's sense in the northern islands. The problem of the rule of descent will only be resolved by further ethnographic field work in the Southern Gilberts.

A number of statements about traditional Gilbertese culture accompany Maude's description of the *boti*. We are told, for example, that illegitimate children inherited almost nothing from their fathers (p. 20). Two sections are devoted to the relations between affinal relatives of opposite sex (pp. 38-40, 59-61). The author is the first to present a readily accessible schedule of Gilbertese kin terms since Lewis H. Morgan (pp. 61-62). Current ethnographic studies will find this essay indispensable for the interpretation of the remnants of the ancient social organization that have been incorporated into modern Gilbertese society.

BERND LAMBERT
University of Pittsburgh

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1955 "A Problem in Malayo-Polynesian Social Organization." *American Anthropologist*, 57: 71-84.
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- Goodenough, Ward Hunt. *Cooperation in Change: An Anthropological Approach to Community Development*. Russell Sage Foundation, 1963. pp. \$6.50.

In the minds of many persons concerned with the future and the progress of Micronesia, anthropology is associated with a vague conspiracy to keep things as they are. It is fortunate, therefore, at this time, that "Cooperation in Change" has been published. Dr. Goodenough has presented a consistent and coherent synthesis of current theory in anthropology as it applies to community development. No attempt is made to present every viewpoint in anthropology, but rather to build a systematic frame of reference, drawing heavily from functional