

## Book Reviews

NAURU: PHOSPHATE AND POLITICAL PROGRESS. By Nancy Viviani. 1970. Australian National University Press, Canberra. 215 p. \$5.75.—This superb chronicle follows the rise of an island nation from its traditional origins in four major stages. The first stage covers the period of pre-European life, the second from 1888–1920, the third from 1921–1947, and the final stage from 1947–1968. Nauruan traditional life, in the period before European contact, is described as a stratified society comprised of three classes. A blurred distinction existed between the first two classes but the serfs remained apart. Descent was matrilineal with clan exogamy and uxorilocal residence. Inheritance reflected a mixture of matrilineal and patrilineal principles with women inheriting from both sides. During this period “the Nauruans cherished their children, brought them up without corporal punishment and schooled them in the art of generous giving” (p. 8). This exemplary trait continues to be a vital part of their cultural heritage till this day. The beachcombers were the first to penetrate this island culture. They acted as cultural brokers facing both the island and to the world beyond, for they followed the mores of their adopted Nauruan culture and mediated the changes which were to come from outside it.

The second stage begins with the agreement between Great Britain and Germany which placed Nauru and the Marshall Islands within the German sphere of influence. In the normal course of events, Nauru as part of the German administered territory, would have become part of the Japanese Mandated Islands, and subsequently a portion of the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. But an Australian ship, the *Messina*, arrived first on Nauru at the start of World War I and began a chain of events which was to lead to a self-supporting, independent, island nation. The German Administration, as in Truk, brought peace to a war weary island by simply saying “drop your guns”. The missionaries, who first came during this colonial administration, gave impetus to “preserving the vitality of the

language” (p. 27) by producing works about and in the Nauruan language. The author through some oversight made Father Kayser, one of these missionaries, a member of the Society of the Divine Word, which publishes *Anthropos* (p. 27). Though he made a substantial contribution to this periodical, Father Kayser remained a member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Perhaps the most significant event of this period was the discovery of phosphate on Nauru and Ocean islands by Albert Ellis. This mineral would provide the basis of continued agricultural productivity in Australia and New Zealand for the greater part of the century and the economic foundation of the island nation. Labor had to be recruited for this developing industry and the island grew in population as it received workers from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, China, and “Europe”.

During the third stage lasting until 1947 four communities grew up in isolation—the Nauruan, Gilbert-Ellice, the Chinese, and the “European” under the British Phosphate Commission and the Civil Administration of Australia. The author says that “the social separation of the Nauruans which was engendered by the imposition of a dominant alien culture, confirmed by withdrawal from an all pervading industry, and reinforced by a paternalistic administration, was not at this time disadvantageous to the Nauruans as a people” (p. 59). I agree that such a period of “benign neglect” allowed traditional forms of social life and social control to regenerate. The results of this policy were interrupted by the war where “a pattern of forced labor . . . made for a complete reorientation of their views on work.” (p. 86).

Early in the last stage one finds the initial step in the rise of self government through the formation of the Nauru Local Government Council. By 1955 a newly elected member of the Council, Hammer DeRoburt, becomes the Head Chief. He would lead his people through the next decade, as the idea of a nation grew, through a series of resettlement alternatives with Australia, to independence and eventual control of its own phosphate industry.

This is a unique achievement in the course of political life in the Pacific for as the author puts it "the attainment of independence by the Nauruan people has wider significance for it shows that where economic and social circumstances are favourable, the attainment of legal sovereignty need present no insuperable problems." (p. 177)

The author also provides an excellent set of tables and references as an appendix to her work. This tale of one people's journey to nationhood is readable, informative, and enjoyable. A fine gift to a new island nation!—FR. THOMAS B. McGRATH, S. J., *Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam, Agaña, Guam.*

THE SEA-GRASSES OF THE WORLD. By C. den Hartog. 1970. *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen, afd. Natuurkunde, 2nd Ser.*, 59(1): 1–275, 63 line figures, 31 half-tone plates. \$15.40. This valuable contribution to Pacific botanical literature provides a workable taxonomy for the ecologically important flowering-plant segment of the marine vegetation. Since the times of P. Ascherson, F. J. Ruprecht, and K. D. E. König seventy to a hundred and seventy years ago no similarly comprehensive single monographic treatment of this ecologically, evolutionarily and sometimes commercially important group of plants has appeared. The author of the present volume has combined the results of his many years of active field and laboratory study at the Rijksherbarium of the Netherlands with a review of the world's widely scattered published information and produced what would seem to be both an illuminatingly detailed and logically reduced, useful, comprehensive treatise.

One could use a guide to the nontaxonomic information such as a subject index. However, the Table of Contents at the front is accompanied by page numbers leading to the sections within the genera, and there is an index to the recognized taxa and names. A book reviewer would conventionally conclude this treatise is nicely printed and serviceably paperbound. The text is accompanied by 31 well-selected photographs of different of the seagrass com-

munities from a wide geographic range. The few typographic goofs will only really disturb the author himself.

Several taxonomic novelties are presented. Two new genera are described, the monotypic *Heterozostera* (Holotype: *Zostera tasmanica* (Ascherson) and *Thalassodendron* (Holotype: *Zostera ciliata* Forskal), with two species. New names at the species level are: *Amphibolis griffithii*, *Heterozostera tasmanica*, *Posidonia ostenfeldii*, *Thalassodendron ciliatum*, *T. pachyrhizum*, *Zostera americana*, and *Z. mucronata*. All these novelties applying to newly recognized or named specific taxa are provided with Latin descriptions, illustrations, and Type specimen selections. However, the Type specimen for the basionym of *Heterozostera tasmanica*, which is the Type for the generic name, *Heterozostera*, is not designated. Most of these new species names are for entities previously recognized but which would not otherwise have tenable names in the present taxonomy.

The vegetative morphology of the species is given detailed attention with many of the taxonomically useful criteria being illustrated by clear line drawings. A key to the genera is based on sterile material. This key is found to be a blessing to the nonspecialists, the ecologists, and morphologists, for it will greatly aid them in identifying these usually sterile plants and will thus serve as an inducement to experimental nontaxonomic studies. Likewise the keys to the specific taxa are also largely based on the leaves and rhizomes.

Frequently the author clearly notes gaps in our knowledge of this group, e.g., he draws attention to the structures that need interpretation, such as the inflorescence and flowers of the Zosterioideae and their retinaculæ. Similarly attention is directed to gaps in distributional, ecological, phenological, and chromosomal information. Thus, this treatise should form a guide to those having opportunities to make such special studies of these plants.

Perhaps a major interest of den Hartog's is in the extensive ecological information, including biogeography, derived from personal observations in the field and herbarium. Again, numerous odd situations are revealed. For example, *Heterozostera* is known from a good many collections in all the southern