

eign investment, foreign aid, tourists, and on an international market for island resources is based on a faith in a continuously expanding world economy. To abandon completely the traditional expertise of their elders in resource management and utilization would be a commitment and faith in a healthy world economy; they would be burning the bridges to return to partial self-sufficiency of island communities if their faith in the world economy was not upheld.

The fourth and most urgent message is an implicit plea to quickly save as much of this knowledge as possible before it dissipates as the elderly pass away. Scientists should document knowledge of the natural history of marine life and traditional systems of utilization and management of marine resources in the culture, but the actual skills and knowledge adequate to use in daily life cannot be recorded in books. It would be of benefit to all if practical skills and expertise were retained by at least a few of the younger generation through experience. This is easy to suggest but difficult to accomplish because training in traditional fishery skills takes time and experience. It is understandable that as individuals, the island youths become impatient and ambitious for western world facilities and work in town.

The book was written smoothly, without technical jargon or erudite references in the text (although well over 300 references were cited from the literature for support of his statements). It can be read quickly and with enjoyment by laymen or scientists and the basic concepts and messages come across clearly. For the myriad of facts about fishes, fishhooks, and culture, it is best kept as a reference book. This book is of particular interest to both laymen and scientists interested in Pacific island culture, marine biology, resource management, fishing or folk lore.

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THE PALAU ISLANDS IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN by Karl Semper (translated by M. L. Berg, edited by R. D. Craig). Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam. 1982. 319p. \$8.50—Karl Semper's *Die Palau-Inseln im Stillen Ocean* is not only a very valuable document for students

of Palauan history and culture, it is also an engrossing travelogue in the best sense of the term. Now Mark Berg has provided us with a splendid English translation of this work which should entertain and inform anyone with even a casual interest in Micronesia.

Semper was a German zoologist who spent nearly a year in Palau in 1862–63. His account of his stay in the islands is no dry catalogue of zoological matters. In fact only a small part of the book deals directly with zoology. Semper's curiosity embraced many subjects beyond those in which he was formally trained. He became fascinated with Palauan people and his book contains the only known descriptions of certain of their customs and ceremonies. The varied ways in which individual Palauans perceived him and reacted to him—as a personal friend, potential husband or lover, political or economic ally or enemy—form the thread which holds his lively narrative together.

Imagine the errors that would be made by non-western anthropologists if they based their descriptions of western culture on what they were told about Christian rules of conduct. The same kinds of errors have often crept into the writings of western social scientists who based their description of a nonwestern culture on what they are told by informants concerning its formal rules. But Semper's account is free of such abstractions. He had time to gather his observations on Palauan life through day-to-day personal involvement in it, and this makes his conclusions more interesting and believable than if he had relied mainly on informants for his data.

Inevitably, nevertheless, Semper's perceptions of Palauan motives and beliefs were sometimes flawed. Palauan readers may find some of his gaffes amusing—a foretaste of some of the cultural blunders made today by Peace Corps workers, academics and other visitors to Palau. But such misunderstandings are inevitable when two cultures meet.

Palauan readers will also find much of interest in the book and will perhaps marvel at how different life was in Palau 120 years ago when to walk outside the limits of one's village was sometimes to risk literally losing one's head—when the chiefs held the power of instant death over commoners—when, according to Semper, there were three times as many Palauans as there are today—when a Palauan chief would object to a sketch of his head, maintaining that since his body was not

shown, the sketch must represent his beheading—when there were hundreds of cows in Koror—when Europeans were looked upon as almost godlike sources of wisdom and power.

Semper describes some of the depredations of other Europeans in Palau, notably the clever, unscrupulous trader, Andrew Cheyne. He concludes that "this small people (the Palauans) appears to be condemned to irredeemable ruin because of their intensive dealings with Europeans. Is that our celebrated cultural mission around the world? That the spread of our civilization requires that we first eliminate those peoples who cannot bear it? Pfui! on the wretches who clothe their self-interest in the colors of humanitarianism and who sacrifice hecatombs of people without shiver while not pardoning the "savage" who takes home the head of a beaten enemy as a trophy".

The extent to which Semper's predictions concerning the demise of Palauan culture have come to pass would make a lively and revealing subject for debate in high school classes in Koror—to which, by the way, I recommend this book. It is, of course, a great pity that Palau does not have its own written records of its past. In the absence of such, Semper's account gives us much to reflect on.

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THE FIRST TAINT OF CIVILIZATION: A HISTORY OF THE CAROLINE AND MARSHALL ISLANDS IN PRE-COLONIAL DAYS by F. X. Hezel, S. J. Pacific Islands Monograph Series, No. 1. University of Hawaii Press. 1983. 365 p. — This is a superb book. For the person with some familiarity with Micronesia, it answers innumerable questions and fills in many of the gaps in his knowledge. To the person to whom Micronesia is an unfamiliar geographic term, it is a very readable and effective introduction to a section of the world in which the U. S. has been much involved during the last forty years. It is an example that illustrates that serious history need not be dull, but can be as readable as a good novel.

The book starts with a preface that is an effective short geographical essay. The first chapter, beginning with Magellan's visit to Guam, de-

tails the early Spanish and Portuguese voyages of discovery in the western Pacific when some of the Caroline and Marshall Islands became known to Europeans.

From those earliest contacts on, the book unfolds the increasing European and, later, American influences in the Micronesian archipelagoes. After the "Spanish Century" (16th), the Spanish influence outside the Marianas waned and the other Europeans and Americans gradually expanded their roles. In his account of the next two centuries the author generally divides the outsiders that were gradually becoming the dominant influences into three classes: the whalers, missionaries, and traders. The interests of these groups were generally antithetical, but the changes wrought in the native cultures were uniformly drastic and irreversible. Desire for western goods, liquor, and guns, then enforced pacification, Christianization, the decay of taboos and authority of chiefs, and serious depopulation, all thoroughly documented and well described, seem to add up to profound change. One then finds it difficult to follow the author in his conclusion, at the onset of the Colonial Period, in the last paragraph of the book, that the Micronesians, in spite of all that these two centuries had brought, "had emerged with their lives, their land...and their social institutions rather well intact" and that "they had demonstrated their ability to adapt to the unfamiliar and could do so, again and again if need be". One can follow this if he is referring only to the biological populations, but it is hard to see that the cultures have survived at all intact.

Of interest, especially in light of the author's own religious affiliation, is his very thorough elucidation of the performance of the Protestant missionaries. He studies this phenomenon with great interest and thoroughness. This attention results in what is probably the most sympathetic yet perhaps the fairest evaluation of missionary history in the Pacific that this reviewer has encountered.

Factually, the research has been thorough, and the result beyond reproach. Only one error was noted in a thorough and careful reading, worth mentioning perhaps because of its very triviality —on page 290 is a mention of "nipa huts" in Jaluit, where nipa palms are unknown. Proofreading has been practically faultless. The handling of reference material, so it in no way intrudes on the reading, is thorough by means of