

Foreword

This volume contains a selection of papers presented at the Micronesian Archaeological Conference, convened on Guam September 9–12, 1987. The Guam conference was the first international scholarly meeting entirely devoted to Micronesian prehistory and physical anthropology. It was jointly sponsored by the University of Guam and the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association and was funded in part by the University of Guam, the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. In-kind support was provided by the Government of Guam Department of Parks and Recreation. On behalf of conference co-organizer Michael Graves and my colleagues at the University of Guam, it is a pleasure to acknowledge the generous support of these agencies. Without it we could not have had such a productive and enjoyable meeting nor indeed have produced the present volume.

The papers here have been revised since their initial presentation but still fairly represent the data and ideas exchanged at the conference. A complete set of as-read conference papers and VHS format video tapes of the seven conference sessions have been deposited at the Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam. Not all the conference papers are included in the present volume; some are published elsewhere, and some are being modified for later publication.

For assistance in editing this collection I thank Michael Graves and Gary Heathcote and gratefully acknowledge the expert guidance and tangible help of *Micronesica* editor Christopher Lobban in bringing the publication to completion. The fold-out map showing the location of all Micronesian islands mentioned in the text was kindly provided by Conrado Redila and Bruce Karolle.

After the introductory paper written for this volume, the papers have been grouped according to the themes of the seven conference sessions. The historic preservation session generated a lively discussion of contemporary issues of interest to professionals and the public, which resulted in the passing of twelve Resolutions. These Resolutions have been reproduced below.

“Historic Preservation in Micronesia: New Political Realities and the Professional Archaeologist” had few formal papers, and none is included here. Of more limited public interest was the session devoted to specialized analyses useful to the prehistoric archaeologist, “Recent Advances in Artifactual Analyses and Typological-Distribution Studies.” However, despite their technical focus, these works have important general implications for understanding the formal variability in some of the most commonly encountered archaeological remains in the Micronesian region. Authors include Stephen Athens, Brian Butler, James Carucci and Steven Mitchell.

The session entitled “Archaeological Models and Cultural Information” had the greatest number of paper presenters. Several of these, offering a variety of perspectives from ethnology and history as well as prehistoric and historic archaeology, are included here. Authors are William Alkire and Keiko Fujimura, Suzanne Falgout, David Hanlon, Kenneth Knudson, Laurie Lucking and Richard Parmentier, Glenn Petersen, and Robert Pickering.

Papers from the two settlement pattern sessions (“The Initial Settlement of Micronesia and Models of the Earliest High and Low Island Adaptations” and “The Late Prehistoric Adaptive Systems and their Environmental Contexts”) come next. The geographical scope of these papers is broad, as is the range of problems explored. Together they indicate the complex realities that can be anticipated and are in fact beginning to be documented with regard to changing human land use through time in the dynamic island environments of Micronesia. Authors include Stephen Athens, William Ayres, Bruce Masse, Kanalei Shun, Wilhelm Solheim, Charles Streck, Tom Dye and Paul Cleghorn.

“Evolutionary Pathways to Social Complexity” were examined in a session devoted to this topic, although the subject of social complexity figured in other conference papers as well. Focused on the high islands of the Eastern Carolines, this session’s papers highlight the need for more studies in the high and low islands elsewhere in the Micronesian region, given the claims of processual generality made. Authors are Joyce Bath and Stephen Athens, James Peoples, and Takeshi Ueki.

All six papers presented in the session entitled “Physical Anthropology in Micronesia,” along with a brief introductory overview and summation by the session co-chairs, Michael Pietrusewsky and Jane Underwood, conclude the volume. Concern with Micronesian population origins and affinities predominates in these papers. However, there is an emerging consensus that local adaptive conditions and the enormously varying archaeological contexts in which Micronesian human skeletal materials occur can profoundly affect the structure of the burial populations, and their phenotypic expressions, now available for study. Authors include Loring Brace, M. L. Brace, Yukio Dodo, Kevin Hunt, William Leonard, Li Yongyi, Sood Sangvichien, Shao Xiang-qing, and Zhang Zhenbiao, Douglas Hanson, Michael Pietrusewsky, Christy Turner, and Jane Underwood.

Much of the archaeological data and interpretations presented in these conference papers are new, the results of unpublished research. Since the publication rate has not yet caught up with the research rate in Micronesian archaeology, the reader will perceive the effects of an unavoidable reliance on the ‘gray literature’ of contract reports, theses, and unpublished works (e.g., papers presented at scholarly meetings over the last decade), many of which are not widely available. While this is unfortunate, at present there is no way round it. These unpublished sources can be obtained by writing to their authors, and many are in the library of the Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam. By a tolerant reading of the papers in this volume I hope that both the specialist and the interested layperson will appreciate the exciting research potential of Micronesian archaeology as the discipline takes its place within a wider Pacific context. From this modest beginning, it is evident that rich rewards await the diligent student of the Micronesian past.

R.H.-A.