MICRONESIAN FOLKLORE CONCERNING VOYAGING

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Introduction

Micronesia consists of some two thousand islands scattered across the central Pacific, an area comparable to the continental United States in size. The islanders form one of the three major Pacific groups, the other two being Polynesian and Melanesian. The Micronesians inhabit basically two types of land areas: high and low islands. The high islands are generally volcanic in origin with rain forests on the slopes and mangrove swamps near the shore. The low islands are atolls, coral masses which are part of a circle of reef about a lagoon (Alkire 1972:4).

Although Micronesian culture varies from island to island a general picture may be formed of the way of life. Traditional arts include weaving, tattooing, singing and dancing. Dress was commonly grass skirts for women and loincloths for men; today Western clothes are the predominant garb (for information on arts and skills see Alkire 1972: 7-10). Christianity has replaced religious beliefs in nature spirits, although superstitions concerning ghosts remain a vital part of culture throughout the islands. The complex kinship system of the past still plays an important role in most Micronesian lives (Mason 1968: 286-289). The traditional chiefs have lost a large portion of their former power, but still wield influence.

The islands first contact with Westerners came with the Spanish voyagers. Spanish colonization had its most marked effect in the Marianas where the ancient Chamorro culture was virtually destroyed. Germany was the next occupying power, until the consequences of World War I forced her out. Under a League of Nations mandate Japan held the islands. This period saw the greatest change with large colonial efforts bringing paved roads, buildings, industries, and schools. While Japan's concern was largely with her own colonists, Micronesians remember wistfully the rapid economic development that occurred at the time. World War II brought fighting and death for Micronesians as Japan and the United States waged a bloody war over the islands. At the war's end the islands became a United Nations Trusteeship administered by the U.S. Even this brief account of the history of the islands should give one pause to think of the adapting that Micronesians have done in the face of foreign intrusion. An amazing resiliency has marked their interaction with foreign cultures; Micronesians have displayed an ability to accept new ideas and outlooks while retaining the basics of their own culture.

Today Micronesia consists administratively of six districts: the "Marianas, Marshallas, Palau, Ponape, Truk, and Yap. Central government is located in the headquarters on Saipan. Micronesian government has consisted of an executive branch made up of the High Commissioner and his staff; a legislative branch of the Congress of Micronesia and district legislatures; and the judiciary, with a High Court as well as district courts. (Organization of Government in Briefing Materials 1974: 8-9).

Micronesia faces the twentieth century as a land of complex problems. The great distances between islands makes logistics of transportation and communication difficult. The variety of cultures and languages poses serious barriers to political unity of the Territory. A widespread educational system is provided but arguments have been waged over the implementation of American curriculum in an island setting. Through the years many attempts have been made to adapt courses and materials to the unique Micronesian situation. In the area of health services enormous strides have
been taken to clear up disease. The medical system is made up of district center hospitals and dispensaries on outer islands. For the Territory as a whole a large budget increase beginning in the early 1960's has brought about building programs which have added considerably to the physical infrastructure. Headquarters policy has changed over the years of the Trusteeship with a shift from centralized to de-centralized authority. This has not been without problems, as would be true in any government or business organization. Much attention has been placed on developing the infrastructure of the Territory. Economically the traditional source of cash other than wage employment in the Administration has been copra, but the recent years have seen tourism become a major consideration for economic development.

One of the most prominent areas of development in the sixties and seventies has been the work towards settlement of the future political status of Micronesia. The Congress of Micronesia has a committee which has conducted negotiations with a team from the U.S. Thus far it appears that the Marianas District will form a separate commonwealth arrangement with the United States; talks have been held and an agreement reached which awaits ratification by the U.S. Congress. The Congress of Micronesia has opted for a free association for the other five districts, with the U.S. supplying an annual budget and having the say in defense and foreign affairs but all internal affairs being in Micronesian hands. A minority of Micronesians have spoken out in favor of independence and this has had an influence on proceedings even though not the main course followed. Much disagreement has arisen between the five districts in the course of negotiating free association. A constitutional convention has been held and a document has been written which will serve as the foundation for the Federated States of Micronesia, once ratified.

It is hoped that the above brief summary of Micronesia's geography, culture, and history will set the stage for examination of a specific problem, that of searching Micronesian folklore for references pertaining to voyaging, seeking thereby to learn what oral tradition says in relation to what is historically known of Micronesian seafaring. A considerable amount of canoe voyages doubtless took place in pre-contact Micronesia, for even today such feats are undertaken by the remarkable navigators and sailors of the islands. Gladwin's study of Puluwat discusses such voyaging at length, for example, "With such abounding enthusiasm for the sea it is evident that taking a trip to another island becomes in a large measure an end in itself...Trips of one hundred and thirty miles are made to Satawal and one hundred and fifty miles to Truk just to get special kinds of tobacco." (Gladwin 1970: 77). Another study concerning navigation and sea voyaging is that of David Lewis. "His work includes the voyage he made with a Carolinian navigator from Puluwat to Saipan (Lewis 1973: 32). Given this setting of a seafaring people the task was to examine the existant recorded folklore for mention of voyaging between islands.

The writer's knowledge of German being yet at the most elementary stages it was necessary to confine the search to manuscripts in English. A great deal of folklore material is found in the writings of German scholars, particularly that from the South Seas Expedition. Fortunately, many authors writing in English refer to the German texts and even give summaries of folktales found therein.

In approaching a study of folklore it is essential to first define terms. "In anthropological usage, the term folklore has come to mean myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, riddles, verse, and a variety of other forms of artistic expression whose medium is the
spoken word. Thus, folklore can be defined as verbal art” (Bascom 1949: v.1). While the entire spectrum of types contained in this definition is to be found in Micronesia, it was observed in the course of research that only myths, legends, folktales, and sometimes verse pertained to voyaging.

The various theories advanced in the study of folklore are many and detailed examination of each would encompass a lengthy paper in itself. To make reference to them shall suffice here. The most common theories advanced are as follows: historical-geographical, historical-reconstructional, ideological, functional, psychoanalytical, oral-formulaic, cross-cultural, folk-cultural, mass-cultural, hemispheric, and contextual. The theory advanced in this paper is that of the historical reconstructional folklore. In attempting to use oral traditions as a basis for historical fact the main problem is establishing the degree of trust which one can place in folklore’s historical and ethnological content. Arguments have raged over this point and while some anthropologists reject any use of folklore, others, like the Chadwicks, feel that in all great folk epics there is a possibility of a foundation in historical fact. Regarding this question the well-known folklorist Richard Dorson comments,

The resolution of this thorny problem lies in an analysis of each individual tradition according to certain criteria; have the tradition carriers resided continuously in the same locality, so that visible landmarks reinforce the story line? does the culture institutionalize oral historians? are the tribal traditions supported by other kinds of evidence—linguistic, ethnological, documentary—and by external traditions? If such questions can be answered affirmatively, the presumption of historical trustworthiness increases” (Dorson 1972: 14).

Another field which might seek to use folklore in examining Micronesia’s past is that of the ethnohistorian. Ethnohistory has become popular in recent years and has come to refer to study of non-European peoples “Utilizing documentary, oral and archaeological sources and the conceptual framework and insights of cultural and social anthro-
best documented island areas, thanks to the extensive work of Sir Arthur Grimble in collecting Gilbertese folklore over the years. It is possible to have a more complete view of folklore for the Gilberts than in most other parts of Micronesia. The relationship between the Gilberts and Samoans is traced in the creation myths of the Gilberts. Grimble discusses one Arean who created the ancestral tree of Samoa and went on to create Tarawa, people it, and then create Beru and populate that atoll as well. In the text of this myth Grimble comments:

Here in the native text, follows a genealogy, interpolated with historic comments, which traces the line of Te I-Matang down to those descendants who migrated to the Gilbert Islands from Samoa, and gives an excellent, though short, account of their arrival in Micronesia (Grimble 1922: 97).

This provides an example of a myth which actually retains the knowledge of early migration from Samoa to the Gilberts, a movement which in all probability took place. Another text of this same legend is offered by a missionary who terms the main character, Nareau, who, "...made heaven and earth whilst still in Samoa...When he left Samoa he had counted seventeen generations..."areau lived in Tarawa for seventy-seven generations, and then returned to Samoa with his children" (Newell 1895: 231). In the author's notes he describes the myth as one of many proving the connection between Samoa and the Gilberts. In yet another of the tales of Nareau he and his sons return to Samoa (from the Gilberts) and are not given their proper share of land rightfully theirs. They thus abandon the islands and depart for Europe, thus explaining the origin of the white men.

This myth is used to account for the "cleverness" of the Europeans, in that they are descendants of Nareau (Chambers 1972: 124-125). The grave danger of taking the words of a myth literally is well-illustrated in the case just cited. Obviously the European venture is a post-contact addendum.

In another Gilbertese myth of origin the gods make people from the dust of canoe parts. A canoe is constructed with the aid of the humans and later voyages are made from Samoa to the Gilberts and thence to Mili in the southern Marshalls. Of this myth Chambers says, "This tale is one of the few indications that there was more than casual contact between the northern Gilberts and the southern Marshalls" (Ibid., 219). Chambers also cites Lewis' mention of a remark in the Gilberts that point the course to Mili and Jaluit in the Marshalls, and concludes that while there is no positive proof, the evidence certainly suggests purposeful two-way contacts (Ibid., 220).

A different account of contact between Samoa and the Gilberts is that of a tale which recites the adventures of a Samoan castaway's children. In this tale a fire causes the Samoans to take to sea in their canoes. A woman is separated from the group and drifts to Nanouti in the Gilberts where she makes her home. Later her children travel to other islands of the Gilberts (Ibid., 180-181). Drift voyages are known even to the Micronesians of present times; when typhoons catch sailors in their grip they have been known to make landfall as far off as Okinawa and the Philippines. It is hardly surprising that the tale makes use of this means of discovery of island groups.

Chambers uses the category "historical tales" in the collection he has made and in this section one finds a Gilbertese tale of troico birds flying from Samoa to the Gilberts. The birds' owner comes from Samoa to the Gilberts to instruct the people in how to kill the particular bird devouring villagers. This done the bird is placed in a grave and from a coconut planted thereon comes a giant whose descendants rule in the manaoa. A man who refused to submit to these leaders fled and from his descendants come the important political factions on Beru and Tarawa (Ibid., 205). With the symbolic element of the troico bird taken into account there is yet room for historical veracity in this...
account of the formation of political factions centering around outsiders who assume a primary role in the maneaba, which is central in Gilbertese politics.

The next group to be examined is that in geographic proximity to the Gilberts, the atoll islands of the Marshalls. In the myth of the origin of the sailing canoe and the acquisition of seamanship, interesting details are recorded:

In Bikini two men made the first paddling canoe, which was powered by a fish. The fish was killed and they drifted and paddled to Allinglaplap. On Allinglaplap the 10 (12, 5) sons of Liktanur, a chiefess (or woman from heaven) made paddling canoes (copying the Bikini men) to race to the East, with the winner to become king. As each canoe set out Liktanur asked to be taken aboard with a large bundle she carried. Each son in turn refused, but the youngest, Jabro, consented to take her. The bundle contained sails and rigging, which Liktanur showed Jabro how to use. Jabro borrowed them then passed the other canoes, but the oldest brother, Timur, demanded to be taken aboard. Taking a vital part of the rigging, Liktanur and Jabro swam away, reaching the eastern land (30 or 40 miles first. Adorned by his mother Jabro showed himself, and to the consternation of his brother, Timur, was proclaimed. (Ibid.: 94-95).

This might be an appropriate time to note that many of the tales Chambers relays are from the German ethnographers, as is the case of the one quoted above, which is a version collected by Kramer in 1938.

The sailing canoe, so vital to the Marshalls and to all of Micronesia, is described in the tale. In discussion (in the seminar group) of this myth, Dr. Leonard Mason pointed out that the woman may stand as a symbol for the matrilineal clan through which the knowledge of the sailing canoe would be inherited. Use of the craft would be by men only, as was common throughout Micronesia. The same principle would doubtless apply to the following story of the origin of navigation.

"Any years ago two men from the west drifted ashore at Namorik inside a large jibubuk (barrel? or other water craft?). Adorned by Litarmelu, a woman of Kwajelein, and another woman, from Namorik, the men taught these women the navigational system based on reflected wave patterns. Because the family of the woman of Namorik mistreated the men, the woman rejected her family and resolved with Litarmelu of Kwajelein, to keep the knowledge of navigation secret. Today the people of northern Nalik (west to Bikini are navigators, while those of southern Nalik (Allinglaplap to Eto, including Namorik) are not. Litarmelu later lived on Atoha, and taught navigation to a few people. All navigational knowledge in the north derives from her (Chambers 1972: 220).

Chambers feels that the references above concerning navigation may possibly be to actual historical fact, "although any attempt to reconstruct this using 'ethnohistorical' methods based on historical traditions would need a much firmer base in the recorded tradition than to be seemed available" (Ibid.: 220).

Another category of tales common in folklore throughout the world is that of the trickster. Such a figure is Eato of the Marshalls. This character is constantly performing acts of malicious mischief and escaping his avengers through clever trickery. Eato's ancestry is of interest in the context of this paper for it is said that his aunt, a turtle, came from the Gilbert Islands. This aunt, Lijebake, is a constant as all the different sources agree that she came from the Gilberts. Indeed, the name given her in the Gilberts (Tabakea) and Nauru (Dabage) are cognates of Lijebake (Ibid.: 223). Again we are presented with the connections between these island groups. Eato receives his power from this Gilbertese aunt, a fact symbolic, perhaps, of the power of the Gilbertese homeland. Indeed, it is in the Gilberts that Eato supposedly died. Chambers feels that "areau and Eato may have originally been one and the same, with their similar phonetic root of au and ao, which he compares to that well-known trickster of Oceania, "Muli. Chambers' studies show that the Marshallese folklore he surveyed, sixty-nine percent of all references to the Gilberts take place in Eato tales (Ibid.: 226). Eato's many exploits include a "Marshallese tale driving people away from Tarawa, perhaps a reference to battles won by the Marshallese. Many of the Eato adventures seek of travel to other lands. For instance, Eato going to Pincelpap, in Kosava.
District. Observing this and other voyages of the trickster one might easily be led to think of certain indication of Marshallese voyages until one happens upon the interesting story of Etao's trip to Oklahoma. Again, the influence of modern times is felt and recorded by the ever-changing and adaptable folktale.

Ponape and Kusaie

From the island of Ponape comes a curious legend of dwarfs, ...they came from Yap in olden times and no one saw them. But we heard that the dwarfs settled down in the state of Kittii after coming from abroad...they were like men, but they were smaller and shorter. Their legs were fully tattooed; they had beautiful voices and celebrated loudly...They always lived under the earth (Trust Territory Dept. of Education 1973: 101).

Since other traditions of voyages coming from as far off as Yap are known this reference may not be as outlandish as it first appears. On the nature of these dwarfs this paper shall remain silent. Such creatures are a common feature of many Oceanic folktales and some rather outre theories have arisen to answer this muzzle. The matter would require extensive study before any remarks could be made.

One central point for folklore in Ponape is the site of the ruins of Man Madol. Sometimes referred to as the Venice of the Pacific, Man Madol contains the ruins of a city built up on artificial islands. The buildings, courtyards, and temples of this ruined structure were constructed with basalt rock crystals. These megalithic creations are imposing even today; they have been the source of much speculation and study by amateurs and experts alike. Ponapean legend has much to say in relation to the ruins. According to tradition the rulers of Man Madol were the Sau Deleurs. Their long line met its demise through defeat at the hands of an invader. This came about in the following manner. The thunder god, Nahnsapwe traveled to the port of Man Madol called Pahnkedira, and there he was seized by the evil Sau Deleur and imprisoned that he might die. His calls for help were heeded and a man rescued him. Through the help of sea animals the weakened Nahnsapwe reached Kusaie, where he caused a woman of his family to become pregnant magically. This son was to seek revenge. The son was called Isohkelekel. The child became bolder and grew up. He gathered many youths about him. They made many canoes and went out on the sea in order to undertake the aial or fencing expedition. Then they sailed on the high seas until they found Ponape. They anchored off Ponape until they were known about by the island. Then they returned home again, and Isohkelekel ordered them to build a great canoe, but they were all ignorant of its purpose, since Isohkelekel did not tell them what he had in mind. In eight days they had finished construction. When the canoe was done, they traveled out; there were 333 men in that canoe. They traveled until they came to Ponape. Here they fought with the Sau Deleur, captured him, and occupied Madolenihmw. After this there was no longer a Sau Deleur. The descendants of Isohkelekel who lived Dinw en Pahnmwe then became the "nahnmwarki of madolenihmw (Trust Territory Dept. of Education 1973: 126).

Geographically this adventure is certainly possible for Kusaie lies some 310 miles from Ponape and longer voyages have been made by Micronesian navigators. The political control, if once centralized at Man Madol, has since early contact times been a fragmented series of chieftainships. The Nahnmwarkis of today claim descent from Isohkelekel.

A tale about Isohkelekel relates a Ponapean Oedipus variant for in it the commander's wife is told to kill her baby if it is a boy. This is not done and the child grows up. Nah Lepenen, the son, commits incest with his father's sister. The child of the incestuous union grows up to challenge his father's authority and this results in a division of power, the father going off to become naehnmwarki of U and the son remaining as head of Madolenihmw. The anthropologist, John Fischer, who has studied this myth in detail, comments:

The myth of Isoh-Kelekel's son is regarded by the natives as a true description of historical events. I am inclined to believe that some probably historical facts are contained in it thus: that historical personages corresponding to them and his parents 'did exist and the hero was the first "king" of U, which was therefore accounted to be a junior district to "pitoelum", which his father's matrilineal heirs continue to hold to this day... However, I do not intend to enter here into the complex question of how much of the narrative consists of traditional folklore motifs and how much consists of historical memory (Fischer 1961: 155).
The importance of Kusaie in the tale of the fall of Man Madol discusses above is interesting in light of traditions of the role of that island in an ancient Micronesian empire. Kachau is said to have been the name of Kusaie, once the center of an empire stretching to Truk, Yap, and the southwest islands of Palau, including perhaps the Carolines. The founders of this empire are identified by chants as being Poluelap and Soukachau, these names possibly serving as titles for a line of rulers. Poluelap was a great navigator (see the section on the Central Carolines concerning this figure) while Soukachau ruled the empire from Kachau. "The administrative center was Noon Island in the Truk Lagoon...The chief on Ponape was Soufonano...Most informants identified Soufonano as another title for the Ponapean chiefs called 'Saudelur' who ruled "Man Madol" (Nakayama 1974: 73-74). Insufficient material is available to determine the accuracy of attempting to reconstruct the boundaries of this empire, if it existed, but the folklore regarding such matters from the various islands of Micronesia would make interesting study.

Central Carolines

These islands lie between Truk and Yap Districts. For the purpose of this paper two of the many will be examine. The greatest amount of collected folklore available is for Ifaluk and Ulithi. Turning first to the island of Ifaluk one looks to the work of Burrows, an anthropologist who collected folklore on Ifaluk. Burrow's informant gave him two stories of conquests of other islands in the Central Carolines, the tales of the conquest of Woleai and of Lamotrek. Both involve canoe voyages from Ifaluk to each of the above places. Woleai is quite close by, about thirty miles away from Ifaluk, while Lamotrek is approximately 150 miles away. The tales explain that after victories which included total decimation of the original populations people from Ifaluk resettled these islands, some going from each clan (Burrows 1963: 72-77).

Thus it is that today when people of Ifaluk travel to Woleai or Lamotrek they have relatives living there. The tales likewise explain why the rank of Ifaluk people is higher; theirs were the original clans. Burrows found a victory song commemorating the flight with Lamotrek.

Comming up from behind on the fugitives,
As they fled from the lagoon shore,
We will close upon them from both sides.
At the Pu-el-Ifalu (Burrows 1963: 77).

The place name included is thought by the collector to refer to the Ifaluk taro swamp, a name still given to an area in the interior of Lamotrek. While to texts concerning the battles do not speak of voyages of great length this does indicate the probable nature of voyaging in Micronesia-the war parties sent by canoe from one island to another. Trading would have been a major reason for seafaring, battle another.

Many songs or chants have been recorded from Ifaluk which concern seafaring. On the small atolls the sea plays a major role in daily life and this is reflected in the folklore. "Navigators are taught the lore of the sea, including indications such as those to keep a canoe from leaking, or to ward off bad weather:

Come now, Weriens,
Quickly, come to my canoe,
Come fast, come right away,
Take away the rain (Ibid.: 97).

A prayer for knowledge is taught to students of navigation in which the supplicant asks,

God of sea captains, come to me,
Give me seamanship,
Make me a wise captain,
A true captain, I... (Ibid.: 100).

This same chant continues and in its text makes mention of the island of Pindelap, another indication of the far-flung voyaging of the Carolinians. Chants have also been recorded which give sailing directions.

Others are work songs. Often the seafaring songs are controlled by women who fear for their men's safety on the voyage and pray for their return.
Such a lament concerning a trip to Angaur is given below:

I told him, "If you go, be strong.
Put iron in your entrails.
If you must go, I'll not object.
No matter how far it is.
Some canoes that put out for Yap were lost!
Still, if you can't rest here, you must go." (Ibid.: 109).

This ancient usages of folklore is incorporated in the needs of modern life as in one song a woman sings for a wandering son who has taken the steamer and gone to the Philippines and to Guam (Ibid.: 112-114).

Scanning the seafaring songs in Burrows one finds the following references:
- Pingelap once, Volesi three times, Elato twice, Pinau once, Valiplir once,
- Paraune four times, Satauw once, Yap four times, Philippines twice,
- Guam once, Truk once, Ngulu once, Aurupik once, Pala twice, Ulihti twice.

Aside from the Philippines and Guam occurrences which are trips by steamer, all other islands mentioned are in the context of canoe voyaging.

These same songs will often name stars by which the voyage is charted. Also frequently mentioned are the sea marks a navigator may look for in seeking his way:

The wind was from the north,
in the open sea he saw a fish.
The man that lives among the reefs,
a sign that Elato was due south.
High seas were breaking over the reef.
But a golden plover flew by,
showing he was not far from land (Ibid.: 121).

Some are also sung which celebrate the skills of the canoe builder. Such songs make reference to the workmanship of the builder, to the talents he learned from his father, to the god who first brought such skills to men. The people of Ifaluk have myths which tell of the origins of the art of canoe building. A man named Galet had his wife abducted. A brother persuaded Galet to seek out the woman. To do this Galet needed a canoe. The first two types made did not please him but the special new kind with a different forked end pleased him. Galet recovered his wife and after that successful voyage the canoe maker, Seimalagarara, taught Selangi the use of the measuring-line and how to shape the canoe bottom. Then the gods knew how to do this the people on earth asked and were taught by the gods to build canoes (Burrows and Solomons: 71-74).

Ifaluk myth explains the coming of navigation skills also as gifts of the gods, in this case in the form of a chart given in gratitude for an inexhaustible coconut. Aluluei passed the chart on to Paluslar, the great navigator, who spread the knowledge among the people (Ibid.: 5).

Ifaluk's history contains recent history as well as myths of ancient times. In 1907 a terrible typhoon struck the island and a song recalls the famine which followed the storm's devastation. Two other historical tales recollect events from the German era. Ifaluk men were taken as laborers to Samoa and a song describes the return of some of these men, one with a bride from the foreign place, who is very homesick. Yet another instance, less happy, is a song of the raid by blackbirders, taking Ifaluk men off to Angaur to work in the phosphate mines.

A ship comes to the pass...
Men get into a raft.
They come ashore.
They come to the men's house.
Where the people are assembled.
And seize men to take them away.

I burst out crying,
Sorrowing for my husband...
The coconut leaf form tells a long voyage for them...

They feel the arms of the captives
And chuckle with glee.
Because they are so strong (Burrows: 1963: 411-412).

These poignant lines form a vivid scene of the captured islanders and the German officials. It is to be hope that more work will be done to collect similar folklore from other parts of Micronesia. Although these documented history of Micronesia for the twentieth century such pieces provide insight into the feelings of the indigenous population at the time.

Turning to another island of the Central Caroline, we next examine...
Ulithi. Here extensive and detailed work has been done by Lessa (1961). A complex myth records the story of the patron god of navigation, Iiululwe. Pelooop is a god of the sky world who has seven sons. One of the sons comes into conflict with the others and must go to live on earth, where he and his wife assume the names and identities of Pelooop and his wife, which the mortals take them to be. The couple have six sons and a daughter, and the boys are taught canoe and house building. Iiululwe overhears navigational lore while yet in the womb and is born full grown and precocious. He rejects two types of canoes and accepts a third and sails away to create an island. Later in the story one of the brothers, Purabwai, predicts a typhoon and is ignored. Pelooop goes on the voyage with his children, although he knows Purabwai is correct. The daughter begins to menstruate and is cast adrift by her father, to save her from the typhoon. All but one man are lost in the storm and when Purabwai comes searching for survivors he strikes the man for climbing in the wrong side of the canoe. Lessa found three cognates for this tale in Micronesia, two from Yap and one from Lamotrek. In one of the Isepe versions “Pelooop does not drown. He saves himself... drifts to Seanoi (New Guinea?), where is is eaten by cannibals” (Lessa 1961: 103). Lessa reports that this tale type has been found only for the areas mentioned above: Yap, Ulithi, and Lamotrek. Bonaparte does not seem to have this myth although it is one of the major settings is three of the four versions. The curious absence from the rest of Micronesia of this myth is yet more puzzling in that it deals with two well-known gods of the Carolines: Lessa points out that:

Although the myth itself has a restricted distribution, it contains three motifs widespread throughout the Pacific: earth from object thrown on primeval water, inexhaustible object, and supernatural growth. None of these are vital or diagnostic components of the plot and have been incorporated merely secondarily. Certainly, they cannot be used to help establish affinities with other myths (Ibid.: 105).

The other tale of Lessa’s collection chosen for inclusion here deals with the sea but is of most interest because of the wide geographic distribution which it enjoys. This is the story of the land crab and the rat wherein the two quarrel over some breadfruit which the rat ate without sharing. In an act of revenge the crab takes the rat to sea and puts a hole in the canoe. The crab walks to shore while the rat drowns. Alone comes a turtle who saves the rat. The ungrateful rat, upon reaching shore, kills and eats the turtle (Lessa 1961: 245). This tale is of the trickster type and the variants are widespread. Malaysia claims the largest number of Oceanic variants of this tale as over two-thirds occur there (Ibid.: 262). The tale is also found in different variants in Melanesia and Polynesia as well as throughout Micronesia. This leads Lessa to think that the tale is old and derived from Malaysia (Ibid.: 446). Such research leads to interesting speculation as to possible ties between the areas of Polynesia and Micronesia in prehistoric times resulting in tale diffusion. Lessa does not state what his study would seem to point to, but he does mention that “Micronesian folklore does not substantiate settlement by Polynesian drift voyage or purposeful voyages.

The vexing problem of the routes of migration taken by the colonists of the Pacific has not been rendered less troublesome by our study, which has done little more than show distributions and genetic relationships rather than movement. Some myths are suggested for specific tales and motifs but it is almost impossible to say if they are recent or early. In many instances these myths may be quite independent of migratory journeys taken by the colonizers (Ibid.: 447).

As regards the use of myth and legends as discussed in this paper Lessa feels that “There are myths with historical, but most myths are certainly not historically true” (Ibid.: 454).

Yap and Palau

Yap’s past indicates much voyaging. This was the ‘home’ of the Caril ‘empire.’ Gagil is a district on the island of Yap which held political
dominance over islands in the east, such as Lamotrek, Puluwat, Woleni, Ulithi, and Fais, among others. The subject islands paid annual tribute to Yap, and were held to be of lower caste (Lessa 1956: 67). Three myths explain the origin of this relationship. One of this number is the story of Motikitik. "This is a Carolinian version of the famous kaul cycle of Polynesia, and has been reported for several islands: Fulo Anna, Fala, Ulithi, Fais, Lamotrek, and Truk" (Ibid.: 67). Loren brings food to her sons and one of the, Motikitik, finds out the sources - her use of a magic formula by which she can descend into the sea. He is able to follow her, but as a result she must die, and Motikitik faithfully carries out her burial instructions. While fishing with his brothers he raises an island from the sea to which his brothers lay claim. They appeal to their mother, who decides in favor of Motikitik. Fais is said to be the island fished up by the hero and the hook which did the trick is held by Yap. If anything should happen to the hook, Fais would once more sink into the ocean (Ibid.: 67-68).

Other myths tie other islands into the pattern. Lessa feels that it is the use of sorcery and the pressure of economics in trade needs which keeps the tributes going from the outer islands to Yap, not the use of myth as blackmail (Ibid.: 70). For the purpose of this study note once again the existence of voyaging, well-verified in this case. The tribute is, of course, brought to Yap by canoe, an annual trip for Central Carolinians.

The Yapese are well known for their stone money. These round discs, often six feet or more in height are used in such cultural exchanges as dowries and land purchases. They resemble a doughnut somewhat, having in the center a hole, probably used in carrying them about. The origins of this money are told in a Yapese tale, wherein an old wise man takes some men and canoes and goes off to Yap where he finds a stone which he conceives of using as a medium of exchange. He settled on the shape of a Carolinian version of the famous kaul cycle of Polynesia, and has been reported for several islands: Fulo Anna, Fala, Ulithi, Fais, Lamotrek, and Truk" (Ibid.: 67). Loren brings food to her sons and one of the, Motikitik, finds out the sources - her use of a magic formula by which she can descend into the sea. He is able to follow her, but as a result she must die, and Motikitik faithfully carries out her burial instructions. While fishing with his brothers he raises an island from the sea to which his brothers lay claim. They appeal to their mother, who decides in favor of Motikitik. Fais is said to be the island fished up by the hero and the hook which did the trick is held by Yap. If anything should happen to the hook, Fais would once more sink into the ocean (Ibid.: 67-68).

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class bracelets whose presence in Southern Philippine sites with 12th to 16th century Asian ceramics is well established" (Force 1959: 44). Force goes on to conclude that future investigation would be necessary to reveal the ultimate source of the materials and explain the route by which they came to Palau. Unfortunately this has not yet been attempted. Unfortunately this has not yet been attempted. Folklore is sadly lacking in any aid at all in this matter but through other tools the anthropologist might yet establish the path of commerce which may be the source of the beads.

yan also knows these beads and there folklore is a bit more plausible at origins. Besides tales of the beads coming as heavenly gifts the Yapese also tell of Yapese canoes being driven off course on a return trip from Salmen. The typhoon is said to have caused the canoes to reach Kowan (Taiwan) where the Yapese fought off attackers and returned to their homes with the beads as booty. (de Beauclair 1963: 3). Yet another tale says that a canoe with one-high end and a rectangular sail came to Yap and gave the chief beads in return for being allowed ashore. These beads were used by the chief as trade items whenever Yapese canoes set out to sea on long voyages. (Ibid.: 4). "The Yapese are even said to have used the beads in trade with the Palauans. De Beauclair argues for a source through inter-island barter, from early Chinese settlers in the Philippines to Yap and Palau. If the beads did indeed travel in this fashion yet another category of voyaging and geographic knowledge could be added to the prehistoric seafaring world of the Yapese.

Conclusion

The Micronesian heritage of voyaging is evident in the folklore of the islands. This has been shown. However, the traces of this travel in the tales of Micronesia is scattered. It appears in the mention of island names in the travels of mythic figures. The natural island concern with the sea and canoes is seen in story after story, with the ocean as a waterway of commerce and a source of adventure, a proving ground of manhood. These Micronesian gleanings do not compare to the Polynesian legend sources. Akerblom's examination of astronomy and navigation utilized folklore and with regard to Micronesia's sources he says:

There is no Micronesian equivalent of the rich Polynesian traditions and myths, this means that it is not possible to present a picture of the original beliefs concerning the universe and the heavenly bodies, as was the case with Polynesia. In addition, there are no detailed voyaging traditions which can provide a basis for a discussion of navigational methods and of the extent of the 8th voyage (Akerblom 1968: 101).

This lack of epic traditions such as those found in Polynesia does indeed make the work difficult, yet even in this brief survey attempted by an amateur much material has been discovered. It requires a scholar of folklore to turn his attention to the matter.

Attempts have been made to use the oral traditions of Micronesia in historical reconstruction. The example referred to is that of Maude's work on the Gilbertese boti (1963). He points out the historical sense held by the Gilbertese; a necessity in a society where oral traditions determine one's place in social and economic life (Maude 1963: 5). While Maude acknowledges the difficulties in using traditional material to reconstruct the remote past he points to the value of narratives within the last hundred years or so to the ethnographer (Ibid.: 5). This material can often be checked with documentary evidence, and thus rendered the more valuable. In most of Micronesia little has been done with the more recent folklore. Collections tend to be focused on mythology and deed of early ancestors. Yet legends do exist regarding the events of this century, such as the Ponapean rebellion against the Germans. Earlier in this paper reference was made to such an example in the case of the Ifaluk islanders recollections of blackbirding by the Germans. It is not known to what extent "recent" folklore exists concerning canoes and voyaging. Further study must be attempted. We do know already that navigation lore, much of it in folklore references (as to sites where mythical events took place) has in modern time...
succeeded in guiding navigators to distant shores. This was shown in a trip Lewis took from Puluwat to Saian. This sparked a "renaissance" in voyaging, with the Satawalese making trips to Saian (McCoy 1973: 356-357). Even now folklore may be arising concerning this rebirth of the old voyaging tradition.

Roger Mitchell makes the point that in dealing with the history of a nonliterate people, such as the Micronesians, the scholar cannot afford to bypass any source of information. Mitchell looks to the short-term history, or microhistory, as he calls it (Mitchell 1970: 35). He proposes examining histories of small groups and moving up the chain of relationships until approaching island to island affairs. Ethnographic works rich in traditional lore, such as Kramer's study, could be used for historical research. "The situation requires only the awakening of interest and the channeling of energy to develop from tradition and the scattered documents the still important story of the at times painful transformation of these societies as their contacts with colony-seeking countries grew from the sporadic to the sustained" (ibid.: 41).

It is difficult to assess just what can be said regarding the extent of the relation between Micronesian seafaring and the oral traditions which speak of this voyaging. However, the need for continued research is pressing. Already the Congress of Micronesia has had occasion to search the recorded lore, looking for material to use in the matter of law of the sea. The navigational methods, voyages undertaken, trade contacts, island empires - all these and the legends referring to them were used in compiling a committee report on the basis for Micronesian claims to ocean areas. In this regard folklore has entered into a dispute of international proportions (witness the United Nations involvement in this question). The formation now in process of the creation of the Federated States of Micronesia is an attempt to hold together in a confederacy the districts of Micronesia (With the exception of the Marianas)
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