Chapter 1

Introductory Issues

Micronesia as a Separate Culture Area

It was Dumont d’Urville whose 1834 report of his voyage around the world divided Micronesia into three parts: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The names have been used off and on in history, even if islanders never would have thought of themselves in terms of the tripartite division. Colonial powers then began picking through the island groups in each of the three divisions, with the result that Micronesia, for example, was divided into British, Japanese, and American colonies prior to World War II. Today, all of the islands in Micronesia are independent countries, except Guam and the Northern Marianas, which remain American territories. We might begin, then, by considering whether it is legitimate to view this group of islands that has come to be known as Micronesia as a single region.

Micronesia stretches from 13 degrees north to 6 degrees south latitude and from 140 degrees west to 174 degrees east longitude, forming a 1,600-mile arc stretching from Tobi, just north of New Guinea, to the Marshalls and Kiribati. Scattered within these archipelagos are two Polynesian outliers (Kapingamarangi and Nukuoro) and two highly isolated islands (Banaba and Nauru).\(^1\) The total landmass of about a thousand square miles, however, is divided between over two thousand islands and atolls, with Guam being the largest single island (225 square miles) and many with an area of less than one-tenth of a square mile. With a total of 2.85 million square miles of ocean, the vast mass of Micronesia is water. The total population of the region today is about half a million people, which leads to the question of how so few people traveled over so much water and settled on so many small and scattered islands. The answer can be found by looking at a combination of linguistics and archaeological research.

Linguistically, all of Micronesia belongs to the large Austronesian language family, which includes much of Indonesia and the Philippines, parts of New Guinea, and all the Polynesian-speaking islands such as native New Zealand, Tahiti, and the Hawaiian Islands. Nearly all of the Micronesian languages also belong to a subgroup titled Oceanic; only
Palauan and Chamorro (the language of the Marianas and Guam) belong to a different subgroup of Austronesian: Western Malayo-Polynesian. Linguists have been puzzled by the language of Yap, but most recently it, too, has been classified as Oceanic. These linguistic classifications are important because linguistics and archaeology provide most of the evidence for the origin of the Micronesian peoples and the reasons for their differences. The inhabitants of most of the islands speak a Chuukic language or a dialect thereof. The case of Yap is highly problematic, and it may be the single member of a unique Oceanic subgroup, while Nauruan is different from any language within or outside Micronesia.

There are three different regions from which Micronesian languages most probably originated. Palauan and Chamorro are closest to Philippine and Indonesian languages, while the much-debated Yapese has its closest relatives in the Admiralty Islands, north of New Guinea. The closest linguistic ancestors of Kiribati, the Marshalls, and Kosrae come from someplace between the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in Melanesia, with Pohnpeian and Chuukic coming from the same Melanesian sources or perhaps through Kiribati and the Marshalls. Archaeological evidence such as pottery also seems to correlate with these three separate origins.

Thus, on the basis of the linguistic and archaeological evidence, Palau and the Marianas were settled earliest, probably out of the Philippines or Indonesia or perhaps even Taiwan. Yap appears to have been first colonized by people from the Admiralty Islands of New Guinea. Eastern Micronesian settlement appears to have moved rapidly from Kiribati, the Marshalls, and Kosrae and then on to Pohnpei and the Chuukic-speaking islands.

Dating the peopling of Micronesia is difficult for the simple reason that radiocarbon dates vary greatly in reliability and range, and the indirect evidence from introduced plants and animals and from slash-and-burn farming is only suggestive of human occupation. The earliest direct dating from radiocarbon methods and pottery types was, until recently, from Palau (about 200 BC) and the Marianas (about 1400 BC). However, based on the indirect evidence of core samples and perhaps very early radiocarbon dates from Palau, newer archeological dating may push Palauan settlement back to 1000 BC or earlier. Archaeological dates for first evidence of the population of these islands are now in flux, even more so now with some recent excavations pushing back Micronesian date estimates by as much as a thousand years.

Added to the linguistic differences are the radically different environments across Micronesia, especially the difference between the high islands—mostly volcanic in origin, often lush in vegetation—and the coral atolls, sandy and with poor soil only a few feet above sea level, limited
vegetation, very limited rainfall, and scarce drinking water. These conditions put understandable limits on cultural and social adaptations. The low coral atolls, for example, had neither the stone nor the population to build such megalithic monuments as those on Pohnpei and Kosrae. Still, the Chuukic atolls of the central Carolines were geographically close enough to each other to develop an elaborate trading exchange, while distant and isolated Nauru had far less opportunity for exchange with other islands. Yet environment is not deterministic; it only sets the parameters within which culture responds. A good example is the development of centralized and hierarchical religious organization. The high islands, with their greater landmass and larger populations, offered the cultures that developed there the potential for a more elaborate organizational structure, but this was not necessarily the case. Indeed, the high islands of Kosrae and Pohnpei developed religious organizations with centralized and hierarchical priesthoods, yet the high islands of the Chuuk Lagoon and the Marianas produced no such political or religious centralization.

It might appear that Micronesia is just a cluster of geographically proximate islands situated to the west of Melanesia and Polynesia. Certainly Micronesia is not a highly homogenous culture area. Nonetheless, the position taken here is that, although these islands show great cultural diversity, there is also a sufficient degree of cultural similarity to allow us to speak of Micronesian religion or religions.4

THE NEED FOR THIS WORK

The study of traditional Micronesian religions is badly neglected, even though other aspects of culture, such as kinship, politics, and social change, have been well researched. Since World War II there has been no monograph on the old religions of Micronesia; the only two book-length treatises are limited to the Chuuk Lagoon.5 However, one of the largest anthropological undertakings ever conducted in the Pacific was carried out in Micronesia shortly after the war. This was the Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology (CIMA), sponsored by the U.S. Navy along with several American universities and philanthropic organizations. In 1947, CIMA put twenty-five cultural anthropologists into Micronesia. No CIMA report was devoted to the old religions, although several members of the team published reports with extensive sections on religion.6

This situation was not always so. The German occupation of much of Micronesia7 produced the other large-scale expedition of researchers into Micronesia: the German-led Hamburg South Sea Expedition of 1908–1910.8 Each volume of reports contained lengthy and detailed
sections on the old religions. The German period also saw an outburst of ethnographic books, articles, and reports by colonial officials, traders, sea captains, and missionaries, much of it devoted to the old religions. No colonial power in Micronesia has ever produced such a level of ethnographic material by nonanthropologists. So extensive were these German publications that the great collector of all things ethnographic, Sir James G. Frazer, was able to draw heavily on the German literature and produce the only published volume dedicated exclusively to Micronesian religion: *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, vol. 3: *The Belief among the Micronesians* (1924).

The primary goal of this work is descriptive; that is, the collection and reconstruction of the old religions of preindustrial Micronesia, insofar as this is possible with the limited evidence at hand. This reconstruction is difficult because all the inhabited islands of Micronesia have converted to Christianity. No Micronesian-wide generalization can be made as to how much this conversion changed their previous beliefs and worldview, although good evidence exists for certain areas. Local medicines, old chants, formulas, and rituals are still widely used despite intense missionization, which dates back a century or a century and a half in some regions. The reconstruction proposed here is a task fraught with difficulties, and there is no hope of making it totally comprehensive. In the first place, the traditional religions were not static, and some (such as those in Pohnpei) were already in decline even before missionization and heavy westernization. Moreover, the record, even from the period of German occupation, is fragmentary.

Difficult or not, this undertaking is worthwhile if only because religion is such an important aspect of island traditions, even if one long neglected in Micronesia. Furthermore, there are no syntheses or book-length summaries of Micronesian religion available, as there are for Melanesia and Polynesia. Finally, a contemporary reassessment of the old religions is needed to correct early and continuing incorrect generalizations, not only about Micronesian religion but also religion in general.

**A Working Definition of Religion**

“Religion,” wrote Erwin Goodenough, “arises from the universal human experience that human beings live in the midst of a vast external universe in the face of which they find themselves essentially helpless. At the same time, they are involved in social forces over which they have little control.” While Goodenough has given us an interesting analysis describing the *why* of religion, he does nothing to show us an effective answer for *what* religion really is. There is no agreement from nineteenth- and
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Some writers use a substantive definition, taking the position that religion is defined by its essence, which is generally a belief in the supernatural. Other writers (Geertz 1966 and 1973, for example) take a functionalist approach: They do not really define what religion is or what it consists of but are satisfied with explaining what religion does and how it works. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages, but because religions pervade most aspects of preindustrial life and are not limited to the world of the supernatural, the functionalist approach works better in this case. As a working functionalist definition, a simplification of Clifford Geertz’s approach fits Micronesia, where religion pervaded most aspects of life and where it is most difficult to separate out any discrete beliefs and rituals dealing with the supernatural. Simplified, Geertz’s definition might read like this: Religion is one and only one of the world’s great symbolic meaning systems. Other symbolic meaning systems could be science, political ideology, or even common sense. This flexibility in the functionalist approach helps to explain why religion can rise and fall in the consciousness of a country, and why it can be important at one stage of an individual’s life and not at another time. Presumed here is that every human needs some explanation of the world he or she lives in; presumed also is that the human needs not just explanation but also guidance and directions for living in this world. In this sense, each meaning system—religion, ideology, science, art—is an explanatory and normative meaning-giving system. What makes religion different from the other meaning systems is its attempt to both descriptively and normatively place humankind within the total cosmos and in time dimensions beyond the present.

Essentially, religion offers meaning—explanatory and normative—through a set of symbols. Sometimes the symbols are generically the same. Music, for example, is a powerful religious symbol but can also be, as Geertz noted, an equally powerful symbol in the art meaning system. While both art and religion use music, they each use it differently. I remember in the 1960s undergraduates telling me how their experience at a rock concert was “religious.” Students would pay a modest fortune to attend the latest rock star’s concert. As one student told me, “Everybody needs something to keep his head screwed on.” Obviously the rock performance, the sound, the visual and staging effects, and the perception of beauty were realities that became symbols of meaning for the students. The point is this: Religion is like art, ideology, or science, but it uses a different symbol set or the same symbol set, such as ritual or mythology, in a different way. This book is about the religious symbols Micronesians used to find meaning before their mass conversion to Christianity.
The word “symbol” probably needs little explanation. The basic meaning is very simple: “something that stands for something else.” Some symbols are probably so close to the object they signify that their meaning is obvious, but many are not. It is doubtful, for example, that the elaborate kava (sakau) ceremonies held in the Pohnpeian communal meeting houses (nahs) would be understood by a stranger to Pohnpeian society. There is something special about the structure of the building, the seating arrangements, the order of presenting the sakau cup; it takes knowledge of the culture to understand more than the obvious in this symbol set.

Religion is not a privately owned set of symbols that is the property of some eccentric individual, nor is it owned by a society; the use of religious symbols to give meaning to life is found across the globe. In that sense, it is “one of the world’s great meaning systems.” The modified definition from Geertz does not require anyone to say that religious symbolic meaning systems are better than any other competitor such as science or art, although given individuals and societies have in fact found religion to be a better source of meaning. It also should be noted that not all the alternative meaning systems are equally available to all societies. Clearly, science is, at best, only minimally available in preindustrial societies.\(^{15}\)

Important to understand here is that symbols and meanings are not just an intellectualizing affair. Meaning can also be found in behavior, in those actions called ritual, as well as in sacred things, places, and people.\(^{16}\)

All symbolic meaning systems offer a path through life. What distinguishes a religious meaning system is that it so often proposes an integration of the life of the individual and the group within times and places that transcend the immediate existential work of daily experience. Religion catches this world and the time beyond in a unique way; the religious understanding of the cosmos puts demands and obligations on believers. The descriptions of the cosmologies of Micronesia later in this work will make it apparent that the religious view of the universe and of time is radically different from that offered by science.

Finally, implied in the above description of symbolic meanings systems is that they all deal with power: the power to understand and direct human existence. Little wonder that Karl Marx called religion the “opiate of the people”; he rightly saw that religion can have great power over the minds and lives of a population. But his description was pejorative. A more positive recognition of the power in religion was recognized by Rudolf Otto, who characterized it as the “mystery which both attracts and repels”—a phenomenon not completely understood but that can generate opposites in human behavior: love and fear, approachability and distance.
Sources

It would be almost impossible to do participant-observation fieldwork on ancient Micronesian religions. The old religions are gone and only remnants and memories remain. One can, as Francis Hezel and I have done, collect and analyze dozens of cases of possession and trance, for example, but this behavior is no longer culturally captured or institutionized within the lineage or the clan mediums and hanging shrines of the community houses. One can also collect—as Jack Tobin did in the 1970s and recently published (2002)—a wealth of folklore, but this folklore is now separated from a living and vibrant culture of the preindustrial societies of Micronesia.

Even many of the post–World War II ethnographies, with their obligatory nod to traditional religions, were the product of “memory culture”—in other words, they were accounts of beliefs and rituals no longer practiced. Even here and there in the ethnographic record, one can see the use of older written sources, uncited and unnamed. There can be no objection to memory culture, if that is all there is to be found. Throughout preparation of this work, however, I have constantly sought out elders to ask them the meaning of religious vocabulary of which the younger generation has never heard. Even so, this work is not the result of intensive fieldwork.

This work is drawn mostly from written sources from the turn of the nineteenth century and the period immediately after World War II. The hiatus of materials from between the world wars is due to the fact that few Japanese anthropologists studied religion at that time. Yet having the German sources from before World War I and the American ones soon after World War II is especially fortuitous, for both of these periods were twilight times for the old religions. The host of German authors—colonial officials, traders, missionaries, ethnographers—and, of course, the great German South Sea Expedition of 1908–1910 all found the high islands (mostly the large, volcanic islands rather than coral atolls) in this twilight period of decline. On many of the remote outer atolls, however, the old religions were in vigor up until after World War II. Thus, American CIMA anthropologists such as Lessa, Burrows, and Spiro found newly converted populations where the memories of the old ways were still fresh.

There are four significantly large sources, at least in terms of sheer volume, that cover the subject of Micronesian religion. These are the reports of the Hamburg South Sea Expedition of 1908–1910 (ESE), the *Anthropos* articles and special publications, the CIMA reports after World War II (funded in part by the U.S. Navy, then in control of the largest portion
of Micronesia), and finally, to a much lesser extent, the reports of the nineteenth-century Congregational missionaries.\textsuperscript{21}

There are problems with each of these sources, however. If one looks at the introductory volume of the German South Sea Expedition,\textsuperscript{22} for instance, one learns that the actual fieldwork of the expedition at some Micronesian sites was only a few days long (as on the atolls southwest of Palau).\textsuperscript{23} Moreover, the published final reports were sometimes based on field notes later collated and written up by someone who neither knew the language nor had ever visited the region.\textsuperscript{24} Since anthropology was in its infancy in 1908, it is not surprising that the leader of the expedition, Augustin Krämer, was a colonial government surgeon and that other members were not ethnographers. Furthermore, the emphasis of the kind of anthropology done by the expedition was on the material culture of the islands, with long sections, for example, devoted to the warp and woof of Micronesian weaving. All of this is understandable in a museum-sponsored expedition. It must also be noted that although their volumes are thick, their fieldwork was not always impressive. Hambruch, for example, spent about a month on Nauru, had very few informants, and still produced two thick volumes.\textsuperscript{25} The local priest, Father Kayser, himself an amateur linguist and author of the first grammar and word finder for the Nauruan language, said about Hambruch’s grasp of the language, “He understood almost nothing” (1917–1918). To their credit, however, it must be said that the Hamburg Expedition researchers seem to have read and summarized in print everything written on the islands before them. Also to their credit is the fact that some of their works remain a priceless source of folklore and traditions for some of the islands. Hambruch’s work on Pohnpei is a good example; it is still being used and integrated into local oral histories (Mauricio 1993).

The second large source is the \textit{Anthropos} publications, mostly the work of German Roman Catholic missionaries in Micronesia. These publications often contain the first rudimentary dictionaries and grammars of the islands’ languages. The advantage of these missionary works is that the authors often spent years on their island learning and speaking the language. By contrast, no Hamburg expedition researcher spent more than ten months on an island. The only individuals who could compete with the missionaries in knowledge of the language were those freelance ethnographers, such as the great Jan Stanislaw Kubary, or the longtime resident trader Karl Semper, and an occasional colonial official such as German physician Max Girschner. None of the American CIMA team after World War II spent more than eight months in the field, although some, like Ward Goodenough, returned more than once. In any case, it is curious indeed
that the Christian missionaries should be the ones to put in writing the story of the old religions that Christianity supplanted. Many had a real knack for ethnography and linguistics: Bollig for Chuuk, Erdland for the Marshalls, Sixtus Walleser for Yap, and Salvador Walleser for Palau.26

The third main source, the CIMA reports, as mentioned earlier, have little time for religion, except for the obligatory bow to the traditional belief system.27 Yet there are significant exceptions. William Lessa’s collections of mostly Ulithian folklore, Spiro’s description and classic Freudian analysis of Ifalik (Ifaluk) spirits, and Burrows’ description of trancelike possession in the inspiration of songs by Ifalik women are still some of the most detailed descriptions of postwar island religion. Also from the CIMA researchers came several scholars whose lives have been devoted to Micronesian research, one of whom eventually produced a monograph on the religion (Goodenough 2002).

Finally, the reports and publications of the American Board of Commissioners of the Foreign Missions (ABCFM) still give valuable insights into the collision of Western and island Pacific cultures. Most of the reports are diatribes against the island cultures, but they still manage to be informative. Among these Boston-based missionaries are men like Luther Gulick, who preserved in writing much of the culture he saw in decline.

**METHODS**

This work, as mentioned before, is largely a reconstruction based on written sources, or rather an ethnohistorical view of traditional religions. Ethnohistorical work anywhere at any time is fraught with difficulties, as is the very word “traditional.” Some writers completely avoid the term “traditional” because for many societies there is no single, canonical tradition. The term is still used here with full knowledge that there is no definitive tradition but often only a history of evolution and change. Three disciplines aid in ferreting out the information. The first is ethnography and ethnohistory, or what Americans would call sociocultural anthropology. The two other disciplines are archaeology and linguistics.

**Oral History**

Whether our sources are called myth, oral tradition, or oral history, whether the local people regard some of the myths true and others entertaining, folklore is at the heart of this reconstruction of the old religions. The problem, then, becomes determining where reality ends and the fairy tales begin. I take the position here that all myth and oral tradition is true—myths relate something that some group believed and passed down
from generation to generation. To find the completeness of “their truth” in myth and tradition is largely impossible. The most that I or anyone else can do is to find out how myth and tradition worked for them. I try to avoid any psychologizing of those long dead, instead trying to find out how the living descendants viewed the traditions of their ancestors. This raises the question of how the meaning of the traditions was recorded through interviews with islanders conducted long ago. For the most part, that means how German and American anthropologists recorded the traditions and local interpretations. Sometimes, however, the anthropologists recorded only the traditions, so the contemporary anthropologist is left to his own wits to determine what these traditions meant to the people and why they were true for them. Such are the built-in limitations of ethnohistory as a functional approach.

There are a few places in Micronesia, such as Pohnpei, where the locals put their treasured family histories in writing. These are enormously valuable because the written histories are both description and interpretation. But regardless of who wrote down the traditions, oral histories or myths used as history are always filled with problems. The writings are not history in any modern sense of the term, although even modern historians know well that all history selects and interprets data. A written oral history, like Luelen Bernart’s *Book of Luelen*, is a mixture of Pohnpeian history, myth, poetry, Christian overlays, and a variety of other ingredients. Even so, oral history or myth as history should not be bypassed. Minimally, it offers at least clues about the past. Unfortunately, oral history is also notoriously bad on times and dates, which is precisely why many do not use the term “oral history” but refer to “oral tradition.” Another problem with oral history and myth is that it is difficult to separate out Christian missionary influence. Many islands have stories about a great flood, to cite an obvious example, often sounding much like the biblical Noah; but the great flood is, after all, a worldwide mythic theme.

**Linguistics**

The second discipline that can produce information on the old religions of Micronesia is linguistics. After all, it is the linguists who have given us the modern dictionaries that often provide both an old and contemporary meaning for important terms. A good example is the word for “heaven” or “sky,” generally found throughout Micronesia as some variation of *lang*. Ward Goodenough and Lothar Käser, after investigating the old and contemporary meaning of this word in the Chuukic-speaking languages, propose that an older meaning of the word referred not only to heaven or sky but also to the places on earth where the spirits and gods lived while
working on earth. The observation might seem trivial at first glance, but their investigation shows why certain places were considered not just dangerous because of local spirits but sacred, because here the helpful ancestor spirits dwelt. And for some of the words that bedevil most of the Pacific religions—“mana” and “taboo” are classic examples—one needs the help of linguistics as well as anthropology. The dictionaries produced by Ward Goodenough are exceptionally rich in detail about the religion of the Chuuk Lagoon, as is Lewis Josephs’ for Palau; others are disappointingly brief in entries dealing with religion.

Additionally and more importantly, linguistics is the major source in Micronesia for tracing the origins and colonization of the islands. Linguistics thus offers answers as to why the Marianas, Yap, and Palau are culturally so different from the rest of Micronesia; these three island groups are from a different subgroup of the Austronesian language than the rest of Micronesia. If Palauan religion appears significantly different from the rest of Micronesian religions, this is not surprising; Palauans come from an earlier colonizing people and probably from a different homeland—Southeast Asia. The Chuukic-speaking islands, on the other hand, appear to come from a later colonization and from a different region, probably somewhere between Vanuatu and the Bismarck Archipelago.

Archaeology

The third source discipline is archaeology. Recent archaeology brought the promise of much-needed chronology and data to the cultural picture. Unfortunately, Micronesian archaeology is, like the study of religion, a neglected discipline; its findings contribute little if anything to reconstruction of a chronology or a diachronic view of culture and religion. Archaeology is constrained by its very method: The stones don’t speak—at least they do not by themselves say much about religion. Rarely, in Micronesia at least, does archaeology contribute to a better understanding of religion. Generally speaking, Micronesian archaeology tells us something only when it is combined with ethnography and oral traditions. One of the best examples of this is Rufino Mauricio’s doctoral dissertation: He uses oral traditions, many recorded in 1909–1910 by Paul Hambruch of the Hamburg Expedition, along with surface monuments, dwellings, shrines, and even the megalithic Nan Madol to reconstruct the religious and political prehistory of Pohnpei. Ross Cordy’s reconstruction of Kosraean prehistory is also a combination of oral traditions (most derived from Ernst Sarfert’s volumes in 1910 [published in 1919 and 1920]) and archaeology to reconstruct the prehistory of the old kingdom centered at Lelu.
Readers will also recognize a functionalist at work in this book. While it is true that functionalism can be applied too broadly and can never legitimately psychologize the needs of a culture—especially the needs of a vanished culture—there is also considerable evidence for what might be termed an “indigenous functionalism.” In essence, this means that the peoples of Micronesia remembered the folklore, the myths, and the rituals because they functioned and worked for them. In other words, the sources are functionalist prior to any outside analysis.

We have negative and positive examples of this functionalism in Micronesia. The great man-made earthen step mounds of Palau remain largely a mystery to Palauans and Western observers. Their meaning and function were already forgotten in the 1860s and 1870s when Kubary and Semper asked about them, and they are not mentioned in Palauan myth or oral history. Western observers can propose functions, such as defense, agriculture, or village structures, but the indigenous meaning and function is lost. A positive form of this functionalism is the upright prismatic basalt monolith near Wene, Pohnpei. In this case, oral tradition tells us what the monolith was used for: Here the candidate for the chief-priest of the nearby religious center was crowned, confirmed, and elevated to his status by a company of his fellow priests. Functionalism is a valuable tool to understanding Micronesian religions; Micronesians were indigenous functionalists, as were most of the anthropologists who worked with the old religions.

THE PLAN OF THIS VOLUME

The next chapter is an overview of Micronesian religion, but the heart of the work follows with chapters about the details of religion in each area (excluding the Marianas and the Polynesian outliers).

The lead-in chapter of the areal studies covers the Chuukese-speaking complex of islands and atolls, an appropriate beginning, I think, because the group contains the largest population in Micronesia, stretches broadly across the region, and had many contacts with other language and culture groups in Micronesia.

The Chamorro-speaking group of the Marianas is omitted, first of all because of the intensive and long Spanish military campaign against the indigenous peoples and their religion; second, because of the occupation and intermarriage with Philippine and Mexican settlers and garrisons; and third, because the very early and long-lasting Catholic missionization stamped out most of the local religion. No other group of islands in Micronesia suffered such intensive and long-term pressure on their
indigenous population, culture, and religion. Furthermore, a thorough treatment of the Chamorro religion would require more than a single chapter and thus is beyond the page limitation of this single volume.

The two Polynesian outliers, Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi, are not given separate chapters because I find their greatest value is highlighting the contrast between Polynesian and Micronesian religion; hence they are discussed in the concluding chapter.

In the concluding chapter, I highlight the similarities and differences between the areas within Micronesia and then attempt an appreciation or evaluation of Micronesian religion. Finally, I address the evidence of my tentative hypothesis that the Micronesian religion is sufficiently different from that of Polynesia and Melanesia to justify the continued claim of a Micronesian religion.

Some readers may be disappointed that there is not more analytic dissection of the beliefs and practices, but the primary need addressed here, to repeat, is collecting the mass of detail from different periods, different languages, and a host of different types of researchers into a single volume narrative description of Micronesian religion. Deeper analysis would require another volume.