

Postscript — Spatial Categories in Social Context: Tracing a Comparative Understanding of Austronesian Ideas of Ritual Location

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Introduction

This collection of ethnographic essays on different peoples within the Austronesian-speaking world represents a step in a comparative effort that is encouraging and frustrating. The papers in this volume engage in this comparative effort in fascinating and diverse ways but their very diversity only highlights the variety of approaches adopted within a comparative Austronesian framework. The papers speak to each other and to previous papers in earlier volumes in the series on Comparative Austronesian Studies but they represent no single viewpoint, nor do they espouse a consistent methodology comparable with that of the 'comparative method' in linguistics. The cumulative effect of the papers produces a strong resonance, but tracing relations among them can give rise to a variety of readings.

The initial question to be asked of this volume is straightforward. What contribution do these separate essays offer towards a comparative understanding of the Austronesians? Each paper deals with a different group of people located across a wide sweep of islands from Sumatra through Bali and eastern Indonesia to Melanesia and the Pacific. This scattered ethnographic coverage can be seen to represent a considerable social diversity yet it would be hard to argue the particular populations included in the volume offer comprehensive coverage of the Austronesian-speaking world or even a strategic selection of comparative case studies. In fact, one of the papers in the volume deals pertinently with a non-Austronesian population that has taken on many of the seemingly defining features of Austronesian societies.

Each paper focuses on local conceptions of land, territory and settlement but the approach taken to examine these conceptions varies significantly. While some of the contributors may share a similar background and operate with some common understandings, other contributors bring their own distinctive perspectives to bear on the issues set out for discussion in the volume. In each instance, an available ethnography is assessed in terms of general issues of the categorisation of land and its social implications and the problem at hand is redefined in each of these ethnographic iterations.

There is an implicit cross-referencing among the papers. Each separate inquiry, although focused largely on internal explication, offers multiple references to Austronesian concepts and practices noted and discussed in other papers. The comparative effort is thus indirect, partial and incomplete but nevertheless insightful. In each ethnographic analysis, some issues take on new dimensions while others appear to recede. Thus each paper offers its own ethnographic contribution but contributes cumulatively to a wider comparative perspective.

To understand the wider comparative thrust of this volume, it is essential also to recognise that this is the fifth volume in a series that has grown out of the original Comparative Austronesian Studies Project that began in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies in the late 1980s. The project began what could best be described as a continuing dialogue. As a consequence, in virtually all of the papers in this volume, there are references to other papers in preceding volumes. Various comparative notions developed and fashioned in these other volumes—ideas about origin, ancestry and precedence—continue to be applied in this volume as well as notions of complementarity and recursivity. From this perspective, the present volume is an extension of a continuing investigation and needs to be read within the context of an entire series.

Given this wider context, it is only at the end of the volume that one is in a position to comment upon its cumulative contribution. This postscript offers one such reading of the volume as a whole. One can consider the papers in this volume in a variety of ways. I have chosen to consider various papers in groups that together pose specific comparative issues and raise questions of significance and of interpretation.

Setting the Scene: The Idea of the Construct **Banua* and its Interpretation

An initial issue in this volume is posed most clearly in Thomas Reuter's paper on ritual domains in the highlands of Bali. The mountain Balinese or Bali Aga organise ritual relations among villages by means of networks known as *banua*, each of which is centred on a paramount temple (*pura banua*) whose ancestral deities insure the fertility of the land of the *banua*. A temple in each of the constituent villages of the *banua* is linked spiritually within the paramount temple and performs its own rituals for the land and people within bounds. Each *banua* is a dynamic creation whose core is of considerable antiquity. In his paper and previous publications, Reuter has described in detail precedence among villages in the large *banua* organised around the regional temple of Pura Pucak Penulisan. The paper raises a historical issue on the extent to which this organisational structure was once more pervasive throughout the whole of Bali. More broadly, the question arises of whether this particular structure reflects a heritage derived from earlier ritual modes in East Java.

Some of the earliest inscriptions in any Austronesian languages refer to the *vanua*. Thus the early seventh-century Sriwijaya inscriptions—in a form of Old Malay written with an adapted Pallava script—refer to the *vanua* as a constituent unit within the polity. Indeed, a single line from one of the earliest of the fragmented inscriptions found at Telaga Batu near the town of Palembang can be read as if it were modern Malay. It reads simply: *vihara ini di vanua ini*: ‘This *vihara* [monastery] in this *vanua*’ (Casparis 1956: 15). Various scholarly interpretations have been offered for the meaning of the term *vanua* in these inscriptions: proposed translations range from that of ‘country’ or ‘kingdom’ to that of the settled ‘semiurban’ area of a particular polity, the centre or nucleus of the realm (see Kulke 1993: 303–308; Manguin 2002: 82–3).

Similarly, some of the oldest surviving Javanese inscriptions refer to the *wanua/wanwa* as indigenous communities or settlements within a larger polity (Zoetmulder 1982, II: 1384). These communities were presided over by elders known as ‘fathers’ (*rama*) while all members were considered the ‘children of the *wanua*’ (*anak wanua*). Supomo, in an earlier volume in this series, has argued cogently that the three Austronesian terms *rama*, *rake* and *ratu*, all of which carry age connotations (‘father’—‘grandfather’—‘ancestor/ruler’), defined three levels of early Javanese polities. Later inscriptions document the ‘Sanskritisation’ of these polities, as rulers (*ratu*) began to refer to themselves as *rajya* and their realms as *negara* (see Supomo 1995: 295ff.).

Critically for this volume, Graeme MacRae, in his paper, ‘Banua or Negara?: The Culture of Land in South Bali’, poses this contrast as a living reality in the cultural landscape of contemporary Bali. Popular accounts of the history of Bali credit the transformation of the island to ruling elites from the Kingdom of Majapahit on Java, who invaded in the 14th century, bringing with them new ideas of rule and religion; by contrast, the lesser-known but deeply held traditions of the Bali Aga look to the pre-Majapahit kingdoms of Kadiri and Singasari for the origins of their rituals and organisation. Thus the historical transformation that occurred on Java, it could be argued, is still under way in Bali. More generally, however, MacRae asks how the transformation based on this historical heritage can be related to a far more profound transformation that began with Dutch colonial rule and has been followed by Bali’s incorporation as a tourist destination in a global economy.

The early historical references to *wanua* and the prominence of the *wanua* as a feature of some Austronesian polities prompts the question of the extent to which the Austronesian (or, more strictly, Proto-Malayo-Polynesian [PMP]) concept of **banua* has been—and continues to be—an important organising feature of societies throughout the region. As was originally noted in the first volume in the Comparative Austronesian Studies Project, *Inside Austronesian Houses*, reflexes of the term **banua* are found in most subgroups of

Malayo-Polynesian. In a few, the term is applied to house (Toraja: *banua*; Banggai: *bonua*; Wolio: *banua*; Molina: *vanua*; Wusi-Mana: *wanua*). More commonly, *banua* is glossed in general terms as ‘land, country, place, settlement, inhabited territory, village’ (see Fox 1993:12).

Thus, for example, in the first Austronesian volume, Clifford Sather (1993: 64-115) defined and described the *menoa rumah* as the ‘territorial domain’ of a longhouse among the Iban of Sarawak; while Michael Young interestingly described the situation on Goodenough Island (1993: 180-93), where *manua* refers to a house but connotes a village in the sense of a ‘dwelling place’. This evidence alone indicates that some common ideas associated with the concept of **banua* were part of a social heritage that was transmitted by Austronesian populations in a wide area across the Indonesian Archipelago and into Oceania and that this heritage continues to inform local conceptions to this day.

In one of the initial chapters of the first volume of *The Lexicon of Proto-Oceanic*, dealing with the ‘architectural forms and settlement patterns’ of ancestral Oceanic society, Roger Green and Andrew Pawley examine the PMP **banua* (based on evidence in Blust 1987) and the equivalent construct, **panua*, in POc. In reviewing the range of reflexes for these terms, they conclude that ‘PMP **banua* and its reflex in POc referred primarily to an inhabited territory; not only to the land but to the human population and dwellings and all plant and animal life and other elements that contribute to the maintenance of the human community—a complex concept with no simple equivalent in European languages’ (Ross et al. 1998: 63).

In a separate paper, Andrew Pawley has focused on the ‘meaning(s)’ of **panua* to pose the fundamental question of semantic interpretation of any ‘complex concept’ associated with a particular lexical reconstruction. This is an essential question that underlies virtually all of the discussion associated with the reconstruction of proto-forms and their subsequent interpretation. Blust, for example, expounded the view that ‘the atomistic chaining of glosses in association with PMP **banua* suggests an original semantic category for which no English equivalent exists, which has fragmented into various components in almost all daughter languages’ (1987: 96). This view implies a chain of meanings that undergoes a fragmentation as an initial ancestral language divides and diverges: languages would thus preserve (and possibly extend) fragments of a whole while losing others.

By contrast (and in contradistinction to his earlier position), Pawley argues that instead of a single complex meaning, **banua/*panua* was ‘genuinely polysemous’ and in some contemporary languages of the Pacific, its current reflex retains this polysemy. He cites the case of Wayan Fijian where *vanua* has a ‘semantic range’ with at least eight senses, each of which can be shown to contrast by one or another criterion, thus forming ‘a family of lexical units’ with

more central or more figurative senses: *vanua* as (1) 'land' as opposed to sea or sky; as (2) 'territory' or 'country', in which case it requires attributive modifiers; as (3) 'homeland', in which case it requires a possessive pronoun; as (4) 'community' or 'land-owning kin-group' in which case it can 'occur as the subject or object of a verb that requires this to be human or animate' (unlike *vanua* [1]); as (5) 'place' or 'area', where it is a near synonym of *tiki*; figuratively (6-8), in reference to the representative of the community, its living conditions and as a political federation of clans. By posing (but by no means answering) this question of the meanings of **panua*, Pawley points to the problematic nature of interpretative semantics in linguistic reconstruction. His proposed solution is much like that of the contributors to this volume. Recognising the historical significance of the category, he offers a careful examination of the use of this term in a wide variety of contexts in a single speech community. This knowledge of the category's usage offers a heuristic indication of its saliency and significance as an organising concept.

Tracing Ideas of the **Banua* (and **Taneq/*Tanoq*) in Eastern Indonesia and the Pacific

In this volume, in addition to the paper on the Bali Aga, there are a number of other papers on societies in which some reflex of **banua* continues to be an important organising category: three societies in eastern Indonesia—the Keo of Central Flores, the indigenous Masarete-speaking population of Buru, and the Alune of the island of Seram—and two societies in the Pacific—the Raga of North Pentecost and the people of the Kingdom of Tonga. In each instance, reflexes of this category (*nua*, *fena*, *hena*, *vanua*, *fonua*) are embedded with other spatial categories and take their meaning, in relational terms, in a matrix of senses. It is possible to trace various comparative pathways among these cases. Interestingly, these pathways, signposted by reflexes of **banua*, intersect with other pathways, marked by reflexes of PMP **taneq* (POc: **tanoq*) which has similar meanings of 'earth, land'.

Philipus Tule's paper on the Keo of Flores offers an examination of the contextual significance of the **banua* category. In the case of the Keo, it is of interest that the reflex *nua* occurs with another recognisable widespread Austronesian term for 'land'—*tana*. The Keo identify themselves as 'children' of the land (*tana*) in both a spatial and a genealogical sense. The land is 'feminised' ('*ine tana*) as 'mother' and all Keo derive from this 'mother'. In ritual language, the male complement to this 'mother land' is 'father stone' ('*ame watu*)—all that surmounts the land. Figures of custodial authority are identified with the land and are referred to by the dual name 'mother land, father stone' ('*ine tana*, '*ame watu*). Within this context, the term *nua* refers to the autonomous settlements, each with its own ritual leadership (*mosa daki*—or, in ritual language, *mosa nua*,

daki oda) whose rituals are conducted through the origin houses (*sa'o pu'u*) that make up a village.

Crucially, among the Keo, there are two constituent categories of people: the *'ana tana*, an indigenous category of those whose origins are affirmed through their origin houses, and *ata demba mai*, incorporated 'migrants' of various sorts, whose origins are known to derive from outside the *tana* Keo. Ultimately, the constitution of Keo as a domain is based on an assertion of the knowledge of origins combined with the ritual acknowledgment and celebration of such origins. The *nua* serve as the named settlements in which the rituals of the origin of the land (*tana*) are grounded.

An examination of the use of reflexes of **banua* among the Keo of Flores with either the indigenous population of Buru or the Alune of Seram, who also structure their social worlds by means of this category, is one pathway of comparison, but it is also instructive to compare the Keo with the Sikka and related population of Tana 'Ai who live further east from the Keo on Flores.

For each of these societies, *tana* functions as the 'higher' category. It is the *tana* that Lewis defines as 'domain'—'the highest order of the classificatory categories of Tana 'Ai society'. A *tana*, Lewis writes, is 'a loosely organised region defined by a centre and whose peripheries form no clear boundary. A *tana's* centre is defined ritually (if not geographically) by its *mahe*, the domain's central ceremonial site, and socially by the ceremonial office of the *tana pu'an* [its 'source of origin']. The key to understanding a *tana*, in this context as in the case of the Keo, is its ritual definition and ceremonial continuity. In the case of the Keo, the head of a particular clan identified in relation to a specific *nua* is the local ritual celebrant; in Tana 'Ai, this celebrant is identified by clan affiliation alone.

In Central Sikka, where once there were more than 40 named *tana*, a political process of consolidation and redefinition has occurred. It is this historical process that Lewis sketches in his paper. At the heart of this process is an origin charter that transforms the basis of precedence allowing outsiders and other immigrants to establish their rule within an expanded domain. Similar myths by which an 'outsider' is installed 'inside'—the idea of the 'stranger king'—occur throughout eastern Indonesia and are, one could argue, a key epistemic component in the structuring of politics in the Austronesian-speaking world.¹

In the comparison with Tana 'Ai, the rulers of Sikka have displaced the ceremonial figure of the *tana puang* as they established their own political centre at Sikka Natar. Thus in Sikka, the *natar* became a new ceremonial. In contrast with the Keo, where incorporated immigrants remain subordinate to the children of the land, in Sikka, the outsider has achieved political centrality.

Comparison with the cases from Maluku—Buru and Seram—reflects a different set of historical processes. Among the indigenous population of Buru, the reflex of **banua* is *fena*. As Barbara Dix Grimes notes, the *fena* constitutes an inhabited, domesticated territory whose ritual custodians are represented by particular clans (*noro*) within specific locations (*neten*). These custodians are the *geba neten duan*. Under a regime of shifting cultivation, the ‘inside’ of this territory (*fen-lale*) is not a fixed location and may shift in relation to changing patterns among clans. Named territories thus consist of an intersection of relations between clans and specific areas.

Among the Alune of Seram, the equivalent category to that of the *fena* on Buru is the *hena*. Where the population of Buru uses the term *noro* for ‘clan’, the Alune use *nuru*. The fact that the languages of the two islands are closely related makes comparison between their social systems the more interesting.

Among the Maluku Islands, Seram is considered the ‘Mother Island’ (*Nusa Ina*) and the source of some of its most profound ritual traditions. Christine Boulan-Smit, in her paper, provides a glimpse of this complexity. Her focus is on one *hena*, Ma’saman Uwei, of the Alune, who inhabit a segment of the territory known as the ‘Three Large Rivers’ (‘Wele Telu Batai’) in the western region of the island. In comparison with Buru, the *hena* is a more ritually circumscribed component involved in a wider range of social and spatial relationships. The ritual ordering of each ‘domain’ is assigned to particular clans that hold specifically named ceremonial positions—seven such positions in Hena Ma’saman Uwei—whose responsibilities are directed within and beyond the domain. This ceremonial system also involves an allocation of land based on the shifting precedence among the constituent clans of the domain.

In the discussion of these various societies from the mountains of Bali to the islands of Maluku in eastern Indonesia, the focus is not simply on inhabited land but on ritually defined, ceremonially ordered social space. Equally important to an understanding of this ordering of space is a social dynamic that defines the categories of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ and their relationship to one another.

Here, the case of Banda, ‘The Blessed Land’ (*Tanah Berkat*), presented by Phillip Winn, offers an instructive contrast. Banda is remarkable in eastern Indonesia for the total displacement of its original population. In 1621, when the Dutch East India Company’s (VOC) forces conquered the Banda Islands, they killed, enslaved, deported or drove into exile its entire population and then repopulated these islands as plantation with outside labour. As a consequence, Banda became a Malay-speaking social enclave within eastern Indonesia, a wholly immigrant society whose origin narratives link Banda to the foundations of Islam and as a ‘blessed’ land (*tanah*) directly to Mecca. In place of indigenous claims to origin, local sites imbued with ‘past’ significance are viewed as places (*keramat*) of ‘hidden’ meaning associated collectively with ancestral spirits

(*datu-datu*). The discourse is that of the Malay world where religious sites, particularly tombs (*makam*), are the focus of veneration (Fox 1991, 2002). As a society of outsiders, the population of Banda treats the 'inside' foci of the land as spiritually powerful but vacant of any specific custodial claim. Yet, as Winn argues, through their 'ritually based engagement' with these sites, the population is able to 'become demonstrably local'.

It is this same theme that is carried forward in the discussion of *vanua* in North Pentecost and the *fonua* in Tonga. John Taylor begins his analysis in distinguishing the category of *vanua* from that of *tano*, a discussion that has its counterpart in eastern Indonesia. On the one hand, he notes that *vanua* are relatively small—an acre or two at most. This situation contrasts with all of the Indonesian cases, where *banua/nua/fena/hena* can encompass a substantial territory. On the other hand, he goes on to note that *vanua* are identified with what are called *bwatun vanua* (literally, the 'source', 'foundation', 'head' or 'roots' of *vanua*): 'Bwatun vanua represent the specific origin places of individual descent groups.' These origin places are the sites of circular stone piles—grave sites associated with ancestors identified as 'people of the place' (*atatur vanua*). These ancestors are the invisible presence whom the living within each descent group must continue to propitiate.

Instead of holding a position of custodianship within a particular *banua/nua/fena/hena*, however, each descent group among the Raga 'retains custodianship of many individual *vanua* that are scattered throughout the North Pentecost landscape'. Thus, while local discourse resembles that in eastern Indonesia, the scale and scatter of social groupings is strikingly different. Particularly remarkable is the use of the 'land tree' as an image of differentiation—an image that is also common throughout Indonesia. Thus, for example, the mythical banyan tree, Nunusaku, at the centre of the 'Mother Island' of Seram, provides a similar metaphoric image of differentiation and distribution among all of the peoples of Seram.

Mary Patterson's paper on North Ambrym provides a counterpoint to John Taylor's paper on North Pentecost. Where Taylor discusses *vanua*, Patterson discusses *tan*. As Patterson indicates, in Vanuatu, the use of *vanua* or *tan* in local discourse tends to be mutually exclusive—even to the point of political identification: the Vanua'aku Pati versus the Natui Tano and the Tan Union. Yet her description of local *tan* resonates with aspects of Taylor's discussion of North Pentecost with its emphasis on origins and the ancestral spirits of the dead.

In the case of North Ambrym, *tan* refers to specific ancestral lands where custodial male kindred are described as the 'doorways' that provide access to local resources while women of the kindred are the 'roads' that 'go forth and return'. In this metaphoric world, men—when they die—are 'planted' by means

of sacrifice and marked by the transfer of tusked boars to members of the mother's origin place.

Appropriately, Tonga offers a case study where the concept of *fonua* has undergone considerable social reconstruction but continues to figure prominently both nationally as well as locally. As Steve Francis points out, the *fonua* in contemporary Tonga embodies notions of nationhood. Whereas the *fonua* in pre-constitutional Tonga were territorial units under chiefly custodians ordered within a social and political hierarchy, the 1875 Constitution transformed this hierarchy and separated the *fonua* from 'the geographical context of local territory, the economic context of agricultural production and the social context of ritual obligation'. Interestingly, the process that Steve Francis sketches bears resemblances to the processes described by E. Douglas Lewis in the transformation of central Sikka under the rulers of Sikka Natar.

Comparative Excursions

Four other papers in this volume engage in implied comparisons on the theme of land as ritual location but without reference to either **banua* or **tana*. Although reference categories are different, the discussion in each of these papers relates to one or another of the themes broached in the earlier discussions.

Minako Sakai's paper deals with the Gumai, a Malay-speaking population in the highlands of South Sumatra among whom the word *tanah*, meaning 'land', occurs. Her concern is with *kute*, the term Gumai ritual specialists use, in preference to modern terms for village or hamlet (*desa* or *dusun*), to denote a 'residential territory' to which genealogically defined Gumai populations link their origins and celebrate their continuity with past generations. The term *kute*, which once implied a fortified centre, is derived from Sanskrit but has a long history of use in Old Malay. As in the case of the papers that discuss the ritual polities of Bali, understanding the Gumai requires some comprehension of the variety of political influences their region has been subject to since well before the time of the Sriwijayan Empire.

As a Muslim population, the Gumai retain non-Islamic ritual specialists (*jurai tue*) whose task is to link the present populations with the founding ancestors of the Gumai population. Sakai's paper is a brilliant exposition of just how these ritual specialists are selected in a society whose origin groups (*jungkuk*) rely on bilateral genealogical reckoning. As in other societies with similar forms of cognatic kin structures, residence—and the de facto inheritance of specific houses—provides the basis for a continuity of succession.

Although not central to her discussion, an interesting feature of her paper is the discussion of how Gumai incorporate 'stranger groups'—populations without genealogical links to the founder population of the *kute*. The Gumai case bears directly on the case of the Keo of Flores, but stands in contrast with that of Sikka.

My own paper, 'Contending for Ritual Control over Land and Polity: Comparisons from the Timor Area of Eastern Indonesia', is concerned with some of the same issues as the paper on the Gumai, particularly the idea of rule and the ritual custodianship of the land. It is in fact one in a succession of papers in which I have attempted to examine comparable aspects of various societies of Timor. The first of these compared houses and their significance (Fox 1993); the second, ideas of origin and the way in which 'progenitor lines' are defined and traced within Timorese societies (Fox 1996).

The paper is a comparison of three domains: Termanu on the island of Roti, Amanuban in south-west Timor and Wehali in south-central Timor. Termanu and Amanuban provide two cases where the contest for control of the land has resulted in the installation of an outsider—a 'stranger king'. As in Sikka in central Flores, this installation subordinated the local ceremonial custodianship over the land to a new political centre.

Wehali provides a contrasting case where such spiritual power has not been subordinated but in fact continues to emanate a vital authority to neighbouring domains. Thus Termanu and Amanuban have developed into polities—states with rulers—whereas Wehali has remained a ritual centre. The further interesting contrast among these cases is the valency given these different centres: Termanu is explicitly a 'male'-centred polity, Wehali is equally explicitly a 'female' centre, while Amanuban evidences elements of both valencies.

The two final papers in this reading—that by Mark Mosko on 'Self-Scaling the Earth' among the North Mekeo of PNG and that by Andrew McWilliam on forest tenures among the Fatuluku of East Timor—are the most challenging and provocative in the volume. Mosko's paper is an attempt to provide a bridge between the discourse currently being conducted in relation to the societies of eastern Indonesia and the distinct discourse on 'personal partibility' in Melanesia. His paper is an elaborate analysis of Mekeo land and society conceived on the model of a body, involving the two-way flow of substances from inside and out.

Andrew McWilliam's paper is particularly challenging in a volume on Austronesian comparison precisely because it deals with a non-Austronesian population who speak a Trans-New Guinea phylum language. As McWilliam makes clear, the Fatuluku have had 'a long-term engagement with Austronesian social and cultural ideas and practices' through contact with other Austronesian-speaking populations on Timor and, as a consequence, 'they have borrowed extensively from Austronesian registers and concepts over many generations'. (In fact, in another paper, McWilliam has referred to the Fatuluku as 'Austronesians in linguistic disguise'.) In his paper, he enumerates a range of conceptual features that the Fatuluku share with their Austronesian neighbours: similarly oriented spatial coordinates, an extensive use of common dyadic categories such as trunk/tip, male/female and elder/younger; landholding origin

groups identified by the Austronesian term *ratu*; a clear recognition of progenitor lines among these *ratu* groups; myths of precedence based on a succession of boat arrivals from overseas; and the regular use of ritual language couplets.

Yet in considering Fatuluku society, there are also apparent differences coupled with an oblique untranslatability of concepts. Thus, for example, McWilliam refers intriguingly to ‘the Fatuluku idea of a conceptual distinction between the “body” of the earth and its “skin”’—a distinction that is not known to be a salient feature of neighbouring Austronesian groups. It is perhaps interesting in this context that Mosko devotes attention to the notion of ‘skin’ as a critical feature of the ‘body’ of the earth among the Mekeo, some of whose cultural ideas might have derived historically from contact with neighbouring non-Austronesians.

Critical comparative issues raised by MacRae in relation to the Indic models that have contributed historically to the transformation of Bali are equally relevant but more elusive in the examination of the Austronesian/Non-Austronesian societies of eastern Indonesia, PNG and Melanesia that have, for millennia, been in regular contact. Fatuluku offers enormous potential for comparative Austronesian studies. The finer and the deeper McWilliam is able to develop his ethnographic understanding of the Fatuluku, the better we might be able to gauge what we mean by ‘Austronesian’.

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ENDNOTES

¹ I embarked on a comparative study of this mythic charter in a paper entitled 'Installing the "Outsider" Inside: The Exploration of an Epistemic Austronesian Cultural Theme and its Social Significance', which was presented at a session of the First European Association for Southeast Asian Studies Conference, 'Local Transformations and Common Heritage in Southeast Asia' (Leiden University, June 29 to July 1, 1995). I have since continued to add to this initial paper, which has now taken on monographic proportions.