

## Culture

# The Title System of Pingelap and the Diversity of Atoll Political Organizations

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Volume 3, Number 1, 1983

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1084155ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1084155ar>

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### Publisher(s)

Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA),  
formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne  
d'Ethnologie

### ISSN

0229-009X (print)

2563-710X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

### Cite this article

Damas, D. (1983). The Title System of Pingelap and the Diversity of Atoll  
Political Organizations. *Culture*, 3(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1084155ar>

### Article abstract

This paper focuses on the factors involved in the development, political process, and guiding principles of a title system which formed the basis of polity on Pingelap atoll in the Eastern Carolines. The evolution of the system of titles is discussed with particular attention to the historical and geographical factors involved in its development, and the effects of contact with other cultures on that system. Comparisons are drawn within Micronesia and used to create a base for broader examination of Pacific polities.

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# The Title System of Pingelap and the Diversity of Atoll Political Organizations

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This paper focuses on the factors involved in the development, political process, and guiding principles of a title system which formed the basis of polity on Pingelap atoll in the Eastern Carolines. The evolution of the system of titles is discussed with particular attention to the historical and geographical factors involved in its development, and the effects of contact with other cultures on that system. Comparisons are drawn within Micronesia and used to create a base for broader examination of Pacific polities.

*La présente communication examine de près les facteurs concernant l'évolution, les processus politiques et les principes directeurs du système titulaire qui constituait le fondement de l'organisation politique dans l'atoll de Pingelap (Carolines orientales). Une attention particulière est accordée au rôle joué par les facteurs historiques et géographiques durant l'évolution de ce système titulaire ainsi qu'à l'influence de contacts avec d'autres cultures. Des comparaisons avec d'autres systèmes politiques trouvés en Micronésie permettent d'étendre cette étude à l'ensemble des formes d'organisation politique de la région du Pacifique.*

Recognition of the substantial range in types of social/political organizations in the Pacific has stimulated several attempts at classification and at explaining this variability. Such comparative studies have included considerations of coral atolls whose political systems are the special concern of this paper. Sahlins (1958 : 218) noted significant variation in Polynesian atolls, and, while acknowledging the effects of divergent origins and degrees of isolation, he placed the greatest stress on "adaptive radiation in particular habitats" (1958 : 137). Goldman (1970 : 570) emphasized the broad adaptability of the dynamic force of "status rivalry" in Polynesian political systems to a variety of ecological and demographic situations, including those of atolls. With regard to the variation which was evident, he favored "differentiation... under a complex of historical conditions" (1970 : 408) over ecological explanations. Douglas (1979) subscribed to a moderate ecological position and saw the relative emphasis on local or kinship elements as the chief ingredients in processes which led toward the variety of expressions of achievement and ascription in Pacific political systems.

Alkire's (1978) comparisons of coral islands and atolls included Micronesian examples, thus bringing his study close to the concerns of this paper<sup>1</sup>. In recognizing a considerable range in the social and

political organizations of atolls, he treated the ecological foundations for atoll social and cultural variability with great care but he also emphasized the role of relative degrees of geographical isolation in effecting such diversity.

The studies cited have been handicapped in the data for comparison, for not often has there been available intensive studies of political systems of specific societies. In order to have adequate raw material for valid comparisons, such intensive studies are sorely needed.

There has been also the tendency to favor one or the other set of factors, either ecological, geographical, historical or socio-psychological, in attempts at explaining variability in polities. I am convinced that any attempt to explore the range of atoll political systems should follow not any one of these approaches, but must consider a combination of factors which act in concert to create and to modify individual atoll political organizations.

With this combined approach in mind, I shall focus on the growth and decline of a system of titles which formed the backbone of polity on Pingelap atoll in the eastern Carolines, and then proceed with some close comparisons within Micronesia, hoping thereby to establish a base for possible broader comparisons of Pacific polities along the same lines.

In the case of Pingelap, traditional history provides sufficient details of the title system to give a basis for evaluating the development of that system, and persistence of significant elements into the period of field observation makes possible an understanding of the effects of contact.

### *Pingelap Atoll*

Pingelap lies halfway between the high islands of Ponape to the north northwest and Kosrae to the south southeast, with its nearest neighbor, the somewhat smaller atoll, Mokil, lying about 60 sea miles away on a line toward Ponape. If one refers to Alkire's (1978) classification of atolls based on the variables of island size, island elevation, rainfall, frequency of droughts and of typhoons, both Pingelap and Mokil fall within the category of "exceptional" with regard to potential support of human occupation. This assessment is supported in the case of Pingelap by the heavy populations which have been reported for the atoll. The population peaked at about 1000 just before the end of the nineteenth century and ranged between 600 and 850 during the past seventy years (Eilers, 1934 ; Bascom, 1965 ; Morton et al., 1972a). These figures serve to rank Pingelap among the most densely populated islands in the Pacific with ratios of

between 1000 and 1500 persons per square mile (340 to 570 persons per square kilometre) of land area. The people of Pingelap mainly live on various aroids (especially wet taros) exploited from November to May, breadfruit harvested from May to September and used in fermented form at other seasons, and the ubiquitous coconut. Tuna from the open sea and smaller fish from the reef provide the chief protein food, for the small lagoon is poorly supplied with marine life of any importance. Pigs, chickens and dogs provide special feast commodities, and during the present century flour, sugar, rice, coffee and canned meats have become important. The Pingelapese have always lived in a village strung along 800 to 1000 yards of road on the leeward side of the largest of the atoll's three islands except for a period of about two years in World War II when the site was abandoned. For most of the history of the atoll this inhabited area has been divided from north to south into four roughly equal sections called *pwekils* which have been the chief political divisions of the population as related to spatial considerations.

While there is no Pingelapese tradition of conscious population control, infanticide, abortion and related practices may have had their places in earlier times. It is more likely that periodic typhoons and accompanying tsunamis provided the chief constraints on population. Two high destructive typhoons occurred during this century (Morton et al., 1973 : 323 ; USDI, 1972). The aftermath of either would have resulted in mass starvation due to damage to crops had not colonial administrations provided food and arranged for some islanders to emigrate. Reasonably reliable reconstructive ethnography dates from a highly damaging typhoon and tidal wave in the 1770s (Weckler, 1949 : 42)<sup>2</sup> which is said to have reduced the population to about thirty. Legendary history attributes another cataclysmic tsunamis to a much earlier phase of history, but if the estimate of 1000 years of habitation of the atoll made by Morton et al. (1972b) is reasonable, the two attributed precontact typhoons which brought on drastic population reduction probably represent a telescoping of a number of similar events. It is likely that the history of Pingelap has been characterized by a series of population slumps followed by periods of recovery such as can be affirmed for the late 18th century and the 19th century.

### *The Early Period*

Traditions of the beginnings of Pingelapese society are laced with legendary events including discovery of the island by travellers from Yap<sup>3</sup> and

settlement and establishment of the line of paramount chiefs out of Kosrae. The principal title of *nahmwariki* is well represented in the legendary history of the atoll as Morton et al. (1973) list twenty-five of these paramount chiefs and the oral tradition provides biographical sketches of each (Hurd, 1977). It is said that shortly after the appearance of the chiefly title, the additional title *wasahi* or their apparent, and that of *nahneken*, or minister, were established. A short time afterwards, "when people became concerned with religion," the offices of *nanapas* or "priest of the land" and *nahlaimw*, "priest of the sea" are said to have appeared. A more profound expansion of the system of titles is associated with the time of Pakispok, the reputed third *nahmwariki*. Before his time the two sections of the village, Lapeir and Lehpeng, had overseers who occupied their posts on the basis of "strength and courage". Tradition has it that there was much rivalry for these positions, so that, in reaction, Pakispok divided the village into four sections or *pwekils*, each of which was represented by one of four hereditary titles, as follows : *nahlik* for *pwekil* Mweniap ; *souwel* for *pwekil* Serkarakapw; *lompwei* for Kahkahlia ; and *nahno* for Namahl. The roster of nine titles is divided into two houses, with *nahmwariki*, *wasahi*, *nanapas*, *nahlaimw*, and *nahneken* making up the *muten kas piete*, or upper house, and the four representatives of the *pwekils* comprising the *muten kas pas* or lower house.

Several aspects of this legendary account of the accretion of titles reveal something of Pingelapese conceptions of their title system. Early establishment of an heir to the paramount chief was important in fixing succession according to prescribed kinship position. Separation of the roles of paramount chief from that of minister or "talking chief" is also apparent in the accounts of the beginnings of the title system of Pingelap, as is absorption of religious practitioners, which served to link closely the secular and the sacred. This is another emphasis which has continued throughout the history of Pingelap.

Division of the village first into two, and later, into four sections may well represent adjustment to expanding populations rather than indicating native conceptions of ideal local organization, but the shift from "strong and courageous" representatives for these sections to hereditary titles is consistent with the emphasis on ascription which, I shall argue, has been prominent throughout the history of the atoll.

There is occasional mention of the activities of several of these title holders in the legendary history of the earliest period (Hurd, 1977) and informants generally attribute this system of nine titles to times

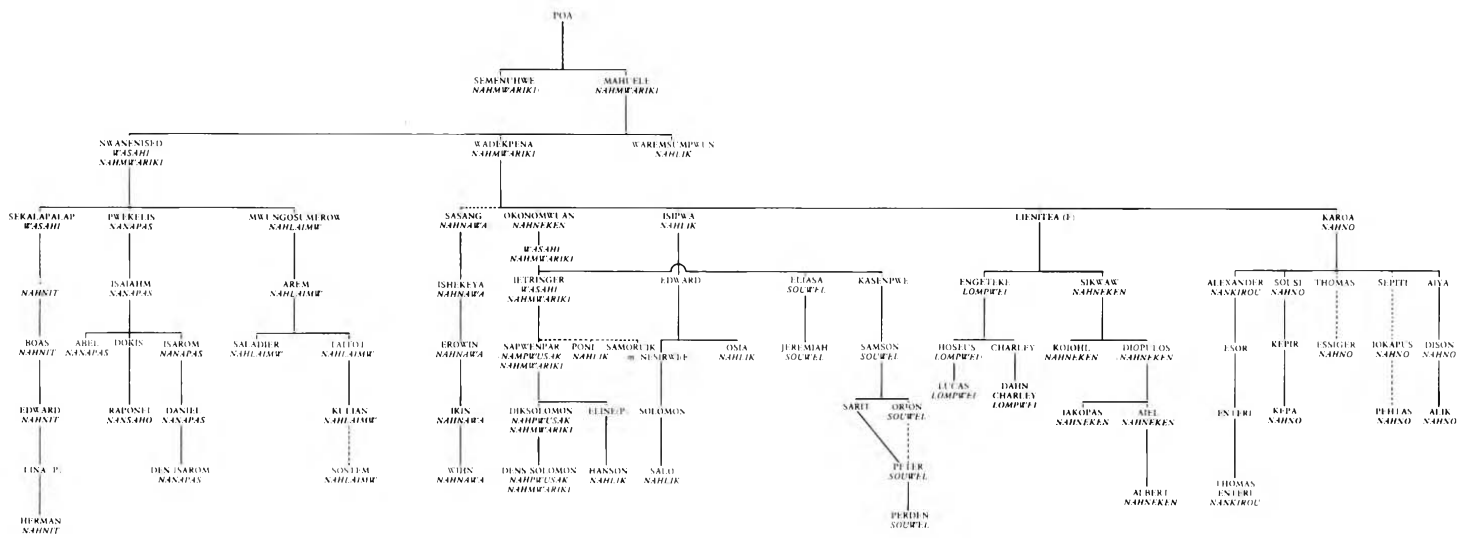
prior to the great typhoon of the 1770's. Perhaps the most interesting feature of accounts of the period preceding this event is reference to nine legendary paramount chiefs designated as Delawans, who have been described as being all Kosraeans, or, alternatively, as Kosraean and Gilbertese chiefs (Morton et al., 1973). However, the first personage to whom genealogies demonstrate an unbroken line is Poa (Morton et al., 1972a : 279), recognized as a native Pingelapese and as father of *nahmwariki* Semenuhwe, who is said to have divided the land into individual plots for the first time, and *nahmwariki* Mahuele, who informants say survived the great typhoon.

### *Restoration and Expansion of the Title System*

Apparently the starvation which followed the flooding caused by the typhoon in the 1770's, not only reduced dramatically the population through destruction of crops, but also thinned the ranks of the title bearers, with only the *nahmwariki* and the *wasahi* named as survivors. The latter, Moise, regarded as a successor to the Delawan chiefs, was eliminated in a blood feud. After that, restoration and expansion of the title system took place largely within a line descending patrilineally from Poa, as presented in the accompanying chart. The events relating to succession in the following period and the processes which they represent warrant close scrutiny.

Little in the way of restoration took place during the time of Mwanenised who succeeded Mahuele. Mwanenised made his mark on Pingelap history through the medium of his fertility. His ten children played a great role in the recovery of this population. According to Morton et al. "this achievement so impressed the Pingelapese that he was given the name 'backbone of Pingelap' posthumously" (1972a : 279). This very prolificacy also brought on a series of disputes for titles.

After Mwanenised died (circa 1813)<sup>4</sup> the title *nahmwariki* shifted horizontally to a younger brother, Wadepena, reportedly because the sons of Mwanenised were too young to take on the responsibilities of chieftainship. However, each of the three sons of the previous paramount chief figured into the subsequent politics of succession under Wadepena. The latter named the eldest, Sekalapa-lap, *wasahi*, and he gave the two priestly titles, *nanapas* and *nahlaimw*, to the younger brothers when each reached maturity. While the *nahmwariki* Wadepena is said to have felt that the chiefly title should revert to the line of his elder brother and pre-



**TABLE I**  
**Succession to the Titles of Pingelap**  
 Titles are within parentheses  
 Adoptive and half sibling ties are indicated  
 by dashed lines

decessor, he preferred the second son of the latter, Pwekelis, to the elder, Sekalapalap, because of past favors. Sekalapalap reputedly made a large prestation of food in order to validate his claim but he did not win his case. Divine intervention is said to have resolved that succession dispute, when the ghost, Isopahu (Hurd, 1977)<sup>5</sup> appeared and decided not in favor of either of these brothers but rather, for Okonomwaun, the eldest son of Wadekpena. At that time Okonomwaun held the newly restored title, *nahneken*, or chief minister. On the death of Sekalapalap, since Okonomwaun had been designated heir, the title *wasahi* shifted to him from the deceased. Okonomwaun yielded the *nahneken* title to Sikwaw, son of his sister, who however, was considered to be in the male line of Wadekpena, being the adoptive son of the latter, his paternal grandfather.

At about the same time, in order to compensate the line of Sekalapalap for the loss of the *wasahi* (or heir apparent) title, Wadekpena awarded the title *nahnit*, assumed to be a new office, to the son of Sekalapalap. Meanwhile, he continued the practice of title revival by giving the lapsed title *nahlik* to his younger brother, Waremsumpwon.

After Wadekpena died, Okonomwaun adopted Sasang, step son of the deceased *nahmwariki*, thus creating another ambiguity in succession rights. In order to resolve this problem, Okonomwaun awarded Sasang the title *nahnawa* which is regarded to have been a new title<sup>6</sup>.

Another complication arose about this time, in that Iengiringer, adoptive son of Okonomwaun, was assumed to be the son of Sasang, thus fortifying his right to succession through both blood and adoption. Iengiringer's position was consolidated when his adoptive father awarded him the title *wasahi*.

For some unknown reason, perhaps because of lack of surviving male issue, the title *nahlik* shifted from the line of Waremsumpwon to Isipwa, younger brother of Okonomwaun<sup>7</sup>. The latter also restored the lapsed title of *nahno*<sup>8</sup> early in his reign, awarding it to his youngest brother, Karoa.

Thus, during the short term of Wadekpena and the beginning of Okonomwaun's long reign, probably about 1813 and before 1830 at the latest, the two surviving titles had been augmented by restoration of five other reputedly traditional titles and two new titles, *nahnawa* and *nahnit*, added. These increments were all made in an atmosphere of competition for chiefly status within the various branches of the male line of Poa, and all awards were made within that close, but rapidly expanding group of kindred.

There were no further changes in the system of titles until near the end of Okonomwaun's reign, probably after 1860 and before his death in 1870. Then another generation of his kin was accommodated into the system of honorific status and political influence. In that period he restored the reputedly traditional title of *lompwei*, given to a son of his sister, Lienitea, and the remaining title from the pre typhoon court, *souwel*, which was awarded a son, Eliasa. He gave a new title, *nankirou*, to a nephew, Alexander, son of Karoa whose line also conveyed the *nahno* title.

One other change in the title system belongs to this second phase of expansion. Shortly after he became *nahmwariki* in 1870, Iengiringer changed the title of heir apparent from *wasahi* to *nahpwusak*. This change accompanied an elevation of the title *nahnawa* to the upper court, replacing himself as he moved to the paramount chief post, with a prominent contemporary. At the same time, the legitimate line of his reputed father, Sasang, was honored with a higher post than formerly. This meant some sacrifice for his own progeny, for while the heir to the paramount chief, as *wasahi*, had been member of the upper court, henceforth as *nahpwusak*, he belonged to a lower, less influential order of titles (see table below).

To summarize the processes of restoration and expansion of the Pingelap title system during the nineteenth century, it is clear that, rather than a steady process of growth, there were two periods of abrupt expansion coming at junctures which were made crucial by transitional conflicts. These episodes were followed by long periods of no further accretions to the roster of titles. Apparent in this process was the early exaggerated genealogical swelling of the chiefly line<sup>9</sup> which had as its corollary later expanding political dominance. The heavy hands of three *nahmwarikis* not only in determining their own successors, but also in their shaping and reshaping of the title system through restoring and adding titles, also left their mark on the 19th century history of the title system of Pingelap.

Three other titles belong to the time of *nahmwariki* Diksolomon (1924-1964) and show direct influence from Ponape during the period of intense contact with that island. Then, considerations of merit became the chief criteria for selection, following a long standing Ponapean practice (Riesenberg, 1968 : 34ff). Diksolomon awarded the title *namatauw*, to Alipil who lived on the island Teke (across the lagoon from the main island of Pingelap) and who acted as overseer of lands there. He gave Raponei the title *nansaho*, who acted as chief policeman off the atoll because of his "great

strength and toughness". Dimson Ioannis became *nanpei* as reward for both important secular and Christian contributions to the community.

The Table lists the entire roster of titles, including those of wives of male office holders.

**TABLE II**  
**The Titles of Pingelap**

A. <i>Muten kas piete</i>	Titles of Wives
1. Nahmwariki	1. Kesowa
2. Wasahi (replaced by Nahnawa)	2. Naleio
3. Nahlaimw	3. Nakulai
4. Nanapas	4. Napasipie
5. Nahneken	5. Nakeniei
B. <i>Muten kas pa</i>	
6. Nahlik	6. Naliekiei
7. Souwel	7. Emin
8. Lompwei	8. Iwepi
9. Nahno	9. Nannapto
C. <i>Other Titles</i>	
10. Nahpwusak	10. None (or Nahpwusak lih)
11. Nahnit	11. Nanitpiei
12. Nansaho	12. Nalisaha
13. Nanpei	13. Napwipwei
14. Namatauw	14. Katinmatau
15. Nankirou	15. Nahlikau

### *The Process of Succession*

This rather detailed account of the events which led to rebuilding and expanding the title system of Pingelap might well obscure the main principles which channelled succession, those of patrilineality and of primogeniture. These principles operated within the outlines of a descent unit, the *keinek*. The *keinek* is best represented as a series of branching units whose membership is defined mainly in patrilineal terms. In the case of the succession routes illustrated in the genealogical chart, Poa is considered to be head of a major *keinek*, but his sons, and their sons, and their sons are also regarded as being founders of branching *keineks*. The primary ideal is for a man to be succeeded by his first son. In cases where the eldest son is either deceased or deemed unfit to assume the title, the second son should follow. When the sons of the deceased title holder are regarded as being too young or otherwise unfit for office, or in cases where there is no male issue or adoptive sons, the title should then shift to a younger brother of the

deceased. Next in line would be patrilineal parallel cousins who would also belong to the *keinek* named for the father of the deceased title holder. As the above account indicates, chief bases for disputes to succession revolve around adoptions and cases of illegitimate sons claiming the titles of previous holders, and of step sons presenting their cases for succession.

If one examines the history of succession to Pingelap titles in the period covered by the chart, the record shows that in 55 cases of succession, 28 titles moved from father to eldest son ; in two other cases it moved to a younger son ; in five cases to adoptive sons ; making a total of 35 cases of father to son transmission. There are also eight cases of brother to brother succession and five others of succession by brother's son or by brother's adoptive son. Several other cases show inheritance of title through broader patrilineal ties. Matched against this majority of cases which show consistency with the norms of succession as stated above, there were only four cases where female links figured in transmission of titles and, as noted above, one of these was rationalized as normative because of an adoption link which is regarded as granting *keinek* membership.

Traditions of the earlier periods of Pingelapese history impute father to son succession in ten cases of sixteen *nahmwarikis* who are associated with periods prior to those covered in the chart. There is less information on the other titles, but for the *nahneken* office, five of the seven remembered early title holders are regarded as having been members of the same major *keinek* with three father to son successions and one FFBS-FBSS linkage being exploited in title transmission.

To be sure, we cannot accept without reservation the actual succession links for these earlier cases. However, just as important as the actual connections which may have obtained in title transmission, is the existence of the ideal of patrilineal succession in the minds of informants, which is supported by genealogies whether partly fictitious or not. On this basis, it seems likely that the ideal of patrilineal inheritance of titles and, probably that of primogeniture as well, have had long histories on the atoll. However, accommodations exist within the framework of ascription through kinship position. A study of individual cases in the recent past provides examples of such adjustments. An elder son is passed over for a younger when the former is not regarded as possessing leadership qualities ; a brother succeeds because the sons of the deceased are too poor to fulfill gift obligations at important ceremonies. There have been other cases where the

title is transferred to another line within the major *keinek* if the bearer has not acquitted himself according to the code of chiefly conduct. In this regard a title bearer may be defrocked during his lifetime or his children may be denied the title after his death.

But even taking such adjustments into account, Pingelap must be regarded as a society where ascription to political positions according to principles of kinship is paramount.

### *Duties and Functions of Title Holders*

Informants specify duties of some title holders, however, in the cases of other titles, designation of special roles is vague. The *nahmwariki* is considered supreme in his decisions and he can ignore or overrule advice of his court of officials. However, in practice, he is said to have seldom acted without considering very seriously the recommendations of the others. He kept silent during discussions which took place in his house and which were chaired by the *nahneken*. Afterwards he retired to his chambers with the *nahneken* for consultation. After these deliberations the latter emerged and announced the decision to the other officers. The representatives of the *pwekils* then transmitted the news to their constituents.

In addition to his function as intermediary and presider at meetings, the *nahneken* is considered as chief of the southern half of the village, and also principal organizer of major feasts. Before arrival of missionaries, the main duties of the two priests, the *nanapas* and the *nahlaimw*, were carrying out special propitiation observances over the products of the land and the sea respectively, at these feasts and seeing that various taboos were observed. The members of the lower house not only represent the four village sections but also formerly served as policemen for them. I have noted above the duties of two of the holders of the newer titles but special duties of other title holders are not spelled out with any consistency in the statements of my informants. However their general role as members of the council of chiefs is clear. This council of chiefs held monthly meetings at which they discussed such matters as organization of public works projects, pondered decisions regarding harvesting the various crops, staging public feasts, and other matters of general concern.

These regular meetings are distinct from those designated as *kapwungs* or "trials". One of the major crimes, which is attributed to the period before the legendary division of land into private plots is said to have been violation of the strict

rotation of land use on the islands of the atoll. Violators were punished by banishment, a measure also applied in cases of *pirap* or theft, according to some informants. More common punishments were cleaning seaweed from the channel, work on the road or paths, or repairing fish traps on the reef. Other occasions for the *kapwung* would be consideration of land disputes.

While the legendary history of Pingelap abounds with lurid accounts of adultery and wife stealing and of the vendettas which sometimes followed, these actions were regarded as personal or kin group matters and were not ruled on by the council of title holders.

The constant round of ceremonial events provided an area for direct participation for the title holders. In addition to the important roles played by the *nahneken* and the two priests which have been outlined above, all title bearers were expected to make larger prestations of food than did the general populace at these events. While the title bearers were aided in their contributions by relatives, they were expected to themselves provide the largest share of these prestations and to retain a relatively modest part when redistributions were effected. The burden of collecting large amounts of food for the feasts has been so great that heirs to titles are known to refuse appointment on that account.

The most important ceremonies for title bearers are those which celebrated succession to titles, the *pwakamwar* or *iraramwar*, which marked the normal father to son succession and the *waliempo* which was held when the titles shifted between lines within the major *keineks*.

The wives of male title holders are prominent in organizing food preparation for the feasts and in recruiting work parties of women for such activities as weaving mats, repairing houses, or spreading coral gravel on main paths. They must also serve as unimpeachable models of female behavior.

Behaviour honoring titled persons in word or deed is designated as *wau*. There is a system of address used as distinct from that of reference for title holders as given in the table. For *nahmwariki* the term *dokusa* is still used, while for *wasahi* the term *nahpwusak*, "his son", was formerly the address term before it became a reference term for the heir to the principal title. For *nanapas*, *mwasa-mal* is used in address (meaning obscure: *mw* = men; *samal* = priest) and for *nahlaimw*, *werenkuluk* or "king of the fishes"; and for *nahneken*, *naholak*, or "he who proclaims".

In addition to these terms, a special language applied in addressing the *nahmwariki* by all, by lower ranked to higher ranked title holders, and by



the remainder of the populace to all titled persons. Examples are *ihn* rather than *kowe* for you (sing.) ; for reference to sleep, *rorong*, instead of the vulgate *meir*. For food, *mwassel* substitutes for *mwange*.

A number of special observances referred to the person of the *nahmwariki*, and people were expected to bow and remove themselves from paths when titled persons neared.

Since the principle of primogeniture predominates in both succession and land tenure, one might expect that the title holders would also be the largest land holders. This association is only partly true. It should be emphasized that land use is controlled within the patrilocal extended family or *peineinei* rather than the much more expansive *keinek* which is the conduit for titles<sup>10</sup>, and that nominal ownership of plots, and with it, right of disposal is assigned to individuals rather than to the usufruct unit of the extended family itself. The size of individual land holdings depends upon a number of factors. While the eldest son in each *peineinei* receives the largest share of the estate through the principle of primogeniture, the locus of leadership may shift within the *keinek* away from the line of dominant land control. Also, other sources of land, such as dowries and lands brought along with adoptees, and land obtained through purchase, provide substantial inheritances. Accordingly, individuals not in the senior line of descent or even senior in their branch of their *keinek*, might acquire sizeable holdings through these means. While it is true that the current *nahmwariki* ranks among the largest land holders, four of the others in this category are not title bearers and two of the present titled men are among the really land poor of the atoll.

### *Acculturation and the Title System*

The coming of missionaries provided the first among the forces of acculturation to affect the title system of Pingelap. Although the representatives of The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) began work in the Caroline in the 1850's, it was not until 1873, and after the death of Okonomwaun who opposed such activity, that they first established a mission on Pingelap (Hurd, 1977 : 21-22 ; Morton et al., 1973 : 321) the actual resident missionaries being Ponapean converts. The succeeding *nahmwariki*, Iengiringer (1870-1881) relinquished one of his remaining two wives in order to conform to Christian notions of marriage, and during the period of wholesale baptisms which followed, he took the name Solomon (Morton et al., 1973 : 321). The next *nahmwariki*, Sapwenpar (1881-1924), is said to have established a number of

rulings which regulate activity on Sunday and he initiated the practice of allotting shares at feasts to church elders (Hurd, 1977 : 64), thus giving recognition to a new elite paralleling that of the traditional title holders.

During the German and Japanese periods, the council of title bearers still met and the *kapwung* continued to serve as the judiciary assemblage even though western and Japanese notions of legality and Christian morality intruded into their decision making. The blood feud probably disappeared by the time it could be outlawed, but the Germans are said to have forbidden the time honored practice of banishment. By the beginning of the Japanese period alcoholic drinks were introduced and drunkenness quickly became a punishable offense. Gambling was regarded as a crime when it was introduced at about the same time, and further evidence of the force of strict Christian morality is also apparent in the treatment of adultery which was established as a matter to be ruled on by the council of title holders.

The German and Japanese policy of recognizing local authority in outlying areas of Micronesia undoubtedly reinforced the position of the paramount chief if not that of his council. The Japanese appointed *nahmwariki* Diksolomon (1924-1964) Chief Magistrate (Morton et al., 1973 : 322) and they appear to have given him *carte blanche* in his political activities. However, this native autonomy suffered to some extent during the Japanese occupation of the atoll (1942 to 1944).

Under the administration of the United States Navy (1945 to 1952) the Ten Man Council formally replaced the court of the titles but the replacement was more apparent than real on Pingelap for as in other parts of Micronesia (Meller, 1969 : 26-27), most of the members of that body were also title holders. However, by this time several of them lived off the atoll and others were excluded, apparently on grounds of deficient personal qualities, so that some element of "achievement" as opposed to strict ascription began to influence appointment.

Under the terms of the Code of the Trust Territory of 1952 (Steincipher, 1970) more drastic changes took place in the political life of the atoll. On Pingelap a council was formed along quasi-traditional lines with each *pwekil* still being represented, but now an elected councilman represented each division rather than the traditional title holder. The Chief Magistrate became the official chief executive according to the code, and after 1957, his duties were spelled out in details which specified such assignments as tax collection, holding of elections, disbursements of municipal funds,

and chairing meetings of the council. In addition, he was to provide liaison with the Ponape district administration (Meller, 1969 : 29).

Since the man who was heir to the *nahmwariki* title, and after 1964, himself the paramount chief, held the position of Chief Magistrate during much of the time between 1954 and 1970 (Hurd, 1977 : 60), there was little occasion for clash between those offices during that period. This individual also moved upwards in the new political hierarchy of the Trust Territory, subsequently holding the position of District Legislator and, after 1974, member of the General Assembly of the Congress of Micronesia. His political career ended in 1976 due to an abrupt mental decline.

With the frequent absences of the *nahmwariki* from the atoll owing to these extra community commitments, it may seem that his role as traditional paramount chief and the position itself might be weakened. However, his immediate successor as Chief Magistrate was generally regarded as being his right hand man, accepting his decisions in matters of local administration according to established custom. The next magistrate (1976-1978) was a son of the *nahmwariki* who continued the influence of the chiefly family for a short time.

Just as the capacity of the title holders as an advisory board for the executive was supplanted by the elected council, their judiciary roles manifest in the *kapwung* were also eclipsed by appointment of a justice and an associate justice, a public defender and the institution of definite codification to replace customary law.

The elected body of four policemen, one representing each of the four *pwekils* and with one being designated Captain of Police, eliminated the main duties of the four title bearers of the "lower house" as well as that of the "chief of police" title or *nansaho*.

In addition to these legalistically imposed sources of erosion of the influence of the title system which occurred during the American period, other factors contributed to its decline. One of these was dispersion and mobility of the Pingelapese population. At first, the traditional political structure accommodated this dispersal. With establishment of the colony at Sokehs on Ponape in 1912-13, the two priestly titles which had been stripped of their special duties with the advent of Christianity, gained new vitality. The *nanapas* became the paramount chief of the new colony and the *nahlaimw* his lieutenant. The *nahneken* now served as intermediary and messenger, carrying information from Sokehs to the *nahmwariki* and directives from that chief back to the

colony. While these three members were absent from the atoll often, if not usually, and from the deliberations of the court of title bearers, creation of three new titles during the same period filled out the effective roster to the nineteenth century total of twelve. However, this was the limit to accommodation, as more title bearers emigrated to Ponape during the American period, and, often, after deaths of chiefs, titles remained vacant for several years. These factors, together with regular movement between the two islands, and later, the frequent absences of the paramount chief due to extra local political commitments, meant that no more than seven, and at times as few as four, of the fifteen positions were represented on the atoll during the period of my visits 1975-1980. Even if other factors had not conspired against traditional title bearers holding modern political offices, the expanding roster of local elected or appointed posts could not have been filled by those remnant representatives.

The continuing expansion of the influence of the church all but provided the death knell to the title system. It is clear that a working accommodation transpired between the church officials and the title bearers during the one hundred years of Christianity, but in this process the purview of the title system shrank markedly<sup>11</sup>. One manifestation of the increased influence of the church was clearly evident to me during my field studies on the atoll. This is pre-eminence of church elders in the various public ceremonies. This presence represents a definite intrusion into an important sphere of the traditional title system. But the final emergence of the church as the dominant force in daily life on Pingelap climaxed with the religious crisis of 1978. A Seventh Day Adventist attempt to establish a mission on Pingelap resulted both in strengthening of the position of the religious majority and also a fatal weakening of the office of the *nahmwariki*. Since the native missionary for the new movement was a son of the paramount chief, and since the chief himself is said to have deplored opposition to the new religion on the atoll, the *nahmwariki* was placed in an ambiguous position with regard to the majority of the community. One very definite result of this conflict was defeat of the other son in his bid for reelection as island magistrate in 1978.

The largely successful opposition to the new religious groups on the atoll is symptomatic of the essential isolation and parochialism which continues to dominate life on Pingelap. These conditions were reinforced by the decisions of the district court in Ponape and of the High Court<sup>12</sup> of the Territory, both of which cited "customary law" in support of the majority on Pingelap and those decisions served

to entrench the established church even more strongly as the dominant social force on the atoll.

This dominance impressed me strongly during my short visit to Pingelap in 1980 and through conversations with a number of Pingelapese on Ponape in that year. There was a marked change in the community since my previous visits. Twice daily church services were held and all activity not related to church work was strictly forbidden on Sundays, with the time honored practice of cooling off on the windward side of the island on that day now eliminated by edict. The night noises of Pingelap which had been the most vivid memory of my earlier stays were virtually quelled, due to rigid enforcement of a 9 o'clock curfew.

However, in spite of this apparent final triumph of the church in the regulatory life of the island, some recognition of the title system still survived. This recognition was manifested in the active role accorded the sole resident member of the upper court, the *nahnawa*, in the religious regime that had emerged. While my stay on the atoll in 1980 was too brief to assess his role adequately, it appeared to me that his participation had been sought largely as a measure to insure support of a substantial "traditional" element which had long identified the operation of the title system with enforcement of religious edicts and Christian morality.

### *Pingelap and the Evolution of Atoll Polities*

The foregoing account of the Pingelap title system provides material for reconsidering some of the problems of atoll political organizations which have been raised in previous surveys. In order to place this material in better comparative perspective it is fitting to first take a closer look at the geographical-historical position of Pingelap. With regard to outside contacts, the folk history mentions Yap, the Marshalls, the Gilberts and Kosrae (Morton et al., 1973 ; Hurd, 1977). But comparison of the political structures of these places reveals little similarity with Pingelap.

The case for political affinities with Ponape is much stronger. This is not surprising in that both linguistic and genetic evidence point to Ponape as the origin point for settlement of Pingelap (Morton, 1972). With regard to linguistic evidence, all of the titles used for men on the atoll appear in Riesenbergs schedules for Ponape as do about half of those for women (1968 : 10-13, 47). Virtually identical are the functions of two chiefly titles, the *nahmwariki* as paramount chief and the *nahnaken* as "talking chief". The offices of *nanapas* and *nahlaimw* are the most important priestly titles of Ponape though

they are not so closely identified by land-sea domains on the high island (Riesenbergs, 1968 : 49, 43).

Also evident are similarities of political functions of the court of title holders. The term *kapwung* (Riesenbergs, 1968 : 52) is used in both places to indicate judicial meetings of that court. The title bearers have important roles in a number of ceremonies, especially the first fruit rituals on Ponape (Riesenbergs, 1968 : 40) as well as Pingelap, and the *pwakamwar* or title initiation ceremony is very much the same. Etiquette procedures and deferential language show identity at many points, though there was greater development of these on Ponape (Garvin and Riesenbergs, 1952). In both places polygyny is associated with chiefly position. Existence of this apparently shared tradition of chieftainship and title development might argue for Pingelap political organization being merely an attenuated version of its forebear, Ponapean polity, with a general lesser complexity that could be attributed to a smaller population and other limiting effects of atoll living. However, there are some features of Pingelapese political organization that give it a special character and which cannot be explained in terms of either common heritage with Ponape, or diffusion from that or other sources.

Foremost among these is occurrence of patrilineal succession which contrasts with the matrilineal title inheritance patterns of Ponape and of Kosrae. Elsewhere, I (Damas, 1979) have argued that that occurrence of double descent on Pingelap supports the general notion of the brittleness of matrilineality and that matrilineal clans have not been kept vital by reinforcement of their importance through inter-island contacts. In developing this hypothesis I stressed the high degree of isolation of Pingelap which can be related to poor development of the navigator's art (Morton et al., 1973 : 318), a factor important in such multi-island networks as the "Yap Empire" (Fischer and Fischer, 1957 : 170), "Greater Trukese Society" (Marshall, 1975 : 171), or the "coral complexes" (Alkire, 1978 : 131-34) of the Marshalls. No such political entities appeared in the eastern Carolines where neither traditional histories nor the records of 19th century voyages (Riesenbergs, 1965) indicate existence of such a system. I have (Damas, 1979) suggested that the seeds of breakdown of a consistently matrilineal-matrilocal focus is evident in that area and may have been part of the background from which the Pingelapese polity arose.

Here I will try to break down the elements of patrilineal kinship more finely and to examine the apparent sequence in which they developed on

Pingelap. Very often anthropologists subscribe to the notion of primacy of economic factors in the chain of associations which concern development or alteration of descent emphases or levels of social complexity. For example, Sahlins (1958 : 201, 218ff) saw for Polynesia a differential distribution of resources at the base of the divergence into descent line or ramage types, with atoll organizations representing each type. He also saw the degree of social stratification as being related to levels of productivity (Sahlins, 1958 : 249). Goodenough (1953)<sup>13</sup> subscribed to the view that unilineal and cognatic systems in Oceania reflect alternate sets of solutions to problems of pressures on land. However, for Pingelap the folk history attributes the notion of patrilineal succession to the very earliest phase of the history of the atoll with patrilineally slanted land inheritance patterns developing only near the end of the precontact period. The tradition of temporal primacy in patrilineal succession over appearance of agnatically slanted land inheritance, is supported by separation of land tenure considerations from the functions of the *keinek*, the patrilineal unit involved in succession to titles.

There is one apparently logical association between the title system of Pingelap and land tenure which should be considered. Since settlement of land disputes became an important duty of the council of chiefs it could be postulated that the expansion of the system itself might have been a response to increased urgency of these disputes. However, this association suffers from temporal dissonance since the most dramatic expansion of the system occurred during a period when the population levels could not have produced a condition of great pressure on land when, empirically<sup>14</sup>, the land of the atoll has supported up to 1000 people.

Ecological factors do provide one ingredient in another aspect of atoll political organizations, that of the effects of differential population sizes themselves, although, of course, other circumstances, in addition to direct responses to subsistence opportunities, affect such sizes. Due to limited scale, the political developments found on Pingelap cannot be likened to the much more complex systems of such high islands as Ponape or Yap. However, it is useful to compare Pingelap with other island societies with small populations. Goldman (1970 :xx) acknowledges that "the character of a social order is not independent of factors of scale or multiplicity of relationship" but he cites the case of the eastern Carolinian atoll Ifaluk as evidence that "a complex order of genealogical rank" exists despite a very small population. Indeed, the description of Burrows and Spiro (1957) points to an obsession with rank

which pervades a society typically numbering between 200 and 300 people (1957 : 4), and which involves ranking of descent units, their chiefly representatives, and of untitled individuals. While such an emphasis has only rudimentary development on Pingelap, there is a similarity in the operation of the title system itself, in that on Ifaluk five chiefs meet as a group to decide important matters, especially interpretation, modification and application of traditional rules (1957 : 188).

Quite other emphases are seen on Fais island also in the western Carolines, where for a population of the same order as Ifaluk, there is a much greater proliferation of chiefly titles than for either Ifaluk or Pingelap (Rubenstein, 1979). However, the efficacy of bearing titles is much diluted despite a native model for a definite hierarchical political order. The role of the paramount chief is honorific and ceremonial in nature and "a largely egalitarian authority exists"<sup>14</sup> (1979 : 270). Further :

There are no direct mechanisms on Fais for the settlement of interpersonal grievances over offenses such as personal theft, adultery, incursions upon someone else's garden lands, and so forth. There are no traditional courts or trials, forms of litigation, or procedures for a chief to arbitrate between disputants (1979 : 285-286).

This situation contrasts sharply with that of Pingelap where there has been a tradition of strong paramount<sup>15</sup> chiefs, and of meetings of a council of chiefs in connection with many offenses against customary rules, an elaborate set of punishments developed for each infraction, and ample evidence for their execution.

It may seem inappropriate to compare the political organization of Pingelap, given its peak population of 1000 with Ifaluk and Fais having numbers in the 200 to 300 range. However, the earlier discussion shows that the Pingelap title system had assumed or resumed its essential character and an extensive roster of titles by the time that the atoll had reached the population levels typical for the two western Carolinian islands considered here.

Even such a brief comparison as attempted here should demonstrate that atolls or small coral islands of roughly the same population levels will display important contrasts in the areas of proliferation of titles, the actual powers of title holders, and in the related phenomenon of ranking. If this is the case, what can we say regarding the effects of expanding populations on political organization as evidenced in the history of Pingelap ?

I have implied above that conflicts over land probably belong to a period of greater crowding on

the atoll rather than to the period of marked expansion of the title system. It is therefore probable that the important function of the court of chiefs as arbiters of land disputes became crucial after that time. Other sorts of disputes brought on by frictions among the increased populations could also require more intervention by the court at later periods. However, the oral history of Pingelap shows a concern with regulation, litigation, and punishments for infractions of customary rules which seem to span several population phases.

Whereas a general application of Goldman's conception of status rivalry as being the stimulus behind the evolution of political organization in Polynesia can be applied to Micronesia only with difficulty, his characterization of the realm of political organization as having dynamic forces of its own which are to a great extent independent of ecological factors or of factors of population sizes would appear to be borne out in the case of Pingelap.

Another important characteristic of Pingelapese political organization is prominence of ascription through kinship in title succession as opposed to qualities of merit which have such prominent places in the Ponapean polity despite ideals of matrilineal succession (Fischer and Fischer, 1957 : 175). This raises the general question of ascription versus achievement in Pacific politics.

Douglas (1979) has criticized the characterizations of the "big man" institution in Melanesia (Sahlins, 1968 ; Valentine, 1963) as representing the pole of achieved status, and the Polynesian polities, that of ascription. She hypothesized that "the greater the stress on kinship in group formation and cohesion, the more likely kinship and heredity were to be important leadership principles", and, "where ties of co-residence and local/territorial group" were more important, "descent was either unimportant in determining leaders or was complemented or superceded by requirements of competence, capability and success" (1979 : 26).

Dichotomization in terms of relative importance of locality as opposed to kinship is difficult to apply to Pingelap, where, I have argued, ascription clearly dominates in the title system. While I have stressed here the kinship elements in succession to titles and have elsewhere (Damas, 1979 ; 1981) noted the occurrence of both matrilineal and patrilineal descent on the atoll, the role of local considerations must not be underrated. The groups formed by association within each of the four *pwekils* have always been important in economic, social and ceremonial contexts (Damas, 1979). Also, while succession is controlled within the frame of the patrilineal *keinek*, important functions of several of the title

holders were tied to their local affiliations. Clearly more extensive comparative work must be carried out before we can begin to understand the problems of the origins of the variations in the relative emphases on ascription or achievement in the Pacific.

It might be appropriate at this point to give a thumbnail sketch of the history of the Pingelap title system. It seems clear that a substantial shared heritage of political institutions with Ponape provided the base from which divergences developed under conditions of considerable isolation. Singular features like patrilineal succession and emphasis on ascription emerged, though the actual steps involved in their development cannot be known. These geographical-historical processes operated in an ecological setting which was highly favorable to human habitation, though periodic typhoons decimated the population and the title system as well. Two of these calamities are featured in the oral history of the atoll. After the first of these, occupation of a foreign dynasty of chiefs dominated the scene according to tradition. But if it did so it left little mark on the essentials of the system. In the case of the reasonably well identified typhoon and tsunamis in the 1770's, disproportionate expansion of the chiefly line, and parallel concentration of political control that followed, brought on title disputes within that line. These were resolved in turn, by restoration and expansion of the roster of titles which had shrunk along with the general population decline. In the 20th century, further expansion took place in the contexts of colonization and adoption of Ponapean practices of awarding titles for merit. Finally, a special set of circumstances including emigration and mobility of the Pingelapese population and of title holders themselves, the institution of elected government according to American ideals of democracy, and the rise of the influence of the church, all contributed to the collapse of the system of titles as an effective political body.

In order to gain further appreciation of how specific ecological, geographical, demographic, and fortuitous historical circumstances interact to create unique developments in atoll political organizations, it is useful to compare the political history of Mokil, Pingelap's nearest neighbor.

### *Pingelap and Mokil Atolls : Diversity in Proximity*

Linguistic and genetic evidence support designation of Ponape as the point of origin for the Mokilese (Morton, 1972). Even though the distance

from Mokil to Ponape is considerably shorter, and a greater degree of contact with the high island more likely than for Pingelap, a largely independent course has been followed until relatively recently in the history of its political organization.

As I have noted in the introductory section, Mokil shares with Pingelap, ecological conditions highly favorable to human habitation. However, with about two thirds the land area, Mokil's capacity for supporting populations must be smaller. Our chief source for Mokil, Weckler (1949), thought that in times prior to the typhoon and tidal wave of the 1770's (which also struck Mokil), the land area of the atoll was divided into two districts which by tradition were politically autonomous and exogamous. While feuding is not absent from the folk history of Pingelap, it dominates that of Mokil. Weckler (1949 : 24) thought that attempts to consolidate the two districts, each of which formerly had a sacred and a secular chief (1949 : 24-25), may have sown the seeds for the unsettled state of affairs which followed this disaster. The 19th century history of Mokil reveals considerable rivalry between two competing patrilineal lines that accounts for assassination of five paramount chiefs between about 1820 and 1845 (1949 : 46-49, 52-62). By contrast to Pingelap where during the same period there had been restoration and expansion in the title system, on Mokil there was reduction from a possible four chiefly titles to a definite one.

Principles of patrilineality and primogeniture in succession appear to have traditional roots (Weckler, 1949 : 67) but the tendency toward ascription through kinship also common to both atolls, was modified on Mokil where appointment of new chiefs had to be approved by a general assembly of the men of the community (1949 : 66). The effects of this element in succession can be seen in the period of 1879 to 1904 when the four paramount chiefs who served during that time failed to show direct patrilineal ties and earlier one chief was actually removed from office (1949 : 55).

Other contrasts in the nineteenth century histories of the atolls include a greater degree of contact with other Micronesian islands and atolls which introduced several matrilineal clans to Mokil but had little effect on the political organization (Weckler, 1949 : 67-70), and much greater participation of beachcombers as advisors and interpreters for the chiefs of Mokil (1949 : 70-81). The influence of these resident whites seems to have been restricted for the most part to external matters.

As in the case of Pingelap, during the German and Japanese periods, colonial powers followed policies of *laissez faire* in the local politics on Mokil,

but dissatisfaction with the paramount chief of the period 1904-1940, caused the Germans to appoint a "No. 2 King" through whom they mainly dealt (Weckler, 1949 : 25). This latter title became hereditary through the male line.

Weckler gives an account of government on Mokil at the time of his study in 1947 (1949 : 25-34). The decisions of the council of all males were almost never overruled by the paramount chief, though he was thought to be concentrating too much power in his personal clique in subtle ways. The Ten Man Council on Mokil did not include either the traditional chief or the "No. 2 King" at that time and Weckler saw that body as providing a check on chiefly power (Weckler, 1949 : 29). On the death of the paramount chief in 1957 he was not replaced (Morton et al., 1973), thus ending the stormy career of that position on Mokil.

It is evident from this survey that Mokilese political organization probably was never characterized by an elaboration of chiefly titles such as found on Pingelap<sup>16</sup> and its development and existence were hampered by a brittleness and uneasiness of the post of paramount chief occasioned by vendettas as well as by the ingredient of succession not being firmly managed within the idiom of patrilineal succession as was the case on Pingelap. These divergences developed out of a common cultural and social heritage in highly comparable ecological conditions as expressions of the vagaries of histories, some of which can be documented for the 19th century. Evidence of such divergent developments within this narrow geographical scope with marked degrees of shared cultural, social and physical backgrounds, discourage attempts to generalize about atoll political organizations. Indeed, the general diversity of atoll polities acknowledged by writers cited earlier in this paper argues against any sort of typology that would go beyond designating similarities in limitation of scale, as contrasted to larger, high island political systems. If classification of atoll polities are indeed difficult to construct, I would argue that attempts to understand the processes which bring about divergent developments found under conditions of atoll living can in themselves provide worthwhile directions of study.

## NOTES

1. Field research on Pingelap and Ponape was supported by the Canada Council in 1975-76, by a McMaster University Arts Research Grant in 1978, and by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in 1980. I wish to express my gratitude to those agencies for their assistance. John Byron Thomas and Mary Durand Thomas read an earlier version of this paper and N.E. Morton provided advice and access to his data on the Pingelapese population. Suggestions by these scholars undoubtedly have resulted in improvement of the paper but they should not be held responsible for the statements and arguments contained here which are my own.

Above all, I thank the gracious people of Pingelap for their help and hospitality. Particularly helpful in the present study was Reverend Albert Diopolus.

2. Weckler has estimated this date after exercising considerable care, using both informant recall and documentary material to reach his conclusion of a 1770-1780 occurrence.

3. Morton et al., think that designation of Yap in this context "is not to be understood as the high island presently known by this name, since to the natives of the Carolines, Yap is the habitation of the gods in the western ocean" (1973 : 322). Nevertheless my informants made the association with that western Carolines island.

4. The dates used for the reigns of paramount chiefs are abstracted from the estimates of N.E. Morton et al., (1973).

5. The spirit Isopahu appears at various times in the legendary history of Pingelap, taking the form of prominent figures including the paramount chiefs. Okonom-waun seems to have been especially strongly identified with Isopahu and the evident abnormal extent of power he was able to exercise seems to rest strongly on his ability to convince the Pingelapese of his time that he was indeed the personification of that spirit.

6. It is possible that all of the titles which appeared during the 19th century were indeed revivals of earlier statuses known on the atoll. Another possibility is introduction of the attributed new titles from Ponape since they all appear in Riesenberg's (1968 : 10-13) charts. Arguing against this alternative interpretation is lack of evidence for close contacts with Ponape before the time of missionary contact (Riesenberg, 1965).

7. The line of succession for the *nahlik* title had a number of ambiguities and variant accounts from among my informants. I have given the simplest version here but other accounts indicate that either two or four individuals held the title between Isipwa and Osia.

8. Succession to the title *nahno* is contained within the major *keinek* Karoa and follows general outlines of patrilineality. However, the sequence Sوسي-Essiger-Iokapus-Pehtas-Dison-Alik-Kepa shows some irregularities with regard to expected father to son succession and a number of special circumstances are cited in explanation.

9. Morton et al. (1972a : 279) indicates that of the 22 founder sibships of Pingelap, that of Poa accounts for 15%

of the gene pool of the atoll. The same source cites the factors of polygamy and of unusually fertile spouses of *nahmwarikis* as accounting for this unbalanced expansion.

10. I have elaborated upon the structures of and relationships between the units *peineinei* and *keinek* in another paper (Damas, 1981).

11. The three sources of influence in the present day community of Pingelap are membership in the board of the local co-operative association, election to the civil posts, and recognition in church affairs either through long term service or through ordainment. The current *nahmwariki* had fortified his position as traditional leader not only through his participation in local and, later, in extra island politics, but also through ordainment.

12. The most crucial point of controversy in this crisis was the practice of the Seventh Day Adventists working on Sundays. Three individuals were tried and convicted by the District Court in Ponape in violation of 'native custom'. They appealed to the High Court in Saipan and the decision of the lower court was upheld on the basis that "custom is clearly established... thus enforceable under the Criminal Code of the Trust Territory", E.F. Granatti, Associate Justice, Nov. 20, 1979 (in referring to Trust Territory of the Pacific Criminal Appeal No. 50-79).

While the Seventh Day Adventists continued activities on the atoll, their attempts at building a church had been forestalled by confiscation of building materials. The effect of the High Court decision was that the members of the new mission continued to worship on Saturdays but refrained from work on Sunday, thus adopting a two day weekend.

13. It should be noted, however, that each of the kinship units which Goodenough discussed was indeed involved some way or other in land tenure, associations which are not applicable to the patrilineal *keinek* or the matrilineal *sou* of Pingelap.

14. The relationship between expansion of the title system and that of the total population can be estimated on the basis of certain historical information. While the folk history of Pingelap attributes survival of thirty persons after the effects of the typhoon of the 1770's had worn off, Morton et al. (1972b : 278) think forty a more appropriate number. The first subsequent population estimate by Hammet (1972a : 278) for 1853 gives 450 and by Aggasiz (1972a : 278) for 1899, 1000. These estimates suggest a growth rate of 3% between about 1775 and 1853, and 2% afterwards. Accordingly, the population of Pingelap was expanding from about 120 to slightly over 200 during the period (1813-30) of greatest accretion of titles, while the total numbers nearly tripled to 500 or 600 during the long period (circa 1830-1860) when there was no change in the roster of titles. Another period of stable title numbers ensued while the population grew from about 600 to 1000 between 1870 and 1899 and during a period of slightly slumping populations (Bascom 1965) in the first half of the 20th century. The final phase of expansion spanned this latter period and the beginnings of a post World War II population boom when the final title *nanpei* was added.

15. Rubenstein's analysis of the actual political structure as opposed to that of the native model raises questions which are exceedingly difficult to resolve in the case of a largely reconstructive study like this one. I have assumed that the conditions of weak chiefly power experienced during my visits to Pingelap indicated a decline from the centralized situation of the past. There are some indications from the ethnohistory of the atoll that the *nahmwariki* did wield considerable influence. A definite shift in land tenure practices indicated above to have been associated with the 18th century chief Semenhue is one example. I have also cited the active controlling role of the 19th century paramount chiefs in restructuring the title system itself. Okonomwaun is said to have forbade missionary activity throughout his long reign even though there is evidence for great interest in Christianity on the island during that time (Eilers 1934 : Hurd 1977). The edicts of *nahmwariki* Sapwenpar have been shown to still carry considerable weight in the case of the religious crisis of 1978. A number of such indications together with the undoubted role of the staff of chiefly advisors with their specific and general powers point to a less than democratic situation on Pingelap.

16. An anonymous reviewer suggests that the greater elaboration of the Pingelapese title system is a direct response to greater population expansion, postulating that there may be a population threshold beyond which we might expect multiplication of titles. While I have argued against any direct correlation between population size and proliferation of titles, if such a threshold exists it would be on the order of about 100 persons for the Pingelap system began to expand shortly after that level was reached and Mokil stayed below that figure until after the middle of the 19th century (Morton et al., 1972 : 277). At the same time, I have noted that the expansion of the Pingelap system might well have been largely a restoration of a previously established roster, a condition which did not exist for Mokil. My main point is that multiple historical factors must be enlisted in this comparison.

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