



IBETEL A KLEBELAU

Quarterly Newsletter

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DOCUMENTING *URRESEL* ORACHEL: BRINGING ROCK ART BACK TO LIFE

Orachel is a famous god in Palau. It was he who is said to have painted *Urresel* Orachel (Orachel's drawings), the rock art that exists in the rock islands in Airai and Koror states. Elders say that Orachel painted these to teach the peoples of Palau many things including the art of how to paint stories. Many states in Palau

have stories of Orachel's feats and contributions to Palau—Ngatpang, Melekeok, Peleliu, Angaur, and others. As a historic and cultural preservation office, the Bureau of Arts and Culture (BAC) encourages the youth and others to ask elders in the community for more of Orachel's legendary accounts that occurred in their state and throughout Palau. Through these stories, the meaning of Orachel and his drawings can be preserved for future generations of Palauans.

Urresel Orachel form an extremely precious cultural heritage from ancient times but many of these pictographs have faded over the generations and continue to be threatened by the weather, time, and climate change.



Mark Willis taking photo of the Orachel pictographs at one of Koror State Rock Islands

mate change. For these reasons, the Directors of the Bureau of Arts and Culture and the UOG Micronesian Area Research Center, who is also the Vice President for a scientific committee of ICOMOS, networked with the Koror State government and the Palau National Commission for UNESCO to bring a 3-D photogrammetry specialist to document *Urresel* Orachel.

As a result, two archaeologists trained in specialized documentation, Mark Willis and Andrea Jalandoni conducted visual documentation work in Palau from February 26 to 28 of this year. Part of their work included examining and taking photographs of related rock outcrops and surfaces for additional or previously undocumented rock art.

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(Rock Art continued)

Though just one sample set of pictures has been submitted thus far to demonstrate the project's potential,

HISTORIANS HOLDS 2ND SESSION FOR THE COMPILATION OF TRADITIONAL CHIEFS BOOKLET

Title 19 of the Palau National Code, known as the Historical and Cultural Preservation Act, specifically tasks the Bureau of Arts and Culture to "Develop a written history of Palau" and to compile "information on the traditional laws of the Republic and their underlying principals." In answer to this, many years ago the Bureau asked each state to nominate their own representative knowledgeable in traditional laws, history, and customs to a Society of Historians. The Historians are then certified by the President. These Historians meet twice a year to ensure that Palau's precious traditional knowledge and practices that have been handed down through the generations are documented and transmitted to the current and future generations through a series of booklets.

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Historians with Minister Faustina Rehuher-Marugg (sitting - first from right) and Director Dwight Alexander (standing -first from right)

UNESCO MEMORY OF THE WORLD 2ND REGIONAL WORKSHOP

Ten countries in the Pacific Asian region met March 11-14, 2011 to participate in the 2nd Regional UNESCO Memory of the World (MOW) Workshop in Jakarta, Indonesia with Palau represented by Bureau of Arts and Culture staff Sylvia Kloulubak, Historical Preservation Specialist. The other countries represented were: Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Bhutan, Solomon Islands, and the youngest nation in the world, Timor Leste. These countries were offered a rare opportunity by the MOW International Advisory Committee to learn the particulars of the MOW nomination process. The workshop aim was to assist fellow countries in the Asia and Pacific Region prepare their draft nominations for the MOW International Register by providing technical assistance.

The documentary heritage for Palau's draft nomination was the Obakelderaol petroglyph of Ngaraard State. This heritage marks what historians say is the burial site of the body of the legendary figure Surech. Surech was the beautiful maiden from Ngijwal who captured the heart of Tulei, a man from Ngaraard state.

The Obakelderaol petroglyph draft nomination is Palau's second effort toward a MOW International Register inscription. The first focused on the rock art called "Urresel Orachl." It was reviewed during the 1st regional UNESCO MOW workshop held in Icheon, Korea from 18 to 20 February 2009 wherein Ms. Kloulubak also served as Palau's representative. The Urresel Orachl nomination will be forwarded to UNESCO as soon as the recommendations by the UNESCO team of experts are able to be implemented and other necessary steps are taken.

Palau was fortunate to have several UNESCO experts review the draft nomi-



2nd MOW Workshop Participants

nation of the Obakelderaol petroglyph so that their recommendations can be implemented. Present were: Ms. Rsolyn Russel (MOW International Advisory Committee, Chair), Mr. Ray Edmondson (MOW International Advisory Committee, Register Sub-Committee member/Chair of the Memory of the World Committee for Asian Pacific), Mr. Rujaya Abhakorn (MOW International Advisory Committee, Register Sub-Committee member/Register Sub-Committee Chair of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia Pacific) and Ms. Joie Springer (Section Chief, Universal Access and Preservation Section). The Bureau of Arts and Culture under the Ministry of the Community and Cultural Affairs looks forward to the submission of these two nominations to the MOW International Register.

BAC INTERNSHIPS: RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS



(l-r) Sylvia Kloulubak, Kelly Marsh, Linnea Lövgren, Sarah Billengren, and Director Dwight Alexander

The Bureau of Arts and Culture (BAC) received two archaeology interns from the Department of Archaeology and Osteology, Gotland University, Sweden for five weeks of field work from 17 January to 20 February 2011. The students were under the supervision of local archaeologist Jolie Liston with guid-

ance by the BAC Director Dwight Alexander, the Ethnographer Kelly Marsh, and Acting Archaeology Section Head Calvin Eme-siochel.

Linnea Lövgren, worked within the state of Aimeliik under the direction of Leli Tem, Director of Aimeliik's Tourism Program, and Governor Leilani Reklai. The timing proved to be good as the state held their official opening to launch their new cultural tourism program on February 1st which Lövgren helped prepare for.

The other intern, Sarah Billengren, worked with the state of Ngardmau with the support of Ngardmau State Executive Secretary Peggy Hanser and the direction of Governor Akiko Sugiyama. Governor Sugiyama worked with the state traditional chiefs

who selected a site for Billengren to help document and clear.

Both states have been very active in historic preservation efforts in recent years, clearing and maintaining historic sites and developing them into cultural heritage tourism programs for visitors. Each of the interns had the opportunity to learn about the states' cultural resources—visiting them first hand, hearing about their significance from state workers, and listening to their oral history from state chiefs and other elders. In return, the interns will be writing some of this information into material that the state will review and use to meet state goals, such as producing brochures about state historic sites or preparing site registration nomination forms. The interns also shared some of their knowledge about how to document a historic site using archaeological methods.

The interns said that they enjoyed their time working under the guidance of the states, the local archaeologist, and the BAC office and connecting with the peoples of Palau who were so hospitable. Each intern expressed that they hope to come back and conduct more work with the Palauan community at some point in the future.

their expert ability to enhance imagery has brought faded pictographs that perhaps have not been visible for 60 years or more back to life. This sample set of pictures is now available for viewing at BAC. Further, the archaeologists are currently working to “stitch” together photographs taken to produce 3-D digital mosaics and panorama imagery of *Urresel Orachel*.

These images will provide valuable baseline data to better understand and safeguard *Urresel Orachel*. Along with the photographs, their report will provide an assessment of climate change impact and recommendations for conservation of the sites. Also produced will be a detailed record of these pictographs which can be used by researchers to non-invasively study changes in the sites over time and obtain precise measurements and calculations of the sites.

Aside from research, the creation of these 3-D images will help preserve Palau’s cultural heritage. The images will serve as a digital record of these pictographs that can be preserved for future generations who may no longer be able to see the rock art that are visible to us today. This documentation is a significant contribution to the state of Koror and the people of Palau in many ways.

CODE OF CONDUCT/PALAU HISTORIC PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

Because of the importance and sensitivity surrounding all the historical sites, the Palau Historic Preservation Office would like to emphasize proper conduct for visiting a site through the following guidelines: 1) Do not remove (or damage/alter) anything from the site. Although you might not think something is significant to the site, all pieces make up the whole. 2) Remember that many sites include culturally sensitive areas and therefore behavior conduct should always be respectful. 3) Remember to take everything you bring to the site with you when you leave.

PHS STUDENTS IN CAREER MENTORING PLACED IN BAC



(l-r) Kelly Marsh, Sylvia Kloulubak, Carlyn Clarence, Antoinette Kebei Antero, and Director Dwight Alexander

Two students from Palau High School (PHS) namely Ms. Carlyn Clarence, 11th grade, and Ms. Antonette Kebei Antero, 11th grade were placed in the Oral History and Ethnography Section of the BAC for one week from February 21 - 25, 2011 for career mentoring.

Each year the PHS places high school juniors in a work place establishment as part of their career mentoring program. This provides students a hands-on employment experience based on their career interest. A main goal of this program is to inspire the students to further their education at a college or university and help expose them to real work environment to help them decide on a major or career choice.

BAC ASSISTS A 10-WEEK ANTHROPOLOGY TERM ABROAD IN PALAU

From September through November of 2010, seven students from Union College, Schenectady, New York studied and lived in Palau. Local families hosted the students. This served as an opportunity for the students from various parts of the United States to experience Palauan culture and family life first hand. During their time in Palau, students were enrolled in three anthropology courses offered through their college. Students studied the topics of ‘Culture and Work,’ ‘Peoples and Cultures of the Pacific,’ and Anthropology Independent Study.’ The students also spent ten hours or more each week serving as interns in local cultural, environmental, and health care organizations. Two interns worked in the Oral History and Ethnography Section of the BAC (see picture). The course, project leaders, and the host families strove to ensure that the students experienced many facets of life in Palau. In return, students worked to give back to their host local organizations. As students, project leaders and coordinators, and

host families expressed at a final get-together, new friendships were formed and much was learned. Each hopes to return for a more casual visit someday.



Union College students with Professor Karen Brison, middle of back row. BAC Oral History & Ethnography Section staff, far right. Picture taken during visual documentation project in Angaur state.

(Session continued)

In this way, each state has opportunity to share how its traditional laws and histories differ or are the same as the other states in Palau. For example, while the highest chiefs meet in *bai er a rubak* (chief's meeting house), their seating assignments differ in each state.

The Society of Historians met from February 28 to March 4, 2011 to review the draft booklet on "Traditional Chiefs" (*Rubekul a Beluu*). The list of chief titles will then be verified with other state representatives such as traditional leaders and the state government offices. The final stage of review is conducted by long-time members of the BAC Technical Review Committee who were selected based on their knowledge of Palauan history, culture, and orthography. BAC expects to have the draft version of the booklet compiled by the end of this year. The Historians produce their booklets with the assistance of the Bureau of Arts and Culture, and use funding provided by the U.S. National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund Grant.

This booklet, published in Palauan and English, will be the fifteenth in an ongoing series of publications on traditional Palauan laws and customs.

BAC STAFF ATTENDS LAUNCHING OF AIMELIIK STATE CULTURAL TOURISM PROGRAM



Tour inside Bai er a Keai

On February 1, 2011 BAC staff Ms. Kelly Marsh, Cultural Anthropologist/Ethnographer, Ms. Lynda Tellames, Staff Historian, Ms. Sylvia Kloulubak, Historic Preservation Specialist, Mr. Errolflynn T. Kloulechad, Historic Preservation Specialist, and Mr. Gener "Eigner" Moon Sangalang, WIA intern attended the official launching of the Aimeliik State government's new cultural tourism program. The ceremony was held at the newly renovated *Bai Ngerkeai* (chief meeting house) in Ngerkeai traditional village, Aimeliik. The

launching included a signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Aimeliik State government and the traditional chiefs of Ngerkeai for opening up their *bai* and allowing it to be a part of the Aimeliik state government's tourism program.

REGULATION FOR HISTORICAL/CULTURAL PROPERTIES

It is illegal to take, remove, alter or damage any historical or cultural properties, including artifacts, sunken WW II vessels and parts thereof, WW II relics, historic landmarks and cultural properties. Detailed information on Public Laws regarding historical and cultural properties can be obtained from PNC Title 19 and its subsidiaries. To ensure compliance with these laws you may contact the Bureau of Arts and Culture/ Historic Preservation Office at (680) 488-2489 or email to hispres@palaunet.com.

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