

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Culture Contact in the Palau Islands, 1783

George Keate's *An Account of the Pelew Islands*,¹ first published in 1788, recounts the shipwreck of the East India Company Packet *Antelope* in 1783 on, what were to the English, the previously unknown Palau Islands of western Micronesia.² The book describes the three-month stay of the *Antelope*'s crew on Ulong Island and their relations with 'a new people'.³ The popular story of mutually beneficial interaction between Pacific Islanders and Europeans provided a striking contrast to the suspicion, appropriation and violence marking many early encounters reported in the voyage literature from other parts of Oceania.⁴ In contemporary scholarship, Palauan society is seen as having been radically transformed by the contact with Europeans in 1783,⁵ and the text is widely cited in Pacific studies. Yet Keate never travelled to Palau, and he composed the account from the journals and papers of Captain Henry Wilson, and the reports of the officers and crew of the *Antelope*, remarking that: 'no work of this nature was ever presented to the Public, in every respect better authenticated'.⁶ Contemporary historians have considered the work, however, to be either a 300-page illusion, or a valuable ethnohistorical text that nonetheless presents Palauan history and society in an

¹ George Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands Situated in the Western Part of the Pacific Ocean. Composed from the Journals and Communications of Captain Henry Wilson, and some of his Officers, who, in August 1783, were there Shipwrecked, in the Antelope, a Packet belonging to the Honourable East India Company. The Third Edition* (London 1789).

² Reference to earlier visits by European and Indo-Pacific people is mentioned by Keate, *Pelew Islands*, ix–xi; Karen L. Nero, 'A cherechar a lokelii: beads of history of Koror, Palau, 1783–1983', PhD thesis, University of California (Berkeley 1987), 207–10; Richard J. Parmentier, *The Sacred Remains: myth, history and polity in Belau* (Chicago and London 1987).

³ The *Antelope* was wrecked on the west barrier reef of Palau on the night of 9–10 August, and the crew departed Ulong Island on 12 November. Keate, *Pelew Islands*, xii. The names of 34 of the crew (one died while quitting the *Antelope*) are given by Keate, who says there were also 16 Chinese men, none of whom is ever named in *Pelew Islands*.

⁴ In the late-18th century there was a complicated interplay between views of European explorers as aggressors and the 'savage' behaviour of Pacific Islanders. For example, *The Gentleman's Magazine* of 1775 catalogued instances of unprovoked shooting of 'Indians' by Europeans, but such events contrasted with the killing of 10 men at Grass Cove in New Zealand in 1773 and the death of James Cook in Kealakekua Bay in Hawaii in 1779. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 45 (1775), 132; James Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, vol. 2, ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Cambridge 1961), 743–4; E.H. McCormick, *Omai, Pacific Envoy* (Auckland and Oxford 1977), 308. The massacre of French sailors on Tutuila during the visit of La Pérouse in 1787 illustrates the interplay. La Pérouse suggests the deaths could have been avoided had the officers not been afraid of 'starting the hostilities and possibly being accused in Europe of barbarous behaviour...'. J-F.G. la Pérouse, *The Journal of Jean-François de Galaup de la Pérouse 1785–1788*, vol. 2, tr. and ed. John Dunmore (London 1995), 399. See also, McCormick, *Omai*, 303.

⁵ Nero, 'Beads of history', 200; Dirk A. Ballendorf, 'A permanent upsetting of tradition: the 1783 British–Palauan alliance for the subjugation of Artingall', *Asian Culture*, 23 (1995), 11–14; Daniel J. Peacock, *Lee Boo of Belau: a prince in London* (Honolulu 1987).

⁶ Keate, *Pelew Islands*, xv.

imagined, mediated fashion.⁷ The accuracy of *Pelew Islands* and, in particular, its portrayal of harmonious culture contact, have been difficult to evaluate in the absence of the primary sources used by Keate.⁸ Recent archaeological investigation of the 1783 site used by the *Antelope's* crew on Ulong Island by the author⁹ showed that the orientation of the camp was strongly defensive, suggesting a more cautious set of cross-cultural relations than is reported in *Pelew Islands*.¹⁰ This paper re-evaluates Keate's book in light of those findings, and considers a radically different and seldom referenced account of early contact between Palauans and the shipwrecked crew written in 1784, well before publication of *Pelew Islands*, in which the meeting of cultures is revealed as more problematic and directed, largely, toward Palauan interests.¹¹

George Keate and the Account of the Pelew Islands

Kathryn Dapp, the biographer of George Keate, considers him part of the fabric of the Enlightenment rather than a major figure.¹² As a man of leisure, a poet and a writer in London, he belonged to the reticulate society of the late 18th century which connected the intellectual, political and economic interests of the metropole with the seaborne agents of the Enlightenment who returned from the Pacific with the essential fodder of empire — knowledge of new lands and people. As a literary figure, Keate had dined with Samuel Johnson, James Boswell and David Garrick, but his political and social beliefs were more in tune with associates such as Horace Walpole and Voltaire.¹³ He became a Fellow of the Royal Society and Antiquary Society of London in 1766 during a phase of colonial expansion after the termination of the Seven Years War, and both societies contained individuals with keen interests in the South Seas, such as Joseph Banks and Alexander Dalrymple.¹⁴ Keate's library contained a number of books on voyages to the Pacific, including those by George Forster, Sydney Parkinson and

⁷ Max Quanchi and Ron Adams (eds), *Culture contact in the Pacific: essays on contact, encounter and response* (New York 1993), 48; Karen L. Nero, 'Keate's account of the Pelew Islands: a view from Koror and Palau', in George Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands*, ed. Karen L. Nero, Nicholas Thomas and Jennifer Newell (London and New York 2002), 2; Parmentier, *The Sacred Remains*, 43.

⁸ Keate says that he transcribed the journals of Captain Henry Wilson and his officers and, in the text, he records using the journal of John Cummins (Third Mate). In spite of the number of different textual sources used by Keate, neither the original documents nor the copies made of them have yet been located.

⁹ Geoffrey Clark, 'Rediscovery of Captain Wilson's 1783 camp on Ulong Island, Republic of Palau', Report to the Belau National Museum (Palau 2005).

¹⁰ Nicholas Thomas, 'George Keate: benevolence on the beach', in J. Lamb, V. Smith and N. Thomas (eds), *Exploration and Exchange: a South Seas anthology, 1680-1900* (Chicago 2000), 112-16.

¹¹ The document in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of 1784 has not been published previously or analysed in relation to Keate's account. The only reference I have found to the document in the secondary literature is Peacock, *Lee Boo*, 236, who comments: 'important in that it tends to confirm much of what Keate later wrote', and Ballendorf, 'A permanent upsetting of tradition', who uses material from the letter, but does not comment on the disparity between it and Keate's account. The document is not referenced in recent versions of *Pelew Islands* edited by Nero, Thomas and Newell (2002), and Lévasque (2000). See full references of these editions in fn. 7 and 30.

¹² Kathryn G. Dapp, 'George Keate Esq., eighteenth century gentleman', PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia 1939), 91.

¹³ Dapp, 'George Keate Esq.', 91.

¹⁴ Keate was also a friend of William Bligh, and the German edition of *Pelew Islands* was translated by George Forster. The will of George Keate, Public Record Office, The National Archives, Online Catalogue Reference PROB 11/1512. Available online at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/search/> (accessed 14 Feb. 2007). Dapp, 'George Keate Esq.', 139, 151.

Alexander Dalrymple¹⁵ and, as a poet and painter, he would have been aware of the growing popularity of South Seas subjects in artistic works typified by the appearance of Omai in paintings, theatre and poetry.¹⁶ In the introduction to *Pelew Islands*, both the scientific and poetic influences of Keate are displayed with a eulogy to the scientific zeal of the President of the Royal Society, Joseph Banks, and his justification of his account of a 'new people' by paraphrasing Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* that: 'Nothing can be more interesting to Man than the history of Man.'¹⁷

In his interests and range of professional acquaintances Keate might be seen as predisposed to literary engagement with the Pacific, but it appears that his awareness of Palau and contact with Captain Wilson of the *Antelope* was through his close association with Brook Watson and Robert Rashleigh, two London merchant partners and friends,¹⁸ whose mercantile concerns were focused on Nova Scotia and Quebec. In 1775, Brook Watson travelled to New York and Quebec, where he is likely to have become acquainted with Henry Wilson who, as Master of the *Adamant*, took him from Quebec before the American attack on the city on 11 November.¹⁹

Captain Wilson and Lee Boo, the son of the *Ibedul* (High Chief) of Koror who had assisted the English, arrived in London in mid-July 1784 after sailing from Palau to Macao in a small schooner built on Ulong Island. The arrival of Captain Wilson and news of the shipwreck in the Palau Islands appears to have been quickly communicated to Keate by Brook Watson, who had recently been elected an MP for the City of London in April. Within a week of their arrival, Keate attended a dinner with Lee Boo and Captain Wilson at Robert Rashleigh's house and, the next day, he visited Lee Boo at the Wilsons' house in Rotherhithe. It is clear that Keate did not set out to write *Pelew Islands* until after the death of Lee Boo from smallpox on 27 December, as in that time he did not record systematically any information about Palau, and several of the 'scanty' anecdotes about Lee Boo derive from a dinner with Keate held shortly after his arrival.²⁰ According to Keate, it was not until April 1785 that he asked Brook Watson to solicit the journals and papers of Captain Wilson, and began to prepare his edited account. Keate records that he wanted to preserve the story for national and scientific benefit, but he was also strongly motivated by personal reasons. The *Pelew Islands* includes a letter from his close friend, the physician James Carmichael Smyth, who attended Lee Boo on his deathbed, which urges Keate to literary action: 'though you cannot bring him back to life, you are called upon (particularly considering his great attachment to you) not to let the memory of so much virtue pass away unrecorded'.²¹

Publication of *Pelew Islands* in 1788 generated then, as now, scepticism about the way Keate's account incorporated a personal eulogy to Lee Boo, an overly positive view of English-Palauan relations, and his philosophical belief that a civilised society was defined primarily by its progress toward moral excellence, which Palauans demonstrated in their

¹⁵ *Catalogue of the elegant and valuable collection of books of George Keate, Esq. Late of Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury, (Deceased)* (London 1800), 16-17. Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Douce CC 393(8).

¹⁶ Omai, for instance, was painted by Joshua Reynolds (c.1776), appeared in William Cowper's poem *The Task* (1785) and his life was dramatised in plays, notably, *OMAI: or, a trip round the world*, performed at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden (1785-86). McCormick, *Omai*, 281, 310, 314.

¹⁷ Alexander Pope's poem *Essay on Man*, composed c.1733-34, 'The proper study of mankind is man'.

¹⁸ Brook Watson is listed in Robert Rashleigh's will as an executor of his estate. The will of Robert Rashleigh, Public Record Office, The National Archives, Online Catalogue Reference PROB 11/1158. Available online at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/search/> (accessed 14 Feb. 2007).

¹⁹ L.F.S. Upton, 'Watson, Sir Brook', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, 1801-1820*, vol. 5. Available online at <http://www.biographi.ca/> (accessed 14 Feb. 2007); A. Farrington, 'Wilson, Henry Sen. (c.1741-)', *A Biographical Index of East India Company Maritime Service Officers 1600-1834* (London 1999), 861.

²⁰ Keate, *Pelew Islands*, 352-3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 360.

social behaviour among themselves and in their treatment of the shipwrecked crew. Thus, in *Pelew Islands* warfare, the killing of prisoners and disruption of friendly English-Palauan relations are ascribed to political necessity and the corrupting influence of shipwrecked 'Malays', while the taking of property was done only by the lowest class.²²

Reviews of *Pelew Islands* were widespread in magazines of the day and were unanimous in approving Keate's work. *The Monthly Review* considered the authenticity of the account, but ended by praising Keate's character and book,²³ while *The Analytical Review* reported that, while Keate may have been deceived in some particulars, his account could be depended on.²⁴ Those in search of practical details, though, were disappointed:

I had expected much satisfactory and authentic nautical information, respecting these islands, from *Wilson's account of them*, published by Mr. Keate; but in that I was sadly disappointed, there being not one useful remark, throughout the whole book.²⁵

The Gentleman's Magazine review of 1788 thought that, from Keate's account, Lee Boo appeared to have made better use of his natural talents while in England than Omai did,²⁶ but in a subsequent review of a later edition, commented:

Our readers will recollect the pleasing reflections we communicated to them in our review of Mr Keate's Account of the Pelew Islands... though it appeared to have been drawn up with more embellishment than the present narrative.²⁷

The issue of embellishment is likely to relate to a letter purportedly written by an anonymous crew member of the *Antelope*, and published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of 1784, which suggests that the English were subordinate to the *Ibedul* of Koror. The document is to be found at the end of the paper.²⁸

An Alternative Account of Initial Culture Contact

The document was almost certainly written by one of the *Antelope's* crew, as it contains numerous details of the shipwreck and stay of the crew in Palau that agree substantially with those in Keate's book published four years later. It stands as the only first-hand

²² *Ibid.*, 205, 220-1, 334-5, 351.

²³ *The Monthly Review*, 79 (1788), 109-21 and 193-203.

²⁴ *The Analytical Review*, 1 (1788), 394-400.

²⁵ George Robertson, *Memoir of a chart of the China Sea; including the Philippine, Mollucca, and Banda Islands with part of the coast of New Holland and New Guinea* (London 1795). The surviving log of the *Antelope* (The British Library, London (IOR:L/MAR/B/570A)) has its final entry on 4 June 1783 when the ship reached Macao. It shows that Captain Henry Wilson kept detailed nautical records, and that the omission of these by Keate in *Pelew Islands* is another example of information loss from editing.

²⁶ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 58 (1788), 629-31.

²⁷ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 74 (1804), 329-32.

²⁸ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 54 (1784), 980-1. There are few clues to the identity of the writer except that the letter contains a possible eyewitness account of the killing of prisoners, including a death not recorded in *Pelew Islands*, during the second attack of the *Ibedul's* forces against Melekeok in which 10-11 of the crew took part. The participants were Philip Benger, William Harvey, Thomas Dulton, William Roberts, James Duncan, Matthias Wilson, Nicholas Tyacke, Thomas Wilson, William Stewart and Madan Blanchard. The translator Thomas Rose may also have attended. Of these only Madan Blanchard and Thomas Rose can reasonably be eliminated as authors.

account of English–Palauan relations in 1783 that is independent of Keate's work.²⁹ The document records how the formative relations between the English and the chief of Koror suffered a crisis on Friday 16 August, when the forces of the *Ibedul*, given as 2000 in number, aggressively approached the English camp by land and sea. In response, the English and Chinese crew armed themselves, whereupon the *Ibedul* spoke to his people, before taking his canoe out of the cove. From the harbour, the *Ibedul* then sent for Captain Wilson and, when he arrived, demanded that the English assist him against his traditional enemies. As the crew were dependent on the *Ibedul* to build an escape vessel and for sustenance, Captain Wilson agreed to support him, and as a result, crew members took part in four engagements, which resulted in numerous Palauan deaths, and where they witnessed the brutal killing of prisoners.

In Keate's account, there is no mention of the *Ibedul*'s forces arriving *en masse* on 16 August,³⁰ and the source of 'coolness' between the Palauans and the English is reported to be the gift of a cutlass valued by the *Ibedul*'s brothers to another chief. When the *Ibedul* later met with Captain Wilson, the tension is ascribed, however, to the diffidence and sensibility felt by the *Ibedul* in requesting military aid from the unfortunate visitors.

Never perhaps was exhibited a nobler struggle of native delicacy; their hearts burnt within them to ask a favour, which the generosity of their feelings would not allow to mention... what most checked their speaking was, that, circumstanced as the English were with respect to them, a request would have the appearance of a command; an idea this, which shocked their sensibility.³¹

When Captain Wilson replied to the *Ibedul* that he should consider the English as his own people and agreed to supply men armed with muskets, cross-cultural harmony was quickly restored. After informing the crew of the outcome of the meeting, Captain Wilson returned to inform the *Ibedul* that his men would be at the *Ibedul*'s orders whenever he pleased. In response, *Ibedul* told Captain Wilson he was his brother *Rubak* or chief, offered to send food and craftsmen to assist the English in boat building, and said he would return the next day to collect the armed crewmen.³²

In both versions of English–Palauan culture contact, the *Ibedul* of Koror had the superior position, and the main difference between the two accounts concerns the way power relations were expressed, and whether firepower was leveraged from the English by threat of immediate military force or by civil request from host to disadvantaged guest. When the *Ibedul* first visited the English camp on 15 August, he certainly came with a large canoe fleet containing an armed force (as was observed in subsequent military expeditions) whose presence constituted a concrete statement of his military capacity. If the *Ibedul*'s forces did threaten the English camp before military assistance

²⁹ Captain Wilson wrote a letter to the President of the Supra Cargoes of Canton after arriving at Macao from Palau on 30 November 1783, that does not mention events after the shipwreck (The British Library, London, (IOR: G/12/77)). An account published in 1788 claiming to have been written by an officer from the *Antelope* is a plagiarised abridgment of *Pelew Islands*. The title is: *The Shipwreck of the Antelope East-India Packet, H. Wilson, Esq. Commander, on the Pelew Islands, situate in the West Part of the Pacific Ocean; In August 1783. By One of the Unfortunate Officers* (London 1788).

³⁰ In *Pelew Islands* the *Ibedul* arrived on 15 August with a large force of armed and unarmed men. The presence of the armed group was explained as a precaution against a sudden attack by the *Ibedul*'s enemies. However, the *Ibedul* did not take a large armed contingent with him on other visits to Ulong Island and surprise attack is specifically mentioned as *not* being a feature of Palauan warfare. Keate, *Pelew Islands*, 334; Amasa Delano, 'A narrative of voyages and travels, in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres: comprising three voyages round the world; together with a voyage of survey and discovery in the Pacific and Oriental islands', ed. Rodrigue Lévasque, *History of Micronesia: a collection of source documents. volume 15 — mostly Palau, 1783–1793* (Québec 2000), 65.

³¹ Keate, *Pelew Islands*, 72–3.

³² *Ibid.*, 75.

was demanded, it would conform to a Palauan political technique of *Twich ei keiulau ei oubuch er a raim* (firebrand politics extinguished by water), where a threat is used to encourage an opponent to one's side, combined with appeasement and compromise.³³

An event that supports the information in the 1784 document is given by Keate, who records that, soon after the *Ibedul* had been supplied with five musket-armed sailors on 17 August, the remaining crew began to fortify their camp site by constructing a strong barricade across the cove, backed by a foot bank for musket fire, and fixing two swivel guns, with the addition of a six-pound cannon a few days later. In 2005, archaeological investigation of the cove with a gradiometer located the 1783 camp and remains of the defensive wall. The work showed that the barricade would have restricted the habitation area occupied by the 49 crew to about 25 square metres, indicating a nucleated defensive position. In a drawing of the cove made by Captain Wilson's son,³⁴ the fortified part is shown as occupying a much larger area than it actually did, which lessens the visual impact of the camp's defences. Before the barricade was built the camp area was almost twice the size, and was undefended except for a night guard. The timing and speed with which the physical defences were completed is consistent as a response to a threat of force, actual or perceived, by the *Ibedul* on 15–16 August.

There is no doubt that genuine and amicable relations developed over time between the chiefs and people of Koror and the shipwrecked crew, and these were maintained by regular gifting of exotic goods by the English and supplies of much-needed food from the people of Koror. The English goods, though, could have been obtained by coercion and force, and in any case, the accessible wreck of the *Antelope* was an independent source of iron and other European items that was regularly visited by Palauans. The source of successful cultural interaction, in the short term, was the military value of the English to the *Ibedul* and his chiefs. The rapid attainment of the *Ibedul's* political objectives demanded the participation of the English and their firearms in warfare, which took significant resources away from the vital business of boat construction. On average, the four armed actions instituted by the *Ibedul* resulted in 20 percent of Captain Wilson's workforce being absent for 29 days or 31 percent of the crew's stay³⁵ — a significant contribution that may well have been secured by a threat of force. In the long term, it was the economic and political links that would be conferred on Koror by an attachment with the English that were perceived as important, and these were encouraged by sending Lee Boo with Captain Wilson to London, while a sailor, Madan Blanchard, remained in Palau with the *Ibedul*.

Other circumstances were no doubt also significant. It was fortunate that effective communication was possible through the *Ibedul's* shipwrecked Malay to the Malay-speaking servant of Captain Wilson, and that the camp was located on an uninhabited island some distance from any of the indigenous political centres. By supporting the construction of a vessel for the crew to leave Ulong Island, the *Ibedul* avoided the economic and social costs of maintaining and incorporating a dependent, and potentially destabilising, group of men into Palauan society. It should also be noted that the crew's response to Palauan contact may have been influenced by an apparently unprovoked

³³ Nero, 'Beads of history', 220. It is possible that the tactic may have been explained later to Captain Wilson. The tactics employed by the *Ibedul* in his first meeting with Captain Wilson were similar to those used in 1791, when the *Ibedul's* canoes arrayed in three lines approached Artingall (Melekeok) and demanded submission from its chiefs. After a display of paddle flourishing and the promise of negotiation the Koror and Artingall groups mingled, which the *Ibedul* encouraged because it furthered his aims by removing animosity. Delano, 'A narrative of voyages', 663.

³⁴ Keate, *Pelew Islands*, 127.

³⁵ The artist, William Arthur Devis, accompanied the third expedition against Artingall (Melekeok) and the translator, Thomas Rose, is mentioned as accompanying some expeditions, although he is not listed directly as a participant. Keate, *Pelew Islands*, 75.

attack on the *Antelope* while trading off the northern coast of New Guinea before arriving at Palau,³⁶ and that Captain Wilson had with him his brother and son.

The widespread influence of Keate's *Pelew Islands* can be traced in the number of editions, translations and abridged versions produced in the late-18th and early-19th century.³⁷ As the earliest detailed account of Palau, it remains an essential historical document containing many important observations, but as an account of culture contact, it is incomplete and marginalises the role of the Chinese, who comprised almost a third of the *Antelope*'s crew, and discounts the relationship between the shipwrecked Malays and the *Ibedul*.³⁸ Keate's over-refined idealisation of Palauan-English relations in *Pelew Islands* appears to have softened or ignored instances of cross-cultural crisis³⁹ that conflicted with his philosophical belief that order, propriety and good conduct were the essential features of a genuine civilisation. Such qualities were typified by Lee Boo's behaviour in London and, after his death, reified and taken by Keate when he wrote *Pelew Islands* as representative of English-Palauan relations.⁴⁰

*Document published anonymously in The Gentleman's Magazine of 1784 entitled: Extract of a Letter from a Person who was saved when the Antelope India Packet, Capt. Wilson, was cast away upon a Rock in the South Seas, in August, 1783.*⁴¹

I have unfortunately been one of the fifty who have suffered an unparalleled shipwreck, on a savage coast in the South Seas, on the 10th of August, 1783. At midnight, the ship *Antelope*, under a pressing sail, struck on a reef of rocks, five leagues distant from the land called Paline [Palau].⁴² Her dangerous situation instantly put us under the necessity of hazarding our lives on shore to the mercy of the savages. It pleased god we landed safe the following evening, with loss of only one man, on a small uninhabited island, some little distance from the main. Three days after we had secreted ourselves in a small cave, the natives discovered us, and at first intended to make us their slaves, as we saw they had done some Malays from a pirate [?scow], wrecked on the same rocks ten months previous to our disaster: but seeing the musquets we had brought, and knowing them to be our protection, from the report the Malays had given of their use and execution when in English hands, they were fearful of attacking us. On the 5th day their King brought near 2000 men in arms. He secreted the major part of them at the back of the island and entered the cove with about 700 unarmed. After a few hours stay, in great admiration (never before having seen white men), he returned to the back of the island for the night, leaving many of his subjects with us, who alarmed us the whole night with their war songs.

³⁶ Peacock, *Lee Boo*, 20.

³⁷ Nicholas Thomas suggests that *Pelew Islands* was, after Cook's voyages, the most popular Pacific voyage text in the late-18th century. Thomas, 'The "Pelew Islands" in British culture', in Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands*, ed. Nero, Thomas and Newell, 27. See Dapp, 'George Keate', 169-70 for a list of editions.

³⁸ There is a notable gap in Keate's account of the relations between the crew and Palauan women. In Palauan warfare, women from a defeated village could be given to the victors. See Parmentier, *Sacred remains*, 95-6; while Delano, 'A narrative of voyages', 654, records that after the submission of Artingall in 1791 the *Ibedul* told the Englishmen to select a Palauan woman.

³⁹ Another instance was on 9 September when the *Ibedul* and his chiefs twice requested the use of a swivel gun for the second attack on Artingall (Melekeok), which was declined by the English. The event is reported by Keate as a misunderstanding when it was clearly a refusal, and afterwards, fearing a hostile response, the crew 'keep every thing in a posture of defence', Keate, *Pelew Islands*, 131-2.

⁴⁰ Thomas, 'George Keate', also suspects that Keate disguised the subordinate position of the *Antelope*'s crew, which the *Ibedul* made clear: 'Had I been disposed to have harmed you, I might have done it long ago; I have at all times had you in my power', Keate, *Pelew Islands*, 249.

⁴¹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 54 (1784), 980-1.

⁴² In Captain Wilson's letter of 1783 (see fn. 29) he uses 'Pelow' and 'Palaos' rather than 'Pelew'. John Wedgeborough was a Midshipman on the *Antelope* and returned to Palau in 1791 as Lieutenant on the *Panther*. In a letter to a relative he records that 'Palou' was the correct spelling for the archipelago. John Wedgeborough, letter, in Wedgeborough, *Journal, 1792-1794*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, MS4088.

Next morning he entered the cove with some of his people to make the attack; in about an hour he took to his canoe in haste, at the same time we saw many coming thro' the woods. We now expected the war-hoop to be given; every Englishman was ready with his musquet, and the Chinese with cutlass and pikes in military order — this struck them with such terror how to proceed. The King harangued a long time to his people, then paddled out of the cove, and sent for Capt. Wilson, demanding to know if we were friends or enemies; he was answered friends — then you must go to war against our enemies, who are more numerous than we are, or take the chance of war with us. It was well known that we were entirely in the King's power, and could not water without his permission; that he might besiege the island, and make us glad to surrender; therefore the issue of a consultation was to acquaint him that we would take up arms against his enemies; and we engaged in four horrid actions, in which a vast number of poor souls were killed. Our King fortunately gained every battle, and, before we had left the island, the whole country was subject to his government.

Their wars are truly bloody; they fight with darts and spears thrown by a sling, and do great execution, engage a [side] and give no quarter; and several of the enemy were taken prisoner, and put to death immediately in a most cruel manner. I will only give instance of two; the first had his arm chopped off at the elbow with a hatchet, and beat about the head with it till he died,⁴³ and was paddled along shore to show others their fate. The other, a man of family, called a Reupack [*Rubak*], wore a white polished bone on his wrist (a mark of rank): this bone they attempted to take off, which he resisted, by expanding his fingers; they then chopped off his hand at the wrist, and the bone was worn by the person who committed the act, and he was promoted to the rank which the prisoner was entitled. After his body was pierced through in several places with a sword of iron wood, they cut off his head, tied it to a bamboo, and placed it in the King's palace.

After the first victory the King granted us leave to build a vessel with the tools we had saved for that purpose to carry us to China, our desired port, but always to be ready to go to war when he demanded it. In thirteen weeks after our misfortune, we completely built a schooner, which, by great providence, carried us safe to Macao, a Portuguese settlement near China, in 18 days, a very quick passage; there she was sold for 700 dollars at public outcry, which was divided among the crew. The Walpole Indiaman arrived here soon afterwards, and conveyed us to Canton. We suffered greatly during our fatigue, for want of provisions, existing on a short allowance of boiled rice and water,⁴⁴ dreadful in a climate so near the equator. Had any accident attended the launch of our schooner, we must have remained on the island with the King; for what tools we had kept from the Indians were now rendered useless, and our provisions expended. The great contrivance hit on to complete such a vessel, and management of the crew, do much honour to our Commander, who is an ingenious, enterprising, and worthy man. Our conferences with the King, till we acquired the language, was by our linguist in Malay to the King's Malay slaves. The King much wishes to establish the English customs among his people, and has sent one of his family to England with us, who is now arrived by the Morse Indiaman, and lives at the Captain's house, at Rotherhithe. One Englishman remains till this young Chief returns.

⁴³ This incident is not mentioned by Keate, but Delano, 'A narrative of voyages', 655, records a similar instance where a prisoner from Artingall had his leg cut off and was then beaten around the head with the amputated limb. Matthias Wilson, brother of Captain Wilson, supplied the account of the second attack on Artingall given in *Pelew Islands*, and the details of the Rupal's death agree with those in the 1784 letter reproduced here.

⁴⁴ The want of provisions for the crew during their stay on Ulong Island is also mentioned by Keate, *Pelew Islands*, 145, 276. The hardship experienced by the crew is somewhat diminished elsewhere. E.g., John P. Hockin, *A supplement to the account of the Pelew Islands; Compiled from the journals of the Panther and Endeavour, two vessels sent by the Honourable East India Company to those islands in the Year 1790; and from the oral communications of Captain H. Wilson* (London 1804), 48: 'A distressed and shipwrecked people are cast away upon a distant and unknown coast; they are there succoured and cherished by the natives, with a liberality, if not unknown, yet not surpassed in any civilised country, nay, in some instances, far exceeding anything before experienced; for in relieving the wants of these strangers, they frequently gave up their own usual and accustomed portion of food.'

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GEOFFREY CLARK