Editor’s introduction

to

rituals and annals: between anthropology and history

Rupert Stasch

This volume collects seven essays by the late Valerio Valeri not previously published in English, and eight further essays already available in scattered locations but having dense connections with each other and with the newly translated items. Valeri was a specialist in the study of Polynesia and Indonesia, whose writings have a philosophical and comparative drive that gives them broad anthropological relevance. His research on eighteenth and early nineteenth century Hawai’i culminated in Kingship and sacrifice: Ritual and society in Ancient Hawai’i (Valeri 1985), one of the most interesting scholarly works ever written about sacrifice. His fieldwork with Huauulu people of Seram in eastern Indonesia led to posthumous publication of The forest of taboos: Hunting, morality, and identity in a Moluccan society (Valeri 2000), probably the best book ever written about taboo, and a remarkable contribution to the anthropology of human-animal relations. The shorter articles that Valeri authored included many other works on Huauulu or Hawai’i, but also a series of theoretical and comparative essays written in Italian. These last include ten review essays for reference works, mainly the Einaudi publishing house’s Enciclopedia (1977-1982), roughly analogous in its time and place to the Britannica Eleventh Edition. Prior to Valeri’s death from brain cancer in 1998, he planned two English-language collections of his articles, and draft translations were made of the Italian items. One collection

1. For example, reviewing The forest of taboos in Science, Mary Douglas (2000: 2238) commented that “Each theorist [of taboo] has a particular axe to grind. But Valeri has scooped the lot, not by proving these interpretations wrong, but by producing a model that incorporates them in a single coordinated set of principles.”

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focusing on his Indonesianist work was published in 2001, titled *Fragments from forests and libraries.* The present volume in the *HAU Classics of Ethnographic Theory* series is the delayed second collection, consisting of Polynesia-focused studies and several of the theoretical essays. The volume now appears thanks to initial work carried out in 1997–1998 by Valeri and by Janet Hoskins, his widow and executor, herself an anthropologist of Indonesia; later enthusiasm that HAU founder Giovanni da Col independently developed for Valeri’s Einaudi articles and wider writings; and the entire HAU team’s extraordinary practical support of open access anthropology, a movement and digital infrastructure hardly envisioned in the 1990s.

According to a February 1997 table of contents, Valeri planned to title his introduction to this volume “Memory and action,” but he added in brackets, “very doubtful that I will have life and mind to write this,” which proved to be true. The volume is now being published without any synthetic text that speaks for the author. The collection’s purpose is to let Valeri’s essays speak for themselves, and to let potential readers find the essays in their own ways.

It may nonetheless be of use to readers if I offer some rough lines of orientation. One starting point is the fairly widespread idea that Valeri is a “structuralist.” Across the essays collected in this volume, there is a recurrent, central concern with “order,” an object of inquiry bearing strong affinities to the structuralist object of “system.” Also, the essays are characterized by a methodological and empirical intensity in the sifting of interconnected ethnohistorical details, and the positing of relational links between them, that is clearly influenced by structuralist theory. But there are various ways Valeri’s notion of “order” does not match the structuralist conception of langue. As the volume title signals, Valeri is centrally concerned with a problematic of the internal relations between order and temporality, including forms of heterogeneity of order intrinsic to temporal existence. He is additionally concerned with institutional processes such as kingship in which “order” or “rule” in the sense of regularity is the same as “order” or “rule” in the sense of power. Further, Valeri’s analyses often turn on posited tensions or contradictions central to order’s very constitution. His essays elucidate an order struggling with its own in-

2. An Italian-language collection of six of Valeri’s essays was also published in 1999 as *Uno spazio tra sé e sé: L’antropologia come ricerca del soggetto* [A space between oneself and oneself: Anthropology as a search for the subject].
ternal antinomies, moving in different directions at once, rather than a self-same and self-consistent système of the canonically Saussurian kind. Relatedly, Valeri analyzes particular practices and actors as themselves engaging with these internal contradictions and ambivalences of a society’s order. Order does not just provide the terms within which people’s actions unfold, but is a contradictory problem toward which those actions are reflexively oriented, and which the actions express and mediate in the details of their form.

These patterns are prominent, for example, in the analysis of kingship Valeri develops across Chapters I–VI, focusing mostly on Hawai‘i, but with a worldwide perspective in Chapter I, and with consideration of Tonga in Chapters V–VI. One antinomy of kingship is between the king as embodiment of order and the king as embodiment of disorder, a force from outside who thereby is able to found and ground order itself (Chapter I: 3–4, 33–34). This is also, by definition, a duality of kingship as continuity and as discontinuity (Chapter V: 169). In Hawai‘i, this contradiction of different principles or “moments” constitutive of kingship appears in a polarity of war-based conquest and ritual-based reproduction, as major types of royal action. The duality also takes the form of kings being linked to different gods and to the building of different types of temples (Chapter III: 76–77, 91–93). Specific paramount rulers move between greater alignment with one or the other of these poles at different times of year, across successive parts of a single ritual event, and at different phases in their lifelong political trajectories (Chapter II: 54–60; Chapter III: 79–84). The duality also appears in the coexistence of genealogical chants representing kings’ authority as the reflection of an unbroken patrilineal chain of succession leading back to the gods and the world’s origins, and prose histories representing the same kings as usurpers from within a bilateral field of predecessors, who have come to power through ruptures produced by their own contingent actions of conquest, alliance, and social acumen (Chapter IV: 128–38, 151; Chapter V: 188). It additionally takes the form of coexisting ideas and

3. The “disorder” face of kingship bears at least superficial comparison to Agamben’s (1998) neo-Schmittian model of the sovereign as “he who decides on the state of exception.” There are other levels on which the problematics of kingship addressed in these essays could be made to speak to the anthropological interest in “sovereignty” that consolidated in a very differently conceived mode in the early 2000s (see for example Hansen and Stepputat 2006).
acts that represent royal power as coming from above, from the gods, versus representations and actions representing this power as coming from below, from the will and consent of subject followers: between kingly power as a condition of all practice, and practices as the conditions determining and allowing the existence of power (Chapter II: 49–52). Valeri takes particular interest in the pattern, across Hawaiian dynastic histories, of unstable cycles of diarchic division of the kingship into two positions: a higher-ranking, purer, but passive and more taboo-constrained ruler focused on temples and sacrifices, and a lower ranking but more active ruler focused on war and popular favor. These events of division are followed in turn by reunification of the kingship in the person of the junior, active, lower-ranking ruler, who usurps the prior order, but in doing so also comes to incarnate or establish anew the dynastic ideal of kingship as divinely conferred continuity and prosperity (see for example Chapter III: 76–79; Chapter IV: 123–31; Chapter V: 172).

The value of the kingship chapters making up the first half of this volume is not primarily in these ideas as I have just schematized them, but in Valeri’s articulation of them through a large sweep of ethnographic and ethnohistorical details. But to take the schematization a bit further: one of Valeri’s refrains is that the dualities in kingship’s makeup amount also to kingship being intrinsically processual. Time, change, and transformation are internal to kingship, not external to what it is. Kings and gods symbolize not a stable order but an order understood as the outcome of constant processual transcendence of disorder (Chapter III: 91–93). The Hawaiian kingship, in particular, is “history to the core” (Chapter V: 172), characterized by unstable alternation between dialectical moments of greater emphasis on war and usurpation and greater emphasis on peace and reproduction. These patterns of political oscillation across royal careers and dynastic generations, as well as transformative oscillations in regularly staged royal rituals, integrate contradictory principles of power’s existence by temporalizing them as stages of a process (Chapter II: 60–61). The intrinsically temporalized character of kingship also appears in the form of frequent changes in the configuration of coexisting sovereign roles, and in frequent changes in the principles of royal succession. And it appears in royal actors’ own temporalized consciousness of the possibilities of their institutions:
Hawaiians... saw in the past potentialities for the present that could be actualized in many different forms. Because some at least of the types from the past were connected sequentially, the past did not appear simply as a timeless repertory of rules (which, of course, it also was) but as a process which invited and legitimated its creative continuation... [T]o the extent that the past as a whole suggested the idea of change, it was possible to creatively select those precedents that best fitted changing situations in the present, instead of slavishly following an immediate past or an eternally repetitive, depthless one. Thus Kalani'ōpu'u [king of the island of Hawai'i from the 1750s to 1782] could break with the system of succession that had been used for some time before him and go back to a much older model. But he could do so precisely because history taught him that the system had often changed. (Chapter V: 181-82; see also Chapter IV: 118-24, 152-55)

Usurpation’s irreducibility in the makeup of established order finds a more generalized echo, in turn, in Valeri’s comparative essay “Cosmogonic myths and order” (Chapter VIII), in his statements that “the deed is the paradigm of meaning” (Chapter VIII: 269), or that “doing is the fundamental source of meaning” (Chapter VIII: 271). These statements are voiced not as the author’s own normative theoretical pronouncements, but as descriptions of ethno-theoretical understandings expressed by the cosmogonic narratives under discussion. Details of the narratives reflexively assert the primacy of action and temporality, as being foundational to whatever human order is, rather than as being extraneous to it.

In Valeri’s approach to kingship as a topic, kingship institutions and the person of a sovereign are often understood as figures of what it is to live culturally in general, and what it is to act. This is a level on which the problematics of “order” surrounding kingship (discussed in Chapters I-VI) carry over into the problematics of “order” across the wider range of topics in cultural process considered in Chapters VII-XII and the three Appendices. Kingship’s paradoxical duality of at once embodying a system of power and being a transcendent ground outside of an established power system is echoed in the wider paradox of existence generally registered in a Vedic epigraph to the already-mentioned essay on cosmogonic narratives: “You deep thinkers, ask yourself in your own hearts, what base did he stand on when he set up the worlds?” (Chapter VIII: 263). Mediating this antinomy of “that which is presupposed” and “that which presupposes it” (Chapter VIII: 276) is a major art of cosmogonic stories, but the
antinomy more widely cross-cuts human action and thought. Valeri evokes a related duality of immanence and transcendence at the end of his chapter on mourning: “Consciousness realizes in this way that the condition for social existence is no different for living and dead, that one lives and continues to live at the intersection of relations and exchanges that are more lasting than the individuals and the objects that actualize them” (Chapter XII: 375). We have seen that Hawaiian kingship (and perhaps kingship more widely) partly mediates its internal tension of existing as the exercise of power and existing as the ground of power’s existence by taking violent usurpation as a base on which to set up worlds, with usurpation then handing off power as a properly transcendent, presupposed form to kingship as divine continuity. But royals, along with everyone else, also mediate this tension by ritual and narrative. These are topics that provide a broader level of integration to the chapters collected in this volume, which Valeri evidently wished to highlight in his title for it.

*Rituals and annals: Between anthropology and history* appears on Valeri’s curriculum vitae as a planned book from at least 1991. The title can be inferred to have at least three interwoven levels of significance. First, there is Valeri’s own intellectual location. In his writings about Polynesian societies in the period of their early interactions with Europeans, Valeri works with sources, methods, and topics of a historian, and questions and concepts of an anthropologist. So too, in the *Enciclopedia* articles collected here that have a worldwide comparative scope, Valeri’s empirical illustrations are drawn from works of history as often as from works of anthropology. Second, there is the level of a theoretical sensibility that temporality is an internal aspect of any human order, and that anthropology’s subjects are intrinsically historical phenomena (a sensibility I already noted in the kingship context). Third, there is the level of the theoretical analysis of ritual and of narrative representations of temporal process, as two of the most important of these anthropological subjects.

All three of these levels, but especially the second and third, are entailed in the title’s derivative relation to Fustel de Coulanges’ short chapter “Rites and annals” in his classic book *The ancient city: A study on the religion, laws, and institutions of Greece and Rome* (1864). In Valeri’s conclusion to Chapter V in the present collection, he draws on Fustel in suggesting an analogy between “the synchronic transcendence of the gods, and more generally of the sacred” that humans put themselves in contact with through ritual, and “the dia-
chronic transcendence of the past” that people put themselves in contact with through mythical and historical narrative (Chapter V: 187). Quoting Vernant’s statement that in ideas of memory informing Hesiod’s poetry, “the process of recall seeks not to situate events within a temporal framework but to reach the very foundation of being,” Valeri describes the Hawaiian *Kumulipo* cosmogonic chant as similarly an account of a past origin that is also a spatial elsewhere, namely “the realm of the gods” that “still exists synchronically with that of the human present.” He continues: “The ordering power of history is thus analogous to the ordering power of ritual: both are based on making a transcendent reality metonymically present, one by connecting with it through time, the other through space” (ibid.).

Six chapters of this volume take ritual as their core subject (III, VI, IX, XI, Appendices I and II). Other chapters center on intersections between ritual and narratives of past events: narrations of the past that are ritually performed, narratives of past events that include ritual performances as turning points in the depicted course of events, or myths that contain a contrarian “secret judgment” on a society’s ritual institutions (II, IV, X). Most other chapters treat specific ritual forms at least in passing, as data through which another topic is addressed (I, V, VII, XII, Appendix III). Across these different discussions, Valeri develops a great variety of ideas about ritual’s principles and efficacy, exceeding what I will touch on here. But one reason ritual—as a theoretical problem—recurs across such a range of Valeri’s empirical investigations is his consistent idea of ritual’s basic makeup. This idea makes ritual, even more expansively than kingship, a focused figure of conditions of human action at large. Consider this passing definition: “Any social behavior entails a relationship to norms: as such it has a ‘ritual’ or ‘symbolic’ or ‘ceremonial’ dimension... which communicates the relationship to those norms and the position within the

4. Alongside the primary theoretical resonances of the “rites and annals” phrase, the Fustel reference could also be taken as apt in two peripheral ways. It is consistent with Valeri’s deep but critical engagement with the Durkheimian tradition (e.g. Chapter IV: 154, n. 34; Chapter IX: 285–89, 295–97; Chapter XI: 351; Appendix I: 387–90). It is also consistent with his views about the mutual relevance of Greco-Roman antiquity and anthropological work (e.g. Chapter I: 16–22; Chapter VIII: 276–80). Valeri once taught a course on “Anthropology, Archaeology, and History” with the classicists Momigliano and Humphreys (both major commentators on Fustel), as well as a course on “The Origins of Rome” with Momigliano.
social system of the one who is acting.” Here, ritual is construed as an action-in-time that is nonetheless reflexively focused on its own type-level normativity. In affirming in the midst of this definition that all behavior has ritual dimensions, Valeri is again characterizing human practice as straddling a duality of immanent “actualization” in individuals, objects, and moments on the one hand, and elements of presupposed, transcendental order on the other hand.

Ritual is here a practice reflexively turned back on that plural internal composition of practice, a meta-cultural, meta-practical gesture of insight and intervention into relations of order inchoately immanent to “daily life” and “ordinary perceptions” (e.g. Chapter IX: 307; Appendix II: 415, and the earlier-quoted passage on ritual’s “ordering power”). Or in other words, ritual is characterized by the elaboration of a “frame” emphasizing the differentiation of a marked “representation” and the unmarked “reality” of nonritual experience, pulling apart a duality of representation and reality that is again latent to experience generally, but then collapsing them once more by affirming the primary reality of the order of representation itself, in the ritual context (see Chapter IX: 317–19; Chapter X: 336–39). In these senses, ritual is a kind of bootstrapping operation in the face of the same problem we already saw thematized in the Vedic epigraph, a problem of performing an action that gives an account of what is presupposed by action. On Valeri’s understanding, gods too are figures of relatively transcendent and semi-conscious presuppositions that human imagination brings to concrete actions, or takes from those actions. Social action is also enmeshed in the imagination’s non-divine transcendental currencies such as “honor,” which likewise anchor many of the ritual forms in people’s lives (the subject of the last two-thirds of Chapter XI). The topic of “ritual” is prototypic of anthropology because it is prototypic of human action under conditions of historical and cultural particularity of order and the ambiguous rela-

5. See also Valeri (1985; 1990). Anthropological literature by other authors, in other registers, in alignment with the perspective attributed here to Valeri is reviewed in Stasch (2011).

6. The cited passages specifically discuss ritual’s relation to art and to play, with respect to the modulation of such a reality-representation duality. See also the passage in Chapter VIII: 273 leading up to the statement “The order of myth—like that of art—exists therefore in a state of tension with experience: it never renounces it, but it never leaves it exactly as it is.”
tions in that action between (again) “that which is presupposed” and “that which presupposes it.”

There is, as we might by now expect, a strongly temporal side to this train of theorization. Ritual qua action, and often qua complex sequence of successive actions, is good at portraying temporalized aspects of order, such as the character of a god or king as a transformational figure presenting a society with images of its own diachrony (e.g. Chapter I: 34; Chapter III: 92–93). There is also ritual’s character of being repeated, which Valeri comments on in at least two ways. One is that he adduces ritual’s repetition across time as another symptom of the laceration of order by divides of representation and reality, or in this passage “ideology” and “practice”:

We have seen that the royal ritual attempted to organize the political process by orienting it in a particular direction, by transforming war and conquest into peace and stability. But this implied a contradictory relationship between ritual and social praxis. On the one hand, ritual was a model for reality. Because of its molding effect and because it created consensus around a ruler who impersonated the model, ritual had a direct relationship with social reality. But on the other hand, the reproduction of ritual, and therefore its very existence, was an index of the fact that what it symbolized was never really translated into practice, could never be.

In other words, a ritual that described the transcendence of war could survive in a meaningful way only because it coexisted with a social reality in which war could not really be transcended, except provisionally. . . . This ritual was the symptom and the expression of a lack of fit between ideology and practice. (Chapter III: 113; see also Chapter III: 82, n.17, and the denial in Chapter IX: 307 that ritual necessarily stabilizes a single specific “code of a superior order”)

But another of Valeri’s refrains about repetition has a more affirmative relation to the claims of order that rituals offer people. This refrain hints at some of the directions he might have gone had he in fact written an essay on “memory and action.” The pleasure and efficacy of ritual, like the pleasure of musical performance, is energized by its dramatization of recognition of form amidst processes of recollection and anticipation:

What then attracts a person either toward the “temple of music” or the temple where the rite unfolds (and are they really differ-
ent?) is ultimately the opportunity to live an experience that could be called “temporal,” i.e., a kind of confrontation and—herein lies happiness—a possible reconciliation between traces left in the memory by past performances and impressions of the present performance, which deposit upon older ones much as a saline solution orders itself upon its corresponding crystal. Discovery and memory are thus reconciled in the flux of time, which, mastered at last, seems headed on a clear course toward an unknown but secure direction. (Chapter IX: 309; see also Appendix II: 409)

This thematic is again generalizable to the definition of “order” at large, as in the cosmogony essay’s postulate that

We feel ourselves in the presence of order whenever we are able to anticipate future experience to some degree based on past experience. This capacity for anticipation exists in practice, that is, it is embodied in certain activities and cannot be easily separated from these. Indeed, at its most extreme it is inseparable from them, as shown, for example, by the ultimate irreducibility of aesthetic knowledge to discursive knowledge. (Chapter VIII: 263)

In this way the divided plurality of any given practice, foundationally composed both of its relation to relatively transcendent levels of the normativity of “rule” (power “from above,” “representation”) and the practice’s actualization in relatively immanent, usurping circumstances of a here-and-now (power “from below,” “reality”), is also the divided plurality characteristic of temporal experience. The inescapability of the temporal enmeshment of action—this moment’s divided relations to its pasts, and the existence of presupposed or semi-conscious “order” as intrinsically residing in problems of intertemporal linkage between this time and others—is some of what is contained in the pronouncement, “in the final reckoning, all societies are traditional” (Chapter VIII: 280).

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While I have highlighted one abstract thematic animating the chapters available here, there is again much else in them, and much that is particular to their respective ethnographic and historical subjects. On a note of personal taste, for example, my own enthusiasm for working on this project has partly stemmed from my sense of the pedagogical value of specifically the comparative studies translated from Italian, about “Kingship,” “Cosmogonic Myths and Order,” “Rite,” “Cere-
monial,” “Mourning,” “Belief and Worship,” “Feasting and Festivity,” and “The Fetish.” These are akin in genre to articles in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, but while most of them are thirty-five years old, they have aged better than most instances of the type. They contain exceptionally clear explications and evaluations of diverse classic works in the history of sociocultural theory, anthropological and proto-anthropological. Also on a note of personal taste, I will say that something I particularly value in Valeri’s work, but have not touched on above, is his ethnographic acuity: his skills of searching out and assembling sociocultural data, thinking through and around them, and explicating them in prose. This methodological craft is present across many essays in this volume, but I know it more vividly myself via his fieldwork-based writings on Huaulu of eastern Indonesia. These writings are not anthologized or even cited in this volume’s chapters. Anyone who encounters Valeri’s work for the first time here and finds it illuminating would probably also be interested in the Huaulu-related publications.

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Valeri was born in 1944 on the outskirts of Milan. His mother had been born and raised in Libya, and after the war Valeri’s family moved to Tripoli, where his father, a philosophy graduate, worked as a cultural attaché at the Italian embassy. The family moved to Istanbul when Valeri was ten, and then from age sixteen he attended boarding school in Venice for several years, during which period he first encountered the writings of Claude Lévi-Strauss. In 1964, he began studies in philosophy and the history of science in Pisa, at the Scuola Normale Superiore (SNS) and the University of Pisa. In 1965–66, he turned to intensive study of ethnology. The character of his intellectual attraction to anthropology in this period, as both a sequitur to philosophy’s questions and a rejection of its methodological and sociocultural limitations, is partly apparent in an article he wrote at the time about Mauss, recently published in English translation by *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* (Valeri 1966; 2013). He more di-

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From 1966 to 1970, Valeri undertook training in ethnology in Paris supported by scholarships from the SNS and the French government, principally at the University of Paris X (Nanterre) and the sixth section of the Ecole pratique des hautes études (EPHE, the sixth section later being detached as the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales). Valeri was guided at different times and in different ways by Lévi-Strauss, Marshall Sahlins, and Louis Dumont. Sahlins taught in Paris in 1967–69, and was thenceforth Valeri’s lifelong scholarly friend. Valeri also followed courses in anthropology and allied fields given by a large range of other Paris-based figures, as well as by Cambridge anthropologists during a term spent there. In the years 1968–70, he received four degrees from SNS, University of Pisa, and EPHE, with the first SNS degree being based on a five hundred page thesis on Lévi-Strauss. Also in this period, he began work on what was to become his doctoral thesis in ethnology, a library- and archive-based study of the rank system, political organization, and political myths of Hawaiian society around the time of European encounter. Valeri earned his doctorate in ethnology from the University of Paris V (René Descartes) in 1976, with a thesis written in the EPHE titled *Le brûlé et le cuit: Mythologie et organisation de la chefferie dans la société Hawai’i ancienne*. A draft of the thesis had been completed in 1971, and this was reworked following archival research in Hawai’i in August 1973. Meanwhile, for two years in 1971–73, Valeri carried out fieldwork on the island of Seram in the central Moluccas, for which he had also been preparing throughout his time in Paris. He and his first wife Renée Valeri (née Örnskär) worked for the bulk of this period in the village of Huaulu. This region of eastern Indonesia was known for matrilateral cross-cousin marriage and other practices of interest within terms advanced by Lévi-Strauss’ *Elementary structures of kinship*. Valeri’s work in the theory and ethnography of kinship in this period is exemplified by an essay on the Hawaiian rank system (Valeri 1972), a previously unpublished 1974 paper on Oceanic brother-sister relations included in the present collection as Chapter VII, a double-article on complementarity between different marriage types in central Seramese alliance politics (Valeri 1975–76),
and a chapter on symmetry and asymmetry in Huaulu marriage pre-
stations (Valeri 1980).

In 1976, Valeri joined the faculty of the Department of Anthro-
pology at the University of Chicago, where he remained for twenty-
two years. The chapters collected in this volume are especially repre-
sentative of his work from 1976 through the 1980s. I have already 
mentioned his main Hawai‘i monograph, published in 1985. As his 
Polynesianist work came to completion, and after shifts in regional 
political conditions made a return to Seram more feasible, Valeri car-
rried out thirteen months of further fieldwork in Huaulu in 1985–88. 
Across his years at Chicago, Valeri’s writing, teaching, and advising 
were important to a large number of graduate students, including 
many who carried out fieldwork in Indonesia or the Pacific. I was 
myself taught by Valeri and a number of other remarkable members 
of the Chicago department during the 1990s. By that time, Valeri was 
principally focused on his Huaulu research, including the project that 
became the already-mentioned Forest of taboos (2000). He had sev-
eral more books still to write, when he was struck by terminal illness 
in his early 50s.

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In assembling this volume, I have followed what can be broadly re-
constructed of Valeri’s intentions for it, mainly by consulting two suc-
cessive tables of contents that he drew up late in his life. My decisions 
about what essays to include, and how to order them, are a hybridiza-
tion of these two documents. The only item occurring on both of 
Valeri’s lists but not included here is an English translation of the 
complete text of his French-language essay on the Hawaiian rank sys-

tem. An abridged version of this essay (cited above) was published in 
L’Homme in 1972. A different abridgment was posthumously pu-
blished in English in the book Hierarchy: Persistence and transforma-
tion in social formations, edited by Knut Rio and Olaf Smedal (Valeri 
2009), working from a translation of the full essay by Janet Hoskins 
and Aletta Biersack. There would be much value to publication of a 
definitive version of this long essay, particularly for Hawai‘i specialists, 
but I decided the editorial ambiguities requiring resolution were more 
than I could take on in the time frame of this project.

Also in a departure from the author’s intentions, this volume in-
cludes as “Appendices” three theoretical essays that were already pub-
lished in English in the posthumous volume *Fragments from forests and libraries*, where Valeri felt they would appropriately cohere with the ethnographic studies of Huaulu that are that book’s backbone. Despite that Valeri did not anticipate grouping those three essays with his Polynesianist articles, HAU editor in chief Giovanni da Col saw particular value in reprinting them in the same place as the several Einaudi *Enciclopedia* articles that are being published here in English for the first time—a judgment I hope readers will share.

In the case of articles that Valeri wrote and published in English, as well as the three “Appendices” that have already been published once in English under Janet Hoskins’ editorship, my editorial adjustments have been minor. With respect to the essays that are here being published in English for the first time, in many cases I have had a more active hand in final adjustments to some details of the translations, to how some sources are cited or quoted now that the essays are appearing in a different language than they were originally composed in, and so on. In the case of one draft translation from the 1970s and two from the 1990s, the identity of the original translators has been lost, and so these texts are unfortunately printed here without a translation credit, or with a credit only to Alice Elliot for work of revision she carried out for HAU in 2013. Across all chapters, numerous small changes have been made to bring the texts into conformity with HAU style or into greater consistency with each other.
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Giovanni da Col and Sean Dowdy wish to thank the dedicated staff at HAU and our collaborators for their gracious assistance in putting together this volume: Gina Krone, Juliette Hopkins, Marguerite DeLoney, Teodora Hasegan, Alex Golub, Alice Elliot, Bree Blakeman, Fred Henry, Philip Swift, Zachary Sheldon, Brian Wilson, Jane Fair Bestor, Janet Hoskins, Marshall Sahlins, Magnus Fiskejö, Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, Carlo Severi, Marcos Lanna, Stéphane Gros, Maarten Ottens, Signe Howell, Olaf Smedel for helping this project to take off, and especially Rupert Stasch for his meticulous and elegant editorial work.

We reserve a very special mahalo nunui hou to Hawaiian Maoli artist Carl F. K. Pao for providing photographs of his original artwork for this volume and its covers. The black and white painting gracing the header of each chapter title is titled “WāMū” (2001), and the remaining four images—the converted black and white painting of Kame'eiamoku (a relative of Kamehameha's) in the front matter and on the covers, and the color plates following Sahlins’ preface, Stasch’s introduction, and the acknowledgments (see below)—are from Pao’s “Kiʻi Kūpuna” series (2012–13). Here, we include Pao’s own artist statements on each of these works as well as his watermark:
“WāMū” is a painting that speaks to the concept of life being cyclic. One of the meanings of Wā is the first sound that one makes as they enter into this world or realm. One of Mū’s meanings is that it is the silence of when you leave this world or realm. I believe that our energy or ‘uhane or spirit continues to navigate through these realms of the physical and spiritual in a cyclic manner. The words of Wā and Mū are abstracted and repeated over and over to represent this concept.

The “Ki‘i Kūpuna” series focuses on depicting my ‘umākua and/or kūpuna (ancestors and/or elders) in a style that is representative of the aesthetic of my Kanaka Maoli ancestors prior to the arrival of the Western lens. Portraiture is in a Western style, but with a Kanaka Maoli abstraction of form and concepts. As I continue to work on this series, I am always challenged as to not cross-over into the kitsch or Tiki Lounge aesthetic or stereotype. To portray my ‘umākua and kūpuna in a respectful manner, but yet to challenge the preconceived idea of what Contemporary Kanaka Maoli visual art looks and feels like. All too often are we Kanaka Maoli portrayed and depicted by others and through others’ perspectives and intentions, here I am continuing to remind the world that we Kanaka Maoli are still here and are thriving as we move forward as a dynamic culture.

Watermark: Throughout the works, one might notice a repetition of geometric shapes in the background—a large central rectangle with an oval near its bottom border, five smaller circles at the lower left-hand corner, a triangle on the top right of the central rectangle, a crescent above the triangle, another smaller vertical rectangle to the right of the crescent, a large horizontal rectangle overlapping the right edge of the central rectangle, an arrow to the lower right of the central rectangle, and finally, five rectangles of varying sizes at the very bottom. All represent my watermark or signature. This watermark is my own personal way of carrying on the traditions of our Kanaka Maoli kapa makers who used a watermark in the production of our kapa or bark cloth. On most occasions, one would only see the watermark if they knew to look for it or if they happened to see the mark as it was revealed by holding the kapa up to a light source. With my works, the watermark is sometimes completely covered and in others, the entire watermark can become the main composition.

The themes of Pao’s artwork reflect HAU’s commitment to ethnographic theory and to indigenous representations of the world in which we all live. We are truly grateful for his participation in this volume.
Finally, we would like to give special thanks to Janet Hoskins and the following publishers for extending permission to publish reprints and/or translations of these articles:


Chapter 7, “Descendants of brother and sister in Oceania: Notes for a new analytic model” is from an unpublished French manuscript (dated 1974) and a manuscript English translation (uncredited) also dating to the 1970s.


