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Reactivation and Reconnection at the Chamorro Latte Ceremony at the Bishop Museum

Abstract

On June 15, 2024, during the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC), the Bishop Museum held a ceremony honoring the latte—ancient Chamorro megalithic stone house pillars—that the museum stewards. Unlawfully removed from the Mariana Islands in the 1920s, these latte, along with over 10,000 artifacts, had been recently relocated to the Bishop Museum's central courtyard by Hawaiian Chamorro diaspora members. The 2024 ceremony, attended by members of the Chamorro diaspora from the US and FestPAC delegates from Guåhan (Guam) and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, was the culmination of the reconditioning, relocation, and re-display of the ancestral latte, which took months of work. This paper, presented at the 2024 Pacific Arts Association-Europe conference in Berlin, focuses on the emotional connections that the latte ceremony elicited among three groups present: between Chamorros who attended, between Chamorros and the latte, and between Chamorros and their ancestors. Using interviews and photographs taken during the ceremony, the author emphasizes the importance of emotional responses in the processes of healing and of cultural revitalization in museum settings. More specifically, she argues that the latte were imbued with life again through chant, touch, and offerings, as the ceremony's Chamorro attendants connected with one another and reconnected with their saina (ancestors).

Keywords: *Chamorro, Mariana Islands, Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture, affect, museum collections, latte, repatriation*

On June 15, 2024, the final day of the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC),[1] the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawai'i, hosted members of the Chamorro diaspora in the United States,[2] members of the Micronesian diaspora in Honolulu, and FestPAC delegates from Guåhan (Guam) and the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI).[3] The occasion was to honor the latte—megalithic stone structures erected by ancient Chamorros in the Mariana Islands—currently stewarded by the Bishop Museum (see Fig. 3) in a special ceremony. The latte, some

of which have been at the Bishop Museum for approximately 100 years, were removed from their ancestral homelands by amateur archaeologist Hans Hornbostel between the 1920s and the 1950s. The Latte Stone Ceremony that took place that day inaugurated the 2024 Celebrate Micronesia Festival, an annual event hosted by the Bishop Museum featuring Micronesian music, dance, art, food, and storytelling.[4] Aligned with both this festival and FestPAC, the Latte Stone Ceremony drew hundreds of Chamorros, many of whom would not otherwise have been in Honolulu.

Early that morning, people gathered in the museum's courtyard and surrounded the latte in a circle (see Fig. 4). Speeches—predominantly in Chamorro—were followed by chants and offerings for the saina (ancestors).[5] Overall, it was a deeply emotional ceremony in which members of the Chamorro community—those residing in the Marianas as well as those living abroad—had the opportunity to physically reconnect with the saina embodied in the latte and shed tears for their displacement.

This paper looks at the emotional and multisensorial engagements the Latte Stone Ceremony elicited between three groups: Chamorros and the latte, Chamorros themselves, and Chamorros and their saina. I argue that museums can be places for the reactivation of Indigenous cultural belongings and suggest that events like the Latte Stone Ceremony can facilitate healing, reconnection, and feelings of pride for Indigenous communities by transforming ancestral objects into living agents of relationships and creating a communal space of emotional and cultural affirmation. To examine how the 2024 Latte Stone Ceremony revitalized these relationships, I focus on four affective responses enacted during the ceremony: voice, offerings, touch, and emotions. I analyze my personal recollections of the ceremony, along with reflections of Chamorro participants recorded by Guam Museum curator and cultural practitioner Dr. Michael Lujan Bevacqua.[6]

Latte Stones: The Pillars of Chamorro Culture

To appreciate the events of the Bishop Museum's Latte Stone Ceremony, it is essential to understand the significance and function of latte. In their original conform, latte were made of haligi (megalithic stone pillars) topped with tasa (capstones), as seen in Figure 1. They date back to the Latte Period (ca. 900 BCE–1700 CE), a major prehistoric era in the Mariana Islands, and were used to support homes and other built structures.[7] A typical latte was between four and seven feet tall, although smaller and larger ones—measuring up to fifteen feet—exist across

the archipelago. They are often found in rows arranged parallel to natural features such as the sea, cliffs, or rivers.[8] Latte likely served residential, communal, funerary, and ceremonial functions, as indicated by ancestral remains and artifacts—including pottery sherds, åcho atupat' (slingstones), higam (shell adzes), and lusong (stone mortars)—that have been discovered in their vicinity.[9]

Figure 1. Latte at Senator Angel Leon Guerrero Santos Latte Stone Memorial Park in Hagåtña, Guåhan. These latte were likely erected during the latte period (ca. 900 BCE–1700 CE) and are about 2 feet tall. Photograph courtesy of the author

The construction and organization of structures made using latte was deeply connected to a broader set of cultural, social, and ritual practices, documented in early European voyage and missionary accounts.[10] The period of latte production came to an abrupt end around the same time as the conclusion of the Spanish–Chamorro Wars (ca. 1700 CE) and the establishment of Spanish colonial rule in the Marianas. During this period, the Spanish forcefully relocated Chamorros from the entire Marianas archipelago to the islands of Guåhan and Luta, in a process known as the Reducción. Many Chamorros lost their lives during the wars and from infectious diseases introduced by the Spanish. Following this period of

tumult, the Indigenous inhabitants of the Mariana Islands experienced extensive religious, linguistic, and cultural assimilation, which fundamentally reshaped daily lives and identity.[11] As a result of generations of social disruption and population loss, knowledge about the ancient meanings of latte and the skills required for their construction were largely lost.[12]

Latte sites are considered sacred spaces where saina dwell. In a community-edited monograph about the latte, Chamorro storyteller Malia Ramirez points to how these pillars—upon which ancient dwellings were built—are sacred because they contain the spirits of those who once lived on these sites.[13] As previously noted, ancestral burial sites are frequently discovered in the vicinity of lattes, reinforcing the notion that the latte serve as physical representations of the saina. This belief has been perpetuated through Chamorro oral histories and passed down through generations, preserving cultural connections to the past. One such example is the following story:

> The remaining lone standing latte at Guma' Taga' [commonly known as House of Taga in the island of Tinian], for example, is said to house the spirit and bones of the daughter of Taga' [a Chamorro maga'låhi or chief]. Legend states that as long as that latte is standing at Taga, the CHamoru culture lives on.[14]

According to Chamorro oral histories, Maga'låhi Taga was a giant Chamorro chief who, dissatisfied with his father's ruling style, challenged him to a fight. He lost the fight and was exiled to the island of Luta (Rota), north of Guåhan. Legend says that during his time in Luta, he carved some of the largest latte known to humankind, which he later transported to Tinian. The stones were assembled to form Guma' Taga, the House of Taga, the latte site with the tallest stones found in all of the Marianas.[15]

Latte have always held a significant place in the lives of Chamorro people. Chamorro oral histories reveal that, despite shifting attitudes toward the reverence of latte sites, they remain important cultural monuments, and that knowledge about them has continuously been transmitted intergenerationally.[16] In recent years, there has been a renewed appreciation for the latte as enduring symbols of Chamorro culture and resilience. Latte forms have been incorporated into the architecture of communal buildings and landmark signs (Fig. 2), and one appears on the flag of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Latte of Freedom is an eighty-foot, modern representation of a latte at the Governor's Complex in Adelup. Latte forms are also included in popular culture, such

as street art, commercial product packaging, souvenirs, and other memorabilia. Some people tattoo their bodies with images of lattes, emphasizing their strong significance for the Chamorro community as well as a deep bodily connection. Joe Quinata, director of the Guam Preservation Trust, and Dr. Kelly Marsh Taitano, head of the Guam Cultural Repository, remind us that, for some people, the latte are "a means for knowing the way forward by looking to, or at least remembering and honoring, the past." Quinata and Marsh Taitano also note that latte are considered the "pillars" of Chamorro culture—a common metaphor used to refer to their strong stone foundation: "After all, latte have survived over hundreds of years through dry seasons, wet seasons, typhoons, and super typhoons."[17]

Figure 2. Two examples of how the latte form appears in contemporary settings across the Mariana Islands. Left: latte-inspired huts at Chamorro Village, the weekly night market in Guåhan. Right: a Saipan landmark sign where a latte form is used in place of the letter "i." Photographs courtesy of the author

The Role of Hans and Gertrude Hornbostel in Moving Latte to the Bishop Museum

The question of how a specific set of large, heavy latte arrived in Honolulu, Hawai'i, can be traced back to Hans Hornbostel and his wife, Gertrude Constenoble. Hornbostel was a US Marine who first arrived in Guåhan in the early 1900s. In 1922, he resigned from the Marine Corps, and the Bishop Museum hired him as an amateur archaeologist to systematically collect ancient artifacts and ancestral remains in the Mariana Islands, particularly in the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI).[18] It is believed that his collecting activities, which granted him access to the Japanese-occupied northern islands, were a cover for his role as a spy, monitoring

Japanese activities in the NMI for the US military.[19] His wife, also known as "Trudis Alemån" in Guåhan, was a Swiss woman who had settled on the island as a child when her parents moved there, and was a known figure in the community. Her fluency in the Chamorro language played a crucial role in her compiling one of the most extensive collections of Chamorro legends and oral histories of that period.[20]

Hornbostel conducted several archaeological excavations at latte and other burial sites in the islands of Guåhan, Tinian, Luta, and Saipan.[21] He gathered six latte—three tasa and three haligi—between the 1920s and the 1950s. The manner in which Hornbostel removed and transported the latte—some of them weighing over 5,000 pounds—to the Bishop Museum remains uncertain. He also collected over 10,000 ancient Chamorro artifacts—including slingstones, pottery samples, stone and shell tools, and body adornments—and unearthed and removed 300 ancestral remains.[22] All of these were sent to the Bishop Museum, where they stayed until the museum de-accessioned the ancestral remains and repatriated them to the Marianas in 2000.[23]

It is unlikely Hans Hornbostel gained permission from the Chamorro people to conduct his excavations and acquire artifacts and remains, as the disturbance of latte sites is considered deeply disrespectful in Chamorro culture.[24] Beyond this, there is documentation that he often used dubious collecting methods, including manipulating or persuading locals into sourcing the artifacts for him using gifts such as movie tickets for Chamorro children.[25] Additionally, it is likely he leveraged Gertrude's network in the Chamorro community to gather information on ancestral site locations. All in all, the Hornbostels' methods reflect a pattern of ethically questionable practices that disregarded Chamorro cultural values and the sacredness of latte sites.

Latte Stone Relocation Project

Hosting the Latte Stone Ceremony in June 2024 required months of collaboration between Bishop Museum staff, representatives of the Historic and Cultural Preservation Offices of the Mariana Islands, and members of the Chamorro diaspora in Hawai'i. For the past thirty years, the latte have not been displayed due to construction and maintenance done by the museum.[26] When displayed in the past, the latte were placed at the back of the museum, neglected and not easily accessible. Few visitors were aware of their presence, meaning that few people engaged with them.[27] Although several groups associated with the Chamorro community had been making requests for their return to the Mariana Islands since the

1990s, it was only following a recent effort—led by Guam Museum curator Dr. Michael Lujan Bevacqua and Guam Cultural Repository Lab manager Nicole Delisle Dueñas—that the latte were relocated to the central courtyard of the Bishop Museum. This followed a series of online public consultations, coordinated by Bevacqua, that brought together Chamorros living in the islands and those in the diaspora to explore their feelings about the relocation of the latte, as well as the possibility of their return home. Bevacqua and Santos invited several diasporic Chamorro museum professionals to contribute their perspectives.[28]

Overall, the goal of the Latte Relocation Project was twofold: it aimed to present the latte to the Chamorro and wider Pacific community during FestPAC, and have the ceremony initiate discussions about the latte's return to the Marianas. Cultural festivals are very important for Chamorros, particularly for those who live abroad,[29] and FestPAC is particularly significant, as it gathers thousands of people from all over the Pacific, including hundreds of delegates and some political representatives from both Guåhan and the Northern Marianas. The fact that the thirteenth FestPAC was held in Honolulu, Hawai'i, enabled the convergence of not only Hawai'i but also Chamorros from the Mariana Islands and other parts of the United States.

Elyssa Santos, a history graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and member of the Hafa Adai Club,[30] led the Latte Relocation Project and served as one of the organizers of the Latte Stone Ceremony, alongside Dr. Faye Untalan and Dr. Mary Therese Perez Hattori. In an interview conducted by Dr. Bevacqua, Santos recounts how she, accompanied by a group of volunteers—most of them Chamorro from Hawai'i—helped to clean and then move the latte during their spring break in March 2024. Santos mentions that during the cleaning process, volunteers experienced feelings of reconnection with the stones and the saina, particularly when their family members asked about the project and shared stories about previous interactions with other latte.[31] However, she also mentions that while cleaning the latte, the volunteers felt pain and loss for the stones' current state, which they shared with one another. Santos reflects on how the process of relocating the latte, marked by long days and the need for great care to avoid damaging the stones, was an experience filled with anxiety. Such feelings of distress, anxiety, and apprehension are common among Indigenous communities in museum contexts, as these spaces often symbolize loss, colonial violence, and pain.[32]

Not only were the people cleaning the latte feeling pain, but they said the latte themselves were experiencing similar feelings.[33] Sandra Dudley argues that artifacts relegated to storage are "actively inhibited in the prospect of self-

articulation, restricted to particular kinds of encounter and reduced to the function of a sign in a narrative that is not one's own."[34] She adds that this feeling, when experienced by museum objects, is a form of oppression. Santos's recollection of the latte cleaning process reflects this perspective: she recalls how artificial it felt to clean the latte at the Bishop Museum: "It's kind of an odd process. Back home they would be in the jungle, in their natural environments. The idea of cleaning them, of sterilizing them, is a bit bizarre and comical," she says.[35] She also references the removal of dirt as the removal of the ʻāina (land in Hawaiian), which has become embedded in the structure of the latte themselves by binding pieces of stone together during their time in Hawaiʻi.[36] In this way, the double process of removal—from their original lands first and then, through cleaning, from the ʻāina that once held them together—bears witness to the shared pain of exile felt by both the latte and those who clean them.

Figure 3. The latte after their relocation to the Gallery Lawns at the Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawaiʻi, June 12, 2024. Photograph courtesy of the author

In their new location on the Bishop Museum's Gallery Lawns, they have become more accessible to Chamorros and museum visitors alike. Seven latte components (capstones and pillars) were arranged to form a circle, with the largest tasa (from the island of Luta) in the middle (Fig. 3). Museum curators and members of the Chamorro community, however, view this as a temporary placement for the latte, with the hope that they will soon be repatriated to the Mariana Islands. Currently, discussions are taking place between cultural institutions in the Marianas, the governments of Guåhan and the NMI, and the Bishop Museum regarding the return of the latte and portions of the Hornbostel collection to the islands.[37] This process, which has been in development for several years, is complex. Because of Guåhan's and the NMI's political status as a territory and a commonwealth of the US, respectively, they do not fall under Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) legislation. This US federal law, first enacted in 1990, requires museums and federal agencies to inventory Indigenous ancestral remains, as well as funerary, sacred, and other cultural objects, and consult with affiliated tribes to return them when requested. However, the circumstances of the Mariana Islands necessitated negotiating an agreement between the Bishop Museum and Chamorro institutions outside the scope of NAGPRA, treating this case as an international repatriation. The whole process has thus demanded significant compromise and effort from both parties.

The efforts to repatriate the Hornbostel collection at the Bishop Museum are part of a broader conversation about the return of Chamorro ancestral remains and cultural artifacts to the Marianas from other parts of the world. In November 2023, the remains of an ancient Chamorro woman, and other ancestral remains dating from about 100 years ago, were returned to Guåhan from the University of California–Riverside (UCR).[38] The remains, which had been excavated in the 1980s by archaeologists from the University of Guam, had been stored at a UCR laboratory for forty years. In October 2024, UCR repatriated Chamorro and Carolinian ancestral remains from Saipan and Tinian back to the NMI.[39] A repatriation ceremony was held on November 16, 2024, in Riverside, where members of the Chamorro diaspora in California wished their ancestors a good journey back home.[40]

There have also been recent efforts to return ancestral remains collected during the German administration of the NMI (1899–1914). In August 2025, Guåhan dance group Inetnon Gefpå'go and NMI cultural practitioner Auntie Frances M. Sablan were invited by Chamorro scholars Andrew Gumataotao and Samantha Barnett to take part in a series of conversations and visits to some of Germany's museums. This project was a collaborative effort to engage with

Chamorro cultural heritage items held abroad through fostering dialogue around the interpretation, care, and potential repatriation of artifacts, human remains, and animal specimens in order to center the conversations around Chamorro perspectives and knowledge.[41] In this regard, the Latte Stone Ceremony is part of ongoing broader efforts to return Chamorro ancestors and cultural belongings back to the Marianas.

Voice and Movement

The Latte Stone Ceremony held on June 15, 2024, on the Gallery Lawns of the Bishop Museum began with an oli aloha, a Hawaiian welcoming chant, as a symbolic invitation to the Chamorro community to share in the space. The oli aloha also embodied other deep emotional connections: the continued collaboration between the institution and the Chamorro community toward repatriating Chamorro artifacts and caring for them until their eventual return, and the solidarity between Hawaiians and Chamorros, whose lands have experienced—and continue to experience—parallel forms of US colonial occupation.

After the oli aloha, Dr. Faye Untalan, Donald Mendiola, and Frances Sablan, important cultural advocates in the Mariana Islands, spoke in Chamorro, reaffirming that this gathering was mostly intended as a space for the community. They expressed their gratitude for people's presence in the ceremony, and their honoring the saina. Additionally, Donald Mendiola, who is a Chamorro suruhånu (healer) and respected manåmko (elder) from Saipan, performed a blessing. In Chamorro culture, blessings are often done by elders before meals or at the beginning of important religious and cultural events. In September 2025, for example, the NMI Indigenous Affairs Office organized the "I Man Mabisita I Mañainai-ta Siha" community visit to ancestral burial sites in Saipan, held as part of Cultural Heritage Month in the NMI. In each of the stops, Mendiola chanted for the saina:

> What I did when I was chanting was, I used the very deep Chamorro that was spoken by the taotaomo'na [ancestral spirits]; that's just calling them, letting them know, informing them that we are here to remember them through their life on earth. And we're expressing our appreciation for them, for all that they've done to teach us about the culture, our way of life, how to live peacefully and to continue on with the interdependence part of the very high value system that ancient Chamorros have, and [that we have] even now,

> because the highest value we place in our culture is inafa'maolek,[42] which includes respect.[43]

In a similar way, during the Latte Stone Ceremony, Mendiola's blessing assured the saina that they would be treated respectfully. Echoing Untalan's and Sablan's speeches, Mendiola's blessing shared feelings of unity and respect for those in the gathering.

The hosts of the event then invited everyone to sing a lålai (Chamorro chant): the Latte Stone Ceremony Chant, composed by Elyssa Santos and Brant Songsong, a Chamorro language professor at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa originally from Luta. Handouts with the lyrics were distributed to each attendee, enabling them to actively participate in the chanting. Sung in Chamorro, the chant was dedicated to the saina embodied in the latte. It spoke of the continued protection that has been granted to them since they were removed from their homeland. It also conveyed the mutual love and light rekindled through the reconnection between saina and descendants. Additionally, it expressed the lattes' pain of separation from their place and community of origin. And most importantly, it spoke of their eventual return home and the collaborative efforts undertaken to achieve this goal. All of these emotions were shared and expressed by those who chanted the following at the Latte Stone Ceremony:

Hagas ha' ham manmacho'cho',	We have always been working,
I gumogogue hamyo.	those who protect you.
Hihot yan chågo',	Near and far,
minasa'pet hugua na tåno'.	the work of two lands.
In na'gåsgas in fa'maolek	We cleaned, we fixed
in fa'gåsi (a)yuhi amko'.	we washed away the baggage.
Hagas mansahnge i hemhom	They were separated for a long time
på'go bula puti'on.	the darkness now has many stars.
Mañaina-ta guse'	Ancestors, go on,
ina i chalan-måmi.	light our path
I che'cho' inadahi	They care work,
guinaiya in fanināmte.	love will heal us.
Mamachom påpa' i atdao,	The Sun sets,
ti ta li'e' finatton puengi,	we don't see night come,
ya ti u mappot ini na cho'cho',	and this work is not difficult,
sa' manhihita ha' guini	because we're here together.

According to Master of Chamorro Chant Leonard Iriarte,[44] lålai date to ancient times and can be considered the most respected form of Chamorro artistic expression. Lålai has been embraced by the Chamorro as a contemporary tradition and is now an integral component of official cultural welcoming ceremonies and other cultural events in the Mariana Islands. Iriarte has spearheaded the revival of Chamorro chanting, begun in the 1990s, as part of wider ongoing efforts to revitalize the Chamorro language and culture.[45] Today, the I Fanlalai'an Oral History Project, also led by Iriarte, includes dozens of chanters who engage in the learning of fino'håya (the version of the Chamorro language without Spanish borrowings) and deepen their understanding of their heritage through historical lessons.[46] Some members of the Guåhan chanting delegation at FestPac have reflected on the content of the lålai they chanted during the festival, which were inspired by oral histories of Chamorro life in pre-colonial times. For example, in an interview for the *Guam Pacific Daily News*, Tamara Cruz asserted that "chant is a way to record history."[47] Lålai, in this way, serves as a means of preserving and transmitting knowledge and aids in the recollection of past events.[48]

Drawing from this tradition, the composers of the Latte Stone Ceremony Chant researched a specific form of lålai, the Kåntan Chamorrita,[49] examining its melodies, rhythms, and improvisational elements to embed these features into the chant. Santos, in turn, incorporated stylistic inflections rooted in the way she was taught to sing the Kåntan Chamorrita, and contributed her own words and ideas for the lyrics, while Brant Songsong provided the translation into the Chamorro language.[50]

I suggest that, in this vein, chanting for the latte served as a means of reconnecting the saina with their descendants, reminding Chamorro attendees where they came from by re-enlivening cultural traditions transmitted across generations. Although the latte have long been treated as "lifeless" museum artifacts, Indigenous affective practices such as lålai help restore both their agency and the relational ties disrupted by institutional preservation.

Once speeches and singing had concluded, ceremony attendees were invited to approach the latte and pay their respects in whatever manner they found most meaningful. As the community moved around the circle of stones, some people spoke to them. Their voices reverberated against the surfaces of the latte, breathing life back into them. Others were at a loss for words, but the absence of words can convey as much meaning as a lengthy speech.

As participants engaged with the latte, the performance delegates from Guåhan sang a selection of lålai dedicated to the latte and the saina, accompanied by dancing. As with many Pacific peoples, chanting and dancing are deeply

interconnected in Chamorro culture; lålai are often accompanied by embodied movements, including "slapping, stomping and swaying in place."[51] This association between voice and embodied practice is also deeply tied to the presence of the saina.

Accordingly, during the Latte Stone Ceremony, Guåhan performers—led by Master of Chamorro Dance Eileen Meno—showcased traditional Chamorro lålai and dances. Some involved the performers moving their arms toward the sky (Fig. 4), which suggests a connection and reverence toward the saina, metaphorically residing far away from the land. Another variation featured powerful steps and defensive arm movements, embodying the strength, unity, and resilience of the Chamorro people across centuries of colonization. Speaking about the chants and dances they performed during FestPAC, Meno stated that "they are about moving forward and remembering who the Chamorro people were through the elders and honoring them."[52]

Figure 4. Delegates from Guåhan performing during the Latte Stone Ceremony, June 15, 2024, Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawai'i. Photograph courtesy of the author

Some of the performers from the Northern Mariana Islands delegation and the Kutturan CHamoru dance group from Long Beach, California, joined the Guåhan delegates from the opposite side of the circle, creating a soundscape that surrounded the latte. Reminiscing about this moment, Dr. Riley Taitingfong commented that she "felt something in the air through the chant."[53] In this way, the environment was affectively mapped through a strong, powerful sense of unity among the attendees at the ceremony, expressed through voice and movement.[54] This created an atmosphere of renewed engagement with the latte, where lålai and the emotional responses it evoked can be understood as a means of ancestral reconnection, or in the words of Marzia Varutti, as "affective encounters."[55]

Following Sarah Ahmed's argument that emotion is a collective experience shaped through contact with others, and that objects elicit rather than contain emotions, I argue that the latte acted as focal points for the emotions of those who took part in the ceremony.[56] These emotions in turn enacted an affective response, a desire for a better future, and the reactivation of the community. In Hawaiian culture, pule (prayers), and mele (song) are used during repatriation ceremonies to reconnect people with their ancestors and help them to ask for forgiveness, understanding, and guidance throughout the process of return.[57] Chamorros shared this feeling during the Latte Stone Ceremony, encapsulated well by Dr. Michael Lujan Bevacqua: "We sang that day, with the hope that someday soon, these parts of our ancestors' lives, the treasures of our people today, will find their way home to us again."[58]

Offerings

Offerings are used by Indigenous communities all over the world to pay their respect to the ancestors.[59] In the Federated States of Micronesia, for example, offerings in the form of material goods must be made to trees and other spiritual deities before any oceangoing voyage sets out.[60] During the first set of chants in the Latte Stone Ceremony, a group of children approached the stones to leave offerings of leaves, flowers, seashells, woven objects, coconut shells, coconut oil, and fruit. Following this, representatives from the islands and the diaspora advanced toward the latte to leave their own offerings. The opportunity to participate in the practice of offering was then extended to all attendees, and soon a procession of Chamorros was interacting with their long-lost saina.

Chamorros have a longstanding tradition of offering tributes to the taotaomo'na, who, according to Dr. Bevacqua, are "the people of before," the

"ancestral spirits that inhabited the earth along with the living."[61] These spirits, which are different from the saina, are believed to protect and assist the island's inhabitants, and to cause harm if disrespected. Ancient Chamorros would often offer food, drink, and sometimes artifacts to ancestral skulls that they kept in baskets in the rafters of their homes.[62] In 1683, Jesuit missionary Francisco Garcia reported that before ancient Chamorros engaged in important activities such as warfare, travel, planting, harvesting, and fishing, they made offerings to these ancestral skulls.[63] This was a way to thank the taotaomo'na for their role in keeping one's family safe, prosperous, and strong.[64]

Figure 5. Latte at Mochong Village in the island of Luta (Rota), NMI. These latte date back to ca. 1000 BCE and are around 2 feet tall. Photograph courtesy of the author

Accounts such as this demonstrate deep cultural continuity through ceremonial practice in the Mariana Islands. Today, Chamorros often leave offerings on the latte, as can be seen in many latte sites all over the Mariana Islands. While conducting fieldwork in the Marianas in January 2024, I visited Mochong Village on the island of Luta (NMI), one of the best-preserved latte sites in the islands and

a place of pilgrimage for many Chamorros (Fig. 5). It comprises fifty individual latte and, in contrast to other renowned latte sites, many of the stones are still standing. One of the first things I appreciated upon arriving was that most of the latte had some offerings on top of them (Fig. 6). Often, such offerings come in the form of ancient artifacts that people have found around the village, such as pieces of pottery, shell implements, and slingstones.[65] By being repurposed as offerings, objects found at latte sites in the islands—including some that once shaped the forms of tasa and haligi—are transformed into enduring tributes to their makers.

Figure 6. Offerings of ancient pottery and higam (adzes) left on one of the latte at Mochong Village on the island of Luta (Rota), NMI. Photograph courtesy of the author

Figure 7. Offerings left on one of the latte at the Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawai'i, June 15, 2024. Photograph courtesy of the author

While some of the offerings presented to the latte at the ceremony in Honolulu included leaves, flowers, and fruits, many of them came in the form of woven objects made by community members (Fig. 7). Tinifok CHamoru (the art of weaving), as it is referred to in the Mariana Islands, plays a crucial role in shaping contemporary expressions of Chamorro culture. The practice of weaving, much like the practice of offering, is transmitted intergenerationally, and as such it embodies the cultural essence of the Chamorro community, as well as its ability to thrive despite many waves of colonization, both historically and in contemporary expressions.[66] While its everyday utility has recently given way to different, more experimental artistic expressions, weaving as a practice still holds a vital place in Chamorro material culture. Chamorro weaver James Bamba, in fact, says that "the inspiration [for weaving in his case] comes from them [the saina] and flows within our spirits, coursing through our thoughts, and executed through our voices, hands, and bodies."[67] In this way, woven objects such as kottot and guagua' (baskets) or katupat (rice pouches) embody both personal and community relationships.

Coconut oil produced in the Mariana Islands and transported especially for the ceremony was also a recurrent offering to the latte, and was poured over their surfaces. This symbolic act is similar to the practice of covering one's body in the same substance, which is often associated with Indigenous notions of health and beauty.[68] Additionally, to the Chamorros living in the diaspora, coconut oil, as a commodity that can be purchased and transported outside of the Marianas, represents an embodied, spiritual, and sacred bond to their homeland. It is a product that informs their identity-building as Chamorros and Pacific Islanders. Chamorro scholar Nathaniel Lennon Rigler Siguenza writes:

> Coconut oil is a product that reflects us. It's a product that has, for as long as Pacific peoples have existed, cared for us, and we in turn have cared for it. In the places where coconuts cannot grow, it is remembered through language and myth. We remember our ancestors—including our plant ancestors—as we carry them with us on our skin, in our scent, and quite literally, in our heart.[69]

The affective significance of niyok (coconut)—one of the most important native plants in the Marianas, one that holds a place as kin, a reliable source of food, and a material used in cultural production[70]—and its derived products are vehicles for ancestral reconnection. Considerable thought and effort were invested in creating and transporting offerings to the latte, acknowledging the latte as embodiments of the saina and therefore active participants in the ceremony. In this way, the latte gradually awakened through the sensory connections fostered by the ritual offerings the community made and gifted to them.

Touch

Another primary method of reconnecting with the saina during the ceremony involved direct physical contact with the stones. For a long time, touching objects held by museums has been forbidden, influenced by Western rational objectivity and the belief that museum artifacts are lifeless objects, a perspective that overlooks their cultural vitality, sacred significance, and how they activate relationships between people.[71] Moreover, the ritual characteristics of the museum reinforce this distance, as its quasi-sacred atmosphere encourages visitors to only engage with objects visually and reverently rather than physically.[72] Recently, however, scholars and museum practitioners have been advocating for the positive

qualities of embodied sensory and cognitive engagements with objects in museum settings and increasingly encourage physical contact between people and objects.[73] Indigenous communities have long emphasized the necessity of physically engaging with their cultural objects to maintain their vitality or to reactivate their significance.[74] Touch, in particular, can act as a powerful tool that prompts an emotional response both in the individual engaging in the act and in the object being touched.

For the Chamorro people, touch serves as a means of establishing connection with the saina. It is common to hear stories of saina "touching" individuals as a way of welcoming them to the islands. This ancestral touch often manifests physically as fingerprint, fingernail, or teeth-like bruises on people's bodies.[75] In a similar way, touch, as it was used during the Latte Stone Ceremony, was a two-way emotional force that reconnected the Chamorro with the latte. Just as the saina touch people, the lifeforce of those who touched the latte during the ceremony was transferred to the stones. Metaphorically, the lifeforce of Chamorros touching the latte can be understood as a fluid-like essence that permeates their skin and into the stone's surface, symbolizing a deep, spiritual connection. As Chamorro poet Arielle Taitano Lowe said after the ceremony, "Our ancestors are still very much tied to these very precious, embodied, cultural latte."[76] In this way, when they were touched, the latte were imbued with new forms of life while, simultaneously, the participants themselves were "touched," not only by the saina who created the latte, but also by the generations who lived in their presence and cared for the spaces around them.[77]

In addition, the materiality of the stones as an index of the tåno' (land) may have inspired those at the ceremony to touch the latte. Just as ancient Chamorros relied on the land and sea in their daily lives, the use of stone to build the latte may have embodied a deep connection between spirit and nature.[78] Touching the latte in the present can thus be considered a way of fostering a renewed connection with the tåno'. In addition, the enduring quality of stone ties the latte to the passage of time, allowing them to function as markers of an ancient society whose presence symbolizes the resilience of the Chamorro people in the face of a long—and still ongoing—colonial history.[79]

During the ceremony, individuals from different generations interacted with the latte in different ways, reflecting different cultural attitudes toward the reverence for the saina embodied in the latte and presenting an interesting contrast. Older generations were often taught to avoid interacting with the latte, as touching them was believed to provoke the taotaomo'na (ancestral spirits).[80] Dr. Michael Lujan Bevacqua recounts how, throughout the ceremony, many elders

sought reassurance from him regarding the appropriateness of touching the latte.[81] In contrast, younger generations found it easier to physically engage with the latte, experiencing fewer cultural prohibitions and a renewed sense of reconnection through physical contact (Fig. 8). The response of Chamorro youth to earlier cultural protocols should not be interpreted as a sign of disrespect; instead, it may be attributed to their growing involvement in disciplines such as archaeology, historic preservation, and museum studies, where direct engagement with the latte is often necessary.[82] This training positions them to become future leaders in preserving and transmitting the cultural significance of the latte, as well as safeguarding their broader ancestral and historical heritage.

Figure 8. Members of the Chamorro community touch the latte during the Latte Stone Ceremony, Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawai'i, June 15, 2024. Photograph courtesy of the author

Despite generational differences in cultural protocols, both elders and young Chamorros physically interacted with the latte. These interactions reconnected I manåmko yan i manhoben (the elderly and the young) with the latte and also fostered an intergenerational reconnection as people of all ages jointly

engaged in the touching of the stones. Concern for the well-being of the ancestral latte is shared across generations of Chamorros. In this sense, touch functioned as a bridge, uniting past and present cultural protocols and generations through shared cultural experience.

Feelings

When asked what they thought of the ceremony, most attendants responded that they found it deeply emotional. "Emotion" is defined by Sarah Ahmed as arising from the recognition of the "sensations" enacted through an "affect" that becomes "emotion" in cultural processes.[83] However, for a long time, emotion and practice have been treated as separate domains, largely because Western scientific traditions have linked "emotion" as an analytic category to an individualized emotional subjectivity.[84] To counter this classification, Catherine A. Lutz argues that emotions are culturally constructed, shaped by social practices, beliefs, and norms. She states that, while studies on emotion in the West typically portray them as arising from "an internal world of sensations and thoughts," they can also be understood in relation to the "environmental crucible"—in other words, the external conditions—in which they emerge.[85] Focusing on the experience of the Ifaluk people of Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia, Lutz argues that emotions and the feelings that arise from them are interconnected with Ifaluk cosmology, value systems, social interactions, historical changes, and everyday life occurrences.

Similarly, in the Mariana Islands, Chamorro cultural practices demonstrate how material objects and communal rituals can evoke complex emotional responses that are both historically grounded and socially shared. During the Latte Stone Ceremony, the shared knowledge of the unlawful removal and subsequent neglect of the stones evoked negative emotional responses, as often happens when Indigenous peoples encounter their cultural belongings in museum settings.[86] Hugs were exchanged and hands placed on shoulders, symbolizing a shared sense of support and solidarity in the face of profound sorrow. The atmosphere was charged with intense emotion, as people openly expressed their grief through tears and their frustration through anger and serious facial expressions. Some people were overwhelmed by their emotions; others needed time to process the deeply emotional experience.[87] Guåhan slinger Roman dela Cruz mentioned that it was "easy to get offended that the artifacts and latte stones are so far away from home."[88] This feeling was shared among many community

members, as well as Chamorros living in the diaspora. However, dela Cruz claimed that it was even worse that the latte "had never been activated." The latte at the Bishop Museum, in this sense, act as evidence of the widespread desecration of funerary and culturally significant sites in the Marianas, and the ongoing cultural trauma and deactivation it perpetuates.

Despite the difficult feelings that the ceremony elicited, many of the attendants also emphasized feelings of hope and reconnection. Talking about the repatriation of ancestral human remains, Fforde et al. suggest that the experience is in itself "transformative and inherently powerful."[89] In a similar fashion, during the Latte Stone Ceremony, individuals experienced a profound sense of respect for their saina. NMI delegation member Erlinda Naputi described feeling at peace after reconnecting with the latte.[90]

Furthermore, the ceremony served as a powerful reminder of the historical and cultural continuity that links past and present generations, fostering a shared sense of community reconnection. Taitano Lowe, who lives in the diaspora, talked about how hopeful she felt after the ceremony: "Healing is happening in knowing that the latte are here in community and with the ancestors . . . that they're well taken-care of."[91] Sarah Untalan, a Chamorro woman who works as an administrative assistant at the Bishop Museum, also noted how happy she was that so many Chamorros had reunited for the event.[92] Tomas Perez of the Chamorro diaspora in Seattle shared similar feelings: "The biggest thing [I felt] is reconnection."[93] In this context, feelings of hope and anger were not opposing forces, but rather intertwined and coexisting.

Feelings of unity, respect, and longing for the return of the ancestral latte to their home were also common among the Chamorro attendants. Several attendees mentioned that the ultimate goal of the Relocation Project was to repatriate the ancestral latte in the near future. In *Placental Politics*, Christine Taitano DeLisle notes that there is a deep connection between Chamorros and the tåno' (land), where the land becomes a visceral, multisensory presence, communicating with Chamorros in ways that both literally and figuratively ground them in the soil and bind them to the land.[94] Latte sites, in this respect, serve as tangible manifestations of the deep connection that Chamorros have to their tåno'. In the words of Marsh Taitano and Liston, "Latte are a significant symbol and treasured birthright to contemporary CHamoru, signifying heritage, identity, and nationalism, and maintaining a community rooted in the land and culture."[95]

Latte sites are also intimately connected to the physical, spiritual, and cultural well-being of the land. Chamorro suruhana (healer) Mamma Chai says the following about her visits to latte sites: "There are times I feel a very deep, deep

piniti (hurt) of our ancestors. I believe they hurt when they see such destruction and lack of respect for our land and our environment."[96] As expressed by Mamma Chai, the desacralization and removal of materials from latte sites—including the stones themselves—play a significant role in the harm inflicted upon the saina and taotaomo'na who inhabit these sacred spaces. While the Latte Stone Ceremony was a significant first step in the rekindling of mutual relationships between the latte and the Chamorro community, the return of the latte from the Bishop Museum back to the islands will entail their physical, emotional, and spiritual reconnection with the tåno', as well as with the taotao tåno' (people of the land). The agency of the latte expressed in these concepts will in turn contribute to the healing of the land, the preservation of the cultural landscape of the Mariana Islands, and the reconnection of Chamorros who reside in different, often extremely distanced, geographical areas.

Reactivation and Reconnection

The latte at the Bishop Museum were reactivated through a series of "affective encounters"—the kinds of encounters that take place in the museum in which *something* affects something or someone else.[97] As descendants engaged with the latte, their presence infused new life into these ancestral structures. In a way, there was an almost ontological transformation in the stones—from inanimate objects stored at the back of the museum to animated agents, reawakened through the relationships imbued in them by the descendants of those who carved them, as well as in the community which was reactivated through the presence of and contact with the latte. These transformations were fueled by touch, offerings, words, movements, and emotions shared during the ceremony. Thus, the Latte Stone Ceremony reveals how such affective responses can transform museum spaces from sites of violence and pain into spaces of healing and reconnection for Indigenous communities. Attending seriously to these emotional and sensory dimensions opens new possibilities for museums stewarding Indigenous cultural belongings—not as passive custodians, but as active participants in facilitating spaces for relationship building, care, and cultural affirmation.

Affective encounters were not limited to interactions between the latte and individuals; they also occurred among members of the community. The ceremony served as a significant moment to be proud of being Chamorro, offering an opportunity to embrace and affirm the Chamorro heritage and language within a communal space. For Chamorros participating in the Latte Stone Ceremony, the

presence of the latte evoked a profound connection to the saina, or ancestors. It represented a deeply significant and sacred moment for all those involved. The Bishop Museum became a space where the Chamorro community had the opportunity to reconnect with their saina, as well as with each other. It became a relational space, where dynamic and deeply emotional engagements between people and cultural artifacts took place.

Furthermore, the latte brought Chamorros together, fostering a sense of reconnection among individuals regardless of their place of origin—whether from Guåhan, the Northern Mariana Islands, or the diaspora. The Latte Stone Ceremony, in this way, embodied the spirit of inafa'maolek, a complex and important cultural metaphor for the Chamorro that emphasizes the cultural values of community cooperation, solidarity, and respect.[98] The gathering of Chamorros for the ceremony holds particular significance because it transcends historical, political, cultural, and linguistic separations, often imposed by external colonial forces; the event not only fostered a shared sense of cultural reconnection but also reaffirmed the latte as a unifying symbol that bridges diverse Chamorro experiences and identities. This feeling is encapsulated by a phrase that was often repeated during the ceremony: "Un taotao, un Marianas—One people, one Marianas."

Coda

This article was originally written shortly after the Latte Stone Ceremony took place in 2024, and exciting developments on the future of the latte housed at the Bishop Museum have taken place since. In August 2025, the Bishop Museum announced the ethical return of the latte, alongside the 10,000 artifacts collected by Hans Hornbostel, to the Mariana Islands. The announcement was made after the Bishop Museum's Board of Directors unanimously voted to deaccession the pieces. This return is among the largest of its kind in terms of the number of items involved.

A small ceremony in Honolulu on August 9, 2025, marked the beginning of this process. Attendees included Lieutenant Governor of Guam Josh Tenorio, Department of CHamoru Affairs President Melvin Won Pat-Borja, and Nicole Delisle Dueñas of the Guam Cultural Repository. Representing the CNMI were Chief of Staff to the Governor Henry Hofschneider, Senator Celina Babauta, NMI Museum Director Leonard Leon, and staff from the CNMI State Historic Preservation Office. Representing Hawai'i were Governor Josh Green and First Lady Jaime Ushiroda, as well as key representatives of the Bishop Museum. Some members of the

Chamorro diaspora in Hawai'i also attended. In their speeches, these dignitaries emphasized the importance of this moment and framed it in terms of reconciliation, healing, and continued collaboration, friendship, and commitment between the Mariana Islands and Hawai'i. Following these remarks, attendees were invited to place offerings upon the latte, to wish them a good trip or say goodbye to them. Bishop Museum staff then started to crate and prepare the collection for transport.

Soon after the ceremony, the first set of objects traveled back to Guåhan. From September 6 to 12, 2025, the Guam Museum held the exhibition *Iyo-ta Gi Tano'-ta Ta'lo* (Ours in Our Land Again) to welcome the artifacts home and reconnect them with the community. On October 24th, the people of Guåhan held a rematriation ceremony in front of the Guam Museum to honor the return of several latte from Honolulu, which will remain on display in Skinner Plaza until a more permanent home is found. Over two hundred people gathered to chant, leave offerings, and touch the latte, welcoming both the stones and the spirits of the saina back to the island. This ceremony, much like the Latte Stone Ceremony, was a deeply emotional occasion, marked by feelings of healing and resilience. In parallel, one of the latte from the NMI—the one displayed in the center of the circle of latte in the central courtyard of the Bishop Museum—has also returned to Saipan. A public ceremony to welcome it home is scheduled to take place within the next few months. While some latte and artifacts have made their way back to the Marianas, roughly 6,000 more are still awaiting return.

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Notes

[1] Every four years, members of different Pacific communities gather in the world's largest celebration of Pacific Islanders and their culture: the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC). Originally set to take place in 2020 and postponed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the thirteenth edition of the festival took place in Hawai'i, June 6–16, 2024. FestPAC 2024 also served as a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first festival. This circumstance allowed its organisers to conceive the biggest event seen to date, with over 100 official delegatations, five main venues, nine additional venues for performances, and eight simultaneous thematic programs. Under the theme "Ho'oulu Lāhui/Regenerating Oceania," the festival organizers wanted to "honor traditions that FestPAC has perpetuated for the last fifty years, with an eye toward the future." "Ho'oulu Lāhui/Regenerating Oceania: 13th Festival of Pacifc Arts & Culture," Gravitas Pacifica LLC, accessed January 30, 2026, https://www.festpachawaii.org/. This iteration of the festival also revolved around ohana (family) reunions after a long eight-year hiatus, enabling the reconnection of different Pacific communities.

[2] The Chamorro are the Indigenous peoples of the Mariana Islands. The term used to refer to them can be spelled several ways—the most common ones being "Chamorro," "CHamoru," and "Chamoru"—reflecting the complexity of Chamorro identity and culture. In this paper, I use "Chamorro" as inclusive terminology encompassing people from Guåhan, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the diaspora. While the majority of people residing in Guåhan (Guam) identify as "CHamoru"—seen as a "practical assertion" of an orthography that is "self-defined and self-adopted, and thus not imposed by any external authority"—inhabitants of the Northern Mariana Islands use the spelling "Chamorro." Gina E. Taitano, "Chamorro vs. CHamoru," Guampedia, last modified February 4, 2025, https://www.guampedia.com/chamorro-vs-chamoru/. The Chamorro diaspora in the United States is concentrated in San Diego, California; Tacoma, Washington; and Honolulu, Hawai'i. Faye F. Untalan, "CHamoru/Chamorro Migration to the US," Guampedia, last modified February 4, 2025, https://www.guampedia.com/chamorro-migration-to-the-u-s/.

[3] The Mariana Islands are a tropical archipelago located in the northwestern Pacific Ocean. The archipelago comprises fifteen islands, listed from south to north: Guåhan (Guam), Luta (Rota), Aguijan (Goat Island), Tinian, Saipan, No'os (Farallon de Medinilla), Anatåhan, Sarigan, Guguan, Alimågan (Alamagan), Pågan, Agrihan, Asuncion, Maug, and Urâcas (Farallon de Pajaros). While the islands form one archipelago and their people share a common identity, the Marianas are politically administered as two jurisdictions. The largest island in the archipelago, Guåhan, has been an unincorporated United States territory since 1898, while the remaining islands are part of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The political status of the Mariana Islands is complex and has long contributed to divisions between the Chamorros of Guåhan and those of the CNMI.

Owing to their strategic location near Asia and differing political arrangements, the islands hold significant importance in global geopolitics, particularly for the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). For more details on the DOD's interest in the Mariana Islands see Sylvia C. Frain, *Fanohge Famalåo'an & Fan'tachu Fama'lauan: Women Rising Indigenous Resistance to Militarization in the Marianas* (PhD diss., University of Otago, 2017).

[4] The Celebrate Micronesia Festival is hosted annually by the Bishop Museum, in partnership with the Pacific Islands Development Program at East-West Center, the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and leaders from Micronesian communities that live in the diaspora in Hawai'i. The event honors the "rich traditions and contemporary expressions of the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guåhan (Guam), Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Kiribati, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands," and brings examples of cultural practices such as music, dance, food, art, and storytelling, among others. "Celebrate Micronesia Festival 2025," Bishop Museum, accessed January 30, 2026, https://www.bishopmuseum.org/celebrate-micronesia-festival-2025/.

[5] Although the word "saina" may refer to one's parents as well as to all elders or to Chamorro ancestors, in this paper it will specifically be used to refer to the ancestors.

[6] "Gi Oriyan I Latte ni Gaige gi Museon Bishop giya Hawai'i," June 26, 2024, by Fanachu! Live (podcast), YouTube, 1 hour, 4 min., 35 sec., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_udqhzuQVjE.

[7] For an archaeological account of the latte, see Mike T. Carson, "An Overview of *Latte* Period Archaeology," *Micronesica* 42, no. 1/2 (2012): 1–79; *Rediscovering Heritage through Artefacts, Sites, and Landscapes: Translating a 3500-year Record at Ritidian, Guam* (Archaeopress Publishing, 2017), and Mike T. Carson, "Ancient Life in the Mariana Islands: From the First Settlement through the Latte Period" in *I estoria-ta: Guam, the Marianas and CHamoru culture,* ed. Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte and Acción Cultural Española (Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, 2021), 27–37.

[8] Lawrence J. Cunningham, *Ancient Chamorro Society* (Bess Press, 1992), 48.

[9] Carson, "An Overview of *Latte* Period Archaeology," 42-49; Carson, "Ancient Life in the Mariana Islands," 33-35.

[10] Early voyage and missionary accounts in the Mariana Islands are reproduced and translated in Cunningham, *Ancient Chamorro Society;* and Rodrigue Lévesque, *History of Micronesia: A Collection of Source Documents,* volumes 1–4 (Lévesque Publications, 1992).

[11] Many historians have written about the Spanish-Chamorro Wars, the Reducción, and the short- and-long-term impacts that these events had on the Chamorro population. See Francis X. Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization: A History of the Caroline and Marshall Islands in Pe-Colonial Days, 1521–1885*, Pacific

Islands Monograph Series, No. 1 (University of Hawai'i Press, 1983); and Robert F. Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1995).

[12] Carson, "Ancient Life in the Mariana Islands," 35.

[13] Malia A. Ramirez, "Taotao Latte yu', Islas Marianas!: Descendant of the Latte People, Mariana Islands!," in *Latte in the Marianas: By the Community for the Community*, ed. Kelly Marsh Taitano and Jolie Liston (The Latte in the Marianas: Art, Icon and Archaeology Project, 2021), 11.

[14] Siñora Rufina F. Mendiola, "Narratives of Maga'låhi Taga'," in *Latte in the Marianas: By the Community for the Community*, ed. Kelly Marsh Taitano and Jolie Liston (The Latte in the Marianas: Art, Icon and Archaeology Project, 2021), 61.

[15] For a longer version of the story, see Don Farrell, "Taga," Guampedia, last modified June 20, 2024, https://www.guampedia.com/taga/.

[16] Evidence for the continuity of oral traditions associated with the latte—and their enduring sacred significance—appears, for example, in a report by a Spanish colonial governor. Felipe de la Corte, *Memoria Descriptiva e Histórica de las Islas Marianas: estudio analítico de todos sus elementos físicos, morales y políticos, y propuesta de su reforma...; escrita por el Teniente Coronel D. Felipe de la Corte y Ruano Calderón, del Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército, Gobernador de dichas Islas* (Imprenta Nacional, 1875), 83.

[17] Joe Quinata and Kelly Marsh Taitano, "Hinanao-ta Mo'na: Our Journey Forward," in *Latte in the Marianas: By the Community for the Community*, ed. Kelly Marsh Taitano and Jolie Liston (The Latte in the Marianas: Art, Icon and Archaeology Project, 2021), 97.

[18] Christine Taitano DeLisle, "Civilizing the Guam Museum," *University of Michigan Working Papers in Museum Studies*, no. 4 (2010): 2.

[19] For more information on Hornbostel's spying activities in the Marianas, see DeLisle, "Civilizing the Guam Museum," 2; Michael Bevacqua, "Bevacqua: Hans Hornbostel," *Guam Pacific Daily News,* September 28, 2023, https://www.guampdn.com/opinion/bevacqua-hans-hornbostel/article_b9b9f990-5dc3-11ee-a0cc-3b7e54256ecf.html; and Michael Bevacqua, "OPINION Bevacqua: We sing, so they will find their way home," *Guam Pacific Daily News,* June 28, 2024, https://www.guampdn.com/opinion/opinion-bevacqua-we-sing-so-they-will-find-their-way-home/article_21dc78c0-344e-11ef-8123-87c53d7849d4.html.

[20] Judy Flores, "Gertrude Costenoble Hornbostel," Guampedia, last modified February 4, 2025, https://www.guampedia.com/gertrude-costenoble-hornbostel/. Some of the oral histories gathered by Gertrude Costenoble have been published in Appendix A of Laura M. Thompson, *Archaeology of the Mariana Islands* (Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 100, 1932), 59–70.

[21] DeLisle, "Civilizing the Guam Museum," 2.

[22] Bevacqua, "Bevacqua: Hans Hornbostel."

[23] DeLisle, "Civilizing the Guam Museum," 1.

[24] Bevacqua, "OPINION."

[25] Bevacqua, "Bevacqua: Hans Hornbostel."
[26] Cassie Ordonio, "Repatriation efforts underway for ancient Chamorro stone carvings at Bishop Museum," *Hawai 'i Public Radio*, April 8, 2024, https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/local-news/2024-04-08/repatriation-efforts-ancient-chamorro-stone-carvings-bishop-museum.
[27] Dr. Michael Lujan Bevacqua, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 03:30.
[28] Bevacqua, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 03:47.
[29] Chamorros who live in the diaspora tend to gather in annual cultural festivals organized by different US-based Chamorro organizations all over the United States. Examples include the Håfa Adai Festival and Che'lu Festival in San Diego, the Marianas Festival in Portland, the Chamorro Day Festival in Tacoma, and the Chamorro Cultural Festival in Oceanside, California. Festivals are extremely important for Chamorros in the diaspora who have never been to the Marianas, as they enable them to connect with their culture, language, and community.
[30] According to their Facebook page, the Hafa Adai Club of Hawaii is a group of "family and friends from Guam" based in Hawai'i. Hafa Adai Club of Hawaii, Facebook, accessed February 03, 2026, https://www.facebook.com/groups/2449077455114351.
[31] Elyssa Santos, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 15:00.
[32] See Sonya Atalay, "Braiding Strands of Wellness: How Repatriation Contributes to Healing through Embodied Practice and Storywork," *The Public Historian* 41, no. 1 (2019): 78–89, https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2019.41.1.78; and Cressida Fforde et al., "Emotion and the Return of Ancestors: Repatriation as Affective Practice" in *The Oxford Handbook of Museum Archaeology*, ed. A. Stevenson (Oxford University Press, 2022), 65–84, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198847526.013.43.
[33] Elyssa Santos, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 14:00.
[34] Sandra H. Dudley, *Displaced Things in Museums and Beyond: Loss, Liminality and Hopeful Encounters* (Routledge, 2021), 81.
[35] Elyssa Santos, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 16:15.
[36] Elyssa Santos, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 16:50.
[37] "Lieutenant Governor Tenorio Leads Effort to Return Latte Stones to Guam, Address CHamoru Artifacts at the Bishop Museum in Hawai'i," Ufisinan i Maga'Håga/Office of the Governor, August 30, 2024, https://governor.guam.gov/press_release/lieutenant-governor-tenorio-leads-effort-to-return-latte-stones-to-guam-address-chamoru-artifacts-at-the-bishop-museum-in-hawaii/.
[38] "Ancient Remains Returned to Guam after Four Decades in a California Lab," *Pacific Island Times*, November 9, 2023, https://www.pacificislandtimes.com/post/ancient-remains-returned-to-guam-after-four-decades-in-a-california-lab.

[39] "NMI Museum Leads Repatriation Project to Return Ancestral Remains," Kuam News, October 30, 2024, https://www.kuam.com/story/51714127/nmi-museum-leads-repatriation-project-to-return-ancestral-remains.

[40] Andrew Roberto, "NMI Museum to Bring Ancestral Chamorro Remains Back from California in November," *Marianas Variety*, October 30, 2024, https://www.mvariety.com/news/local/nmi-museum-to-bring-ancestral-chamorro-remains-back-from-california-in-november/article_3477f67e-95d0-11ef-8f9a-57bf857393a8.html.

[41] Walter Ulloa, "Cultural Group Visits CHamoru Artifacts at German Museums," *Marianas Variety*, October 20, 2025, https://www.mvariety.com/regional_world/regional-world-cultural-group-visits-chamoru-artifacts-at-german-museums-dwtorvhd/article_6c8c5dc3-1458-474c-baf8-3920744d2ecb.html/.

[42] Inafa'maolek is a complex and important cultural metaphor for Chamorros that embodies several interconnected meanings. The literal translation of the term is to "make (inafa') good (maolek)." Dr. Katherine Aguon argues that the concept espouses the six traditional values of Chamorro culture: 1) Respetu: respect afforded to the elderly, the ancestors and other significant members of the community and one's family; 2) Manginge: a reverence of respect given to the elderly by slightly touching one's nose to the back of the person's hand; 3) Mamahlao: shame, embarrassment; 4) Chenchule': to give things way; 5) Che'lu: relationships with siblings; and 6) Påtgon: the collective responsibility of raising children. Lilli Perez-Iyechad, "Inafa'maolek: Striving for Harmony," Guampedia, accessed January 31, 2026, https://www.guampedia.com/inafamaolek/.

[43] "Community members visit ancient burial sites in Saipan," September 14, 2025, by Marianas Press, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qap0bNujNZs&t=221s.

[44] The title of "Master of CHamoru Culture," awarded by CAHA, the Guam Arts Council, is bestowed upon those master practitioners who preserve various aspects of Guåhan's Traditional and Folk Arts (like chanting, dancing, weaving, blacksmithing, carving, healing, among others). The award honors master practitioners for their artistry, craftsmanship, and dedication to preserving Guåhan's cultural traditions. See "Masters Program," Guam Council on the Arts & Humanities Agency, accessed January 31, 2026, https://guamcaha.org/programs#:~:text=Since%20the%20establishment%20of%20the,Award%20will%20be%20April%202019.

[45] For more information on the Chamorro revival of chant, see Judy Flores, "Chant," Guampedia, last modified February 22, 2025, https://www.guampedia.com/chant/; and Judy Flores, "Art and Identity in the Mariana Islands: Issues of Reconstructing an Ancient Past" (PhD diss., University of East Anglia, 1999).

[46] Tihu Lujan, "Ancestral Connections Through Language: Chanters preserve fino'håya," *Guam Pacific Daily News*, May 30, 2024,

https://www.guampdn.com/lifestyle/ancestral-connections-through-language-chanters-preserve-fino-h-ya/article_91bed166-1e22-11ef-bcb5-e3f2d1ba7245.html.

[47] Lujan, "Ancestral Connections Through Language."

[48] D. S. Farrer and James D. Sellman, "Chants of Re-Enchantment: Chamorro Spiritual Resistance to Colonial Domination," *Social Analysis* 58, no. 1 (2014): 127–48, https://doi:10.3167/sa.2014.580107.

[49] Kåntan Chamorrita is the contemporary name given to an ancient Chamorro art form, known for its call-and-response, impromptu verse-making practiced between several people. Judy Flores, "Kantan Chamorrita," Guampedia, accessed January 31, 2026, https://www.guampedia.com/kantan-chamorita-2/.

[50] Schyuler Lujan, "Latte Stone Ceremony Chant by Brant Songsong and Elyssa Santos," Lengguahi-ta: Digital Lessons and Learning Resources for the Chamorro Language, June 26, 2024, https://lengguahita.com/2024/06/26/latte-stone-ceremony-chant-by-brant-songsong-and-elyssa-santos/.

[51] Lujan, "Ancestral Connections Through Language."

[52] Jerick Sablan, "Letting the World Know about the CHamoru People through Dances," *Guam Pacific Daily News*, June 4, 2024, https://www.guampdn.com/lifestyle/letting-the-world-know-about-the-chamoru-people-through-dances/article_c608933c-2154-11ef-b6bd-a3228837461f.html.

[53] "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 35:00.

[54] Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Harvard University Press, 2008).

[55] Marzia Varutti, "Affective Encounters in Museums," in *Heritage Ecologies*, ed. Þóra Pétursdóttir and Torgeir Rinke Bangstad (Routledge, 2021), 129–44.

[56] Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 10–11.

[57] Fforde et al., "Emotion and Return of Ancestors."

[58] Bevacqua, "OPINION."

[59] Examples of this from around the world can be found in Bill Sillar, "Animating Relationships: Inca *Conopa* and Modern *Illa* as Mediating Objects," in *The Inbetweenness of Things: Materializing Mediation and Movement between Worlds*, ed. P. Basu (Bloomsbury, 2017), 131–48; Danelle Cooper et al., "It's Always a Part of You": The Connection Between Sacred Space and Indigenous/Aboriginal Health," *International Journal of Human Rights Education* 3, no. 1 (2019): 1–29; and Aurore Dumont, "Turning Indigenous Sacred Sites into Intangible Heritage: Authority Figures and Ritual Appropriation in Inner Mongolia," *China Perspectives* 3, no. 126 (2021): 19–28, https://doi.org/10.4000/chinaperspectives.12129.

[60] Hilary "Larry" Raigetal, "Revitalizing 'Traditional' Navigation Systems in the Contemporary Pacific," in *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean Volume 1: The Pacific Ocean to 1800*, ed. R. Tucker Jones and M. K. Matsuda (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 345–68.

[61] Michael Bevacqua, "Taotaomo'na," Guampedia, last modified February 22, 2025, https://www.guampedia.com/taotaomona-taotaomona/.
[62] Accounts of ancient Chamorro storing ancestral skulls under the rafters of their dwellings are found in Cunningham, *Ancient Chamorro Society*, 53; Farrer and Selman, "Chants of Re-Enchantment," 132; Marjory Driver, *The Account of Fray Juan Pobre's Residence in the Marianas, 1602*, MARC Miscellaneous Series No. 8. (Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam, 1993); and Michael Bevacqua, "Taotaomo'na."
[63] An original account of this practice is found in Francisco Garcia, *The Life and Martyrdom of the Venerable Father Luis Diego de San Vitores, S.J.*, ed. J. A. McDonough, MARC Monograph Series 3 (Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam, 2004 [1683]), 13–19.
[64] Bevacqua, "Taotaomo'na."
[65] These ancestral objects are now protected from removal by various laws, like the Commonwealth Historic Preservation Act of 1982 (Public Law 3-39) in the NMI, and Chapter 76 of the Regulation of Real Property Uses (21 GCA Chapter 76) in Guåhan. US federal laws, including the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1996, further restrict excavation on public lands and require permits for artifact removal. Adding another layer to these legislative projects, the removal of artifacts from Chamorro ancestral sites is a profound act of disrespect toward the community and the saina.
[66] Jesi Lujan Bennett, "Guagua' (woven basket) and Chamoru Weaving (mamfok)," *Smarthistory*, March 26, 2025, https://smarthistory.org/chamoru-guagua-mamfok/.
[67] James C. Bamba, "I mañaina-hu chumachalåni yo': My Ancestors Guide Me," in *Latte in the Marianas: By the Community for the Community*, ed. Kelly Marsh Taitano and Jolie Liston (The Latte in the Marianas: Art, Icon and Archaeology Project, 2021), 81.
[68] Nathaniel Lennon Rigler Siguenza, "Coconut Oil Reflects: A Comparative Commodity Ethnography in Two Sites" (PhD diss., Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington, 2022), 241–60.
[69] Siguenza, "Coconut Oil Reflects," 260.
[70] Siguenza, "Coconut Oil Reflects," 89–139.
[71] Fforde et al., "Emotion and Return of Ancestors," 65; and Elizabeth Pye, *The Power of Touch: Handling Objects in Museum and Heritage Contexts* (Left Coast Press, 2008), 16.
[72] Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History* 3 (1980): 448–69; and Carol Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship" in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 88–103.
[73] Scholars who have focused on the emotional aspect of touch include Pye, *The Power of Touch*; Dudley, *Displaced Things*; and Sandra H. Dudley, *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations* (Routledge, 2010).

[74] See Fanny Wonu Veys, "Awakening Sleeping Objects," in *Pasifika Styles: Artists Inside the Museum*, ed. Rosanna Raymond and Amiria Salmond (University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2008), 111–15; and Stephen Gilchrist and Henry Skerritt, "Awakening Objects and Indigenizing the Museum: Stephen Gilchrist in Conversation with Henry F. Skerritt," *Contemporaneity: Historical Presence in Visual Culture* 5, no. 1 (2016): 108–21, https://doi.org/10.5195/contemp.2016.183.

[75] Bevacqua, "Taotaomo'na."

[76] Arielle Taitano Lowe, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 25:40.

[77] Veys, "Awakening Sleeping Objects," 15.

[78] Fred Rodriguez, "Latte's Significance," Guampedia, last modified February 26, 2025, https://www.guampedia.com/lattes-significance/.

[79] Michael L. Bevacqua, "Latte: Contemporary Symbol of CHamoru Identity," in *Latte in the Marianas: By the Community for the Community*, ed. Kelly Marsh Taitano and Jolie Liston (The Latte in the Marianas: Art, Icon and Archaeology Project, 2021), 133.

[80] Bevacqua, "Taotaomo'na."

[81] Bevacqua, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 08:45.

[82] Joe Quinata and Kelly Marsh Taitano, "Hinanao-ta Mo'na: Our Journey Forward," 97.

[83] Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Introduction.

[84] Fforde et al., "Emotion and Return of Ancestors."

[85] Catherine A. Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll & Their Challenge to Western Theory* (University of Chicago Press, 1988), 150.

[86] Cressida Fforde et al., "Emotion, affective practice, and the taking of Indigenous Ancestral Remains" in *The Oxford Handbook of Museum Archaeology*, ed. A. Stevenson (Oxford University Press, 2022), 45–64, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198847526.013.43, 64.

[87] Bevacqua, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 19:45.

[88] Roman dela Cruz, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 53:30. A "slinger" is a person who practices slinging: throwing or hurling stones or other things using a tool known as a sling.

[89] Fforde et al., "Emotion, affective practice," 64.

[90] Erlinda Naputi, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 59:10.

[91] Arielle Taitano Lowe, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 25:30.

[92] Sarah Untalan, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 21:20.

[93] Tomas Perez, in "Gi Oriyan I Latte," 28:08.

[94] Christine Taitano DeLisle, *Placental Politics: Chamoru Women, White Womanhood, and Indigeneity Under U.S. Colonialism in Guam* (University of North Carolina Press, 2021), xiii.

[95] Marsh Taitano and Liston, "Introduction," in *Latte in the Marianas: By the Community for the Community*, ed. Kelly Marsh Taitano and Jolie Liston (The Latte in the Marianas: Art, Icon and Archaeology Project, 2021), 1.

[96] Marsh Taitano and Liston, "Taotao Tåno yan Tåsi, Taotao Latte: People of the Land and Sea, People of the Latte," ed. Kelly Marsh Taitano and Jolie Liston (The Latte in the Marianas: Art, Icon and Archaeology Project, 2021), 7.
[97] Varutti, "Affective Encounters in Museums," 62.
[98] Bevacqua, "Latte: Contemporary Symbol of CHamoru Identity," 133.