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CHICAGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM—ETHNOLOGY

50-11

252515

Provenience: Western Caroline Islands ; Palau

Field No.

People or Culture: Palauans

Object: bowl

55-92

Material: wood

Description: This is a chief's bowl. It belonged to the father of the donor. He was one of the high chiefs of Ngerechelong district, namely, Richirei era Ngarabad in Ngabei village. It was one of a set of 10. Most high ranking chiefs possessed such a set. These bowls were used at

Neg. No.

Dimensions: diameter: 32.5 (over)
(in cm.) height: 8.4

Acc. 2574

Collection: Presented by Roland W. Force; Collector, 1956.
Tri-Institutional Pacific Program Ethnological Expedition
to Palau, 1954-1956.

feasts. Since the chief's council usually was composed of 10 members, there were bowls enough for all. There are places for 32 pieces of shell inlay on this bowl; most have eroded away, but some remain. Such inlay was made from either asiuch (oyster shell; principally the black-lipped pearl oyster shell, Pinctada margaritifera or from ketarem (chambered nautilus) shell and was called oredech. The inlay pieces were held in place with "Palau putty" called delechudech. The same substance was used to patch holes in wooden containers.

Theoretically each chief of the council in each village had ten such bowls which he kept in his house. Those who had none (visitors, etc.) borrowed those of other chiefs when ceremonious occasions demanded that they provide them. This type of bowl was used for starch food only. Native name: orsachel el ua (bowl with legs) or ua el orsachel, (legged round bowl).