South Pacific Oral Traditions book. Read reviews from world’s largest community for readers. Exploring the oral traditions of the South Pacific, this work demonstrates that oral media and native cultural forms are vital throughout the South Pacific. It appeals to scholars concerned with the relationships between verbal art, social change, gender, power, and social organization. Get A Copy. South Pacific Oral Traditions. Ruth Finnegan and Margaret Orbell, eds. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. 259 pp. I think that a full understanding of some of the texts reproduced in the book requires an awareness of a linkage that exists in many Pacific cultures between ideas about identity and relatedness on the one hand and notions of place on the other. This is something that could have been brought out a little more forcefully in the book’s introduction and the individual articles themselves. The oral traditions and expressions domain encompasses an enormous variety of spoken forms including proverbs, riddles, tales, nursery rhymes, legends, myths, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants, songs, dramatic performances and more. Oral traditions and expressions are used to pass on knowledge, cultural and social values and collective memory. They play a crucial part in keeping cultures alive. In many societies, performing oral traditions is a highly specialized occupation and the community holds professional performers in the highest regard as guardians of collective memory. Such performers can be found in communities all over the world.