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0521783097 - *Hawaiki, Ancestral Polynesia: An Essay in Historical Anthropology*

Patrick Vinton Kirch and Roger C. Green

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## ***Hawaiki, Ancestral Polynesia***

An Essay in Historical Anthropology

The power of an anthropological approach to long-term history lies in its unique ability to combine diverse evidence, from archaeological artifacts to ethnographic texts and comparative word lists. In this innovative book, Kirch and Green explicitly develop the theoretical underpinnings, as well as the particular methods, for such a historical anthropology. Drawing upon and integrating the approaches of archaeology, comparative ethnography, and historical linguistics, they advance a phylogenetic model for cultural diversification, and apply a triangulation method for historical reconstruction. They illustrate their approach through meticulous application to the history of the Polynesian cultures, and for the first time reconstruct in extensive detail the Ancestral Polynesian culture that flourished in the Polynesian homeland – Hawaiki – some 2,500 years ago. Of great significance for Oceanic studies, Kirch and Green's book will be essential reading for any anthropologist, prehistorian, linguist, or cultural historian concerned with the theory and method of long-term history.

PATRICK VINTON KIRCH is Professor of Anthropology, and Director of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum, at the University of California at Berkeley. A member of the National Academy of Sciences, he has authored some ten previous books on Pacific archaeology and prehistory, including *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History in the Kingdom of Hawaii* (1992) (co-authored with Marshall Sahlins), which won the J. I. Staley Prize in Anthropology.

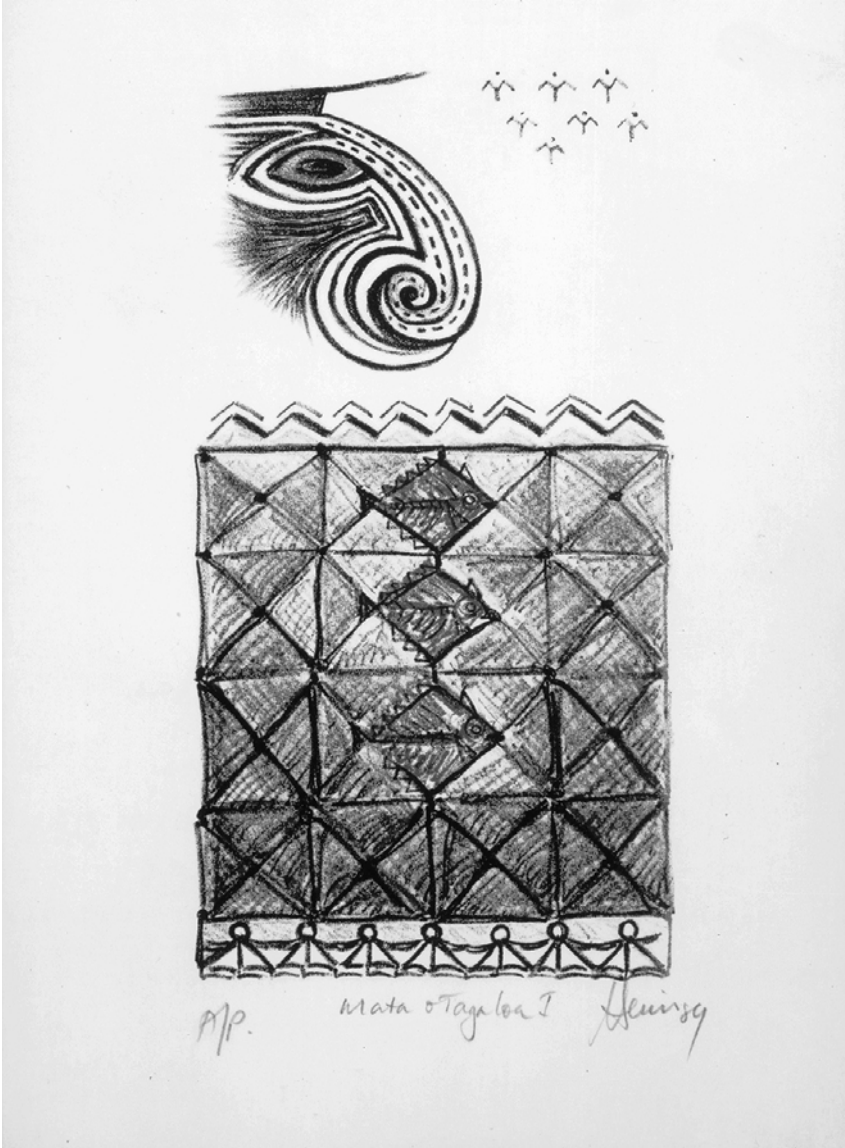
ROGER C. GREEN is Emeritus Professor of Prehistory at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. A member of the National Academy of Sciences and a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand, he is the author of several important monographs on Pacific Islands archaeology and prehistory.

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# *Hawaiki, Ancestral Polynesia*

An Essay in Historical Anthropology

PATRICK VINTON KIRCH

*University of California, Berkeley*

and

ROGER C. GREEN

*University of Auckland, New Zealand*



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*To Thérèse and Valerie, for their love and support;  
and  
to the late Bruce Biggs, preeminent Polynesian linguist*

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## Preface

Enchanted by the seductively salubrious atmosphere of California's Napa Valley, we gazed over sun-drenched vineyards with the 1993 harvest ripening on the vine, sipping the last of a lush Cabernet while intently arguing the intricacies of some Proto Polynesian term. Perhaps – given the blissful feeling this setting inspired – we might have been excused our conceit that we would conspire to write “a little essay between covers.” The notion, naive in retrospect, was to expand slightly on our 1987 article on “History, phylogeny, and evolution in Polynesia” (Kirch and Green 1987), so as to address certain critiques of the phylogenetic approach to historical anthropology, and to elaborate what we call a “triangulation method” for historical reconstruction. The proposition seemed straightforward enough. Yes, a “little essay,” perhaps a hundred pages or so. Over plates of roast Petaluma duck and grilled swordfish, our wives had seconded the idea, insisting that we should keep the essay lean and trim.

Nearly a decade later, our “essay” has taken shape as a book, a more ponderous volume than we at first envisioned. Its writing has occupied far longer than anticipated, requiring several international trips and much long-distance collaboration. Yet we do not regret the transformation that our project has undergone, because out of it we have gained a deeper respect for the possibilities of a truly integrative historical anthropology.

We were trained (at Penn and Yale, New Mexico and Harvard, respectively) in the classic *holistic* perspective of Americanist anthropology, and although we are both primarily archaeologists of the Pacific, each of us in our respective careers has endeavored to bring a full spectrum of anthropological evidence and approaches to bear in our research programs. Green early on incorporated historical linguistics into his models of Polynesian settlement (e.g., Green 1966), while Kirch integrated field ethnography into his work on prehistoric ecology and economy (e.g., Kirch 1994a). This book reflects the maturing of those long-standing interests, a statement of our conviction that *anthropology at its best is always holistic and integrating*. At a time when at least one prominent biologist is crying out for “consilience” between the social and biological sciences (Wilson 1998), we would point out that anthropology has always heeded that call.

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*Preface*

While engaged in drafting several chapters during June of 1997, in Berkeley, we became overtly conscious of how our respective ethnographic and linguistic experiences in a diversity of Polynesian venues critically aided the construction of the arguments we were striving to advance. Comparative ethnography can, in theory, be carried out by the proverbial “armchair” scholar, but there can be no doubting the value of personal ethnographic experience over a range of Polynesian cultures and societies. The most astute comparativists in the Oceanic field themselves had the advantage of original fieldwork in at least two or more locales: Handy, Hiroa, Burrows, Emory, Oliver, and Sahlins, among them.

As with our predecessors, we likewise have spent much time residing and working in many Polynesian societies, including: Anuta, Tikopia, Taumako, Tonga, Futuna, Samoa, ‘Uvea, Mangaia, Mo‘orea, Mangareva, Aotearoa, Rapa Nui, and Hawai‘i. Between us we speak or have made significant efforts assembling vocabularies of the following Polynesian languages: Anutan, Tikopian, Taumako, Futunan, Tongan, Samoan, Tahitian, Mangarvan, and Hawaiian. This ethnographic and linguistic background, acquired through a combined total of seven decades of continuous effort in the Polynesian field, has proved invaluable for the task we set ourselves. All this, need we say, has been in addition to our primary efforts as archaeologists in the same islands, where we have endeavored to generate materially documented historical sequences of cultural change. We underscore this point here not to assert our authority, but rather to stress the necessity in historical anthropology of erudition based on broad comparative knowledge. Quite possibly, the kind of work we would wish to see undertaken and extended is, in fact, only possible through collaboration, for it is doubtful that any one individual can command either the necessary depth of methodological and theoretical expertise, or the range of specific knowledge acquired through field or library research.

Writing this book has been a true collaboration. But one of us writes books, having honed the necessary skills, while the other does not; the order of authors recognizes that reality. Of course, each of us read, emended, edited, and critiqued the drafts of the other, so the final book truly reflects a joint effort.

**Acknowledgments**

Green thanks the Miller Institute for Basic Research in Science, University of California at Berkeley, for a Visiting Miller Professorship which brought him to Berkeley in the fall of 1994, and allowed us to begin our collaboration. Kirch gratefully acknowledges the support of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California, which provided him

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with ideal working conditions during the final stages of writing and editing. Kirch also thanks the National Science Foundation, which partially funded his 1997–98 CASBS Fellowship (Grant No. SBR-9601236).

We owe a great debt to our colleagues in Pacific historical linguistics, without whose decades of careful work in lexical reconstruction we would not have been able to undertake this book. In particular, the late Emeritus Professor Bruce Biggs of the University of Auckland provided a major underpinning for our research through his POLLEX database of Proto Polynesian reconstructions which he has tirelessly compiled since 1965. Professor Biggs gave us free access to his computerized database, for which we are immensely grateful. It was with great sadness, as this book was in final proof, that we learned of his passing. Other linguists, especially Andrew Pawley, Malcolm Ross, Ross Clark, and Bob Blust, have provided us with information, insights, and helpful critiques over the years.

We are especially grateful to the following colleagues who took the time to read and critique draft versions of various chapters: Peter Bellwood, Bob Blust, Janet Davidson, Ward Goodenough, Steve Hooper, John Moore, Frank Lichtenberk, Andrew Pawley, and Marshall Sahlins. David Tuggle kindly provided simulated southern hemisphere sky charts for the mid-first millennium BC, including that reproduced as Figure 9.4. Hans Schmidt kindly provided us with his transcriptions, in English and Rotuman, of selected excerpts from the manuscript notes of A. M. Hocart, housed in the Alexander Turnbull Library. Serge Tcherkézoff shared with us a copy of his manuscript paper on Samoan *matai*. In the final stages of manuscript preparation, Sara Diamond (Berkeley) and Dorothy Brown (Auckland) provided invaluable assistance with word processing and bibliography. Joan Lawrence prepared the illustrations from our rough copy.

It gives us great pleasure to dedicate this book to our wives, Thérèse Babineau and Valerie Green. They shared our early enthusiasm, encouraged us through the rough spots, and reminded us of the larger significance of our project.

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# Abbreviations

## Language abbreviations

### Proto-language abbreviations

PAN	Proto Austronesian
PCE	Proto Central Eastern Polynesian
PCEMP	Proto Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian
PCP	Proto Central Pacific
PEC	Proto Ellicean
PEP	Proto Eastern Polynesian
PMP	Proto Malayo-Polynesian
PMQ	Proto Marquesic
PNP	Proto Nuclear Polynesian
POC	Proto Oceanic
PPN	Proto Polynesian
PTA	Proto Tahitic
PTO	Proto Tongic

### Modern language abbreviations, and geographic affinity

AIT	Aitutaki (Cook Is.), Central Eastern Polynesia
ANU	Anuta (Cherry Is.), Outlier
AUS	Austral Is. (French Polynesia), Central Eastern Polynesia
EAS	Easter Is., Marginal Eastern Polynesia
ECE	Tuvalu (Ellice Is.), Western Polynesia
EFU	East Futuna (Horne Is.), Western Polynesia
EUV	East Uvea (Wallis Is.), Western Polynesia
FIJ	Fiji
HAW	Hawai'i, Marginal Eastern Polynesia
KAP	Kapingamarangi, Outlier
MAE	Emae (Vanuatu), Outlier
MAO	New Zealand Maori, Marginal Eastern Polynesia
MFA	Mele-Fila (Vanuatu), Outlier
MIA	Mangaia (Cook Is.), Central Eastern Polynesia

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MKI	Manihiki (Cook Is.), Central Eastern Polynesia
MOR	Mooriori (Chatham Is.), Marginal Eastern Polynesia
MQA	Marquesas (French Polynesia), Marginal Eastern Polynesia
MQN	Northern Marquesan dialect (French Polynesia), Marginal Eastern Polynesia
MQS	Southern Marquesan dialect (French Polynesia), Marginal Eastern Polynesia
MRA	Manihiki/Rakahanga (Cook Is.), Central Eastern Polynesia
MVA	Mangareva (French Polynesia), Central Eastern Polynesia
NIU	Niue Is., Western Polynesia
NKO	Nukuoro, Outlier
NKR	Nukuria (Solomons), Outlier
OJA	Luangiua (Ontong-Java, Solomons), Outlier
PEN	Penrhyn (Cook Is.), Central Eastern Polynesia
PIL	Pileni (Solomons), Outlier
PUK	Pukapuka (Northern Cook Is.), Central Eastern Polynesia
RAR	Rarotonga (Cook Is.), Central Eastern Polynesia
REN	Rennell and Bellona Is. (Solomons), Outlier
ROT	Rotuma (Fiji)
RUR	Rurutu (French Polynesia), Central Eastern Polynesia
SAM	Samoa, Western Polynesia
SIK	Sikaiana (Solomons), Outlier
TAH	Tahitian (French Polynesia), Central Eastern Polynesia
TAK	Takuu (Solomons), Outlier
TIK	Tikopia (Solomons), Outlier
TOK	Tokelau Is., Western Polynesia
TON	Tonga, Western Polynesia
TUA	Tuamotu (French Polynesia), Central Eastern Polynesia
WFU	West Futuna (Vanuatu), Outlier
WUV or WEV	West Uvea (Ouvea, New Caledonia), Outlier
WYA	Waya, Western Fiji