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Massachusetts, Amherst*

**ISLAND SOCIETIES**

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Edited by Patrick Vinton Kirch

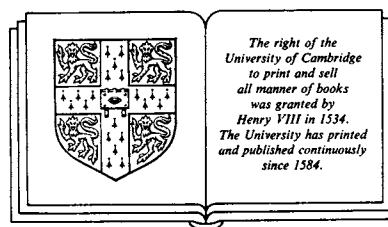
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# ISLAND SOCIETIES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO  
EVOLUTION AND TRANSFORMATION

EDITED BY PATRICK VINTON KIRCH



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## CONTRIBUTORS

- R. C. Green, Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland  
New Zealand
- George J. Gumerman, Center for Archaeological Investigations,  
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
- Robert J. Hommon, Archaeologist, Naval Facilities Engineering  
Command, Pearl Harbor, Hawai'i
- Terry L. Hunt, Department of Anthropology, University of Washing-  
ton, Seattle
- Patrick V. Kirch, The Burke Museum, University of Washington,  
Seattle
- Barry Rolett, Department of Anthropology, Yale University, New  
Haven
- Matthew Spriggs, Department of Anthropology, University of Hawa-  
ii at Manoa, Honolulu
- Christopher M. Stevenson, Department of Anthropology, The  
Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania

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## PREFACE

Despite a long and significant tradition in Oceanic anthropology, the islands of the Pacific are one of the last areas of the world to have received archaeological scrutiny. Barely three decades ago, a host of unwarranted assumptions that had thwarted the development of archaeology in Oceania were finally swept aside with the unanticipated results of excavations in Fiji, the Marianas, and Hawai'i. In the past few years, as major problems of cultural origins and island sequences have been resolved, island archaeologists have increasingly turned their attention to significant issues of social change. Such studies frequently attempt to integrate the vast new corpus of archaeological data with the older but rich ethnographic and ethnohistorical materials. Much of this recent work centers on the evolution of complex Oceanic chiefdoms, several of which (such as Hawai'i) were advanced enough in terms of the classic indices to be arguably termed 'archaic states'.

In order to bring together some of the more prominent investigators active in the archaeological study of island societies, I organized a symposium on 'The Evolution of Island Societies' for the XIth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Vancouver, British Columbia, in August 1983. A parallel symposium, 'Recent Advances in Pacific Prehistory', organized by Professor William Ayres of the University of Oregon, also included several papers

with overlapping or relevant themes. Following the symposia and discussions among several participants, it was agreed that I would edit a selected group of revised papers drawn from these two symposia. Cambridge University Press expressed interest in the project, and offered to publish the work in the present series. Ten participants were originally invited to submit revised papers for consideration; in the end, two of these authors were unable to meet their commitments. While their contributions are missed, the eight papers compiled here present a fair sampling of current archaeological work on the evolution and transformation of island societies. It is to be hoped that the approaches developed here, and the unique characteristics which islands offer, will be of interest not only to Oceanic specialists, but to all archaeologists and prehistorians grappling with the complex problems of tracking and explaining prehistoric social change.

Professor Richard Pearson of the University of British Columbia and a member of the Organizing Committee of the XIth International Congress is owed a debt of thanks for first proposing that such a symposium be held, and for inviting me to organize it. The Bishop Museum in Honolulu provided organizational support and also underwrote my own travel costs to and from the Congress. I am particularly grateful to the contributors for responding so cheerfully, and for the most part promptly, to my varied editorial queries and suggestions.