

Editor's Introduction

Understanding the Hawaiian Past: Papers in honour of Patrick V. Kirch

One would be hard pressed to name an aspect of the Pacific Island past that we do not know more about today thanks to the efforts of Patrick V. Kirch. In no place is this truer than in his natal home of the Hawaiian Islands. Kirch began his career in archaeology in 1964 with the first excavations at the now well-known Hālawā Dune Site on Moloka'i Island. These excavations were quickly followed by the start of his long association with the Bishop Museum, as seen here in a snapshot of Kirch as a precocious, beard-less youth during excavations of the H66 site in Ka'ū on Hawai'i Island (Figure 1). In the years that followed, Pat's career would take him around the world, with major projects spanning Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia and with publications resulting from each of



Figure 1. Patrick V. Kirch in Ka'ū, Hawai'i Island. This photo was taken by the Bishop Museum's Lloyd Soehren during his 1965 excavations of the H66 site and may be the first of Patrick Kirch in the field. Kirch would later describe the site as 'a small lava bubble with only about 10 square meters of floor area, and a roof so low that one can barely sit upright in the main part of the shelter... [n]evertheless, it produced an amazing number of artifacts... [and] is probably the highest ever recorded [density of artifacts per cubic meter] for a Hawaiian archaeological site' (Kirch 1985:159–160). Courtesy of Bishop Museum.

these endeavours (Figure 2). But, as they say, you can take the boy out of Hawai'i, but you can't take the Hawai'i out of the boy. Over the course of his career, Kirch has maintained a strong presence within Hawaiian archaeology, completing major innovative projects, such as those most recently in Kahikinui, Maui and Kohala, Hawai'i. Now, fifty years later, we celebrate Pat's transition from his post as Class of 1954 Professor of Anthropology and Integrative Biology to Chancellor's Professor Emeritus and Professor of the Graduate School at the University of California, Berkeley with this special issue of the *Journal of Pacific Archaeology*. The volume focuses on current research in the Hawaiian Islands, to commemorate where Pat began his archaeological research career and to highlight a region that has always been a specific focus of his research.

This issue grew out of a conference session for the 2013 Society for American Archaeology meetings which, in the first time in its long history, were held in Honolulu. Session participants were asked to focus on a specific aspect of Hawaiian archaeology that Kirch had contributed to, and to present new syntheses or new case studies on these topics. The paper topics illustrate the enormous



Figure 2. Patrick V. Kirch in Mangareva in 2005.



Figure 3. Participants in 2013 Society for American Archaeology session in honour of Patrick V. Kirch, Honolulu. Front row, left to right, Jennifer Kahn, Patrick Kirch, James Flexner, Melinda Allen; Back row, left to right, Tom Dye, Carl Christensen, Mark McCoy, Peter Mills, Peter Vitousek, Marshall Weisler, Michael Graves, and Rob Hommon. (Session participants absent from photo: James Bayman and Kathleen Kawelu).

breadth of Pat's work in Hawai'i, and include discussions of chronology and settlement; household archaeology; monumental architecture; political centers; stone tool production, exchange, and the political economy; soil fertility and agricultural intensification; historical archaeology; and community-based research. Not surprisingly, the session attracted a great deal of interest, filling the largest room at the SAA conference venue to capacity. The session presentations covered a wide range of themes and highlighted the perspectives of colleagues who have known Kirch for many years, including his former students (Figure 3). The maps presented as Figures 4 and 5 are provided for readers unfamiliar with the islands, as a guide to the places and sites mentioned in the volume (Figures 4 & 5). The session's abstract, reproduced below, was printed in the conference program in English and Hawaiian in recognition of the importance of the Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) community and cultural traditions throughout Kirch's works:

When he published *Feathered Gods and Fishhooks* in 1985, Patrick V. Kirch summarized the archaeology of the Hawaiian Islands, "as seen through the eyes of a single archaeologist who has spent nearly two decades attempting to understand the Hawaiian past." In this session, we reflect on major themes that have developed from his quest for understanding as highlighted by new innovative research from throughout the Hawaiian archipelago.

I ka manawa 'o ia i pa'i ai 'o "Feathered Gods and Fishhooks" ma ka makahiki o 1985, i ho'opōkole i ke kuhana ai 'o Patrick V. Kirch i ka hana hulikoehana no keia pae āina o Hawaii nei, "i ike 'ia ai e ke kuana'ike 'o ke kanaka hulikoehana he kahi no kēia mau makahiki

kokoke i 'iwakālua, no ka maopopo 'ana, ka wehewehe 'ana o ka 'āla'apapa, ka wā i hala." Ma kēia kau kūikawā, e no'ono'o ana kākou i kekahi mau po'omana'o nui i mohala 'ia ai e kāna 'imi'ike na'auao e kūkulu 'ia ana e he hana hou, he hana malihini mai kēia pae āina o Hawai'i nei.

The capstone talk at the session was given by Kirch himself and he has kindly reproduced an edited version of his comments for the volume.

We would once again like to thank all the contributors to the volume for their hard work. A special thanks to Tim Thomas for agreeing to allow us to guest edit this issue, to Les O'Neill for his work on the volume's layout, and to Regina Hilo for her translation of the session abstract. Last, but certainly not least, a *mahalo nui loa* to Patrick Kirch for his continued mentorship and for showing us all by his example what doing great archaeology looks like.

*Mark D. McCoy
Jennifer G. Kahn*

Reference

Kirch, P.V. 1985. *Feathered Gods and Fishhooks: An Introduction to Hawaiian Archaeology and Prehistory*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

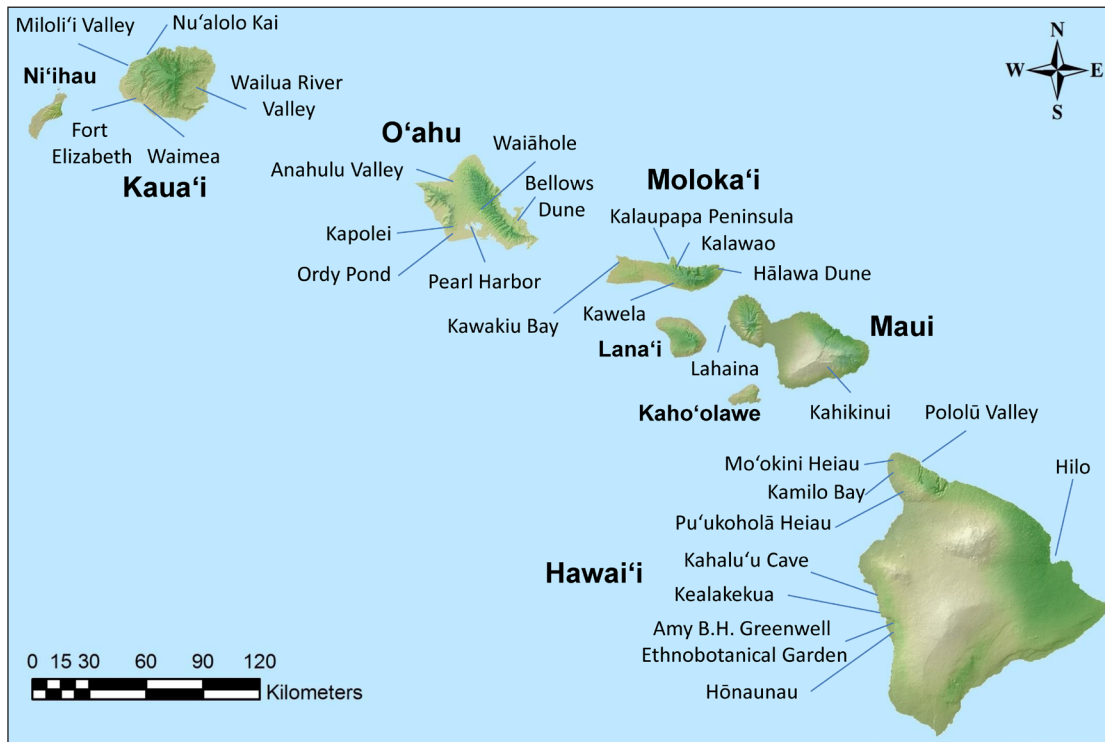


Figure 4. The Hawaiian Islands. This map shows locations referenced in this special issue with the exception of Nihoa and Mokumanamana (Necker) in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands and islands outside the archipelago.

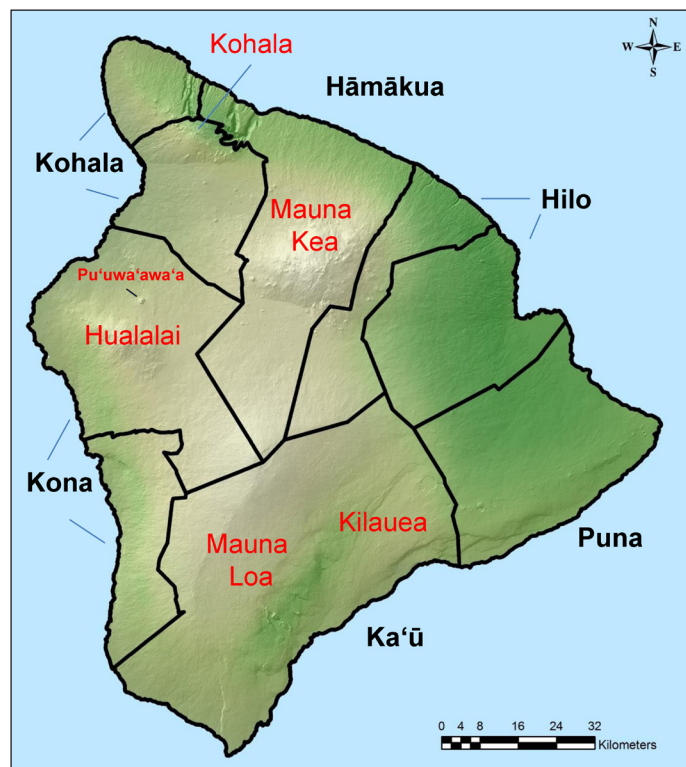


Figure 5. Districts and Geology of Hawai'i Island. The place names shown here (districts or *moku* in black; geology in red) appear in several of the contributions to this issue since the large majority of lithic artefact sourcing studies that have been published to date have focused on Hawai'i Island sites and sources.