PACIFIC ISLANDS ARCHAEOLOGY

2014, Fall Term
William S. Ayres
Department of Anthropology
University of Oregon

Rano Raraku, Rapa Nui, Polynesia (w. ayres © 2014)
Anthropology 343

Pacific Islands Archaeology
University of Oregon Fall, 2014, 04 cr hrs; CRN 10380

Instructor: Professor William S. Ayres office: 273 Condon, ph.346-5119;
email: wsayres@uoregon.edu
Instructor web page: http://uoregon.edu/wsayres/
Office Hours: MW 13:00-13:30 and 16:00-16:30, and by appointment
Class Meetings: MW 10:00-11:50, 104 Con

Reading and Text material:
Blackboard: Selected Readings
Supplemental Optional Readings/Materials on reserve (see attached bibliography):

Content:

In this class we will examine the prehistoric colonization of the Pacific islands that began as a slow migration process more than 50,000 years ago. The subsequent cultural patterns of adaptation to life on remote islands are revealed through archaeological evidence. A review of basic archaeological concepts provides a basis for formulating a regional frame-work for discussing the migrations and maritime cultural adaptations made by peoples moving into the Pacific and for clarifying their relationships to complex cultures in mainland Asia. In particular, the area of SE Asia and the Southwest Pacific provides an early cultural foundation, and out of this, a broad, later dispersal into the more remote eastern Pacific islands follows. Changing Pacific Island cultures in Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia (geographically, from Australia-New Guinea across the Pacific to Rapa Nui) are examined from the time of the earliest human settlement through the stages of complex society existing at the time of early Western contact. Ethnology, linguistics, and oral history are all areas of study related to cultural history and conceptions held by islanders and by researchers of the human past in the Pacific Islands. Of interest is the use of culture “history” developed by archaeologists to examine the human past and this includes questions related to cultural conservation and cultural identity. Connections between archaeologically known cultures and historic to contemporary island peoples, including issues of cultural resource management will be explored.

Learning Objectives:

Typically for an upper-division archaeology course, a class in Introduction to Archaeology is expected as background, so that you are familiar with the basics of archaeology as well as world prehistory in general. Prior knowledge of the Pacific Islands or the archaeology of other world areas may, in some cases, serve this same purpose. As well, in this class, we will be reviewing some of the basic concepts in archaeology in the context of sites and artifacts from the Pacific. After successful completion of this course, students are expected to have an
understanding of the following key issues:

• The basic concepts and aims of area prehistory studies within archaeology and the
  Pacific region, and, more broadly, anthropology’s role in such studies.
• The major trends in how the Pacific Islands, representing a major world area and a set
  of distinctive cultural groups, have been archaeologically studied by outsiders and by
  islanders.
• The environmental context of early Pacific settlement, including biogeography and
  natural environmental factors affecting islands.
• The archaeological study of cultural diversity within the region, and an understanding of
  human migration patterns.
• Contemporary factors related to conservation of the archaeological and cultural
  remains and the impact of these materials on traditional island society and cultural
  heritage.

Course Outcomes (some specifics):

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

*. identify key archaeological sites in Samoa related to Polynesian origins;
*. describe the ceramic attributes of Lapita pottery in Melanesia;
*. know the differences among Pacific Islands adze types
*. be able to document the initial colonization of Micronesian islands
*. explain the differences between Austronesian and non-Austronesian colonization of the
  Pacific Islands;
*. identify the key elements of tree and root crop cultivation practices;
*. distinguish Near Oceania and Remote Oceania;
*. calculate from radiocarbon dates the time of initial colonization of West Polynesia
*. formulate a model of marine-terrestrial subsistence for islands;
*. evaluate the arguments for early versus late colonization of Polynesia;
*. discuss the arguments for and against New World connections to the Pacific Islands;
*. explain the relationships of megalithic architecture to evolving social systems in islands.

Basis for Evaluation:

Quizzes (2, 18%) and homework (10%), midterm (28%) and final exam (28%). There is
no formal term paper, but you will have a research and writing project (15%) due later in the
term that reviews, in approximately 5 pages, the archaeological record for a specific island or
island group. Also, class participation is important. More detailed information about reading
assignments will be provided on a weekly basis and materials will be available in class or on
Blackboard. The syllabus with reading assignments and other details will be available from the
primary instructor, William Ayres, and the Blackboard web page. Exam format will be both
objective and essay. Attendance is expected.
Other Points:

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking.

Note: For those needing special assistance with the materials and information presented in class, please see the instructor at the beginning of the term. Documentation of special learning needs is to be established through the Accessible Education Center in Oregon Hall.
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<tr>
<th>Week 1 - 29 Sept -05 Oct (M-Su)</th>
<th>Introduction to Islands and Island Archaeology</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class 01. Mon, 29 Sep</td>
<td>Introduction to Islands and Island Archaeology (read the Syllabus);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 02. Wed, 01 Oct</td>
<td>Area Prehistory and archaeological methods Dispersal of People in the Pacific and SE Asia Read <em>Road of the Winds (ROW)</em>, Introduction, pp. 1-11. Hawai‘i,</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2 – 6 -12 Oct</th>
<th>History of Island Studies; Early Archaeology in the Pacific.</th>
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<th>Week 3 – 13-19 Oct</th>
<th>Migrations and Cultural Sequences</th>
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<td>Week 4 - 20-26 Oct</td>
<td>Melanesia and Early Migrations; Navigation</td>
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| Class 7, Mon, 20 Oct | New Guinea and the SW Pacific: Melanesia  
Agriculture in the Western Pacific |
| Class 8, Wed, 23 Oct | Traditional Navigation and Sailing Craft.  
Sea Lanes and Corridors. (see:  
http://www.penn.museum/sites/navigation/intro.html) |

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<th>Week 5 – 27-Oct – 2 Nov</th>
<th>Early Melanesia and Lapita</th>
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| Class 9, Mon, 27 Oct | The Lapita Complex and West Polynesia.  
Read B4 Kirch 1988a, *Talepakemalai Lapita Site*.  
Later Melanesian Archaeology  
Read ROW, Chpt 5, pp 117-164  
Read B5, Sand 2013.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KzshDLNres |
| Class 10, Wed, 29 Oct | Midterm Exam |

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<th>Week 6 – 03- 09 Nov</th>
<th>Micronesia</th>
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| Class 11, Mon, 03 Nov | Settlement and Cultural Differences.  
Read *ROW*, Chpt. 6, pp. 165-206.  
Read B6, Carson 2011  
Read B7, Fitzpatrick 2008  
Read B8, Ayres 1990a, *Pohnpei’s Position* ... |
| Class 12, Wed, 05 Nov | Pohnpei and Eastern Micronesia.  
Read B9, Ayres 1990b, *Mystery Islets* ...)  
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<th>Week 7 - 10-16 Nov</th>
<th>East Polynesia: Overview</th>
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| Class 13, Mon, 10 Nov | West Polynesia-East Polynesia.  
Read *ROW*, Chpt. 7, pp. 207-245.  
Read item B10, Mattisoo-Smith-Rats2004 [BB-"Documents; optional: Anderson 1995, Current Approaches ...] |
<p>| Class 14, Wed, 12 Nov | East Polynesian Interrelationships. |</p>
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<th>Week 8 - 17-23 Nov</th>
<th>East Polynesia: Easter Island</th>
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<td>Class 15, Mon, 17 Nov</td>
<td>Easter Island. Review of the Archaeology</td>
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<td><strong>Quiz 2</strong></td>
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<td>Week 9 – 24 Nov- 30 Nov</td>
<td>Sociopolitical and Economic Developments</td>
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<td>Class 17, Mon, 24 Nov</td>
<td>Dr. Joan Wozniak lecture on Easter Island and Polynesian subsistence. Read <em>ROW</em>, Chpt. 8, 246-301</td>
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<td>Week 10 – 01 - 07 Dec</td>
<td>Summary and Synthesis</td>
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<td>Class 19, Mon, 01 Dec</td>
<td>Read B12, Ayres 2013 Optional Read Item: Van Tilburg on Easter Island statue issues.</td>
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<td>Class 20, Wed, 03 Dec</td>
<td>Class Discussion.</td>
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<td><strong>Final Exam: 10:15 Tue., Dec. 9</strong></td>
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Typical Rapa Nui (Easter Island) stone artifacts, Polynesia

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Contents Reading Packet papers:

Papers on Pacific Archaeology: (these will be on Blackboard electronic reserve or available online through the UO library)

Read in this order (see course schedule):


Other Optional Reading:


Field studies at Dau en Kioahk, Sokehs, Pohnpei, conducted by the Pohnpei State Historic Preservation Office and the University of Oregon. Students from the UO and other places participated in this site documentation and conservation project. This structure is an early historic meeting house called a nahs.

General Introduction to Pacific Linguistic Diversity

There are more than 1200 distinct languages spoken in the Pacific Islands (including the diverse languages of New Guinea totaling some 800). The most geographically-extensive language grouping within the Oceania region of the Pacific is called Austronesian, which extends from SE Asia (with an outlier in Madagascar) to Easter Island in the East Pacific. We can trace the history of their individual language roots back six or seven thousand years to SE Asia/South China. Archaeological and linguistic evidence reveals varying degrees of cultural homogeneity and diversity among the past and present inhabitants of the three major Oceanic "culture areas;" these are designated Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia. Indonesia and Australia constitute two other major culture areas within the Pacific Basin. Pacific archaeologists continue to seek the causes of cultural patterns that emerged within and across these area boundaries. There are, however, differing views regarding the value of the tripartite culture area distinction noted above (see Mason 1968, Thomas 1989, Hanlon 1989). While respecting the need to de-construct the aura of early historical misconceptions and colonialism embedded in the names, Micronesia (literally, small islands), Polynesia (many islands), and Melanesia (black islands), and recognizing the need to blur boundaries in many areas, much linguistic and archaeological research has been conducted with these boundaries in mind. This seems appropriate for some levels of investigation, but the broader framework of an Austronesian, as well as an earlier non-Austronesian, colonization of the Pacific Islands must be understood prior to focusing on settlement and culture change in
specific island groups.

Speakers of the Austronesian Oceanic languages characteristic today of most of Melanesia, Micronesia—except for the westernmost islands—and Polynesia represent the most recent major tropical Pacific migration (see map). The ancestral populations were in the New Britain and New Ireland area perhaps as early as 1500 B.C. and moved south and southeastward to the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Fiji by approximately 1300 to 1000 B.C. (see, e.g., Bellwood 1979). The initial settlement of the Micronesia area is represented by colonization in the west, by 3500 years ago, derived from Island SE Asia (Western Malayo-Polynesian) and by later migrations derived from the south and southeast (Melanesia) moving into eastern Micronesia. The initial settlement of the eastern Caroline Islands, beginning between two and three thousand years ago, was part of the relatively rapid dispersal of Oceanic Austronesian horticulturalists and seafarers northward from the Solomon and Vanuatu regions into Kiribati and the Marshall Islands. From eastern Micronesia, gradual western expansion through Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and as far to the west as Tobi Island followed (Shutler and Marck 1975, Bender 1971, Ayres and Mauricio (1987). Language relationships in Polynesia indicate connections among languages spoken in two western island groups centered respectively on Tonga and Samoa, and including a number of "outlier" languages that are closely related to Samoan in the latter. An East Polynesian language group developed out of the Samoic grouping and it becomes distinct through isolation beginning at least 1500 years ago. The major groups of East Polynesian languages consist of Easter Island (Rapanui) as an isolate, Marquesic, and Tahitic (Central Polynesia). Important for archaeology are the implications of settlement dispersal suggested by these language relationships.
Reference List: This includes basic materials covering the Pacific in general.

General Pacific Islands Archaeology References

Ayres, W., Mystery Islets of Micronesia. Archaeology Jan-Feb 1990, pp. 58-63.
Bellwood, P., et al. (eds), The Austronesians. Canberra: Dept of Anthropology, RSPAS, ANU. 1995

Chang, K.C., Fengpitou, Tapenkeng and the Archaeology of Taiwan. 1969
Egloff, Brian, Recent Prehistory in Southeast Papua. Terra Australis 4. University of Sydney. 1979
Fosberg, R., Man's Place in the Island Ecosystem 1965 Bishop Museum.
Higham, C., Prehistoric Rice Cultivation in Southeast Asia. 1984


Early Rapa Nui (Easter Island) Stone Tool. An Obsidian Scraper Showing Use-Retouch on sharp edges.

Major Journals for the Pacific Region:
AO Archaeology in Oceania (formerly APAO); ANZ Archaeology in New Zealand (formerly NZAAN); AP Asian Perspectives; APAO Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania; BIPPA Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association; JICA Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology; JPH Journal of Pacific History; JPS Journal of the Polynesian Society; JRSNZ Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand; JSO Journal de la Société des Océanistes; MCO Man and Culture in Oceania; MI Micronesica; NZAAN New Zealand Archaeological Assn. Newsletter; NZJA New Zealand Journal of Archaeology; PAR Bishop Museum, Honolulu: Pacific Anthropological Records (no longer pub.); PPS Proceedings Prehistoric Society; RNJ Rapa Nui Journal; Shima; WA World Archaeology
Site PoD24-36, an important ritual platform referred to as Pehi Sarawi.

Sample of Archaeological site mapping, Pohnpei, Micronesia. “F1” through “F5” are “features” of the site architecture that are separately designated to aid in description for the site record. Note symbols and methods of representation for different kinds of archaeological data.

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