

Book and Media Reviews

ment and Agreement of Restoration unintentionally undermines the basic claim about the illegality of the US occupation.

Ultimately, while Sai distinguishes colonization from occupation, his main premise—that under US occupation Hawai‘i’s sovereignty endures—suffers from his theory regarding the interplay between the Lili‘uokalani Assignment and the Agreement of Restitution. Still, the benefits of *Ua Mau Ke Ea* outweigh the costs of not having instructional materials on Hawai‘i’s status under US occupation available to secondary students and to a broader public hoping to remedy the disparities in Hawai‘i caused by over a hundred years of occupation. Sai reminds readers, perhaps more than intended, that an inadvertent interpretation of international law may have dramatic consequences. Though Hawai‘i remains under US occupation, *Ua Mau Ke Ea* demonstrates not only the importance of international law in contesting examples of domination in the Pacific but also the need to acknowledge missteps as part of the process toward independence. In teaching this text, instructors and students would be wise to heed the advice from *Ua Mau Ke Ea*, the documentary: Question everything, trust nothing.

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Polynesians in America: Pre-Columbian Contacts with the New World, edited by Terry L. Jones, Alice A. Storey, Elizabeth A. Matisoo-Smith, and José-Miguel Ramírez-Aliaga. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2011. ISBN cloth 978-0-7591-2004-4, ISBN eBook 978-0-7591-2006-8; xix + 359 pages, illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$90.00; eBook, US\$89.99.

Polynesians in America reopens the case for pre-Columbian landfalls along the Pacific coasts of North and South America by bringing together new linguistic, biological, material, nautical, and physical anthropological evidence produced during the past decade. The purpose of the assembled authors is to establish conclusively, through a set of mutually reinforcing analyses, that Polynesian contacts took place with at least three societies of the American Pacific, namely the Mapuche of Southern Chile, the coastal peoples of the Gulf of Guyaquil in Ecuador, and the Chumash/Gabrielino of the Santa Barbara Channel in Southern California. The result is a largely convincing set of interleaving case studies whose collective persuasiveness speaks to the rigor with which the editors approached their task.

Most of the fourteen chapters that make up the book are assembled from papers presented during the 2010 meeting of the Society for American Archaeology. However, the final product is more than just a hasty compilation. It is clear that the editors realized that they would need to make a considerable effort to rise above the troubled history of the debate regarding transoceanic contacts. Accord-

ingly, three of the first four chapters are dedicated to “Re-introducing the Case for Polynesian Contact” (chapter 1), “Diffusionism in Archaeological Theory” (chapter 2), and “A Long-Standing Debate” (chapter 4). The second chapter offers a particularly useful reappraisal of the concept of “diffusion” and its permutations across North American, South American, and Oceanic scholarly traditions. The result is an informative overview of the state of the art that crosses different continental traditions and may be worthy of inclusion in reading lists for introductory courses in archaeological theory. Unfortunately, not all of the initial chapters sustain the same level of tight, explanatory style. For instance, the brief third chapter is dedicated to “mythological similarities” between North and South America and Polynesia, but the available data is so meager that its reporting may come across as excessive. Nevertheless, this scrupulous, preliminary laying out of every scrap of potential evidence in relation to the main argument of the book is not a minor issue. In addition to offering necessary contextualization, eventually coming to seventy pages authored by two of the editors (Alice A Storey and Terry L Jones), this framework ultimately supports the case studies that serve as the key material contribution of this compilation.

The fifth and sixth chapters, titled “The Artifact Record of North America” (Jones) and “The Mapuche Connection” (José Miguel Ramírez-Aliaga), delve respectively into the Southern Californian and Chilean cases. Both texts have a concentration on material culture. At issue is a suite

of artifacts—including sewn-plank watercraft, compound fishhooks, composite harpoons, hand clubs, and various other tools and ritual objects—whose form and phylogenetic reconstruction lend themselves to the possibility of transcultural borrowings. Various localities of Eastern Polynesia are identified as likely origin points for these transfers, most notably Hawai‘i and the Tuamotu group in relation to the Chumash/Gabrielino peoples, and Rapa Nui in relation to the Mapuche (speculation as to direct Māori/Moriori-Mapuche connections represents something of a stretch). Chapter 7, “Identifying Contact with the Americas: A Commensal-Based Approach” (Storey, Andrew C Clarke, and Elizabeth A Matisoo-Smith) is a discussion of “those plants, animals and viruses that have been identified as evidence for contact or have the potential to in the future” (111). It presents a valuable *mise-en-scène* about the application of commensal models to contact situations (ie, relative to the study of interactions between humans and different organisms that become food, including the remains thereof) and sets the stage for chapter 8, “A Reappraisal of the Evidence for Pre-Columbian Introduction of Chickens to the Americas” (Storey, Daniel Quiróz, and Matisoo-Smith), which offers one of the most forceful expositions of the book. Referring to “archaeological, radio-carbon, isotopic and mtDNA evidence from chicken remains recovered from the . . . site of El Arenal in Chile” (139), the authors also respond to robust criticism leveled at previous versions of their findings by rolling out a comprehensive suite of histori-

cal, linguistic, and molecular proof in support of their argument, namely that Polynesian landfalls occurred in Southern Chile sometime in the early to mid-fifteenth century AD. I cannot submit an expert assessment of the molecular evidence at issue, but, while compelling, the overall conclusion remains problematic insofar as (1) it is based on a relatively narrow data series, and (2) it introduces a chronology of contact that is so late as to strain established timelines regarding the collapse of long-distance Polynesian voyaging. As the authors state, their findings certainly call for further research before solid conclusions can be put forward.

Chapter 9, “Did Ancient Polynesians Reach the New World? Evaluating Evidence from the Ecuadorian Gulf of Guayaquil,” is the most tightly structured and convincing of the case studies on offer. The authors (Richard Scaglione and María-Auxiliadora Cordero) are both long-standing experts in their fields—Oceanic anthropology and Ecuadorian archaeology, respectively—and have previously presented solid research with respect to Polynesian–South American interactions. This chapter is a clear maturation of their efforts. Their argument proceeds through a careful revision of ethno-historical, climatological, linguistic, and navigational evidence that adds important new insights to the long-proven dispersion of the sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) from South America to Oceania. They then transition to the Ecuadorian context of circa 800 AD, during which Polynesian return voyages are most likely to have occurred, and they suggest, always with precautionary tones, that these

visits may have taken place against a backdrop of agricultural intensification, expansion of long-distance maritime networks, and the emergence of complex polities that would have offered ideal conditions for transcultural borrowing, most notably the adoption of Polynesian sailing technology, by ancient Ecuadorians.

The following two chapters, “Words from Furthest Polynesia: North and South American Linguistic Evidence for Prehistoric Contact” (Kathryn A Klar) and “Human Biological Evidence for Polynesian Contacts with the Americas: Finding Maui on Mocha?” (Matisoo-Smith), present a series of linguistic and craniometric data that offer potential lines for future research rather than robust findings. Chapters 12 and 13, “Rethinking the Chronology of Colonization of Southeast Polynesia” (Marshall I Weisler and Roger C Green) and “Sailing from Polynesia to the Americas” (Geoffrey Irwin), are presented by established experts in their fields and offer updated climatological, archaeological, chronological, and navigational data that will be of great interest to Oceanists concerned with broader problems in Polynesian prehistory.

In sum, this book consists of a broad-ranging, ambitious, and largely rigorous evaluation of emerging research that effectively transcends the long-running impasse regarding serious discussion of Polynesian–American contacts in the pre-European period. Despite editorial shortcomings, including recursive authorship (some of the editors individually or collectively contributed over seven of the fourteen chapters); a certain lack

of consistency in the citation of units of measurement; and the fluctuating quality of some of the evidence (the Californian and Chilean cases may not provide the watertight evidence that has been demanded from some skeptical specialists whom this book addresses), this work represents an important point of departure and baseline data that should reinvigorate

the study of Polynesian-Amerindian contacts, and as such it paves the way for this hitherto marginal aspect of Oceanic history to be reintegrated into mainstream scholarship.

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