



Hokule'a is riding north wind to port, theory into ground

By Bob Krauss
Advertiser Columnist

The voyaging canoe Hokule'a threw a cherished migration theory into a cocked hat with a landing expected today at Papeete, after sailing straight east from Rarotonga.

The canoe sailed in the direction critics said she couldn't because she was unable to sail in the direction they said she could.

A spokeswoman for the Polynesian Voyaging Society said word came by radio from the escort boat, Dorcas, yesterday that Hokule'a had sailed east past Raiatea, its destina-

tion, and would probably arrive at Papeete at midnight.

The change in plan resulted from northerly winds against which the canoe could not make Raiatea.

Normally, winds in the Society Islands blow from the southeast at this time of the year.

The Hokule'a rode the unusual northerly wind pattern straight east after departure from Rarotonga on Aug. 12, counting on a shift to the trade wind that would take it north to Raiatea.

But the wind did not shift to normal until yesterday, the Dorcas skipper reported. By

that time Hokule'a was in sight of a tiny island called Mehetia, 80 miles east and a little south of Tahiti.

To reach Raiatea, Hokule'a would have to sail all the way back past Tahiti, Moorea and Huahine. Navigator Nainoa Thompson decided to put into the port of Papeete instead.

Dr. Ben Finney, chairman of anthropology at the University of Hawaii, is flying to Tahiti to meet the canoe and document the unusual voyage.

He said some anthropologists, including Thor Heyerdahl, have contended that the Polynesians did not migrate from the west because they were unable to

sail east against the trade wind.

Earlier, from Samoa to the Cook Islands, Hokule'a sailed more than 600 miles southeast during a change in wind pattern. Finney said the canoe's performance demonstrated that the old Polynesians could have done the same thing.

Reports from the escort boat said the just-completed leg from Rarotonga to Tahiti was the roughest so far, with strong winds and continual overcast. But the entire crew of 12 was reported to be in good condition.

Thompson acted as both navigator and sailing master because the canoe did not carry a

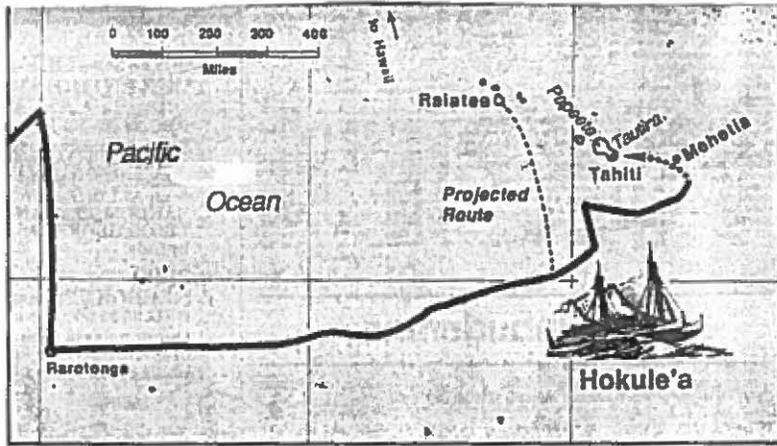
captain on this leg. Micronesian master navigator Mao Pialug served as adviser.

Hokule'a's first captain, Kawika Kapahulehua, who sailed to Tahiti in 1976, waited at Raiatea with astronomer Will Kyselka to board the canoe for the voyage on to Tahiti.

At last report, they were trying to catch a plane to meet the Hokule'a in Papeete.

From Papeete the canoe will sail around the island to Tauiira, Tahiti's canoe capital, where she will remain for eight months until the final voyage to the Marquesas and Hawaii in 1987.

The crew will arrive in Honolulu on Sunday.



Hokule'a, which was to head north (dotted line), instead is heading for Tahiti.

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