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LA PRATIQUE DE L'ESPACE
EN OCÉANIE
DÉCOUVERTE, APPROPRIATION
ET ÉMERGENCE
DES SYSTÈMES SOCIAUX TRADITIONNELS

*SPATIAL DYNAMICS IN OCEANIA
DISCOVERY, APPROPRIATION
AND THE EMERGENCE
OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES*

ACTES DE LA SÉANCE
DE LA SOCIÉTÉ PRÉHISTORIQUE FRANÇAISE
PARIS 30 janvier-1^{er} février 2014
Textes publiés sous la direction de
Frédérique VALENTIN et Guillaume MOLLE

SÉANCES DE LA SOCIÉTÉ PRÉHISTORIQUE FRANÇAISE

7

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PARIS

30 janvier-1^{er} février 2014

Textes publiés sous la direction de
Frédérique VALENTIN et Guillaume MOLLE



Société préhistorique française
Paris
2016

**Les « Séances de la Société préhistorique française »
sont des publications en ligne disponibles sur :**

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Illustration de couverture : Tarodière du col des Roussettes, Nouvelle-Calédonie (© IANCP, cliché C. Sand).



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Société préhistorique française
(reconnue d'utilité publique, décret du 28 juillet 1910). Grand Prix de l'Archéologie 1982.
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Publié avec le concours du ministère de la Culture et de la Communication (sous-direction de l'Archéologie),
du Centre national de la recherche scientifique,
de l'université Paris I – Panthéon-Sorbonne, de l'université Paris Ouest Nanterre,
de l'université de la Polynésie française (Faa'a), de l'Australian National University (Canberra),
de l'UMR 7041 « Archéologie et sciences de l'Antiquité (ArScAn) » et de son équipe « Ethnologie préhistorique » (Nanterre),
de l'Institut d'archéologie de la Nouvelle-Calédonie et du Pacifique (IANCP, Nouméa)
et du Centre international de recherche archéologique sur la Polynésie (CIRAP, Faa'a).

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Dépôt légal : 4^e trimestre 2016

ISSN : 2263-3847 – ISBN : 2-913745-66-0 (en ligne)

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*La pratique de l'espace en Océanie :
découverte, appropriation et émergence des systèmes sociaux traditionnels*
Spatial dynamics in Oceania: Discovery,

Appropriation and the Emergence of Traditional Societies

Actes de la séance de la Société préhistorique française
de Paris, 30 janvier-1^{er} février 2014

Textes publiés sous la direction de Frédérique VALENTIN et Guillaume MOLLE
Paris, Société préhistorique française, 2016

(Séances de la Société préhistorique française, 7), p. 141-160

www.prehistoire.org

ISSN : 2263-3847 – ISBN : 2-913745-2-913745-66-0

Public *versus* Corporate Ritual in the Prehistoric Society Islands (French Polynesia)

A Multi-Scalar Analysis of Religious Practices

Jennifer G. KAHN

Abstract: Multi-scalar analysis of religious architecture and ritualized practices are discussed for the late prehistoric Society Islands chiefdoms. Utilizing a spatio-temporal perspective, I compare and contrast evidence for public, corporate ritual versus more private and communal household ritual. In comparing and contrasting evidence for temples, shrines, priests' houses, and specialized ritual features, I outline similarities and differences in such ritual elements at residential complexes and more isolated aggregate ritual centers in the 'Opunohu Valley, island of Mo'orea. The goal is to demonstrate how multi-scalar spatio-temporal analyses can be used to investigate the elaboration of religious practices in the Society Islands. In addition, links between social complexity and ideology in the development of the Ma'ohi chiefdoms are explored. Archaeological data confirms that later corporate ceremonial complexes incorporate spatial aspects of earlier communal sites, suggesting an appropriation of ritual power by Ma'ohi elites through time. Later aggregate centers retain the use of temple enclosures and shrines, the latter serving as more individualized areas for prayer or worship. These elements are the building blocks for earlier family temple sites used in communal ritual. The essential elements of marae and shrines (i.e. the rows of uprights) are clearly significant. These features represented the ancestors, providing a material link between the social power and well-being of the residential or community group in the present with the ancestors from the past. Corporate ceremonial sites also derived power from association with the ancestors, particularly in their inclusion of ancestral burial remains, however, they differ in critical ways from less elaborate, more inclusive communal ritual sites. Elaborate corporate sites lack evidence for residential use, and represent isolated ritualized zones on the landscape where socio-ritual elites carried out elaborate *rites de passage* and rituals linked to the annual cycle. For the large part, the general laity community was excluded from these most sacred of rites, other than playing a participatory role as audience members, and importantly, as members of the community providing offerings of food and other goods to the reigning chiefs, the ancestors, and the gods. As a result, corporate rites elevated both elites and ritual specialists to positions of socio-ceremonial power.

Aggregate ritual centers focused on corporate ritual are constructed late in the Society Islands sequence after AD 1600. This is a period when multiple lines of evidence point towards increasing chiefly power throughout the archipelago. Archaeological data from corporate ritual centers includes structures indicative of communal feasting, sport, and political meetings of social elites. In diverse ways, aggregate temple complexes served as ritual-economic centers, where tribute was funneled up to the most high status chiefs. As such, the corporate ritual sites were multi-purpose, having both socio-economic, ritual, and political use. Isolated and formalized concentrations of aggregate corporate ritual centers increasingly excluded commoners and women, members of society who lacked *mana*, from the 'state religion'. Corporate ritual sites thus served as one avenue for elites to strategically use ideology to institutionalize social hierarchies and political status, a pattern seen in many other ranked societies.

Keywords: religion, Pacific Islands, East Polynesia, priests, place-making, micro-scale analysis, multi-scalar analysis, corporate ritual, communal ritual.

Rituels publics et spécialisés aux îles de la Société (Polynésie française) : une analyse multiscalaire des pratiques religieuses

Résumé : Cet article propose une analyse multi-scalaire de l'architecture religieuse et des pratiques rituelles au sein des chefferies préhistoriques des îles de la Société à la fin de la période pré-européenne. Dans une perspective spatio-temporelle, nous différencierons les pratiques publiques / « corporatistes » de celles menées dans le cadre plus privé de la maisonnée. La comparaison des types de structures rituelles (temples, autels, maisons des prêtres et autres éléments fonctionnels) met en évidence des similitudes et différences visibles dans les complexes résidentiels et les centres rituels plus isolés de la vallée de 'Opunohu, sur l'île de Mo'orea. L'objectif de cette approche multi-scalaire est de documenter l'élaboration des pratiques rituelles dans l'archipel de la Société. Nous discutons

également des liens entre complexité sociale et idéologie dans le développement des chefferies Ma'ohi. Les données archéologiques indiquent que les complexes cérémoniels publics tardifs ont intégré divers éléments des sites plus anciens, suggérant une appropriation progressive du pouvoir rituel par les élites. Les groupements les plus récents conservent l'usage de temples entourés d'un enclos ainsi que d'autels, ces derniers servants essentiellement d'espaces privés dédiés aux prières et adorations. Ces structures existaient autrefois sur les sites familiaux utilisés dans les rituels communautaires. Les rangées de pierres dressées qui sont les éléments essentiels des marae et des autels, sont à, ce titre, particulièrement importantes. Elles matérialisent le lien entre pouvoir social et bien-être du groupe résidentiel avec ses ancêtres. Les sites « corporatistes » tiennent eux-aussi leur pouvoir de leur association aux ancêtres, notamment en recevant leurs dépouilles. Ils diffèrent cependant en plusieurs points des sites communautaires moins élaborés. Les ensembles corporatistes ne présentent aucune trace d'usage résidentiel et constituent plutôt des secteurs isolés où l'élite conduisait des rites de passage ainsi que des rituels liés au cycle annuel. La plupart du temps, le reste de la communauté était exclu de ces cérémonies très sacrées et voyait son rôle restreint à celui de simple assemblée. Ses membres devaient néanmoins pourvoir aux offrandes de nourriture et autres biens destinés aux chefs en place, aux ancêtres et aux dieux. De cette manière, les rites spécialisés permettaient aux élites et aux spécialistes des rituels de s'élever à des positions de pouvoir socio-cérémoniel.

Les centres réservés à ces pratiques rituelles se développent tardivement sur les îles de la Société, après 1600 AD. Plusieurs éléments indiquent qu'à cette époque, le pouvoir des chefs augmente de manière significative dans tout l'archipel. Les sites cérémoniels comprennent des structures réservées aux repas communautaires, aux pratiques sportives et aux rencontres à vocation politique. Les complexes de temples participaient aussi du système d'économie rituelle en cela que les tributs y étaient versés aux chefs de haut rang. Les sites servaient donc plusieurs fonctions, à la fois socioéconomique, rituelle et politique. Le développement de ces centres isolés exclut peu à peu les gens du commun et les femmes, c'est-à-dire les membres de la société ne disposant pas de *mana*, de la « religion d'état ». Les sites rituels spécialisés permirent ainsi aux élites d'utiliser à leur avantage l'idéologie pour institutionnaliser les hiérarchies et les statuts politiques, une pratique décrite par ailleurs dans de nombreuses autres sociétés de rangs.

Mots-clés: religion, Pacifique, Polynésie orientale, prêtres, fabrique du lieu, analyse à micro-échelle, analyse multi-scalaire, rituels spécialisés, rituels communautaires.

MANY ARCHAEOLOGISTS consider ideology to be an avenue through which elites developed and maintained power in complex chiefdoms and state societies. Some researchers view ideology as a source of economic power, enabling political leaders to mobilize surplus for competition and status (Earle, 1991a; Stein, 1998; Clark et al., 2014). Others view ideology as a source of social power, providing a means for elites to broadcast political messages which promote their own interests and lead to increasing inequality (Gailey, 1987; De Marrais et al., 1996; Joyce and Winter, 1996). It is likely that ideology served both functions in the past, supporting complementary aspects of elite power in the social, economic, and political realms (Earle, 1991b; Baltus and Baires, 2012).

In Polynesia, most studies of ideology have a materialist bent, focusing on the scale and temporality of monumental architecture, most notably, temple sites. Temples, typically defined by an enclosure or pavement with an altar or *ahu* at one end, are the largest structures associated with prehistoric religious activities in East Polynesia. While East Polynesian temples undeniably provide strong material evidence for ancient ritual, the practice of focusing exclusively on the largest of religious structures results in a biased perspective. Ethnohistoric and archaeological data demonstrate that East Polynesian religious practices, each of which had an ideological component, took place in a number of locales. East Polynesian rituals were likewise associated with a wide range of material culture and site types. The latter include shrines with god figures, priests' houses, mortuary sites, temples, rock art, and sacred elements of the landscape.

In this paper, I provide a multi-scalar analysis of religious architecture and ritualized practices in the Society

Islands. Utilizing a spatio-temporal perspective, I compare and contrast evidence for public, corporate ritual versus more private and communal household ritual. In comparing and contrasting evidence for temples, shrines, priests' houses, and specialized ritual features, I outline similarities and differences in such ritual elements at residential complexes and more isolated aggregate ritual centers in the 'Opunohu Valley, island of Mo'orea (Society Islands, French Polynesia). The goal is to demonstrate how multi-scalar spatio-temporal analyses can be used to investigate the elaboration of religious practices in the Society Islands. In addition, links between social complexity and ideology in the development of the Ma'ohi⁽¹⁾ chiefdoms are explored. In particular, I question whether elites may have appropriated certain ritual spaces, ideas, and practices to exploit ideology as a form of socio-economic and political control.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES OF RELIGION IN POLYNESIAN CHIEFDOMS

In ancient Polynesia at the time of European contact, status was derived from one's sacredness (*tapu*). People were vessels for supernatural power (*mana*) and their *mana* had to be protected in order to guard their sacredness. This led to a series of social prohibitions or restrictions about how people of different statuses should act, and about the sacredness or non-sacredness (*noa*) of particular places, activities, and persons, generally referred to as the *tapu* system (Shore, 1989). Those entering the most highly ritualized areas were bound by rules

of ceremony and status, leading to place making (see discussion below), identity construction, and affirmations of bounded status. Generally in East Polynesia, things related to the gods and the ancestors were considered sacred. Because chiefs carried out ‘the work of the gods’ (Kirch, 1991), and often shared such responsibilities with priests and other ritual specialists, control over ritual was a source of chiefly power.

The story of East Polynesian religion is more complex, however, as places, as well as persons, were imbued with ritual significance. People’s relationships with the landscape, and the myths and stories told about them, as well as the activities and ceremonies remembered on them, formed a means of place-making whereby the natural world was imbued with ritual significance. Thus, in East Polynesia and widely throughout Oceania, ritual life centered on sacred sites of a material nature—shrines, temples, mortuary caves, and rock art locales—and sacred sites of a naturalistic nature—features on the landscape such as peaks, promontories, and bodies of water. In some instances, sacred features of the landscape grew into named places, remembered in oral traditions and myths or encoded in site layout or alignment.

Archaeologists have overwhelmingly focused on material elements of East Polynesian religious sites, and in particular, the largest, most monumental structures. In Polynesian chiefdoms, temples or *marae* are the main forms of ceremonial architecture and the *marae-ahu* (temple-altar) complex is well distributed throughout East Polynesia (Kirch and Green, 2001, p. 251–254, p. 276). While the function of specific temple sites varied, temples were places where offerings and incantations were made to the gods and the ancestors. Archaeologists have long studied the size and morphology of *marae* as a proxy for chiefly religious control. Religious ideologies and ceremonial rituals carried out at East Polynesian temples established elite control over labor, production, and the annual calendar, created avenues for territorial marking, and facilitated warfare, territorial disputes, and elite hegemonic influences (Kolb, 1994 and 2006; Dixon et al., 1995; Kirch, 2004; Kirch and Sharp, 2005; Sharp et al., 2010; McCoy et al., 2011; Wallin and Martinsson-Wallin, 2011; Kahn and Kirch, 2014).

While the central importance of the *marae-ahu* complex cannot be disputed, ethnohistoric texts also describe a myriad of other East Polynesian site types that had ritual significance with differing functions (table 1; see

Site Type	Form	Context	Activities
Rock Art	Petroglyphs of mourning costumes	Associated with banyan trees, caves, aggregate <i>marae</i> sites, chief’s house platform	Mark sacred sites associated with mourning rituals (A, E)
Banyan Tree	–	Planted on or near other ritual structures in aggregate <i>marae</i> complexes, <i>me’ae</i>	Mortuary- bones placed in tree limbs (A, E)
Shrine	Simple stone pavement or less frequently a simple walled enclosure; rows of uprights at one end, backrest stone at the other end, sometimes with a <i>ti’i</i> (god figure) in between	Often attached to <i>marae</i> , but sometimes stand alone in residential or ritual complexes; those for occupational specialists found in unique contexts near natural resources	Incantation or prayers; sometimes used by occupational specialists (A, E)
<i>Ti’i</i>	Anthropomorphic image sculpted in stone or wood	Associated with shrines attached to temples (often simple temples), or isolated shrines and other religious structures	Symbolize the ancestors; mediate between the world of the gods and the living; incantation or prayers (A, E)
Family <i>marae</i>	Simple to elaborate stone enclosure, with or without <i>ahu</i> (altar)	Associated with residential structures (rectangular houses, oval-ended houses), pavements, terraces	Feasting, offerings to the gods and ancestors (A, E)
Community <i>marae</i>	More elaborate stone enclosure with <i>ahu</i> , entry-way, ramp	Often associated with aggregate <i>marae</i> sites with numerous elaborate <i>marae</i> , priests’ houses, council platforms, other specialized structures	Feasting, but more removed from temple and associated with priest house or council platform; ritual storage and memorialization of ancestor bones; procession; dance, performance; games (A, E)
<i>Tupapa’u</i>	Pole and thatch platform	Associated with major temples or chiefs’ houses	Mortuary (embalming, presentation of dead to the family community); public mourning (E)

Table 1 – Variability in ritual site types found in East Polynesia, (A) refers to archaeological data, (E) refers to ethnohistoric data.

Tabl. 1 – Variabilité des types de sites rituels retrouvés dans l’Est de la Polynésie. (A) se réfère aux données archéologiques, (E) se réfère aux données ethnohistoriques.

Kahn and Kirch, 2014 for a recent Society Islands study, McCoy, 2008 and 2014 for recent Hawaiian studies). Society Island and Marquesas Island texts note how Banyan trees were afforded sacred significance (Orliac, 1984; Lepofsky, 2003; Kahn and Coil, 2006; Ottino-Garanger, 2006). Indeed, such trees are often found in association with *marae-ahu* and *me'ae* archaeological complexes (Ottino-Garanger, 2006; Rolett, 2010; Kahn and Kirch, 2011). R. Linton (Linton, 1925) has argued that the majority of Marquesan meae are associated with Banyan trees planted in prehistory, while J. Kahn and P. Kirch (Kahn and Kirch, 2014) have described a similar pattern at an aggregate *marae* complex on Mo'orea, Society Islands.⁽²⁾

Banyan trees on Marquesan *me'ae* were associated with mortuary offerings, with long bones placed in their roots (Linton, 1925). Banyan trees were also associated with mortuary complexes in the Society Islands, offering support for the *tapu* nature of Banyan trees and their association with sacred locales.

Small shrines, constructed as simple pavements or platforms with less elaborate architecture than temples, were also places of religious activity in East Polynesia. In the Society Islands, shrines comprised of pavements, uprights, backrest stones, and god figures are found directly attached to marae or in isolation from marae and distributed throughout residential complexes (Green, 1961, p. 171; Kahn and Kirch, 2013 and 2014). Sculpted stone anthropomorphic images, or *ti'i*, are commonly associated with shrines and less commonly with other religious structures (Campbell, 1991). While having multiple uses, *ti'i* were regarded as ancestral figures, and as mediators between the world of the gods and the world of the living. They were actively evoked at the local or family level by household members or ritual occupational specialists for general worship and protection (Montgomery, 1832a, p. 114, 1832b and 1832c). The specific placement of *ti'i* on shrines suggests active invocation, as they were positioned opposite backrest stones where the officiant would sit, but before the rows of uprights which symbolized the ancestors.

The archaeological association of *ti'i* with shrines suggests an individualistic style of ritual worship (see discussion below). This is supported by B. Campbell's (Campbell, 1991, p. 68) study of 'Opunohu Valley, Mo'orea shrines, which illustrated that shrines are most often associated with simple temples and may have been used for small family rites of an 'individual/occupational form'. In Hawai'i, small household shrines associated with stone uprights and coral offerings are often located in men's houses within residential clusters (Kirch, 1985; Weisler and Kirch, 1985; Weisler et al., 2006). P. Buck (Buck, 1957, p. 527–528) argued that shrines were used by small family groups or individuals in short rituals with offerings that did not require the participation of priests. Similar to Society Island shrines, Hawaiian household shrines were used to dedicate offerings to family deities in individualistic rituals.⁽³⁾

Fishing shrines are another ritual site common on the Hawaiian landscape. These religious sites are delineated

by small courts and water worn upright stones and are often situated along coastal promontories (Kirch, 1985; Weisler et al., 2006). Fishing shrines are also found in the Marquesas Islands, where they were considered sacred sanctuaries of professional fishermen (Millerstrom, 2009), and the Tuamotu Islands, where they served as places for fisherman to provide offerings to marine deities (Emory, 1934 and 1947; Molle, 2015). Occupational shrines also were present in pre-contact Hawai'i (Buck, 1957; Malo, 1951) and differed from fisherman shrines in their specific locations. Finally, shrines similar to Society Island forms have been described for the upper reaches of the Mauna Kea adze quarry (McCoy et al., 2009) on Hawai'i Island. M. McCoy (McCoy, 1999 and 2014) has argued that these ridge top shrines were used in ceremonies initiating apprentice adze makers, in ceremonies related to adze manufacture, and in pilgrimages to this upland wilderness to worship local gods and goddesses. As this brief review suggests, East Polynesian shrines typically served religious purposes that were of a more individualistic or specialized nature than the larger communal events at monumental temple sites.

Other East Polynesia religious sites are associated with human burials and mourning locales. In the Society Islands, funerary rites carried out near elaborate temples were instrumental in transforming the deceased chief into a supernatural (Babadzan, 1993). Important high ranking individuals were embalmed and laid out on platforms (*tupapa'u*) for a period of time while the community engaged in mourning (Oliver, 1974, p. 494). These mourning rituals involved high priests donning elaborate mourning costumes with shiny breastplates (Henry, 1928, p. 293–94; Oliver, 1974, p. 503–4). Such costumes are described and depicted in both explorers' journals (Banks in Hooker, 1896) and rock art sites (fig. 1). As S. Millerstrom and H. Baumgartner Lesage (Millerstrom and Baumgartner Lesage, in press) note, rock art in the Society Islands and elsewhere in East Polynesia denote aspects of religious ideology. Mourning mask and headdress petroglyphs illustrating breast plates were found at Vaiote, Tautira (Tahiti; Emory, 1933, p. 171; Garanger, 1980; here: fig. 1), in association with a burial cave and a Banyan tree. Images of these types have been found at other sites, including Fare Hape, Papeno'o (Tahiti), and Tevaitoa (Rai'atea), at the former they were associated with several marae, shrines, a council platform, and a likely fare *tupapa'u*, at the latter they were associated with a corner stone of a chief's house platform (Millerstrom and Baumgartner Lesage, in press). These mask images depict traditional mourning costume headdresses used in burial ceremonies of important people (Emory, 1979, p. 200–221). Data suggest that rock art images of mourning costumes mark sacred areas where the *tupapa'u* or ghost house for an embalmed chief stood and thus, represent another type of religious context.

The diversity of ritual sites in the Society Islands calls for a multi-scalar approach, as ethnohistoric and archaeological data suggest that ritual structures and spaces of different size and form had different uses.

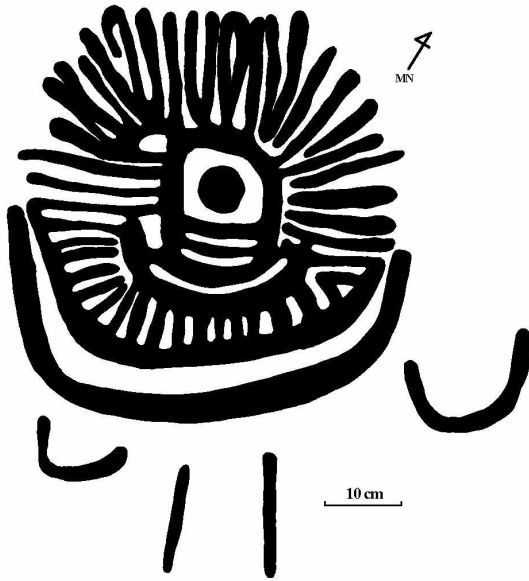


Fig. 1 – Rock art depiction of a mourning headdress and breast-plate, Vaiote Valley, Tautira, Tahiti.

Fig. 1 – Pétroglyphe représentant la coiffe et le plastron d'un deuilleur; vallée de Vaiote, Tautira, Tahiti.

Ritual sites also had diverse users and audiences, including the chiefs and their elite retinue, formalized ritual specialists such as priests, laity practitioners, and the general community. The latter were at times members of audiences participating in larger ceremonial events led by chiefs and priests, and at other times, were active participants in household ritual and individual, meditative ritual (Oliver, 1974).

One means of investigating functional differences between Society Island religious structures is to focus on ritual architecture and its relationship to use and access (public versus private), patterns of visibility, and size and type of the audience and active participants. Utilizing such a methodology, L. Fogelin (Fogelin, 2003) has described three major forms of ritual worship. The first, individual ritual, is associated with one or more individuals directly interacting with an object of worship. Individualistic cultic practices lack ritual specialists and can be carried out by varied individuals in any society (see also Rakita, 2003, p. 72). As I will argue, local-scale ritual in East Polynesia associated with household shrines and shrines with god features aligns well with individual ritual. Communal ritual, as a form of group worship, relates to a group worshipping in relation to an object. As L. Fogelin (Fogelin, 2003) notes, communal ritual promoted egalitarian relationships within groups and did not require a ritual specialist. In the Society Islands, household ceremonies carried out at family *marae* by headman would conform to communal ritual. Both individual and communal ritual would be considered laity⁽⁴⁾ rituals, as they were not associated with ritual specialists or other groups who were elevated in status or role above the rest of the participants.

Finally, corporate ritual involves worship between a group and an object or action. It is strongly hierarchical, as it is mediated by a ritual specialist, either an individual or group (clergy) who is elevated above the rest of the audience (laity).⁽⁵⁾ L. Fogelin argues that corporate ritual was carried out in public areas allowing for community assembly, areas that were constructed so as to support the clergy/laity distinction. Merging L. Fogelin's architectural model of clergy/laity distinctions with ritual activities described in the Society Island ethnohistoric accounts will allow for a multi-scalar view of Ma'ohi religious practices to emerge.

MODELLING INDIVIDUAL, COMMUNAL, AND CORPORATE RITUAL: MERGING ETHNOHISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA TO INFER SITE FORM AND FUNCTION

Following a spatio-functional approach, ethnohistoric documents and archaeological data can be used to model whether religious activities at Society Island ritual sites were of an individualistic, communal, or corporate nature (table 1). With respect to temple sites (*marae*), historic documents and terms in the earliest Tahitian dictionary indicate that the largest monumental temples in the Society Islands (community level and international—or paramount level—*marae*) were loci of community wide presentations to the chiefs (table 2 and table 3). Ritual ceremonies led by specialized priests at these structures included important rites of passage for the elites, such as political investiture ceremonies, coming of age ceremonies, and mourning ceremonies, in addition to the internment and memorializing of elite skeletal remains. *To'oo*, sacred god images, and other religious sacra were housed exclusively at international or community level *marae*, and were unveiled and used during significant temple renewal ceremonies and rites of human sacrifice associated with war (Henry, 1928, p. 166; Beaglehole, 1955, p. 201; Orliac, 1982, p. 169; Eddowes, 1991). Community level temples were also associated with warfare rituals linked to engaging in battle, particularly when human sacrifices were offered up to the gods at war cult temples. Thus, community level temples were frequently associated with corporate rituals led by a clergy (formal ranks of priests, in association with chiefs).

In contrast, smaller temples served as house-based loci of ritual engagement, associated with laity rites of a more intimate nature (table 1). Family temples were contexts where headmen of the extended household performed rituals for the household to the ancestral deities (table 2). Rites at family *marae* not only sanctified household activities, but announced land ownership, delineated control over resources, and justified rank (Henry, 1928, p. 141).

Family temples also served as places for rites of passage for children of lower status households, while

higher status chiefly households performed such rites in their community level temples. These family-based rituals would be considered either individualistic or communal depending on the number of officiants and the size or presence of participatory audiences, while evocation prayers offered up to the ancestors at small shrines would likely be individualistic in their nature.

Because laity and clergy rituals in Ma’ohi society have some overlap in terms of spatial location, it is instructive to look at the development of Ma’ohi ritual in a multi-scalar fashion, both in terms of time and space. In terms of space, based on L. Fogelin’s (Fogelin, 2003) analyses, and ethnohistoric data from the Society Islands, the architectural form and spatial layout of specific ritual structures should be instructive for teasing out individualist ritual from communal or corporate ritual. One key difference is in the number of participants in the ritual, including the number of officiants and the size of the audience. Given that individualistic rituals typically involved one or a few individuals, we would expect such sites to be smaller in size than communal and corporate ritual locales which involved a larger number of officiants and a larger audience. Second, while participation in individualistic ritual may have cross-cut status and rank categories in the prehistoric Society Islands, it seems likely that corporate rituals were highly or exclusively associated with upper class elites and ritual specialists. This has relevance to site proxemics—the expectation would be that individualistic ritual sites may be found interspersed throughout ancient Society Island landscapes, while corporate ritual sites will be situated in

more isolated or unique (i.e. high status) settings. Furthermore, given the difference in audience size, one would expect corporate ritual sites to not only be larger, but to have specific architectural elements allowing for a clear division of the clergy closely involved in the ceremonies from the laity, whose participation was solely in an audience capacity.

In terms of change through time, archaeologists studying ancient religion have posited that the role and number of ritual specialists and the complexity of religious practices parallels general trends in the society’s socio-political complexity (Blenkinsopp, 1995; Hayden, 2003; Sugiyama, 2003; Redmond and Spencer, 2008; Steadman, 2009). In many complex societies, elite leaders or ritual specialists appropriated early communal forms of religious worship as a means of consolidating socio-political power. With respect to the Society Island case study, the question becomes: are communal ritual sites earlier than corporate ritual sites on the Ma’ohi landscape? And do later corporate ritual sites incorporate spatial aspects of earlier communal sites, suggesting an appropriation of ritual power by social elites through time? Finally, can spatio-temporal analyses of ritual sites illuminate aspects of socio-political complexity in Ma’ohi chiefdoms through time?

‘OPUNOHU VALLEY CASE STUDY

‘Opunohu is the largest valley on Mo’orea Island, which along with its neighbor Tahiti, comprise the

<i>Rites de Passage</i> (Tahitian term in italics)	Form	Context	Activities
<i>Fa’aari’ra’a</i>	Office taking, investiture of the chief; large scale public ceremony and feast	International temple; Community level temple	Henry, 1928; Oliver, 1974
<i>Taurua</i>	Large scale public ceremony with feasting	‘Oro (war cult) temples; International or Community level temples	Corney, 1919; Oliver, 1974
<i>Pa’iatua</i>	New decoration of the <i>to’o</i> or god image; performed as a prelude to other ceremonies (chief’s inauguration, laying a cornerstone of a <i>marae</i>)	International or Community level temples	Davies, 1851; Henry, 1928; Oliver, 1974
<i>Matea, maui fa’atere, haea mati</i>	Large scale political and religious ceremonies prior to commencing a battle	International temples (and community temples?) dedicated to ‘Oro	Ellis, 1829a and 1829b; Oliver, 1974
Honoring of the deceased	Mourning ceremonies, with elites laid out in an embalmed state for several weeks, while family and friends came to mourn; supervised by high priests or elder member of the family; associated with use of mourning masks	<i>Fare tupapa’u</i> , platform for the dead, erected near international temples (and community temples?) dedicated to ‘Oro; near chiefs’ houses (?)	Beaglehole, 1967, p. 190–91; Bligh and Tobin in Oliver, 1988, p. 188–89; Eddowes, 1991, p. 93–96; Ellis, 1829a and 1829b; Henry, 1928, p. 296; Oliver, 1974

Table 2 – Examples of corporate rituals and their material and spatial associations, as modeled from the Society Islands ethnohistoric record.

Tabl. 2 – Exemples de rituels spécialisés et de leurs associations matérielles et spatiales, modélisés d’après les archives ethnohistoriques des îles de la Société.

<i>Rites de Passage</i> (Tahitian term in italics)	Description	Reconstructed Locale	References
<i>Paiatiare</i>	Custom or ceremony, when restrictions of female children, were removed	?? international, community, and family level temples based on household rank?	Davies, 1851
<i>Puaafatoi</i>	Feast and ceremony, members of a family eat together for the first time, children having been considered sacred, and eaten apart	?? perhaps both international, community, and family level temples based on household rank?	Davies, 1851
<i>Uhiā'iri</i>	A ceremony performed, navel string of a first born was cut	international and community temples, family temples based on household rank?	Davies, 1851; Oliver, 1974; Henry, 1928
<i>Amoa, Amo'a</i>	Remove restrictions in regard to children of the chiefs	house near the temple, family residence, 'head-freeing rites' at the temple	Davies, 1851; Oliver, 1974
<i>Tehera'a</i>	Male circumcision rite	community or family temple	Henry, 1928
<i>Fa'atoira'a</i>	Coming of age rites/feast	community or family temple	Henry, 1928
<i>Hunara'a a tupapa'u</i>	Burial of the dead; internment of chiefs was supervised by priests, at first in a vault in the marae and later in a burial cave	community or international marae, <i>anaa</i> (burial caves)	Beaglehole 1962a, p. 378; Bligh, 1792, p. 153; Moerenhout 1837, p. 554–55; Oliver, 1974

Table 3 – Examples of individual and communal rituals and their material and spatial associations, as modeled from the Society Islands ethnohistoric record.

Tabl. 3 – Exemples de rituels individuels et communautaires et de leurs associations matérielles et spatiales, modélisés d'après les archives ethnohistoriques des îles de la Société.

Windward islands of the Society archipelago (fig. 2). At the time of European contact the valley was divided into two socio-political districts, Tupauruuru in the east and Amehiti in the west (Green, 1961; Lepofsky and Kahn, 2011). These two districts vary in the types and frequencies of archaeological structures situated on their landscapes (Green 1961; Green and Descantes, 1989; Kahn, 2013; Kahn and Kirch, 2013).

R. C. Green pioneered a settlement pattern approach in the 'Opunohu (Green, 1961; Green et al., 1967), mapping and describing close to four hundred residential sites, ritual structures (*marae*, shrines), and agricultural complexes (Green and Descantes, 1989). D. Lepofsky (Lepofsky, 1994; Lepofsky et al., 1996) amplified R. C. Green's survey by comprehensively mapping the spatial context of agricultural features, while Kahn (Kahn, 2003, 2005, and 2007; Kahn and Kirch, 2004 and 2013; Sharp et al., 2010) carried out extensive excavations at domestic structures and ritual structures of varying size and elaboration in both sectors, adding to our understanding of residential patterns and ceremonial practices.

Among the well-studied archaeological complexes in the Tupauruuru district is ScMo-170-171, a residential complex associated with a small temple (fig. 3). This complex is situated in upper Tupauruuru and its two major phases of site occupation date to between the

mid-15th and the mid-17th centuries (Kahn, 2006). In contrast, ScMo-103 is a ceremonial complex with seven aggregated *marae*, eight shrines, and two large oval-ended houses (Green et al., 1967; here: fig. 4). This complex is associated with high status specialized structures, including a chief's council platform and an archery platform. ScMo-103 has multiple episodes of site construction and use dating to between the mid-15th and the early 17th century (Kahn, 2011). Finally, ScMo-163/129⁽⁶⁾ is an aggregated *marae* complex in Tupauruuru found on one side of a major river (fig. 5). The complex includes three temples with elaborate architecture (-129, -161, 163), numerous shrines (165), and elite specialized structures including two large oval-ended houses (162, 164), two archery platforms (109), and a chief's council platform (164b) (Emory, 1933; Green et al., 1967). Dated samples suggest that the complex was constructed and used between the mid-15th and the 17th centuries (Kahn, 2011).

While residential sites in the Amehiti district can rival those found in Tupauruuru with respect to size and architectural elaboration, ceremonial sites in the Amehiti district tend to be less elaborate in terms of temple architecture, the number of aggregated structures, and the frequency of elite specialized-use structures. Among the well-studied archaeological complexes in the Amehiti



Fig. 2 – Mo'orea Island, showing 'Opunohu Valley and the Amehiti and Tupaururu Districts.

Fig. 2 – Île de Mo'orea : vallée de 'Opunohu et districts d'Amehiti et de Tupaururu.

district are zone A and zone B (Kahn and Kirch, 2013; here: fig. 6 and fig. 7). Zone A and B are comprised of residential sites and specialized houses interspersed among agricultural zones and ceremonial structures of a familial nature. Zone A was constructed and settled during the mid-14th and 15th centuries and used up until the 17th century, while zone B was constructed and settled in the mid-15th century and used up until the 17th century.

Family level *marae* and communal ritual

Family level marae and communal ritual: spatial layout

Current survey and excavation data for the Tupaururu and Amehiti districts illustrate that small family level *marae* are typically found embedded within residential complexes. As can be seen in figure 3 and figure 7, small temple enclosures interpreted as family level *marae* are associated with residential sleeping houses, craft activity areas, and planting zones. Archaeological investigation of family level *marae* has produced evidence for temple offerings and feasting, either on the *marae* enclosure or on adjacent terrace structures (Kahn, 2005; Kahn and

Kirch, 2013). The layout of family *marae*, with their simple enclosures and rows of uprights representing the ancestors, facilitated household assembly in a ritual context. Given their spatial context, it seems likely that family level temples were used in both individual and communal family based rituals led by the residential group's headman.

The form of family-based *marae* likewise suggests their use in intimate rituals of the residential group. Like other family level *marae*, ScMo-325, the small temple associated with Zone B, includes a stone enclosure and stone uprights or backrests stones, but lacks an elaborate altar (*ahu*) or a restricted entry way (fig. 7). The open rather than restricted form of the familial ritual structure would have lent itself to collective worship. As with ScMo-325, small shrines with rows of uprights are attached to family level temple site, indicative of individualistic worship. Isolated shrines not attached to temples are also found at other areas within residential complexes. For example, an isolated shrine with rows of uprights is found along the southern limit of the zone B complex, adjacent to a major river and interspersed among residential and agricultural structures (fig. 6). This pattern highlights that individualistic worship could take place either within dir-

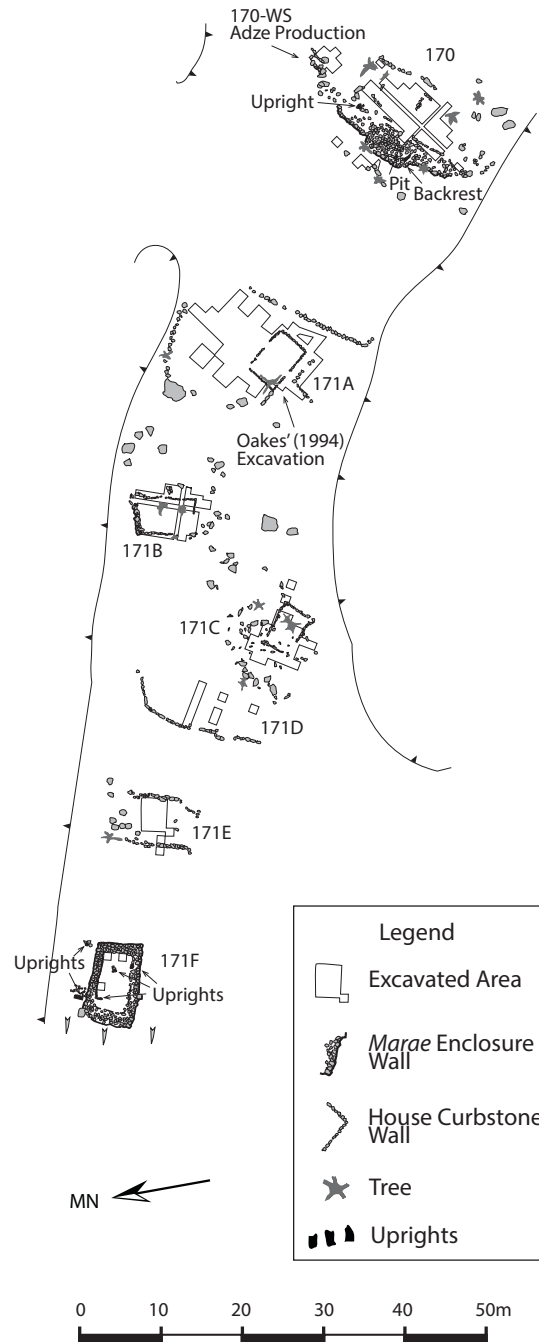


Fig. 3 – Plan view of the -170/171 residential complex.

Fig. 3 – Vue en plan de l'ensemble de maisons -170/171.

ect association with a familial temple, or in isolation from temples and embedded within other zones of residential complexes. In this way, individualist worship at shrines can be seen as another form of intimate ritual associated with residential groups.

Family level marae and communal ritual: temporal sequence

AMS radiocarbon dating of short lived species has documented that small family temples are typically built early on in the inland expansion into the 'Opunohu Valley, ca.

AD 1350 (Kahn and Kirch, 2013). In the Amehiti district, several complexes illustrate a shared pattern whereby family temples are the first to be built in conjunction with elite residences and agricultural complexes. One example is zone A in Amehiti, a neighborhood that has both large and small terrace complexes for irrigated taro cultivation and houses of varying size and morphology (fig. 6). This ridge also has one of the higher densities of temple sites in the sector, with three *marae* situated along its flanks (Kahn and Kirch, 2013). Within this complex, the earliest episodes of site use during AD 1350–1450 include the construction of a moderately elaborate sleeping house



Fig. 4 – Plan view of the -103 aggregate *marae* complex.
Fig. 4 – *Vue en plan de l'ensemble de marae -103.*

(-289) and two family temples adjacent to major wetland taro complexes and important water sources (-287, -306). This has an appearance of territorial marking of the landscape by residential groups. The close spatial association of house sites and temples suggests social identity was reified as domestic groups participated in house-based annual rituals at family temples throughout the year. Individualistic ritual would also have been carried out in the small shrines attached to family temple sites or those found in other areas of each residential complex.

Family level marae and communal ritual: discussion

Current data indicates that during the early inland expansion period, between AD 1350–1450, house groups actively competed for land and resources in the

‘Opunohu Valley. Family-level temples and shrines and the ceremonies carried out at them were among the ritual locales actively used to mark territories and property. While such data support L. Fogelin’s notion (Fogelin, 2003) that communal ritual promoted group solidarity and egalitarian relationships, as these religious activities did not require ritual specialists, it is clear that Society Island familial rituals also emphasized subtle hierarchical differences. Ethnohistoric documents suggest that most house-based rituals in the archipelago were led by the senior male or headman who officiated at the *marae* for the family in various ceremonies (Forster, 1778, p. 224–225; Oliver, 1974, p. 78; Orliac, 2000, p. 143). The senior headman of the senior household also served as leader at neighborhood level (Wilson, 1799, p. 186; Newbury, 1967, p. 477–478; Oliver, 1988, p. 43). Regional-wide hierarchies of families, based on notions of sanctity and rank of the household head

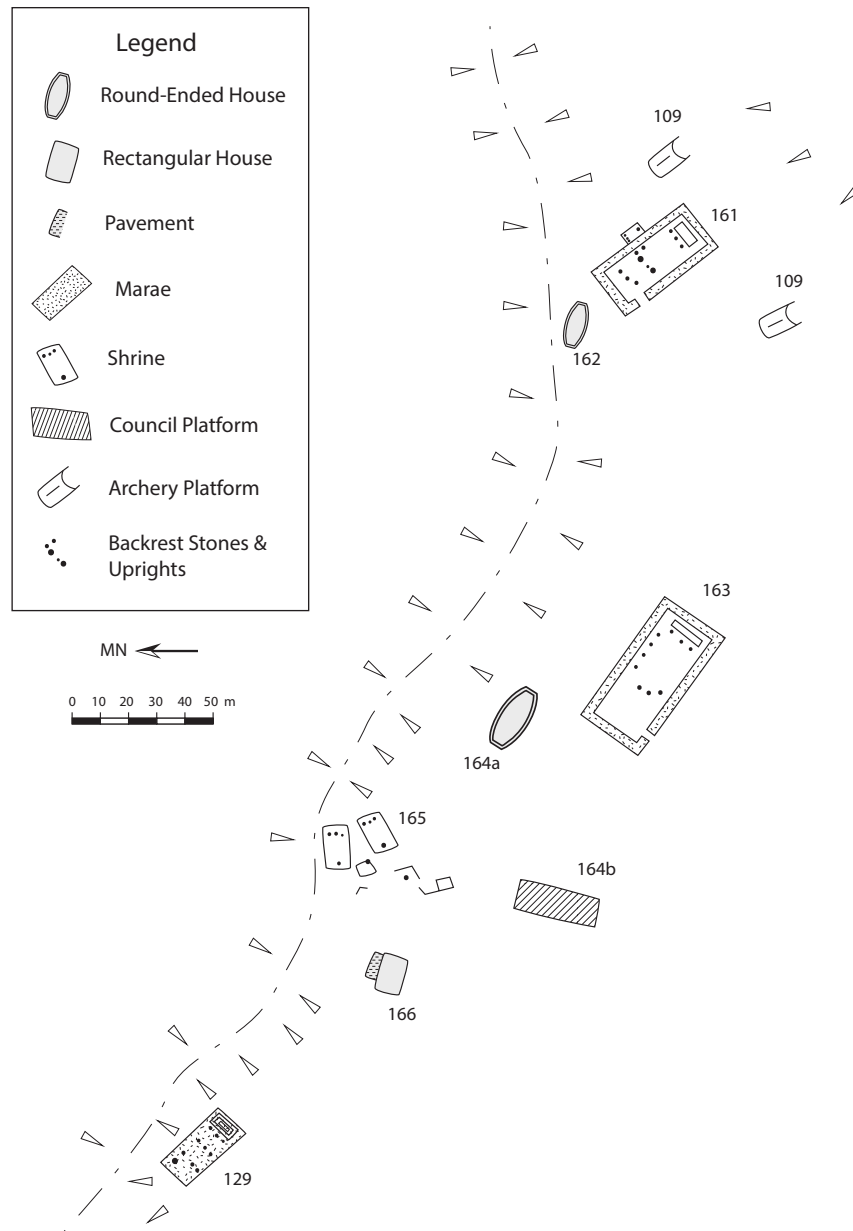


Fig. 5 – Plan view of the -163/129 aggregate *marae* complex.
Fig. 5 – *Vue en plan de l'ensemble de marae -163/129.*

(whether first born or from junior lines), existed in the Society Islands (Oliver, 1988, p. 45) and these hierarchies had great influence at the local level (Beaglehole, 1962, p. 339).

Thus, communal rituals at family level *marae* contributed both to social cohesion of the residential group and to subtle structures of hierarchy from the mid-14th century onwards. These patterns were accelerated in the two following centuries, from AD 1450–1650, when there was an infilling of the 'Opunohu Valley landscape. New, often lower status residential clusters were established in conjunction with ritual and subsistence zones (Kahn and Kirch, 2013), while other complexes first established in the 14th century continued to be occupied and expanded in size (Kahn, 2013).

The advent of community *marae* and corporate ritual

The advent of corporate ritual, or more exclusionary rites carried out by specialized priests in front of larger audiences, is materialized on the 'Opunohu Valley landscape in a different manner than that of communal ritual. Towards the latter half of the 15th century, construction of clustered temple sites with more elaborate architecture including raised altars (*ahu*) commences. I refer to these clusters of elaborate temple sites as aggregate complexes (Kahn, 2011). Through time, particularly after AD 1600, aggregate complexes expand to include numerous elaborate temples, and other types of 'elite' political structures such as archery platforms and chiefs' council platforms.

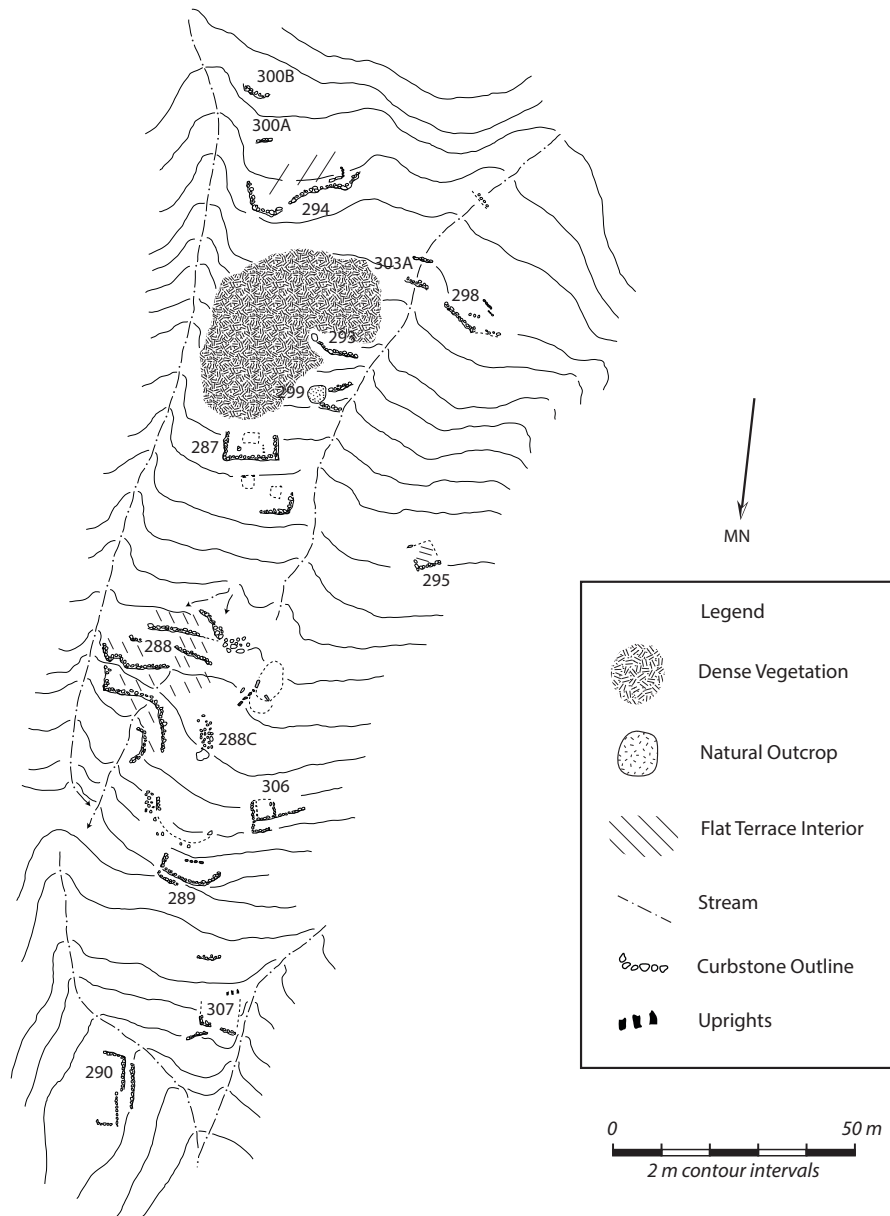


Fig. 6 – Plan view of the zone A residential complex.

Fig. 6 – Vue en plan de la zone A de l'ensemble de maisons.

Site proxemics, archaeological data, and ethnohistoric data illustrate that aggregate temple complexes are the material manifestations of Ma'ohi corporate ritual.

Corporate ritual: spatial layout

Aggregate marae complexes related to corporate ritual include a greater diversity of structures, including specialized structures with dual ritual and political functions. The ScMo-103 aggregate complex includes seven elaborate altar bearing temples, round-ended and rectangular house structures, and raised platforms (fig. 4). Specialized structures, including a chief's council platform and an archery platform, are found upslope (Kahn, 2011). A number of the temples have attached shrines, and three are appended to one another with shrines and rows of

uprights. Based on excavation data (Orliac, 1982; Green, 1996), round-ended house site -103C was identified as a *fare 'ia manaha*, a house to store sacred items used in elaborate *marae* ceremonies. Numerous cooking features were located adjacent to the -103C round-ended house and pavement. Their size, frequency, and context are suggestive of a feasting locale (Green et al., 1967; Kahn, 2016).

While the form and spatial layout of ScMo-103 riffs on aspects of house-based ceremonial sites, such as the inclusion of temple enclosures, many with attached shrines, and the inclusion of feasting activities, there are notable differences. First, excavation data illustrates that house sites found at ScMo-103 were not ordinary sleeping houses, but rather, functioned as specialized houses serving a range of socio-political functions. The afore-

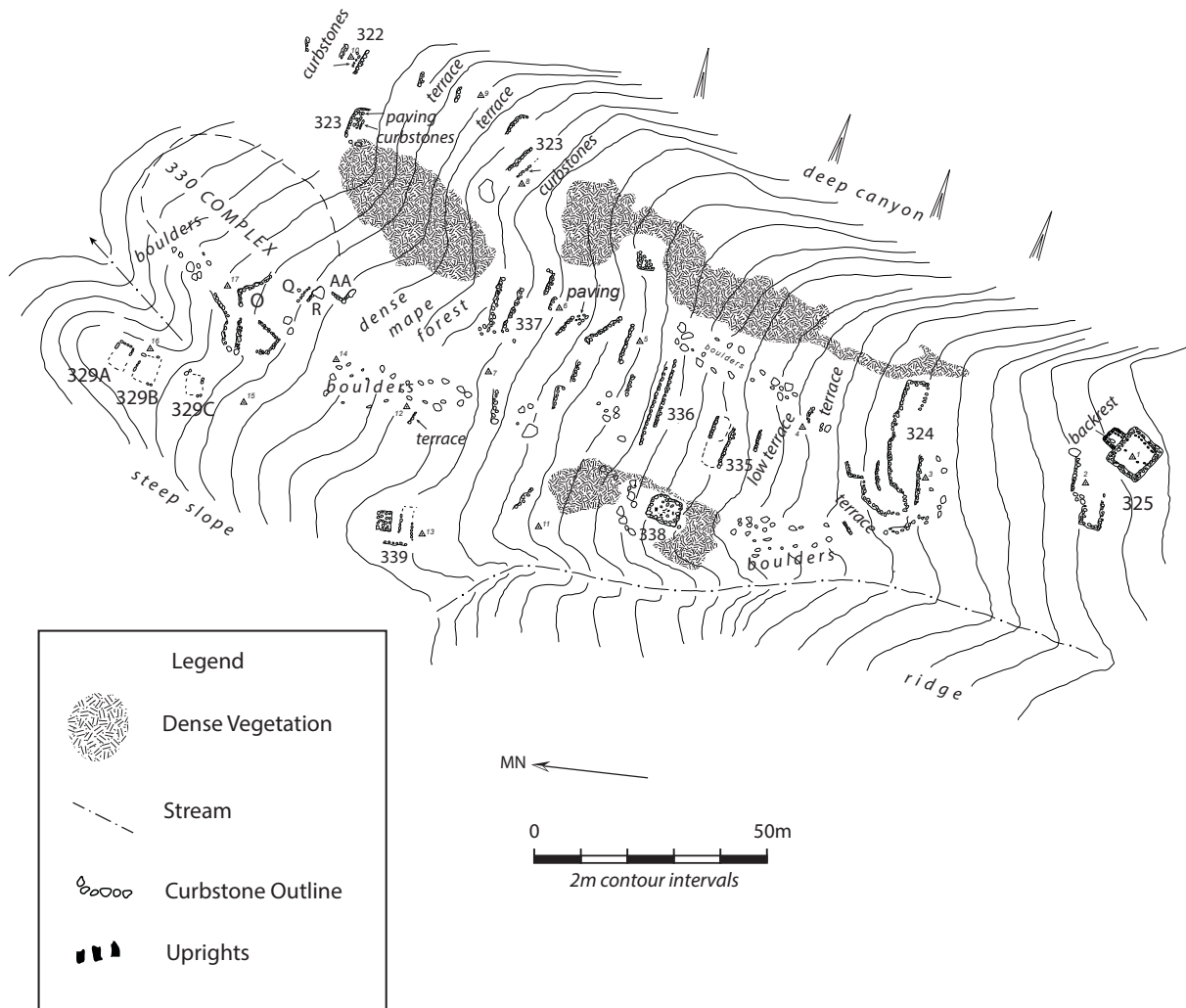


Fig. 7 – Plan view of the zone B residential complex.

Fig. 7 – Vue en plan de la zone B de l'ensemble de maisons.

mentioned round-ended house 103C served as a *fare 'ia manaha* (Orliac 1982, p. 283; Green 1996, p. 221), a sacred house used for the storage of ritual paraphernalia, such as drums, god-idols, tapa cloth, and costumes utilized in rituals (Parkinson, 1773, p. 70; Henry, 1928, p. 135, p. 175–76). At aggregate complex -163/-129, large rounded ended-houses are paired with elaborate *marae* (fig. 4), suggesting similar use as *fare 'ia manaha* with specialized function. Such sacred houses were typically found at communal or international level *marae*, where formal ritual sacra were utilized in public ceremonies.

Second, the ScMo-103 complex is situated near several elite political structures found upslope, including an archery platform, another large round-ended house, and a chiefs' council platform. Archery platforms were places where elites competed in sacred sport (Kahn and Kirch, 2014). Only elites, namely warriors, high chiefs, and their administrative land managers, could participate. The sport had a number of religious connotations (Wallin, 1997) and was associated with feasting and dancing. The fact that the 'king and chiefs' usually attended these fest-

ivities, as did chiefs from other socio-political districts (Ellis, 1829, p. 301; Henry, 1928, p. 279), illustrates that archery platforms and the structures surrounding them served as places for communal gatherings of a political and ritual nature.

Council platforms (one of which is found upslope of ScMo-103), are similarly identified as specialized structures for chiefly activities. At these stone platforms, elites, including chiefs, priests, and warriors, deliberated on political matters such as warfare (Kahn and Kirch, 2014). Thus, the spatial configurations of aggregate temple sites and the range of site types associated with them suggest they had corporate ceremonial functions. These complexes were used both as meeting places for a range of socio-political elites, as well as places of large, communal worship where economic tribute was filtered up to socio-ritual rulers. It is not surprising that aggregate *marae* complexes tend to be isolated in hard to access parts of the 'Opunohu Valley or in areas with sacred meaning (i.e. areas inscribed with *mana* due to natural landscape features such as sacred peaks, or due to internment of skeletal remains).

The inclusion of ancestral skeleton remains in the altar or walls of elaborate community level *marae* such as ScMo-163 (Green et al., 1967; see here fig. 5) or in the general precincts of aggregate complexes (Kahn and Kirch, 2014) mark these places as the most sacred of sacred. Given their association with the ancestors and exclusive ceremonial practices which served to support status hierarchies at the community scale, exclusivity and isolation of aggregate complexes also functioned to protect the sacred power of the elite.

Varied architectural elements of aggregate *marae* sites likewise argue for their use in more formalized and exclusive corporate ritual. At aggregate complex ScMo-163/-129, each of the three main *marae* has a volumous enclosure, allowing for sizeable numbers of participants (fig. 5). Each has a clearly defined enclosure or paved court, with an altar or *ahu* at one end and backrest stones, delineating an interior space for the clergy- ritual specialists such as priests, and the chiefs in their ritual capacities. Formal entryways in the temple walls are narrow, allowing the clergy to access the sacred court but restricting the laity audience to participatory activities in exterior areas. Other corporate ritual sites in the ‘Opunohu Valley such as ScMo-120 and -124 utilize altars, formal entry-ways, and enclosures in association with ramps that were likely used for formal pageantry, such as when the clergy brought ritual sacra, including god images, into the *marae* court (Kahn, 2005; Kahn and Kirch, 2014). Formal architectural elements such as altars, entry-ways, elevated courts, and processional ramps serve to create divisions among participants in corporate ritual, creating intimate exclusive spaces for the elevated clergy members, while decreasing active participation of the laity audience (see Kolb, 1992 and 1994, for a Hawaiian example).

Other features of aggregate *marae* sites, most notably large terraces fronting temples, speak to the economic functions of elaborate ceremonial sites in the ‘Opunohu Valley. Excavation at these terraces has overwhelmingly revealed that they were areas used for tribute (Kahn and Kirch, 2013). These areas lacked evidence for structures or sub-surface features. Other than micro-fossil remains (Kahn et al., 2014), they were remarkably clean. As I have argued, large terraces fronting the temples likely served as presentation areas for offerings used in *marae* rituals. Many of these rituals, including the annual first fruits festivals, involved lesser elites bringing large contributions of food to communal assembly grounds. The foodstuffs were then laid out in heaps and divided into shares, while a large part was appropriated for the gods and the highest ranking elites. This tribute—the direct result of commoner labor—was funneled up through the social hierarchy at certain times during the ritual calendar, confirming the integrated nature of Ma‘ohi social hierarchy and ideology. The presentation of ritualized tribute literally at or in front of community level *marae* underscores the integrated role of corporate ritual, production, and hierarchy in late pre-contact Ma‘ohi chiefdoms. Archaeological evidence reveals that these activ-

ities were organized by political elites as well as priests, as material evidence for priests’ houses and specialized ritual-use houses has been found at numerous aggregate sites (Kahn and Kirch, 2014). As such, corporate rituals associated with a ‘clergy’ of ruling chiefs and ritual specialists (priests) represent a distinctive strategy that led to increasing socio-political power of elites in the Society Islands through time.

Interestingly, both aggregate complex ScMo-103 and -163/-129 have numerous attached and isolated shrines with rows of uprights, back rest stones, and at times, *ti‘i* figures. While many shrines are attached directly to one or more *marae*, others are found as isolated structures. As previously noted, shrines are also situated in residential sites associated with family-level *marae* and communal worship, and likely served as locales for individualistic worship on the part of the headman or other individuals. The presence of shrines at large aggregate ceremonial complexes likewise substantiates the presence of individualized worship taking place at these elaborate corporate ritual sites. Based on ethnohistoric accounts, D. Oliver (Oliver, 1974, p. 103) has suggested that such shrines were used in the Society Islands by ritual specialists, such as priests, in individualistic worship. Given that in many world religions, leaders of corporate ritual, (i.e. the clergy and lineage heads), needed places for their own individualistic worship (Lane 2001; Kyriakidis, 2007), it is thus not surprising that such a pattern is retained on the Society Island landscape. Small shrines in corporate contexts in the Society Islands might also have been used by a select few chiefs and priests, further restricting access to the gods and the ancestors (see Hayden, 2003, p. 204–5, 315).

Corporate marae: temporal sequence

AMS radiocarbon dating of short lived species and U-Th series dating of corals has documented that aggregate *marae* centers typically have a staged construction sequence. The first phase of site construction dates to ca. AD 1400–1500 and is associated with major inland expansion (see Kahn, 2006, 2011, and 2013). The majority of temple sites and specialized elite structures in aggregate complexes post-date AD 1600 and are related to a period of intensified chiefly competition whereby new temples, elaborate specialized house sites, and structures with specific ritual-political uses were constructed, enlarged, and elaborated into ceremonial zones used more exclusively by ritual-social elites (Sharp et al., 2010; Kahn and Kirch, 2014). This pervasive pattern, whereby elites gained increasing socio-political, economic, and ritual power over the rest of the Ma‘ohi populace, became accelerated in the 17th century up until European contact in 1767. The fact that this shift is materialized most strongly in the construction of elite specialized structures and evidence for elite feasting at numerous aggregate ceremonial sites (Kahn and Kirch, 2014) indicates that the advent of corporate ritual and its elaboration through time resulted in broad-scale social transformations.

Corporate ritual: discussion

The chronology of Society Island aggregate complexes supports that the materialization of religious rituals and ideology was rapidly elaborated through corporate ceremonies as elites vied for political control in the late pre-contact era. Isolated and formalized concentrations of ceremonial sites such as -103 and -169/-129 served not only as corporate elite religious centers, but created avenues for the development of social difference by promoting dominant political ideologies and control over economic resources. Data from corporate ritual centers in the 'Opunohu Valley demonstrate that this process of ritual landscape creation was accelerated during the period AD 1620–1760. It is thus during the last two centuries prior to European contact that Society Island elites strategically began to use ideology, notably elements of ritual and religion linked to inclusion and exclusion, to institutionalize social hierarchies and political status.

Corporate ritual and the evolution of elite power

Utilizing multi-scalar analysis of religious architecture and ritual activities in the Society Islands, I have proposed that individual and communal rituals based in Society Island residential complexes differ from corporate rituals carried out in larger ceremonial centers that come to dominate the landscape in the final two centuries prior to European contact. While both communal and corporate rituals served to transform late prehistoric Society Island communities into complex chiefdoms, I focus here on the unique role of corporate ritual. From a temporal perspective, it is clear that in the Society Islands, corporate ritual evolves out of an earlier period where individual and community based ritual predominated. In inland Society Island contexts, archaeological evidence suggests that communal ritual sites are constructed early on during the inland expansion, after AD 1350. The strongest evidence for formalized corporate ritual complexes comes over two centuries later, after AD 1600.

Archaeological data confirms that later corporate ceremonial complexes incorporate spatial aspects of earlier communal sites, suggesting an appropriation of ritual power by elites through time. Later aggregate centers retain the use of temple enclosures and shrines, the latter serving as more individualized areas for prayer or worship. These elements are the building blocks for earlier family temple sites used in communal ritual. The essential elements of *marae* and shrines—i.e. the rows of uprights—are clearly significant. These features represented the ancestors, providing a material link between the social power and well-being of the residential or community group in the present with the ancestors from the past. Corporate ceremonial sites also derived power from association with the ancestors, particularly in their inclusion of ancestral burial remains, however, they differ in critical ways from less elaborate, more inclusive communal ritual sites. The most elaborate corporate sites lack evidence for residential use,

and represent isolated ritualized zones on the landscape where socio-ritual elites carried out elaborate *rites de passage* and rituals linked to the annual cycle. For the large part, the general laity community was excluded from these most sacred of rites, other than playing a participatory role as audience members, and importantly, as members of the community providing offerings of food and other goods to the reigning chiefs, the ancestors, and the gods. As a result, corporate rites elevated both elites and ritual specialists to positions of socio-ceremonial power.

In closing, we can ask how do spatio-temporal analyses of Ma'ohi ritual sites illuminate aspects of socio-political complexity in Ma'ohi chiefdoms through time? Aggregate ritual centers focused on corporate ritual are constructed late in the Society Island sequence, after AD 1600. This is a period when multiple lines of evidence point towards increasing chiefly power throughout the archipelago (Lepofsky and Kahn, 2011). Archaeological data from corporate ritual centers includes structures indicative of communal feasting, sport, and political meetings of social elites. In diverse ways, aggregate temple complexes served as ritual-economic centers, where tribute was funneled up to the most high status chiefs. As such, the corporate ritual sites were multi-purpose, having both socio-economic, ritual, and political use. Isolated and formalized concentrations of aggregate corporate ritual centers increasingly excluded commoners and women, members of society who lacked *mana*, from the 'state religion'. Corporate ritual sites thus served as one avenue for elites to strategically use ideology to institutionalize social hierarchies and political status, a pattern seen in many other ranked societies.

The evolution of Society Islands ritual and religious practices mirrors that found in other complex chiefdoms, whereby patterns of both elaboration and increasing restriction or exclusivity are expressed through time (Emerson, 1997). In many societies, ancestor worship at local level temples and shrines, often of a communal or individual nature, are inclusive, while through time, cult worship emphasizing exclusiveness begins to dominate and serves as a politically manipulative tools for socio-political elites (Brown, 1997; Aldenderfer, 2010; Hastorf, 2007; Marcus, 2007; Renfrew, 2007). Identifying the particular function of ritual activities and their change through time thus provides an effective means of understanding how changes in ritual and religious systems can effect greater socio-political change in prehistoric societies.

Acknowledgements: Funding for this research was provided by the Roger Green Foundation and National Science Foundation grant BCS BCS-0749385. Warm thanks to the late Roger Green for first stimulating my interest in 'Opunohu Valley shrines and *ti'i*. Diana Izdebeski is thanked for expertly redrafting many of the site figures. Guillaume Molle is thanked for translating the abstract into French and providing comments on an earlier draft of this manuscript, as did an anonymous reviewer. Thanks also to Guillaume Molle and Frédérique Valentin for their editorial suggestions and for shepherding the manuscript through the publication process.

NOTES

- (1) *Ma'ohi* is the term that Tahitians use to refer to themselves.
- (2) In contrast, Larrue and Meyer (Larrue and Meyer, 2013) have contended that the association of Banyan and *marae* sites on Tahiti may be due to natural colonization.
- (3) Household shrines are also found in other East Polynesian archipelagoes. For example, W. Mulloy (Mulloy, 1965, p. 34) recovered three clustered prismatic basalt uprights at a Rapan hilltop fortification which has been interpreted as a defensive village with a chief's house and other domestic structures (Kennett and McClure, 2012).
- (4) Laity are members of the community who, while at times

- participate actively in ritual or ceremony, do not have formal professional roles or responsibilities, in contrast to priests or other types of formalized ritual practitioners.
- (5) Rakita (Rakita, 2009, p. 73) uses the term 'ecclesiastical cult formation' to describe corporate ritual where "full-time professional clergy who learn their craft from other members of the religious institutions" perform ceremonies.
 - (6) I have used two of the main site numbers (-163, -129) to designate this complex, however, given Emory and Green's original site descriptions (Green and Descantes, 1987), and the close spatial association of the surface structures, it is clear that this aggregate complex consists of numerous structures that Green split into separate site numbers. These include ScMo-109, -129, -161, -162, -163, -165, and -166.

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