The book is comprised of “Entries” in alphabetical order—121 in total, ranging from Ahi ka ‘continuous occupation of, and right to land’ to Whiu ‘to punish’. Each entry contains a brief explanation of the concept. This is followed by an “Entry Guide”, which contains a more detailed description of the term and its historical and contemporary use supported by “References”—the latter references contain transcriptions of the original sources that use the concept. Some of the entries—e.g., Hakari ‘feast’—run into several pages, peppered with illustrations. Others such as Tupapaku ‘body of a dead person or the seriously ill’ fill one page. The “References” contain the high grade ore, having been carefully selected from a wide range of historical and contemporary sources including Māori periodicals, the journals of rangatira and of colonial and imperial officials, whakatauki ‘proverbs’, and academic scholarship.

The long-term ambition of the authors is to foster the creation of a bi-cultural jurisprudence that draws on both Māori and Pakehä value systems. If there is to be any serious consideration of custom law’s application today, then the starting point has to be this very process of sifting through the historical and contemporary record for good evidence of how it has been used in fact. Te Mātāpunenga is the only scholarly attempt at that and so it is unique and much needed. Now, one cannot help but wonder about the next step in the ongoing project—custom’s contemporary use and application and the development of a truly bi-cultural jurisprudence in New Zealand’s legal system.

References


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In Abundance and Resilience… Field and Graves reveal the archaeology of Nu‘alolo Kai, an important site on the northwest coast of Kaua‘i in the Hawaiian Islands. The archaeological importance of Nu‘alolo Kai derives from the site’s relative isolation, well-preserved features, and its abundant and diverse artefacts. The data and analyses in this book contribute new knowledge of Hawaiian life and cultural change over a continuous sequence, beginning with the first occupations at approximately AD 1300 until the end of permanent habitation in the early 1900s. Until recently, much of this knowledge was trapped in the store rooms of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, as the vast majority of the archaeological collections, those from 132 m² of excavation in the 1950s–1960s, were largely unanalysed and unreported (the results of a 4 m² excavation in 1990 have been published). The work in the book is based on a sample of over half of the approximately 18,000 items recovered from Nu‘alolo Kai.
Abundance and Resilience brings together eleven chapters presenting the data, analyses and summaries of seven researchers (including the editors) across a range of largely ecological and environmental topics. The analytical chapters are based on new analyses, including subsistence-focussed work on marine animals and avifauna, as well as introduced and indigenous (marine) mammals. Other analyses focus on coral, shell and bone artefacts. Several chapters present the environmental context, research history and summarised prehistoric sequence of the site, while one chapter compares archaeological and modern shellfish and avifauna to discuss ancient and contemporary resource management practices. Much of the analytical work is influenced by the salvage excavation procedures and recording practices used during the 1950s and 1960s from which the majority of the collections derives. Field’s summary (Chapter 3) of this past work justifies both the resulting chronological periods and observational scales (e.g., ordinal measures) used in this volume. The history of fieldwork at Nu’alolo Kai forces the authors to be explicit about their observational scales, precision and accuracy, but we should remember that these issues affect all archaeological measurement, no matter how carefully it is conceived.

The general applicability of this volume of collected articles is greater than other site-focussed books because of the consistent use of both human behavioural ecology and analytically-driven classifications. A behavioural ecology approach allows different authors in multiple chapters to generate related expectations of empirical patterning that can be compared to archaeological observations. These results are easily compared to other assemblages and regions because they are, in part, deduced from the universal and robust assumptions of evolution, primarily that different behaviours have different fitness consequences. The editors suggest (Chapter 1) that behavioural ecology (or perhaps evolution more generally) may not be suited to explain some dimensions of human life, such as religion or social rules, that are more removed from subsistence and the natural environment. I do not agree as our decisions about, for example, what stories we believe and with whom we interact can also be explained in terms of fitness consequences, irrespective of our personal motivations.

Analytically-driven or problem-oriented classifications also appear in several chapters (but not all) including those on avifauna (Chapter 6), coral artefacts (Chapter 8) and ornaments (Chapter 9). These classifications eschew traditional artefact labels such as combs or awls as they presume unverifiable use of items and are often ambiguous in their definitions. Instead the paradigmatic classifications applied here describe artefacts through a series of mutually exclusive dimensions such as wear, shape and material type that are unambiguous, can be applied to other assemblages, and allow the authors to propose novel and testable hypotheses of material culture variation. In Chapter 6, for example, instead of simply noting changing frequencies of awls or picks, the tool classification indicates that out of 36 possible bird bone tool classes, a specific form dominates the assemblage over time. This suggests increasingly specialised use, possibly associated with subsistence changes.

Several additional chapters examine subsistence remains. These include fish fauna (Chapter 4), turtle (Chapter 5) and introduced and native mammals (Chapter 7). Chapters on applied zooarchaeology (10) and a synthesis of the Nu’alolo Kai prehistoric sequence (Chapter 11) complete the main text. Three appendices present
Reviews data on fish remains, invertebrate marine fauna and general artefact descriptions. The only noticeable omission is the lack of any analytical treatment of lithic artefacts such as adzes, flaked tools and debitage from the site.

Fishing strategies varied over time at Nu‘alolo Kai. There was an early and consistent focus on large easily caught inshore taxa; later, small pelagic fish from the reef margins were added to the catch. Intriguingly, some inshore taxa increase in size throughout the prehistoric sequence, contradicting typical expectations of resource depression. The analysis of turtle remains uncovers unexpected patterns as well. Turtles were often targeted by colonising populations, as they can offer a high return for hunting effort in virgin environments. At Nu‘alolo Kai, however, turtles are not seen in the archaeofauna until about AD 1500, some centuries after first occupation. And while the Nu‘alolo Kai collection is unusually well-preserved and large, turtle still contributed a minor component to the overall diet. Continuing with unexpected patterns, birds were important for subsistence and raw materials, but despite long-term human predation, they were a stable resource. The chapter on mammal remains indicates that the earliest residents introduced pigs, dogs and rats to Nu‘alolo Kai, and that pig and dog were the major sources of terrestrial protein in people’s diet.

The chapters on both coral artefacts and ornaments of shell and bone undertake the classification approach mentioned above. This allows the authors to generate hypotheses about behavioural variation over time; for example, abrading techniques remained relatively unchanged. Some artefact uses are identified through comparison with ethnographically documented specimens, leading the editors to suggest that artefacts interpreted as lei nihoa palaoa, a status object worn by elites, signify the presence of chiefs at Nu‘alolo Kai.

In their concluding synthesis chapter the editors highlight the relatively small impact of subsistence behaviours on marine and bird fauna. While there is some evidence for pressure on these resources, they are largely stable over time. This resilience is attributed to ancient Hawaiian practices of “stewardship, which regulated production in order to maintain populations and reduce resource stress” (p. 199).

*Abundance and Resilience* is an excellent addition to the archaeology of Hawai‘i. The book is the first to realise the archaeological potential of the vast Nu‘alolo Kai collections and will be of interest to all students and scholars of Hawaiian prehistory and contemporary Native Hawaiian issues.


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Niue was annexed by New Zealand in 1901 and since independence in 1974 has been in a relationship of free association with New Zealand. In spite of these close ties, which go back more than 100 years, publications on the history of Niue have been few when compared with those on other Pacific Islands. However, that “to date, this