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FIFTY YEARS IN THE FIELD. ESSAYS IN HONOUR
AND CELEBRATION OF RICHARD SHUTLER JR'S
ARCHAEOLOGICAL CAREER

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Burley

REDISCOVERING THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF ANCESTRAL OCEANIC SOCIETIES THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY, LINGUISTICS AND ETHNOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

Among the large Austronesian family of languages, an adequate reconstruction of those ancestral societies that were speakers of Proto Oceanic will require information from the combined resources of at least three disciplines within anthropology. To do this one begins with the reconstruction of Proto Oceanic lexical forms and meanings supplied by historical linguistics. These are then integrated into a well-developed archaeology of the surviving and dated cultural elements of the earlier parts of the Lapita horizon. To them are added consideration of appropriate analogies and interpretations built from the comparative ethnology of a number of Oceanic speaking descendents in the regions of Near and Remote Oceania (Green and Pawley 1999; Hage 1999a:200). Given this mix of data sources, perhaps it is not surprising that an initial presentation of this paper (Green n.d.) in the hope of stimulating useful debate at a 1996 Lapita workshop in Port Vila, actually elicited minimal response among those present at that largely archaeological gathering.

Hage (1999a:220-221) outlines a number of reasons behind the sceptical to negative attitudes frequently expressed when these kinds of scholarly endeavours are undertaken, to which I have added others.

1. This method of reconstruction is rejected by some archaeologists because it is not understood (Bayard 1996; Pawley and Ross 1995:48-9).

2. Some archaeologists, and some anthropologists as well, have strong reservations regarding the application of historical linguistics to social relations as opposed to material culture (Dye 1987:445; Green 1994:183; Sutton 1990:450, 1996).

3. While there is a willingness among archaeologists to provide (with varying degrees of confidence) interpretations concerning the artefacts, ecofacts and structural features they routinely recover, many display pronounced hesitation when it comes to formulating inferences about the socio-political or religious realms in which those surviving remains were almost certainly embedded. As Gillespie (2000:467) remarks (citing Henderson and Sabloff 1993:450) "some uncertainty is predictable given the difficulty of understanding social organization from the archaeological record".

4. A few anthropologists reject historical linguistics in favour of purely typological approaches to cultural history (Hage 1999a:222). Hage cites the kinship essay by Marshall (1984) as one Oceanic example. In my view Goldman's (1970) book on the development of *Ancestral Polynesian Society* and its reconstruction based on a classification of its descendants would qualify as another major work of this kind that employed a rather minimal historical linguistic component.

5. Certain archaeologists find unacceptable any assertions that convincing associations can be established, either in the Pacific or more generally, between entities employed by archaeologists in their analyses and the quite different subgroupings and proto-lexicons used by historical linguists (Hunt *et al.* 1998; Smith 1995a, 1995b, 1999:7-17; Terrell 1986:243-254). An edited volume (Terrell 2001) provides a number of essays by scholars making this point for various regions in the world. Additional discussion focused on the Pacific, setting out for and against positions in this conflict-ridden domain, are to be found in Green (1994, 1997a:113, 1999), Bayard (1996), Bellwood (2000:8-9) and Kirch and Green (2001).

During the early 1970s it was still possible to eschew many aspects of the above debates. At that time, Richard Shutler, together with a graduate, Jeff Marck, explored the probable linkages between the several major subgroupings of Austronesian languages identified across the Pacific and certain early archaeological entities described from the same region (Shutler and Marck 1975). Pawley and Green (1973) had done the same, but with greater focus on the Oceanic region. Shutler was already well known for his useful overviews and interpretations of chronometric data across the Pacific as well as his analytical studies of several of its ceramic assemblages. The paper co-authored

with Marck, that combined archaeological information with linguistic data, signaled a fresh and innovative departure for this senior scholar in the Pacific (see Marck this volume). This became a field to which Marck (2000) continued to contribute. At the Port Vila conference, despite a seeming lack of interest among other archaeologists, Richard encouraged me to persevere with such holistic cultural history enterprises, just as he has done with Marck. That such ventures have been long standing concerns of his has been acknowledged also by Hayden (1983:132) when he was writing on this same topic two decades ago. Hence, in this paper I have expanded on the earlier initial theme in recognition of Richard's encouragement to explore further this important topic bearing on the nature of Lapita societies.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

Discussion of the social aspects of ancestral Oceanic societies may now be conducted within what are increasingly productive theoretical and methodological parameters. Thus, certain publications in this general topic area since my 1996 Port Vila presentation are here deemed to provide the kinds of frameworks that have helped to enhance a reworking of the paper. These are:

(a) The theoretical and methodological development in Oceania of a holistic approach to culture history, or an anthropology of long term history, allowing researchers to provide a fuller account of both the immediate and more remote past (Green 2000; Kirch and Green 1987; Kirch and Green 2001:13-91).

(b) An increased understanding of the importance of dialect chain modeling when attempting to combine archaeological constructs with language subgroups in Oceania (Green 1999; Pawley 1999; Pawley and Ross 1995:51-54; Ross 1997).

(c) The identification of seeming historically conservative societies within the Island Melanesian region of Oceania that can serve as instructive ethnographic analogs when interpreting Lapita horizon archaeology (Green and Pawley 1999). Such analogies must, of course, be joined with renewed inputs from those doing general comparative ethnology as a means of inferring the underlying and probably ancient systemic patterns common to the societies of Oceanic speaking peoples (Hage 1999a; Scaglion 1996).

(d) Books by Kirch (1997) and Spriggs (1997) which cover all aspects of the Lapita Cultural Complex including both historical linguistic and biological perspectives. Moreover, part of one chapter in the Kirch (1997:183-191) study is devoted to probable social arrangements within Lapita societies. In addition, both studies set out a growing

case for linking early Far Western Lapita with Proto Oceanic in Near Oceania along the lines proposed by Pawley and Ross (1993). A similar linkage, but with a later stage of Proto Oceanic, has most recently been forwarded by Green (1997b, 1999:11-13), Pawley (1999:115, 2001) and Blust (1999:70) in even more emphatic terms for Remote Oceania.

(e) A concept that many Malayo-Polynesian and Oceanic speaking societies, perhaps from their beginning, possessed social arrangements and groupings best understood under the rubric of house societies (Fox 1993; Pacific essays in Joyce and Gillespie 2000). Tentative claims along these lines have already been made for Lapita societies (Kirch 1997:143-144, 188-191) and stronger ones for those of Ancestral Polynesia (Kirch and Green 2001:201-218).

(f) A strategy seeking to improve an understanding of Lapita settlements, their dwellings and associated buildings through embedding them within a reconstructed Proto Oceanic lexicon for settlements and buildings throughout this region (Green 1998; Green and Pawley 1999). Of course, the dwellings constitute a physical manifestation of, as well as a focal point for, the residential social groups (conceived as a house society) who continue to occupy them over long periods.

Through the remainder of this essay, various of the above considerations are further expanded as a means to rediscovering the social arrangements that may be said to characterise ancestral Oceanic societies. These considerations also provide a sound substantive basis for countering the list of five identified reasons that are often seen to frustrate such enterprises. Most of these difficulties can, could or in fact have been overcome when set within an explicit and reasonably well-formulated conceptual framework.

ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS AND THE PROTO OCEANIC LEXICON

The references cited under (d) above provide sufficiently detailed arguments to allow one to deal fairly briefly with outlining the strength of the linkage between aspects of Proto Oceanic lexicons and those sites assigned to the Lapita Cultural Complex. Proto Oceanic, of course, refers to the nodal juncture where the primary branches of that linguistic subgroup began to break up into various lower level sub-groupings. Yet, Oceanic as a subgroup, as almost everybody recognises, possesses a rather rake-like form with little internal hierarchy among its primary branches, spread as they are over the whole zone from Near to Remote Oceania (Figure 1). This gives every indication that its dissolution derives from a once regionally extensive Proto Oceanic dialect chain.

Only on the Western end of the rake, in respect to the Admiralty Island subgroup of languages, has it even been
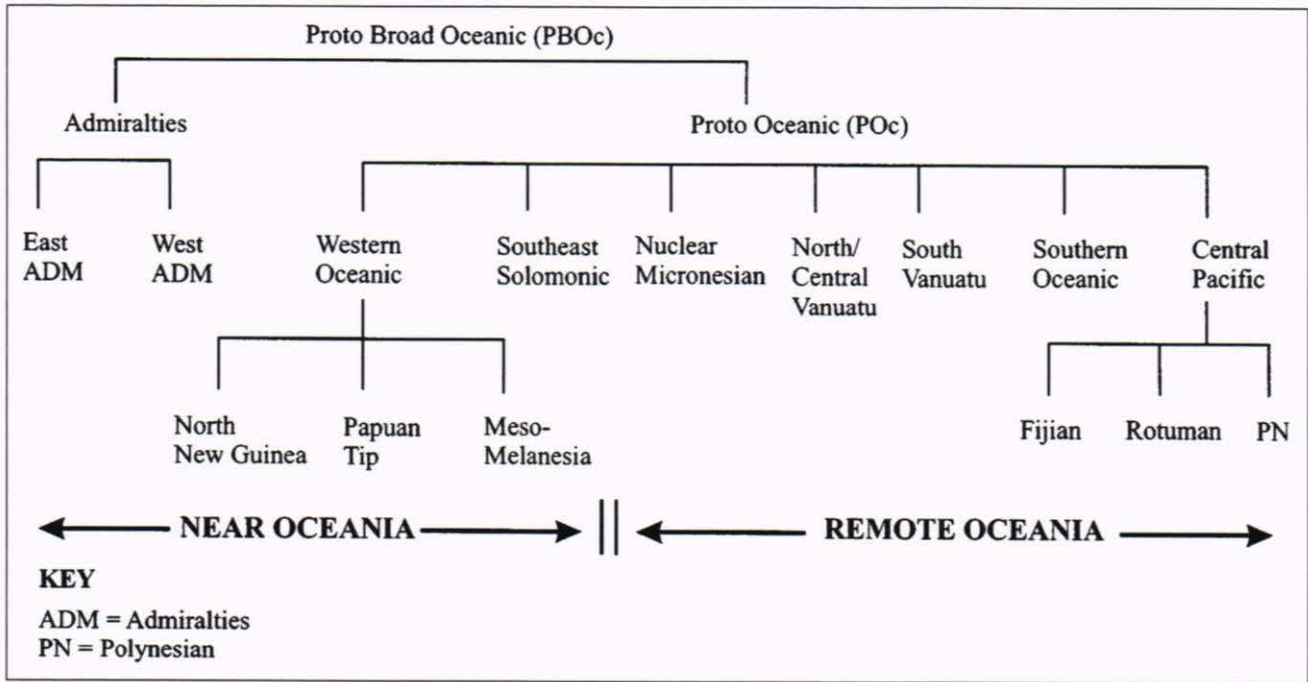
FIGURE 1. A diagram of the relation between the major subgroups of Oceanic resembles a rather "rake-like" family tree structure.

suggested that some degree of primary branch hierarchy is obtained. This gives rise to a "supergroup" called Broad Oceanic by Blust (1998). The position of the languages of the Mussau subgroup within this scheme also remains equivocal, largely for lack of data. But, the structure of the remaining Oceanic family tree points to a rapid linguistic movement from the eastern Bismarcks in Near Oceania across the southwest Pacific as far east as Fiji and Western Polynesia (Pawley 2001). This horizon-like character of the linguistic evidence, stemming from a dialect chain type spread, was recognised long ago by Pawley (1981) as according well with the equally horizon-like spread of Lapita. The latter appears to have stretched from the Bismarcks to Western Polynesia starting no later than 3300 to 3200 years ago and ending circa 2900 years ago.

Given this context, it should not be surprising that a representative sample of languages from Remote Oceania subgroups yields reconstructed forms of proto-phonology and a proto-morphosyntax that differ only slightly from those reconstructions based on a sample including the entire Oceanic subgroup (Pawley 2001). As a result, late stage Proto Oceanic (sometimes referenced as Proto Eastern Oceanic) is very like Proto Oceanic itself, implying only a short time interval in which no very great internal change has taken place. This is an important observation.

When one asks what languages were spoken by the Lapita colonisers of a previously unsettled region of Remote Oceania, it is extremely difficult to avoid the conclusion they belonged to the more easterly dialect clusters of late stage Proto Oceanic. In time, these became the various innovation-defined or innovation-linked subgroups now found in the zone from Vanuatu through New Caledonia and the Loyalties to Fiji and Western Polynesia. Throughout the region, from the time of first settlement, both the archaeological sequences and the linguistic trajectories exhibit continuity coupled with an increasing degree of divergence as one approaches the present.

One can leave the highly plausible (but certainly less secure) linkage of a pre-Broad Oceanic type language to the Far Western Lapita of Mussau and the Admiralties region for the future. Dates for Lapita may go back 3400 to 3500 years here (Kirch 2001). In that region, it will require further refinements to the linguistic and archaeological situations before the picture clarifies. Meanwhile, one can concentrate instead on the much stronger claims for sound linkages between Proto Oceanic social lexicons (especially late stage ones) reflecting aspects of Western and Eastern Lapita social arrangements as these are embedded within a surviving associated material culture.

PROPOSAL FOR WHAT WAS IN PEOPLE'S HEADS AT THE TIME OF PROTO OCEANIC

The arguments of the previous section become vital to this paper's objectives because much of what has been inferred

so far about Proto Oceanic speaking Lapita societies employs historical linguistic and comparative ethnological evidence. That is, the content refers very largely to what was in people's heads, and the social activities dependent on these ideological concepts – i.e. a concern with cultural beliefs and behaviour minimally, or perhaps not at all, represented in what archaeologists have actually found in the ground (Green 1994:183).

Earliest to be reconstructed was the kinship system (Milke 1958), something which most archaeologists would avoid attempting to infer from the durable remains they recover. This topic was taken up some years ago by an ethnologist (Marshall 1984) in the same year that it was also discussed in a paper by a linguist and archaeologist (Pawley and Green 1984). While Marshall, using a largely comparative ethnographic approach that treated the linguistic evidence rather lightly, drew a wrong conclusion as to the probable original kinship system (Type 3) for ancestral Oceanic speaking societies, others with training in historical linguistics who commented on the article quickly corrected this oversight. Marshall's numerical designation for what has now proven to be the ancestral system is Type 10. This is the same system that was obtained among ancestral Polynesian societies (Marck 1996; Kirch and Green 2001:221-223), which makes sense, because those derive from a Lapita based Proto Oceanic system through Eastern Lapita.

The Type 10 designation indicates that kinship arrangements among Western and Eastern Lapita era social groups were bifurcate merging for its +1 males and either bifurcate merging or generational for its +1 females (Hage 1999a:202, 1999b:368). In this respect, Proto Oceanic and Proto Polynesian sibling/cousin terminology would be that usually described in the older literature as a Hawaiian form of social organisation. Furthermore, every reason exists for these proposals, about the kind of kinship terminology and social organisation to be associated with Lapita and ancestral Oceanic societies, to endure and be built upon, notwithstanding the archaeological scepticism about the possibilities of making such inferences (Binford 1962:218-19).

Most comparative ethnologists agree that kin-based landholding descent groups were characteristic of the social arrangements among Proto Oceanic speakers and that there is sound linguistic, distributional and cross-cultural evidence for this view (Hage 1999a:202). The problem is in identifying a term used for referring to them and ascertaining whether they were unilinear or non-unilinear (cognatic). These issues are not so easily resolved. Hage (1999a:220) takes the position that "bifurcate merging kinship terms, as Rivers (1914) perceived, and as Murdock (1947) demonstrated, imply

the presence of unilineal descent groups". This conforms to an ethnographic observation about Island Melanesian societies: the principal kinds of descent units encountered there are typically unilinear (Hage 1999a:Table 4; Oliver 1989:1028). In contrast, those that are cognatic are concentrated largely among the Central Pacific speakers of Fiji, Rotuma and Polynesia.

When the switch from the unilineal descent groups of ancestral Oceanic societies to those of cognatic descent groups in Polynesia took place is unresolved (Hage 1998a; Kirch and Green 2001:214, 225, 304), though for *kainanga it may have been sometime following the Ancestral Polynesian stage. On the matter of whether descent in the ancestral Oceanic and Polynesian groups was matrilineal or patrilineal even Hage (1999a:220), who has explored the issue in the greatest depth, prefers to leave the question undecided. Still, on existing comparative ethnographic and historical linguistic evidence he would favour the former choice (Hage 1998b).

Given our current understandings about primary level subgroups within Proto Oceanic, it is reasonable to attribute the proto-form *kainanga (meaning a land-holding descent unit) to a late eastern stage within the subgroup. This is based on the data for daughter language reflexes for the term in Nuclear Micronesia and a firm reconstruction for it in Proto Polynesian (Chowning 1991:62). However, two occurrences of a cognate reflex in north Vanuatu, one in Namakir [kainang] and the other in Nguna [kainanga] are, as Chowning (1991:62) suspected, borrowings from neighbouring Polynesian Outlier languages (Clark 1994:132; Osmond pers. comm. July 2001). Unfortunately, they can not be used, as one might have hoped, to strengthen the soundness of that reconstruction as belonging to a late stage of Proto Oceanic. Thus far, no other reflexes for *kainanga have been identified among the languages of Fiji or eastern Island Melanesia to assist in that deduction. Nor have any reflexes been found within the homeland region to the west where Oceanic languages occur (Hage 1999a:203; Blust, pers. comm. July 2001; Osmond pers. comm. July 2001) that might extend *kainanga to an earlier stage of Proto Oceanic. This poses a significant drawback to giving it Proto Oceanic status, much less Broad Oceanic status, as a lexical reconstruction referring to the ancestral Oceanic descent group. It is also difficult to say at present just when *kainanga became associated with the inferred presence of unilineal descent groups discussed above and attributable to the Lapita societies of Remote Oceania. Certainly an inference for the presence of *kainanga by the time of Eastern Lapita in 900 B.C. seems secure because societies with Proto Polynesian social groups using that term continue on into the Ancestral Polynesian

stage of 600 B.C. and after. A conjecture about the *Rumaq* that may further help to resolve this problem is offered below.

The category of "house-based societies" envisioned on a worldwide scale by Levi-Strauss typifies the ethnographic region of Island Southeast Asia (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Joyce and Gillespie 2000; Waterson 1990). How far back they extend into the Island Southeast Asian past is at present unknown. Still, it is not unlikely that they extend as far back as Austronesian beginnings during the Malayo-Polynesian stage dated to 4000 to 4500 years ago (Fox 1993; Green 1998). Kirch and Green (2001:201-218) have argued in some detail that the ancestral social groupings within Polynesian culture around 2600 to 2000 years ago should also be interpreted as "house-based societies". Thus it makes sense, as Kirch (1997:188-191) has tentatively done, to propose that early Lapita social arrangements of 3300 to 3000 years ago, from which the Polynesian ones derive, also constituted small scale societies with the concept of "house" conceived socially as one of their organising components. However, Hage (1999a:205) may be right to take exception to Kirch's further suggestion that such house-based social groups were at that time organised cognatically.

Employing the "house" concept, the application to Lapita societies currently being canvassed has been summarised along the following lines set out by Hage (1999b:205):

> "For Austronesianists (J. J. Fox 1993) a "house" refers to a social group identified with a dwelling. The group is often named and in possession of a landed estate and immaterial property including titles, and ceremonies. Affiliation may be through birth but also through marriage or adoption. Typically, a house has "origins," often conceived in a botanical idiom, and rituals focused on ancestors" (see also Levi-Strauss 1983:184-7).

Some Pacific archaeologists have advanced a claim that those portions of domestic structures whose features they recover, whether built on stilts or directly on the ground, are the remains of *Rumaq*, the Proto Oceanic term for domicile or dwelling (Green 1998; Green and Pawley1999:77-81; Kirch 1997:168-186). Importantly, that word in the Oceanic languages constitutes a continuation of the Proto Malayo-Polynesian term (and therefore the dwelling form as well) from Southeast Asia. As a physical focus for the social group, such residences are deemed to have some of the Austronesian house-based society characteristics outlined above. This applies especially to rituals conducted within them involving

ancestors represented by decorated pots with anthropomorphic face designs (Kirch 1997:132-144) and to central house posts that functioned as ritual attractors (Fox 1993:20-23; Green 1998:264; Green and Pawley 1999:81).

Rumaq dwelling structures, however, do not extend ethnographically or archaeologically into Polynesia. Instead, they are replaced physically by Proto Polynesian forms of domicile called *fale* (Green 1998). And it is these which are most closely associated with a widespread Polynesian type of social grouping (acting in that region as one focus of a house society), this time designated by the innovation of a new term for such a residential group – the Proto Polynesian *kainga*.

It follows, as Goodenough (1955:81-82) suggested, that two types of kin group associated with land have become characteristic of Oceanic societies because they have proved adaptive with regard to fluctuations in group size relative to often rather constrained land resources. "One was an unrestricted descent group, while membership in the other was determined by parental residence". The implication from ethnography and distribution is that both types were initially present at some stage among many ancestral Oceanic societies. At the later eastern stage of Proto Oceanic the *kainanga* would appear to satisfy the larger descent group ascription, as it does also in Ancestral Polynesian societies, precisely as argued by Goodenough. On the other hand, reconstructing a proto-form for the local residential social unit with its linked and named estate – comparable to the Proto Polynesian *kainga* – has proven unsuccessful. This is because a seemingly appropriate set of widespread cognate reflexes with this meaning has yet to be identified among the ethnographic Oceanic speaking societies of Island Melanesia. What named category might once have filled that role?

My conjecture is that *Rumaq* in Oceanic societies may have once functioned in this fashion. This conjecture is substantively based on observations by Fox (1980a:234) and Blust (1980:211) concerning the common use of a reflex of *Rumaq* not just for a physical entity, a domicile or dwelling, but also for a "descent group of a varying segmentary order" (Fox 1980b:16). That kind of usage is very pronounced among the societies of eastern Indonesia, the presumed source region for the Oceanic subgroup of languages and the Lapita Cultural Complex. Elsewhere in Island Southeast Asia, such examples are far fewer and scattered, and among them the limited number of references to a descent group meaning for *Rumaq* are often only figurative or metaphorical. Thus the evidence supporting the proposition that Malayo-Polynesian societies in their entirety were initially built on a descent group foundation remains equivocal.

In his most recent statement Blust (1995:497-498) reaffirms his earlier conclusion that Proto Malayo-Polynesian society probably had descent groups designated as corporate kin categories defined through reference to an apical ancestor. Fox (1994:138), however, is sceptical that early Austronesian-speaking societies (outside perhaps those of eastern Indonesia) were built around such social arrangements, as ethnographically those Southeast Asian communities overwhelmingly exhibit a kind of bilaterality that is difficult to reconcile with any descent group or prescriptive alliance hypothesis. Thus, in early Austronesian it may be that descent groups were largely a Proto Eastern Malayo-Polynesian characteristic that continued into Proto Oceanic societies under the rubric of *Rumaq.

In this context, a unilineal or even cognatic descent group consisting of a localised landholding unit of substantial duration and its named dwelling seems to me a productive proposition for the kinds of social arrangements that obtained at the Proto Oceanic and Broad Oceanic level. It would constitute a second meaning for *Rumaq in addition to domicile, where no other term for an enduring residential kin-based social group can presently be proposed or reconstructed.

If correct, what would appear to be remnants of this second kind of social group meaning should survive somewhere among Oceanic speaking societies. They appear to do so west from the central Solomons. The examples are Baegu with *lumaa* as 'the collective body of wife's consanguineal kinsmen', cognate with other northern Malaita groups' use of *luma* as meaning both 'woman's family' and 'the dwelling house' (Hage 1999a:218; Ross 1973:120). They also include the Lau *luma* meaning 'family house, house for married people' and the Arosi *ruma* meaning both 'house' and 'family' (Blust 1987:93) as well as the Kwaio *luma'lana*, a collective term for 'affinal kin or their descent group' (Osmond pers. comm. July 2001). Under this hypothesis, at a late stage within Proto Oceanic a second term *kainanga developed to designate a socially more inclusive segmentary descent group of a unilineal character also useful for holding land in addition to the *Rumaq. Social groups of the *kainanga type are still known in the societies of eastern Micronesia and Polynesia. However that earlier term has now seemingly been replaced or lost in other societies of the eastern Island Melanesia region.

Early in the debate about Lapita and Austronesian and ancestral Oceanic societies, Hayden (1983) examined two contrasting models, an egalitarian one and a stratified one. His assumption was that a stratified (or, as he called it on occasion, "incipiently" stratified) community best satisfied the evidence then available. The capital investment by leaders, who could command significant resources to undertake the construction of boats and sail them over long distances, plus the economic trade specialisation which they helped to underpin, were for him (at the time he was writing) the most powerful reasons for preferring that choice. More recently the arguments for a stratified model have turned to linguistic and distributional evidence. They turn on the terminological marking of, rather than the absence of, hereditary status in ancestral Oceanic society. Here the information from Malayo-Polynesian societies proves of little help, for as Blust (1995:500) admits, cognate linguistic forms that would enable one to infer Proto Malayo-Polynesian terminology reflecting social stratification are few and semantically ambiguous. Not only are Malayo-Polynesian proto-forms suggesting hereditary status not able to be reconstructed, but the ethnographic and distributional evidence for ranking within those Southeast Asian societies is itself indicative only of it being an "old feature", though not necessarily one present during initial stages. By way of contrast, in Oceanic speaking societies a sufficient number of widely-spaced instances occur throughout the region, among those communities where hereditary status is marked, to allow two Proto Oceanic terms – *tala(m)pat and *adiki – to be reconstructed and meanings for each proposed.

The proto-form *tala(m)pat is almost certainly of Broad Proto Oceanic status since it is found as a reflex, *lapan*, in the Admiralty Islands languages with the meaning of ascribed hereditary status (Otto 1994:226). Prior to the inclusion of this reflex in the corpus, the debate was whether *tala(m)pat meant, as its literal meaning implied, a big or great person serving as a leader (Lichtenberk 1986:353), or whether it referred to a person of hereditary chiefly rank as in Arosi (Pawley 1982). Hage (1999a:207) has used the additional linguistic evidence from Manus, plus other instances from Nuclear Micronesian languages, to sum up the current basis for establishing the meaning of this proto-form, "In terms of distribution, hereditary leadership is found in societies belonging to every major sub-group of the OC [Oceanic] language family".

In the scenario outlined above, *tala(m)pat would at the earliest stage have provided the hereditary leaders for the *Rumaq conceptualised as a descent group. At that stage, their effective leadership probably depended on their ongoing achievements as well as ascription, as Hage (1999a:209,218) notes for Baegu and Manus communities. With the development of the two levels of kin groups in the more easterly Proto Oceanic societies (see above), *tala(m)pat became the reference for leaders of *kainanga, as they still are today in Nuclear Micronesian societies (Hage and Harry 1996). In this context it is worth

noting that the reconstruction of *patu* may in fact be extended back to a late stage of Proto Oceanic on the evidence of reflexes for it in the languages of the Southeast Solomon Islands. Kirch and Green (2001:231-234) have proposed that Proto Polynesian *fatu* served as leaders of *kainga* in ancestral Polynesian society. In my view, highly esteemed elders marked out by this designation may also have filled such residential leadership roles for *Rumaq* social groups during an eastern Proto Oceanic stage when the two level kin group system obtained in the eastern Island Melanesian region.

Late stage Oceanic *adiki* in its Proto Polynesian form of *qariki* possessed the meaning of leaders acting as chiefs and priests in Ancestral Polynesian societies (Kirch and Green 2001:247-8). Before that, depending largely on its meaning in Arosi [and also Bauro], Pawley (1982) had proposed *adiki* initially meant son of a chief. However, Lichtenberk (1986:353) has shown this chiefly sense should in fact be excluded for any earlier meaning. His preference is for "oldest child" as a likely designation. Furthermore, in late stage Proto Oceanic it is his view that when *adiki* was preceded by the personal proper article *qa*, it was thought to have functioned as a kinship term. Chowning (1991:63), in reviewing his claims, found neither of these attributed meanings entirely convincing, particularly that for a Proto Oceanic *qa diki* functioning as a kinship term. She suggests instead – "child (not 'offspring'), especially girl" – as one of the equally plausible interpretations of a probable meaning for *adiki*. In addition, Chowning cites additional information from New Britain and elsewhere of what she regards as other potential reflexes with this meaning – ones beginning with a consonant implying an earlier stage Proto Oceanic form – *kadiki*. However, Lichtenberk (pers. comm. October 2001), in working through these, is able to show all these additional suggested reflexes encounter sufficient formal problems in relation to regular sound correspondences to make it unlikely they are in fact truly cognate forms.

Once the uncertainties raised by Chowning are removed, it would appear something of error, based on Pawley's initial analysis, to assume that Proto Oceanic societies began with both the term *tala(m)pat* for a hereditary leader and *adiki* for a son likely to ascend to that status. While initially it was appealing as a quite satisfying proposition, it has proven not to be one that is particularly well supported. Better supported is a viewpoint that the proto-form *tala(m)pat* can be firmly attributed to Far Western Lapita societies of 3300 years ago, whereas *adiki*, present only in reflexes from Polynesia and languages of the Southeast Solomons, might have constituted a somewhat later addition. This latter innovation would have taken place during the subsequent few centuries when Western Lapita colonists

moved into Remote Oceania. Shortly thereafter *tala(m)pat* as the foundational term for hereditary leaders in Proto Oceanic societies was replaced by *sau* in the ancestral Central Pacific societies at the time of Eastern Lapita around 900 B.C.. The hereditary leadership role was next taken over by *qariki* as the chief and priests in the societies of ancestral Polynesia of 600 B.C. and after. In contrast, at about the same time, *sau* and *turanga* came to distinguish such leaders in Fiji, as they still do.

From the above it would seem a reasonable deduction that *adiki* did in fact designate an oldest child at a late stage in Proto Oceanic. This is in keeping with the seniority in status given to firstborns, a common Oceanic feature especially prominent in Polynesia (Kirch 1997:65; Kirch and Green 2001:225-226). It also expresses the over-riding concern with rank based on birth order that Bellwood (1996:24) sees as occurring throughout the Austronesian world. That practice acts as a mainspring for what he calls founder-focused ideology and founder rank enhancement, particularly important during the colonisation process.

Overall it would appear that the formative basis for descent lines, stratification, ranking and hereditary leadership in ancestral Oceanic societies were laid in its founding communities as Hayden (1983:125) correctly assumed. They have been further modified along several trajectories ever since, sometimes leading to full-fledged highly hierarchical chiefly societies, but just as often not, leading rather to societies exhibiting only some or even none of those attributes. However, as Scaglion (1996:10-11) demonstrated, there is within the region of Oceania a strong association between language affiliation and leadership type in this part of the Pacific. Thus among the Oceanic Austronesian speaking societies he surveys, 52 are reported with "chiefs" and 21 without them, while among the non-Austronesian societies the numbers were 3 only with "chiefs" and 75 without. He comments:

> "If we do accept a "chiefly" base for Proto-Austronesian [Oceanic] society and an "egalitarian" one for non-Austronesian societies, the influences seem to be moving primarily in one direction. That is, some Austronesian societies seem to have "lost" strong elements of ascriptive leadership, perhaps because of new environments (either ecological or social), whereas non-Austronesian societies seem only rarely to have "adopted" chiefly models" (Scaglion 1996:11).

INFERENCES FROM EXCAVATION DATA BEARING ON LAPITA SOCIAL ORGANISATION

A reasonably complex picture of various aspects of social formations within ancestral Oceanic societies emerges from
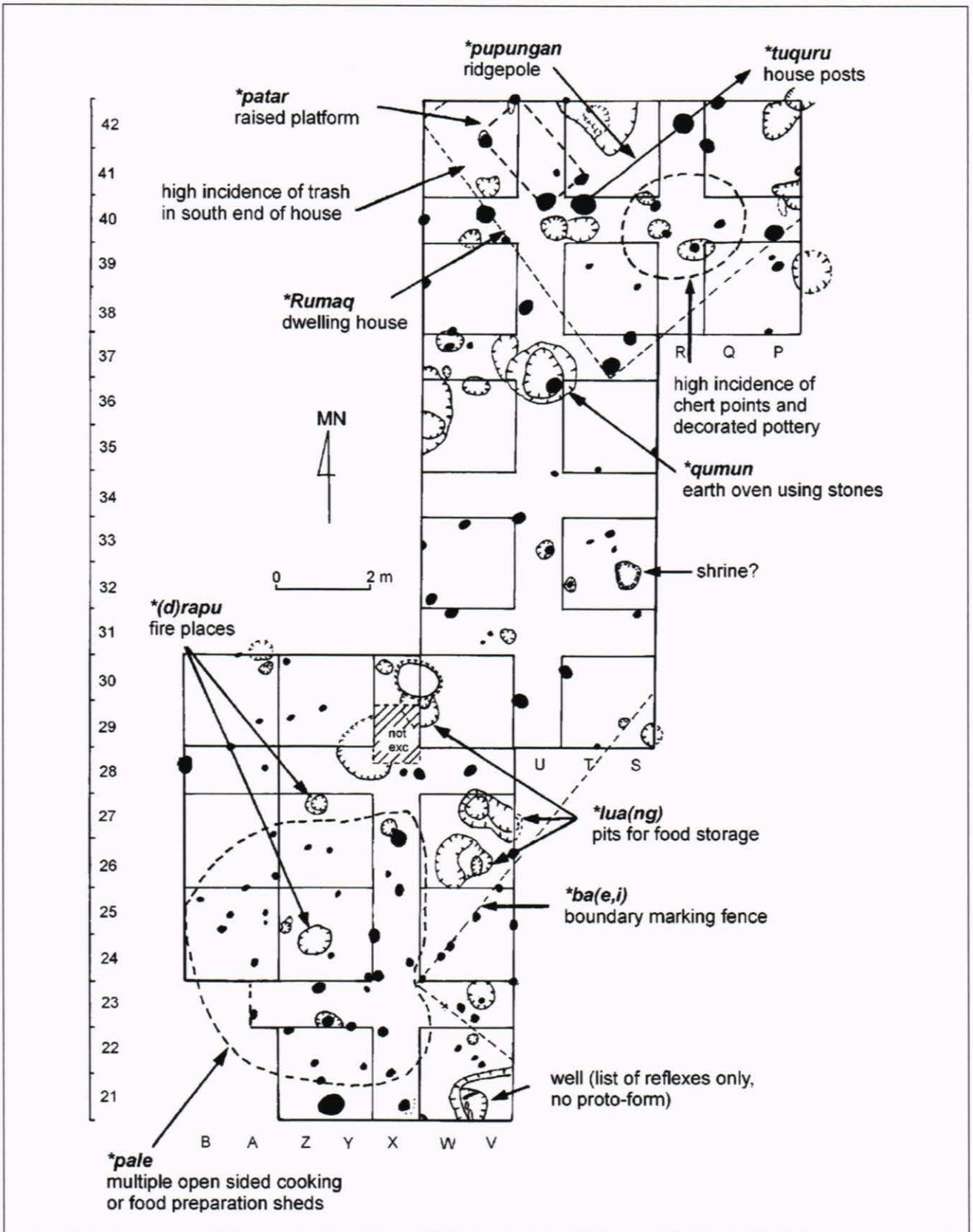
FIGURE 2. Plan of structural features for the excavated area of the Nenumbo Lapita site with a functional interpretation of them related to Oceanic proto-forms carrying that meaning.

the non-archaeological data outlined in the previous section. In contrast, what can be inferred about them more directly from arguments based on Lapita archaeology proves to be rather limited. Although in the social-political realm this is to be expected (Green 1994:183), it is unfortunate that what is available from excavation is even more curtailed by the kinds of investigations usually undertaken in Lapita sites. Only a few of these have been of a kind to reveal information about settlement pattern arrangements within a site or about micro-patterning in the content and features found within dwellings and other structures.

The archaeological case for Lapita being a kind of "house-based society" rests on the identification of certain of the residential units present in Lapita sites being examples of dwellings called *Rumaq, and *Rumaq in turn having a primary role as the focus of a local residentially-based social group. The first part of that case has been made by Kirch (1997:183-188), and by Green and Pawley (1999). The best demonstration derives from a large area excavation within the Nenumbo Lapita site in the main Reef Islands (Figure 2). The plan exhibits a large number of the elements, both within a sizable rectangular *Rumaq dwelling and by structural features elsewhere within that settlement, which can be associated through their function with a range of terms according to the meaning for them in Proto Oceanic.

Kirch (1997:191) succinctly states the second part of the argument along the lines covered in the previous section: "Given the pervasiveness of the "house" as a social concept of fundamental organisational significance throughout the Austronesian-speaking world.... For the early Lapita colonisers in the Bismarcks, the *Rumaq was probably not just a physical dwelling, but also the basic social unit with which they affiliated".

One other archaeological aspect of the Nenumbo site bears comment. There, the total hamlet-sized occupation zone of 800 to 1000 square metres contained only a single centrally located residential structure, though its size was fairly generous at 7 by 14 metres. Other sites, where there have been intensive surface surveys of potsherd distribution (like that of Lakeba in Fiji), reveal larger village-sized sites in the 9500 to 13000 square metre size range. They are best interpreted as simply larger communities with multiple dwelling houses, their associated utilitarian buildings and other features (Green and Pawley 1999:78, and Fig.1.10; for stilt-house settlements see also Kirch 1997:173-174). The clear implication is that residential structures were the focus of Lapita settlements as well as their domestic and social activities. In no Lapita sites have indications of other large structural types with different social or religious functions been found, much less monumental constructions in stone

for various purposes, to compete with the ubiquitous evidence for wooden structures revealed by postholes defining buildings with residential or cooking functions.

Finally, there is some hint from the zone in the Talepakemalai site with housing on stilt platforms that some differentiation among its residential structures may be in evidence. This relates to the co-occurrence of a bone figurine bearing a human face motif, together with several ceramic vessels exhibiting elaborate facial designs and finally a substantial range of shell exchange valuables, in the depositional zone from one of these stilt-houses. It suggests this dwelling had "particular social significance" (Kirch 1997:140).

Hayden (1983:128), in my view, rather overplayed the explanation that the strongest argument for stratification in Lapita was "the long distance economic trade specialisation" which benefited the elites who controlled it. Certainly he was right to think it dubious the inhabitants of Lapita communities were just exchanging common staples, rather than being "purveyors of highly access-restricted, unusual goods, primitive valuables, or specialty items" – which people with status sought for themselves and their followers. However, our understanding of Lapita exchange systems has further deepened since the appearance of Hayden's essay (for a summary see Green and Kirch 1997).

Still, on the evidence now available, it seems possible to argue that Lapita exchange systems accommodated two modes of transactions. One consisted of valuables, including some probable luxury goods (such as muscovite-garnet-schist used perhaps as glitter in body paint) and a certain range of shell ornaments usually viewed ethnographically as items of high worth (Kirch 1988). To these may be added certain kinds of stone adze/axes manufactured in local centres where greenish and other high-grade metamorphic rocks occur that become more widely distributed through exchange. Other valuables would include blocks of very useful hard isotropic rocks transported over long distances - the sources of which are highly restricted - for making utilitarian flake tools of obsidian and chert, and on occasion decorated pots whose contents remain uncertain transported over shorter routes. The other mode consisted of more utilitarian items such as oven stones or pottery vessels that were part of short distance exchanges, especially where suitable rocks or clay were absent in local environments. Thus, I would sum up Lapita exchange systems as exhibiting two categories under the control of selected individuals. The more valuable among its components yielded a certain degree of economic power for people of status, though not to the extent implied by Hayden under the rubric of trade goods.

The existence of the long-distance exchange networks is directly inferred from the archaeological data. They

underpin the occurrence of another category of remains, which unfortunately seldom endure, but were almost certainly present nonetheless. This is the Oceanic canoe complex, the details of which Pawley and Pawley (1998) have offered from reconstructions using historical linguistics and comparative ethnography. The inferences for sea-going vessels had earlier furnished a second line of argument for Hayden (1983:127), "capable of reliably and repeatedly making trips of several hundred or thousand kilometres in the open ocean". His argument is this:

> "Large long distance boats cannot be built and sailed safely and effectively without clearly defined hierarchies of command and responsibilities. It would require individuals of considerable wealth and power to successfully complete these construction projects, not to mention maintaining the sailing enterprises with skilled navigators and repairmen as noted by early observers" (Hayden 1983:127).

More recently, Ambrose (1997:533) has further amplified the point of just how major an undertaking it was to construct, launch, maintain and beach, as well as sail, such large sea-going vessels. He makes the additional observation about both the organisational skills in directing a range of specialised personnel, and the ceremonial intervals that needed requiting with food exchanges, in undertaking such an enterprise. Bellwood (1996:31) too has made comments along these lines in respect to similar requirements for founding elites being in authority while constructing and sailing these craft and settling new islands. As a result, in a house society, these voyaging vessels would represent significant items of moveable property and capital; they would be as important as the immovable domiciles situated on their estates. Altogether these intersecting lines of inference constitute a strong argument supporting the presence of elite leaders, along the lines suggested in the previous section. Their positions may have been ascribed, but it was the individual's achievements in long-distance voyaging, in settling new lands, and in facilitating the accompanying and subsequent exchanges which sustained their status.

In relation to this topic, one needs in addition to cite the lexical item from historical linguistics of the one lexically marked category of specialist that can be reconstructed, though only for a late stage of Proto Oceanic. This is *tau-tasik with the meaning 'expert fisherman or sailor, mariner' (Pawley and Pawley 1998: 207-8). Other specialists within ancestral Oceanic societies are implied by archaeology (such as skilled potters, tattooists, or makers of bark cloth, each employing the Lapita design system as known from its occurrence on the decorated pots), yet seem to have gone unmarked linguistically. However, they too would have constituted selected personnel holding socially differentiated positions in the community. Therefore, starting with the elaborate nature of the decoration on the pots recovered through archaeology, one can argue for a certain degree of social distinction among various craft specialists within the local Lapita societies.

DISCUSSION

In the previous section a circumscribed amount of evidence deriving from archaeology, and especially from inferences based upon it, has been canvassed. In general, the inferences fit with the non-archaeological information addressed in a prior section bearing on social arrangements in ancestral Oceanic societies. What has not been commented on is data that do not conform, especially if the claim is made, as some writers occasionally do (cf. Scaglion 1996:7), that these societies were already hierarchically ordered chiefdoms. Given what we know of Lapita archaeology, the evidence for this is not present in the form of monumental architecture or other aspects of the built environment. Nor is it there in burial grounds exhibiting hierarchical relations among individuals, nor is it reflected in a potting industry turning out particular forms of high status ceramic vessels for trade or reserved for the sole use of elites. Thus it seems quite unwarranted to declare Lapita societies constituted fully developed chiefdoms.

One way out of this dilemma would be as follows. Earle (1987) observes that many sedentary pre-state societies have been called chiefdoms because of their hereditary ranking. "Yet, their small population sizes, often well below a thousand, would require them to be considered not as a sample of chiefdoms, but as "tribal" variants on a local group level" (1987:288). This would appear a better fit with Lapita archaeology and with what has been advanced for Lapita and ancestral Oceanic societies in this essay. However, problems arise with the use of the term 'tribal'.

At this point one can adopt a strategy advocated by Renfrew and Bahn (1991:157):

> "The term "tribe," implying a larger grouping of smaller units, carries with it the assumption that these communities share a common ethnic identity and self-awareness, which is now known not generally to be the case. The term "segmentary society" refers to a relatively small and autonomous group, usually of agriculturists, who regulate their own affairs: in some cases, they may join together with other comparable segmentary societies to form a larger ethnic unit or "tribe;" in other cases they do not".

These remarks again would appear to conform in high degree with what is presently known or has been claimed

in relation to the Lapita Cultural Complex. Few would claim it represents either a tribe or involves some other unified large scale ethnic unit rather than a number of them, hence the use of the term Lapita peoples rather than Lapita people (Kirch 1997:18).

What then of the word hierarchical? Yet again, an alternative is at hand: "heterarchical". The history of this concept is sketched in an essay by Crumley (1995) introducing a volume of essays which employ the term for a variety of societies, ancient and modern. One essay in the volume even begins with the ethnographically known trading networks in the west Caroline Islands and the Trobriands, regions in Oceania deemed by most to have had chiefs, yet these are seen to be heterarchical (Small 1995). This essay concludes with "A heterarchical frame has given us an alternative path to social complexity, one that does not assume it is measured on a scale of increasing fixed hierarchy" (Small 1995:82). The heterarchical framework, it would seem, constitutes yet another way of analysing small segmentary societies who perhaps possess only selected elements of social ranking. Basically, what one assumes is a fluid or flexible system of status marking within different sections of the society that do not necessarily strongly align one with another. Thus, they fail to constitute a single integrated hierarchical order, at least not during the early stages of their development. It means they need not entail a homogenisation or streamlining of the whole social field to focus on one individual, "the chief" ruling over a highly structured and fairly large scale socio-political entity that could therefore quite legitimately be designated a chiefdom.

CONCLUSION

How then would I conclude? Ancestral Oceanic societies were more probably heterarchical than hierarchical, and they were segmentary. As such, they were not often tribal (in the ethnic sense) over any great region, and certainly not from Near Oceania to Remote Oceania, the region covered by the Lapita Cultural Complex. They consisted of rather small populations, numbering in the hundreds at most. At the local residential group level these were organised into social entities, perhaps called *Rumaq, living in dwellings almost certainly called *Rumaq.

Social arrangements in these communities in relation to kinship followed a Hawaiian form in their structure, and the descent groups based upon them were unilineal in their formation. The hereditary leaders of these descent groups were called *tala(m)pat. Call this proposed reconstruction a chiefdom if you wish, but in my view such complex social forms came later. Moreover, societies that were eventually constituted as full chiefdoms developed a number of times in different places throughout the Oceanic region during

quite different temporal intervals. When they did achieve this status, they employed a range of innovated terms to designate the chiefly leaders within these particular societies rather than a mutually shared inherited form.

An early change from the presumed least complicated situation obtaining at the Proto Oceanic level is the postulated differentiation of these ancestral Oceanic societies in a few centuries into the two levels of kin grouping inferred with a fair degree of certainty for the late Proto Oceanic stage. One was the unrestricted descent group and the other was one whose membership was determined by parental residence. This seems to have occurred among those societies represented by Lapita when its colonising populations became the founding inhabitants of the island groups throughout western Remote Oceania. One segment among them laid the basis for later social formations found among Fijian societies, and permutations in other segments provided the basis for the societies of New Caledonia, Vanuatu, and eastern Micronesia. These are, of course, the very regions in Island Melanesia from which much of the ethnographic literature on the chief and a history of interest in its "traditional chiefs" derives (Scaglion 1996:1-2). Yet other trajectories led to chiefdoms with varying degrees of hierarchy in Polynesia where the interest in their development has been a longstanding theme.

More broadly, as Rousseau (2001:121) seeks to demonstrate, ideological factors in the formation of chiefly leadership have proven to be as important as ecological, economic and demographic variables. Thus "we should not be surprised that many Austronesian societies experimented with hereditary stratification, because the notion of hierarchy was already part of their cultural baggage".

What happened in the Near Oceanic region is not yet so clear, but apparently trajectories there followed a far more complicated set of pathways. Recent proposals for the development of a chiefdom in the Roviana region of the central Solomon Islands give us some insight into when and how this kind of very late development might have occurred in that particular region (Sheppard et al. 2000). Elsewhere, as in the Trobriands, societies led by chiefs took on other forms at quite different intervals in time. At other periods and in other places no such developments occurred, and leadership in these Oceanic-speaking societies gravitated instead into the hands of "big men" rather than hereditary leaders.

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