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ROGER GREEN IN FRENCH POLYNESIA AND SAMOA: CONTEXT AND LEGACY

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At Roger Green's memorial service in Auckland in October 2009 I spoke about his early years in the Pacific, and particularly his fieldwork in French Polynesia and Western Samoa. In this further tribute, I will consider the contexts in which those field projects took place, and touch on the legacy that resulted.

I have written elsewhere about the various intellectual influences on Roger's approach to archaeology and prehistory (Davidson 1999). Suffice it to say here that Roger began his career in the American Southwest, studying anthropology and geology at the University of New Mexico, and moved to Harvard to undertake graduate studies. There he was much influenced by archaeologist Gordon Willey's work on method and theory and specifically on settlement pattern studies. But it was social anthropologist Douglas Oliver who was responsible for turning Roger in the direction of the Pacific. As legend has it, Roger and fellow student Kwang-Chih Chang were charged with reporting on archaeology to Oliver's Polynesian seminar; when Roger commented that there could not be much in Polynesia if that's how bad it was, Oliver retorted "you haven't even been there and you've made up your mind". A few weeks later, Oliver called Roger into his office and offered him the opportunity to work in the Pacific (Davidson 1996: 9).

Although Oliver was a social anthropologist, he had a significant influence in Pacific archaeology in the 1950s (Davidson 2008: 11). He assisted Roger to obtain the Fulbright Scholarship that first brought him to New Zealand, provided the opportunity for Roger to carry out a settlement pattern survey on Mo'orea as part of his own long-running project in the Society Islands, which was then just beginning and, through his contacts with other influential scholars interested in the Pacific, in this case Harry Shapiro of the American Museum of Natural History, arranged funding for Roger to work in Mangareva and later

to carry out excavations to provide time depth to the settlement pattern of the 'Opunohu Valley on Mo'orea.

Fieldwork in French Polynesia

In 1959, when Roger was in Auckland on his Fulbright Scholarship, immersing himself in New Zealand archaeology while preparing for his settlement pattern study on Mo'orea, he received word that funding was available through the American Museum of Natural History for a six month archaeological project in Mangareva. The broad objective was to find a site or sites to excavate to provide time depth for the baseline studies of Emory (1939) and Hiroa (1938). So Roger and his wife Kaye cut short their stay in New Zealand and headed for their first Pacific adventure. Roger was 27 and Kaye was 20. In Pape'ete, Shapiro had arranged for them to meet the Reasons, who owned land in Mangareva and were supportive of the proposed archaeological work. The Reasons' young son John went to Mangareva with them as interpreter. Assured that they could acquire anything they would need in Mangareva, Roger and Kaye embarked with six dozen cabin biscuits (always useful in the Pacific) and a couple of packets of raisins, only to find that other necessities, such as chocolate, were not in fact available. Kaye made sure that nothing like this happened on any of their subsequent fieldwork. They were joined in the field in Mangareva by Donald S. McClain and his wife (who brought much needed supplies, including confectionary). McClain was a member of the Explorer's Club of New York and had provided the funds for the expedition to the American Museum of Natural History in return for being able to take part in the project. Six sites were excavated, the most important a stratified rock shelter on the small uninhabited island of Kamaka, where the field party camped, cooking in one cave and excavating in another. This site on Kamaka provided a sequence from about AD 1200 until the beginning of contact with Europeans in the early 1800s. Radiocarbon dates and comparison of artefacts enabled deposits at five other sites to be linked to the sequence established in the rock shelter.

After the excavations on Mangareva, Roger carried out his survey of the many structural sites in the 'Opunohu Valley and did some initial excavations in the valley and in coastal sites (Figure 1). This time, Oliver provided the contacts, arranging for Roger to meet Nai of Papato'ai Village, who would provide a house for him and Kaye, organise the workforce and act as foreman. In Tahiti and Mo'orea, Roger and Kaye were not on their own, but part of Oliver's ongoing programme, with a base house in Pape'ete, occupied at the time by Oliver's student Paul Kay and wife Patsy. This was large enough to accommodate others of Oliver's students and visiting researchers and academics

passing through Pape'ete. There were contacts with French researchers, such as Michel and Yvette Julien, and local residents such as Bengt Danielsson. Oliver himself came and went. Funding for the Opunohu survey came from American Academy of Arts and Sciences; the excavations in the valley and in coastal middens on Mo'orea were again funded by the American Museum of Natural History with sponsorship from Donald McClain.



Figure 1. Roger flat out excavating at site ScMo158D in the 'Opunohu Valley in 1962. Nai is at left rear; the other workers are Roland, Hua and Leo.

The principal area of investigation, the 'Opunohu Valley, is at the head of the 'Opunohu Bay.

The entrance to the valley is more than 3 km from Papato'ai and the first sites perhaps another kilometre inland, while the furthest inland are about 7 km from the village. In 1960, Roger and Kaye variously cycled or travelled by outrigger canoe, powered by a spluttering seagull outboard motor, to the beginning of the valley and then walked to the sites they were surveying. At the conclusion of the fieldwork, Roger and Kaye headed to New York and the American Museum of Natural History to write up the results of this long period of fieldwork. Several papers on the 'Opunohu survey appeared promptly (see Brown 1996: 20-21 for references on the Mo'orean work).

At this time and for some time to come, Roger was faced with a problem over completing his PhD. His initial plan of submitting a dissertation on

his earlier fieldwork in the Largo-Gallina in New Mexico was derailed when he became seriously ill at Harvard with peritonitis. He recovered in time to take up his Fulbright Fellowship, but the dissertation had to be put on hold. He decided to use the Mangarevan work for a dissertation and put in quite a lot of work on it, but then the job at the University of Auckland, vacated by Jack Golson, came up and by the middle of 1961, Roger was in Auckland developing teaching courses, getting involved in New Zealand archaeology again and planning a final season of excavations on Mo'orea. Mangareva went on to the back burner for a very long time. With no time to work up a detailed Mangarevan report, Roger submitted *The Prehistoric Sequence of the Auckland Province* to Harvard as his dissertation and it was accepted.

The Mo'orean excavations continued through a final season in 1961–1962, in which I was fortunate to take part. This time, through the good offices of the landowner at the time, Medford Kellum, a camp was established well back in the valley, close to the sites to be excavated. Medford provided a small hut which served as office, kitchen and living room; tents were used for sleeping accommodation. The workmen, once again organised and supervised by Nai, commuted each day from the village. The full results of the excavations were published in a multi-authored monograph (Green *et al.* 1967).

Fieldwork in Samoa

Once Roger made his move to the Pacific, he quickly developed a long term strategy for himself that involved a progressive movement from east to west, from French Polynesia to Samoa and thence (originally) to Belau in western Micronesia. His opportunity to start a field programme in Samoa came hot on the heels of his French Polynesian work. His initial impact in the Pacific was extraordinary. He first came to the Pacific in 1958; in 1961 he was one of the key players at the 10th Pacific Science Congress in Honolulu, deeply involved in planning what would become the Three-Year Polynesian Prehistory Programme, funded by the United States National Science Foundation through the Bishop Museum in Honolulu (Green 1961; Davidson 2008: 13-14). This provided opportunities for New Zealanders to work initially in Samoa, the Cook Islands and Pitcairn and later also in Fiji and Tonga. In mid 1965, funding was received from the National Science Foundation for a further two-year programme. Linguistics was a significant component of the new programme along with more archaeology, and the title was changed from Polynesian Prehistory to Polynesian Culture History.

Roger's programme in what was then Western Samoa began in December 1963 and continued until March 1967 (Figure 2). In some respects, it seems to have been modelled on Oliver's Society Islands programme. People came and

went; at times there were a lot of people all working on excavations; at other times there might be only one archaeologist, usually but not always engaged in survey rather than excavation. There was no permanent central base, but after the first season, for much of the time there was an expedition vehicle. When there were a lot of people a house would be rented in Apia; solitary archaeologists might enjoy a rented house but often stayed with friendly expatriates in Apia or with Samoan families in the outer villages close to where they were working.



Figure 2. Roger and Kaye recording the bulldozer-cut section at SU-Va-1, Vailele, Western Samoa in 1964.

Although Oliver had arranged for Roger to visit Samoa on a reconnaissance trip in 1960, there was nobody in Samoa to provide the sort of arrangements in Samoa that Oliver had provided in the Society Islands. Roger had a few contacts made by Jack Golson during his reconnaissance in 1957, which was apparently also master-minded by Oliver (Davidson 2008: 11). However, members of the New Zealand expatriate community, United Nations experts based in Samoa, Samoan government authorities and members of various churches all took an interest in the research and offered support and assistance.

Sixteen people, including students, took part at various times, 12 contributing to the final publications (Green and Davidson 1969, 1974).

Common threads

All of Roger's fieldwork has been characterised by the careful archiving of records and collections, including charcoal samples used many years later for additional radiocarbon dating. The Mo'orean and Samoan programmes both resulted in a mixture of separate, sometimes preliminary, papers, and detailed publication of results in monograph form (Green *et al.* 1967; Green and Davidson 1969, 1974). The non-publication of the Mangarevan work was an anomaly. Roger was able to work up the results of the Mo'orean project while immersed in the Samoan fieldwork, and the Samoan results while busy in Hawai'i and then while launching his Southeast Solomons programme, which was more complex and ambitious than any previous programme. All his fieldwork included settlement pattern surveys, followed by carefully targeted excavations, and the use of ethnohistoric sources (another aspect probably derived from Oliver, whose own work in the Society Islands culminated in his massive three-volume work (Oliver 1974). Both Samoa and Mangareva were largely unknown to modern archaeology. Roger tried to include aspects of economic prehistory and material culture studies in all the projects, despite the poor survival of organic remains in the volcanic island soils.

Legacies

Roger's belief in full publication and archiving of records and material laid the foundation for further work in places where he had been a pioneer. This is perhaps particularly true of the 'Opunohu Valley, which has provided the material for several theses and dissertations. Roger made his own field records available for an Auckland MA thesis (Descantes 1990); this was followed by PhD dissertations by students at the University of California at Berkeley (Lepofsky 1994, Kahn 2005) and there are many published papers deriving from these studies. For some years the University of California has a field station at the mouth of the 'Opunohu Valley, administered by the Berkeley campus, which has been the venue for archaeological get-togethers. The main site clusters in the valley are protected by the French Administration. Horse trekking in the valley is a popular tourist attraction.

Roger's Samoan programme was soon followed by several seasons of work by Jesse Jennings and his students (Jennings *et al.* 1976; Jennings and Holmer 1980). Jennings was a senior and well known figure in North American archaeology when he met Roger in Honolulu in 1965. Both were on leave from their respective institutions and they struck up a firm friendship. Jennings'

fieldwork built on and extended the settlement pattern studies of Roger's programme, investigated more pottery bearing sites and coastal middens, and followed up on the finding of Lapita pottery from the submerged site at Muli-fanua, which happened shortly after Roger's field programme ended. There was then a considerable period when investigations in the Samoan group shifted to American Samoa, with the rise of mitigation archaeology there not paralleled in Western Samoa, but also with major research-oriented work at To'aga in particular (Kirch and Hunt 1993). More recently, the massive mound Pulemelei in Savai'i, first described as part of Roger's programme (Scott 1969) has been the scene of intensive investigations (Martinsson-Wallin 2007).

After Roger's pioneering work in Mangareva, the group was neglected for nearly 40 years. Although he used to include the Mangarevan sequence in his Polynesian prehistory lectures (Green n.d.b) and willingly gave out information (e.g., Green n.d.a) to those who asked, he continued to find it difficult to publish anything about it. This may have been partly because he saw it as an abandoned PhD dissertation, and partly because he had experienced difficulties with the man who funded the work, Donald S. McLain. As recently as 2000, Kirch (2000: 267) could write "What then transpired on Mangareva? The answer is not yet clear, for archaeological work on Mangareva is still in its infancy" citing only Emory's pioneering work (1939) and a recent survey by Marshall Weisler (1996). Yet Roger's dogged determination to publish basic data eventually won through, with help from Marshall Weisler (Green and Weisler 2000, 2002, 2004; Weisler and Green 2001).

In late 2000, a proposal for a major expedition to Mangareva arose at a conference on East Polynesian Prehistory. The results of the first two seasons were published promptly and in full, building on Roger's pioneering research (Kirch and Conte 2004). New radiocarbon dates extended the sequence back in time, raising new questions. The volume was dedicated to Roger.

Despite his deep involvement in the western Pacific and in Lapita archaeology in recent decades, Roger never stopped thinking about Polynesia. Not only did he finally publish much of his Mangarevan material, but he continued to reflect and publish on topics such as Mo'orean and Samoan settlement patterns and Samoan house forms (Green 1996, 2002; Green and Barnes 2008).

In this short tribute I have concentrated on some of Roger's early fieldwork in the tropical Pacific. His influence at the time and subsequently was far greater than I have been able to cover here. His work in the 'Opunohu Valley influenced much subsequent work in Polynesia, with valley surveys in places as diverse as the Marquesas and Hawai'i as well as Tahiti. His influence in the central Pacific spread far beyond Samoa, as he promoted fieldwork in Tonga and Fiji, wrote papers on aspects of the archaeology of those groups

and thought about and wrote higher level synthetic papers. He was also deeply involved in New Zealand archaeology, particularly in the Auckland province, at that time. Fieldwork conditions, particularly in Mo'orea and Mangareva were pretty primitive, equipment was basic, and the work was hard. But at the same time, from my own experience, it was hugely enjoyable. And from it came some great results.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Kaye Green for sharing her memories of fieldwork in Mangareva, Mo'orea and Samoa.

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