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CEREMONIAL ARCHITECTURE IN EAST POLYNESIA: DEVELOPMENT AND VARIABILITY

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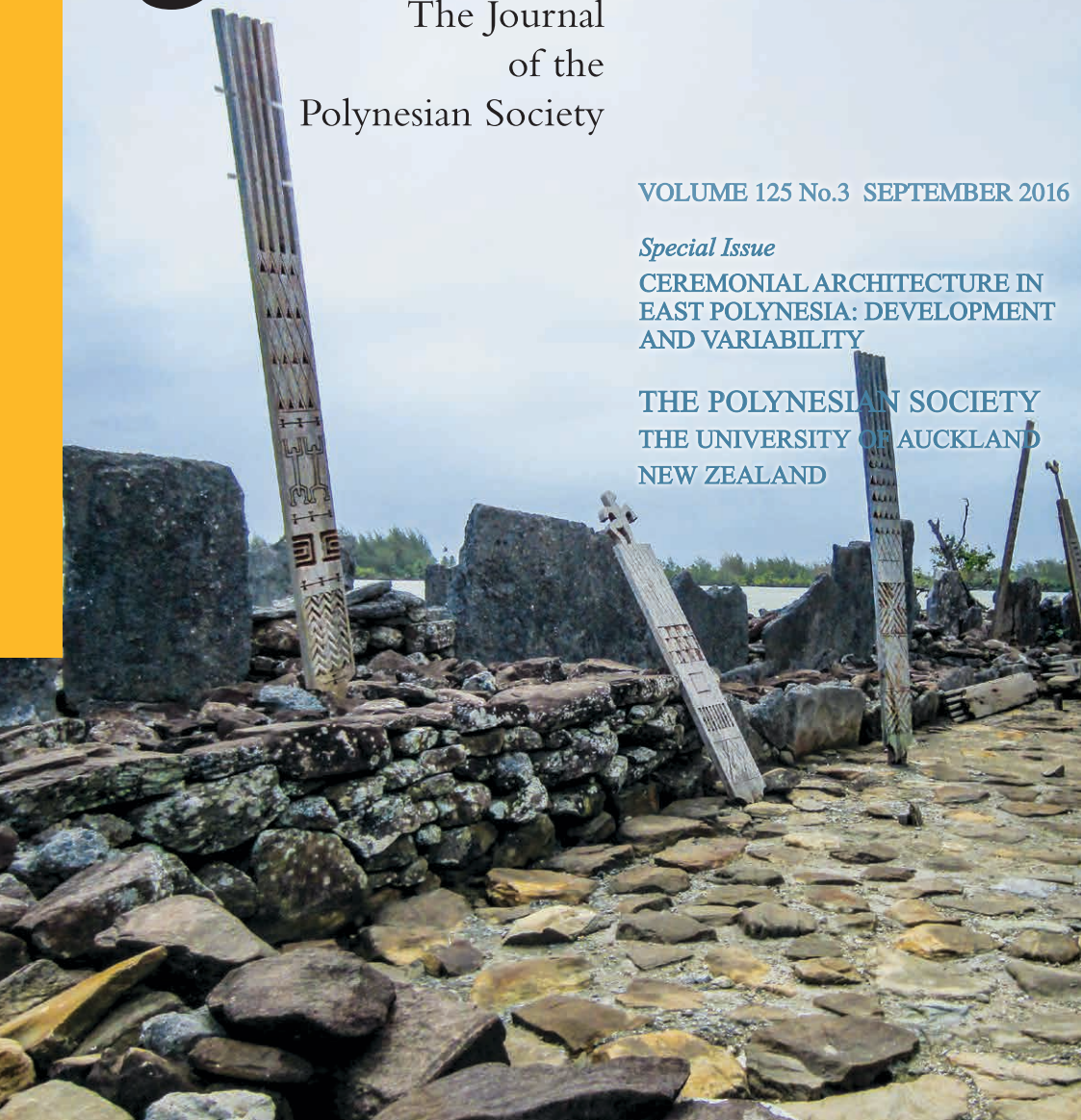

THE FUNCTIONALITY OF FEASTING AT LATE PREHISTORIC RESIDENTIAL AND CEREMONIAL SITES IN THE SOCIETY ISLANDS

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Much of the research into East Polynesian ceremonial sites focuses on *marae-ahu* 'temple-altar' complexes as sacred sites where varied religious rituals and rites of passage were performed. Yet ethnohistoric documents and the Tahitian lexicon suggest a broader role for Ma'ohi or 'indigenous Tahitian' ceremonial architecture, specifically as the foci of individual and corporate ceremonies of a religious, economic and political nature. Situating ceremonial *marae* complexes within broader archaeological landscapes likewise speaks to the integrated socio-political and ritual nature of Society Islands ceremonial architecture. This case study investigates the role of feasting on terraces attached to Ma'ohi *marae* complexes and within communal spaces found in residential complexes. Utilising a spatio-temporal perspective, I investigate the function of feasting at a range of community and familial level temples and residential complexes found in the 'Opunohu Valley, an inland valley context on Mo'orea Island (Windward Society Islands). My goal is to explore the ways that Ma'ohi household leaders, chiefs and priests may have utilised feasting to materialise their economic or political authority, while at the same time facilitating the formation of communal identities. A second goal is to identify whether the specific function of feasting differed at monumental architectural sites of varying scale and complexity, utilising both archaeological evidence and ethnographic analogy. Finally, a third goal is to investigate change through time in the scale and intensity of feasting at specific locales, in particular, whether community level or corporate feasting intensified and became a strategy used by socio-religious elites to formalise and extend social alliances.

BACKGROUND TO FEASTING STUDIES IN MIDDLE RANGE SOCIETIES AND POLYNESIAN CHIEFDOMS

Feasts include the communal consumption of food or drink (Dietler and Hayden 2001); they are typically both qualitatively and quantitatively different from everyday domestic meals in the types and amounts of foods and drink that are served. Feasts can be forms of ritual activity, in that they link power displays with social action (oratory, drinking, dancing) and thus can become the stage for other transformative social acts such as gift

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exchange. They are also inherently political events (Dietler 2001) where status is negotiated, alliances and marriage exchanges are created, and conflict is resolved.

Studies have delineated varied types of feasting with diverse goals, including work party feasts, solidarity feasts, solicitation feasts, tribute feasts and maturation and life event feasts, among others (Dietler 2001, Hayden 2001). The form and function of these specific types of feasting, as well as their scale and intensity of occurrence through time (Chicoine 2011, Potter 2000), have been recent topics of investigation. Feasting events can empower different social groups at different social scales (Reinhart 2015). At the community scale, feasting events are central to hierarchical reproduction, as they bring together and express a wide range of social relations. There is growing realisation that feasting, as a highly visible event of some import, can be an agent of social transformation, in structuring the social relations of production, in creating new identities, in enlarging the prestige of leaders, and in constructing political alliances (Emerson 2008, Hayden 2001, 2014, Knudsen *et al*. 2012, Reinhart 2015).

In middle range societies, societies that are intermediate in terms of political complexity like chiefdoms, feasting serves as a highly visible social act, representing not only a local or political leader's generosity, but delineating boundaries of particular social groups and their control over resources. In effect, feasting nourishes the status of a group, but it often has simultaneous functions and effects. Feasts can be highly integrative while at the same time exclusive, joining elite leaders with commoners by highlighting their shared kinship ties and integrating households at the local level, while at the same time showcasing socio-economic, ritual or political power of local and regional leaders and their differential status vis-à-vis the rest of the populace (Knudsen *et al*. 2012, Potter 2000). Hayden's (2014) recent comparative synthesis argues that feasting is underlain by three general motives: social bonding, material and economic benefits, and status distinction, supporting the event's often multi-faceted character as a simultaneous social, economic and political act.

In the past, public feasting events involving the community were financed at the supra-household level (Potter 2000) and were sometimes held in specialised communal spaces, typically on or near sacred sites (temples, monuments, tombs, ancestor shrines) or other types of specialised locales (men's houses) and sometimes in structures having specialised facilities (Blitz 1993, Chicoine 2011, Hayden 2014). Such feasts were often regulated by ceremonial participation in the ritual calendar. In contrast, residential feasting commonly took place at, or adjacent to, specific house sites or within communal places and ritual zones in household complexes (Junker

and Niziolek 2010, Nash 2010) and were financed at the household level (Potter 2000). Thus, the spatial context of feasting as well as its scale and intensity can provide clues to the type of feast offered as well as its goals, whether to promote within group or between group solidarity, to aggrandise and gain prestige, to broaden social networks and alliances, or to create debt.

In Polynesia, feasting is not well documented archaeologically, but is well known from historic sources. Ethnographic analyses characterise Polynesian feasts quantitatively as involving supra-households groups and large amounts of food per consumer, and qualitatively as having high numbers of ritually marked foods or delicacies (Kirch 2001; see also Oliver 1989: 291-92). Polynesian scholars differentiate household level or domestic feasting versus community level feasting, and sacred versus secular versus political feasting (Kirch 2001: 171, Table 6.2; see also Kirch 1991: 131, Oliver 1974: 231, 259-64, Thomas 1990: 89-97). Much research has focused on the ways in which political elites in Polynesian chiefdoms utilised feasts as sources of socio-ritual and political power (Kirch 2001, Kolb 1994, 1999, 2006, Thomas 1990). Leach's (2003) survey of East Polynesian ethnohistoric records documents widespread traditions of hospitality, including food sharing, status display through feasting and elaborate social rules governing public feasts. Both sacred and secular community-wide feasts hosted by district chiefs or paramount chiefs indebted neighbouring chiefs who were invited to attend, and materially displayed the socio-economic and political power of particular leaders through lavish spectacles of food, ceremony, feasting and dance. Such feasts took place in spatially defined places that were marked by permanent, and often elaborate, stone structures, including temples (*marae*, *me'ae*, *heiau*) and other structures (dance grounds [*tohua*], council platforms). Some elite feasts were highly exclusive, permitting only a few individuals of similarly high status and high political rank to participate in order to emphasise alliance linkages. Similarly, ceremonies marking different stages of an elite's life (rites of passage) or political career broadcasted the ideological underpinnings of their socio-ritual and economic power to the rest of the populace, as did sacred ceremonies embedded into the ritual calendar, where large amounts of foodstuffs and prestige items were funnelled up to the elites from the general populace in the form of tribute.

While much has been made of elite feasting in Polynesia, in most regions ethnographic data illustrate the importance of feasting within and between commoner households as well as among and between elite households (Goldman 1970: 500-5). Residential feasts at the local level established and perpetuated social relationships, while at the same time excluding different groups (Kahn 2005, Kirch 2001; see also Dietler 2001: 88-90, Hayden 2001: 29-30).

ETHNOHISTORIC AND ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA FOR FEASTING IN THE SOCIETY ISLANDS

Ethnographic and ethnohistoric data, as well as glosses from the first Tahitian dictionary (Davies 1851) illustrate that the major types of Society Island feasts included residential and secular events, residential and ritualised events, communal and secular events, and communal and ritualised events that were typically also political in nature (Table 1). Community-wide feasts often had a strongly exclusive nature. While they brought the entire community together at the temple, often to present tribute items, only the most sacred elites could actively take part in these public rituals. The less sacred or profane (commoners, women) participated only indirectly from the "outside", as members of the audience watching those actively involved in the rituals taking place within the sacred precincts of the *marae* enclosure. In contrast to these community scale events, commoners and women could actively participate in local level residential rituals and feasts. Thus, social class played an important part in dictating the host of Society Island feasts as well as the audience of the feast and their appropriate levels of participation.

Household Feasts

Ethnohistoric and ethnographic data for the Society Islands indicate the importance of the household and household groups as the basic unit of production (Oliver 1974). Ma'ohi households worked land held in common and participated in domestic ritual and feasting at their familial or ancestral *marae* (Henry 1928: 141). The activities of household groups had widespread importance in marking social difference and establishing and maintaining social relations. In house societies such as the Society Islands, the practice of daily activities, such as shared preparation and consumption of foodstuffs, served as markers of house affiliation while at the same time emphasising the boundary of the house to others (Kahn 2007).

Glosses for Ma'ohi household level feasts (Table 1) highlight how these events often focused on life stages of children, such as cutting of the umbilical cord or removing food *tapu* 'taboo'. It is likely that both high status and low status households staged such events, either at their familial temples or at communal spaces within residential complexes. Life stage domestic feasting served dual purposes—to re-establish and strengthen kinship bonds—but also to increase perceived status at the local level, both to participants of the feast and the surrounding community. The ethnohistoric evidence implies that staple goods and non-staple goods held equal importance in smaller family feasts and gift exchange (Henry 1928: 128-29, 198, Morrison 1935: 347).

Table 1. Examples of Ma‘ohi community scale feasts and household scale feasts and their material correlates (not exhaustive).

Tahitian term	Description	Scale/Reconstructed Locale	Material Items	References
Fa‘aari‘ira‘a	Office taking, investiture of the chief	Large scale, public; International, national, or community level (district) temples	Large quantities of feast foods, rolls of high quality bark-cloth, clothing with feathered decoration, feathered *maro* ‘loincloths’, canoes	Henry 1928, Oliver 1974: 1015-24
Taurua	Public feast	Large scale, public; International, national, or community level (district) temples	Bark-cloth, canoes, pigs, human sacrifice	Oliver 1974: 1295-96
Pa‘iatua	Religious ceremony on the new decoration of the *to‘o* ‘god’ image, or performed as a prelude to other ceremonies (chiefly inauguration, laying a cornerstone of a *marae*), first fruits tribute ceremonies	Large scale, public; International, national, or community level (district) temples	Large quantity and variety of foodstuffs including pigs, dog, deep sea fish, turtles, starchy puddings, rolls of bark-cloth, mats, feathers, feather ornaments	Davies 1851: 182, Henry 1928: 157-77, Oliver 1974: 112-20
Matea, maui fa‘atere, haea mati	Political and religious ceremonies prior to commencing a battle	Large scale, public; International *marae* dedicated to ‘Oro	Human sacrifices, (to the gods) bark-cloth, fine mats, pigs (to the priests)	Ellis 1831, Oliver 1974: 385

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Tahitian term	Description	Scale/Reconstructed Locale	Material Items	References
	Mourning ceremony and feasts	Public; for elites at community *marae*	Large quantities of pigs, other food stuffs, rolls of bark-cloth	Corney 1918: 183-95
Parara'a matahiti	First fruits (harvest ceremony)	Community *marae*	Tribute and feasting goods, brought to the temple; large quantities of pigs, deep sea fish, turtles, baked vegetables, starchy puddings, mats, rolls of cloth, feather ornaments	Babadzan 1993: 237-40, Henry 1928: 177, Moerenhout 1837: 516-21
Po tupapa'u	Annual night of returning ghosts	Community or familial *marae*		Davies 1851: 204, Oliver 1974: 628
Ruahineaimauu	A term used in connection with a batch of food, baked at the removing of restrictions in using a new fishing net	Community or familial *marae*	Fish	Davies 1851: 233, Morrison 1935: 183
Purepapa	Ceremony attended with prayers, and offering up a number of pigs, previous to launching of a canoe	Specialists' *marae*?	Pigs, bark-cloth	Henry 1928: 181
Auto'i	Name of a certain feast, and the ceremonies of canoe builders	Specialists' *marae*?		Davies 1851: 51

Pua'atafeti'i, Pua'afatoi	A feast, and ceremony, when the members of a family eat together for the first time, children having been considered sacred, and haven eaten apart	?, secular, small scale, not public, probably at a range of households, both high and low status		Davies 1851: 205
Uhiairi	A ceremony performed, when the umbilical cord of a first-born child was separated, natal ceremony where a chief's newborn is given a "royal-name" or kin title	?, public for elites, small scale for non-elites; probably at a range of households, both high and low status and/or international, community or familial *marae*	Food, feather objects	Davies 1851: 298, Henry 1928: 184-87, Oliver 1974: 643
Amoa, Amo'a	The name of a certain feast, where prayers were made and ceremonies undertaken, for the purpose of removing various restrictions in regard to the children of the chiefs who were before considered sacred. A certain feast and series of rituals for the removal of restrictions on chiefly newborns to render them sacred	?, house near the *marae*, family residence, "head-freeing rites" at the *marae*	Pigs, cloth, feast foods	Davies 1851: 20, 21, Oliver 1974: 446

Elite Feasts

Ethnohistoric accounts indicate that elites, and particularly elite feasts, were provisioned by commoner labour and tribute (Corney 1914 [II]: 134, Henry 1928: 177, 260, 357, Oliver 1974: 635, 1010-11, 1071-72). Feasts were often integrated with Ma'ohi political events and socio-ritual rites (Oliver 1974). Lavish ceremonies where new chiefs were invested with power necessitated months of preparation. Commoner and elite households alike would have produced copious amounts of foodstuffs, such as pigs, plantains, breadfruit and starchy puddings (*po'e*), fancy clothing (including fine bark-cloth or *tapa* garments with feathers affixed to them), plaited mats and perhaps a new canoe for presentation at the investiture ceremony. One of the most sacred renewal ceremonies, the *pa'i atua* or 'first fruits', would have taken place at community (district level) temples. Foodstuffs presented at the feast after the *marae* ritual included large quantities of pigs, deep-sea fish, turtles, baked vegetables and starchy puddings, as well as great numbers of mats, rolls of cloth and feather ornaments. Non-staple goods, particularly bark-cloth, also figured prominently in the articles demanded by the chiefs from households and communities as tribute for large-scale community-wide ceremonial events associated with feasting (Corney 1913 [I]: 357).

Glosses for Ma'ohi elite feasting refer to community-wide secular feasts and community-wide sacred feasts (Table 1); both likely had political connotations in elevating and supporting the socio-religious power of chiefly leaders. Some community feasts involved removing restrictions for important objects of high value, such as new fishing nets or a canoe. Such rituals may have taken place at specialists' temple sites, those that were dedicated to certain deities related to specific craft activities. Glosses for Ma'ohi community-wide sacred feasts sponsored by elites include rites of passage and life event ceremonies for rulers and members of their families, in addition to ceremonies of warfare and tribute. Such ceremonies took place on the largest and most elaborate temples, either of "international", "national" (royal), or "district" (community) level stature (Kahn and Kirch 2014: 35-39). Feasting events were likely held on spaces just adjacent to temples, either in the open air, or in specialised "eating sheds" (glossed as *fare tama'ara'a*; see Henry 1928: 176). Small feasts carried out at the end of a period of *rahui* 'restriction' took place directly on district level *marae*, where a pig was cooked and eaten on the spot (see also Ellis 1831 [II]: 93). Such feasting is likely to be associated with specialised architecture, including pavements or platforms where foodstuffs were consumed, or pavements where dances, songs and other amusements (wrestling, games) were carried out (Henry 1928: 239, Kahn 2005: 165). Ethnohistoric documents likewise suggest that ritual feasting could have taken place near priests' houses where ritual foods were cooked. Houses for ritual

attendants are expected to be situated in close association with *marae*, and may be of either round-ended or rectangular form (Kahn 2015). Sumptuary non-staple items presented to the chiefs as tribute, or exchanged in elite feasting ceremonies, including bark-cloth or other objects made from vegetal materials and fibre (e.g., mats), would have been produced in household contexts.

Material Correlates of Society Island Feasting

East Polynesian ethnographic data highlight that high status and highly valued foods often took central roles in feasts. These included fatty, fleshy animal foods (pig, dog, fowl, pelagic fish and turtle) and fermented breadfruit or puddings with coconut cream or oil. *Kava*, a psychoactive plant, may have been prepared and imbibed at feasting sites (Kirch and Green 2001, Thomas 1990). Following this, large quantities of such foods and drink disposed at one place would be highly indicative of feasting.

East Polynesian ethnographic and historic records, as well as archaeological data, suggest that many food stuffs would have been cooked or prepared *in situ* at both domestic and elite feasts in communal spaces removed from everyday cooking areas (Kahn field notes, 1997, Oliver 1974: 262, Suggs 1961: 72-73). Thus, the spatial context of cooking features, and their direct association with other sites types (sleeping houses, ritual structures, specialised houses), can be used to differentiate everyday cooking from food preparation associated with feasting events. Given the need for copious amounts of food, cooking or food preparation features associated with feasting, such as earth ovens, hearths and fermentation pits, should be larger or more abundant than those found in domestic cooking areas (see Ottino-Garanger 2006: 371, Fig. 6).

Ma‘ohi sleeping houses served as the primary residence (Orliac 1982); such house sites typically are quite clean in their interior and have exterior but enclosed cookhouses, either directly attached to the house or on fronting terraces (Kahn 2005, 2007). Such every-day cooking areas typically had a small to moderate sized earth oven or hearth (or both) that were re-used time and again, as well as one to two food storage or fermentation pits. While cook sheds often are associated with charcoal, fire-cracked rock and sometimes shell and bone, these spaces were presumably regularly swept given their close association with sleeping houses which had to be maintained in a “clean” manner given *tapu* regulations. These data diverge from expected correlates of feasting areas, where we might expect larger sized and more frequent constellations of earth ovens, hearths and pits which were used to prepare copious amounts of food stuffs in short periods of time. That feast foods were all consumed and disposed of in one place (Henry 1928, Thomas 1990) likewise suggests that feasting debris will differ from everyday domestic remains. The intermittent but intensive use of feasting areas might

lend themselves to less frequent cleaning or maintenance activities, resulting in large accumulations of cooking debris over short periods of time.

Unfortunately food items consumed at feasts in the Society Islands, as well as the majority of tribute items presented at such events (Table 1), were organic in their nature and will not preserve in inland valley contexts due to high rainfall and soil acidity. However, microfossil analyses should be able to retrieve signals of certain items, such as bark-cloth, *kava* and vegetal foodstuffs (Horrocks *et al*. 2015, Kahn *et al*. 2014). Due to these constraints, I focus on the most durable material correlates of Society Islands feasting, notably, the association of cooking features with non-domestic and/or specialised or ritualised architecture. Site proxemics play an important role in defining site status, as temple sites, specialised ritual structures and ceremonial sites tend to be situated in elevated locales, as a way to protect individuals of high status who resided and used such sites. Equally important for identifying feasting locales are the size, frequency and placement of cooking features and associated cooking debris (earth oven rake-out, ash dumps, sheet deposits of charcoal and fire-cracked rock, etc.), as well as the nature of the associated archaeological deposits. Criteria for defining the function of sub-surface features can be found in Kahn (2005: 156-63, 180-82).

SITE PROXEMICS AND EXCAVATION DATA FOR MA‘OHI FEASTING

Here I compare and contrast evidence for feasting events associated with ‘Opunohu Valley, Mo‘orea sites (Fig. 1). The case studies include two residential complexes with familial temples and an aggregate temple complex with community *marae* that functioned as a ritual-political centre.

Amehiti Zone B

The Zone B ceremonial and residential complex is found in the Amehiti District of the ‘Opunohu Valley (Fig. 1). The Zone B complex includes numerous house sites and cooking sheds (-322, -323, -326, -329a, b, c) associated with households of varying rank, in addition to a specialised secular feasting area (-324), a familial temple (-325) and shrine (-338) of moderate elaboration, and dryland and irrigated agricultural complexes (-335, -337, -339) (Fig. 2). Based on site proxemics and excavation data, Zone B has been interpreted as the material remains of a corporate group (or house) of moderate status, who worshipped together at its ritual structures, planted together at its agricultural terraces, and feasted together at its specialised locales (Kahn and Kirch 2013).

Feasting remains were found on the elaborate terrace associated with the -325 temple. Here, test excavations at TP1 recovered two large earth ovens with multiple use events (Fig. 3, Table 2). The surrounding area had dense midden suggestive of *in situ* cooking practices (fire-cracked rock, charcoal,

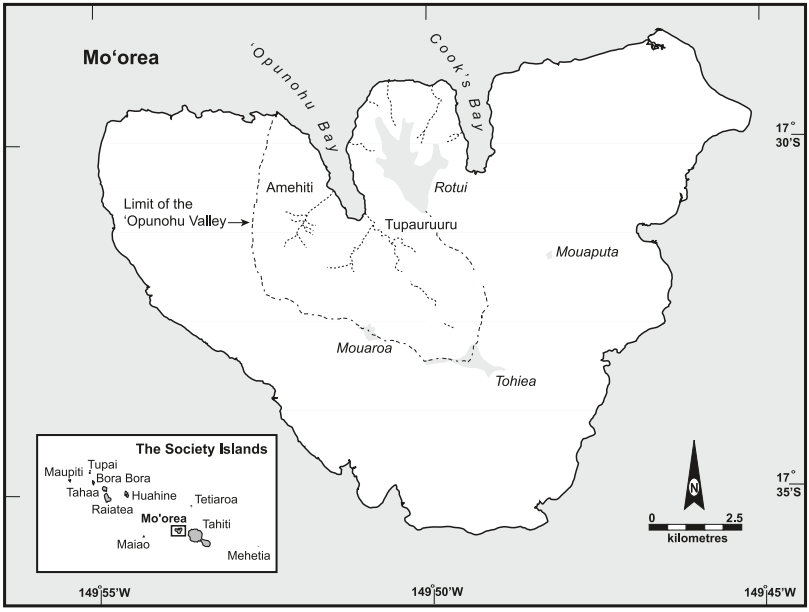

Figure 1. Overview of Mo'orea Island, showing the limits of the 'Opunohu Valley and the Amehiti and Tupauruuru political districts.

ash). Given their association with the familial temple, it is highly likely that these earth ovens are the result of communal ritual and feasting events sponsored by the headman of this corporate residential group. Given that -325 is situated at the most elevated point in this residential complex, such ritual feasting events would have both created a shared identity among residents of Zone B, while at the same time broadcasting the status and prestige of the headman to its lesser ranked members and neighbouring communities. Site -324, an elaborate complex with two impressive terraces, is situated just below the -325 temple. The lower terrace (B) has a well-constructed pavement along its northeast limit, and a sub-surface cooking feature (hearth) was found at its extreme northeastern limit. Units excavated just adjacent to this hearth and along the mid-line portion of terrace B lacked charcoal and other artefacts, suggesting cleaning and maintenance activities. In contrast, the upper terrace (A) had deposits replete with charcoal, fire-cracked rock and ash. A moderate sized hearth and large earth oven were recovered in the excavations, in addition to a breadfruit fermentation pit. Given the limited

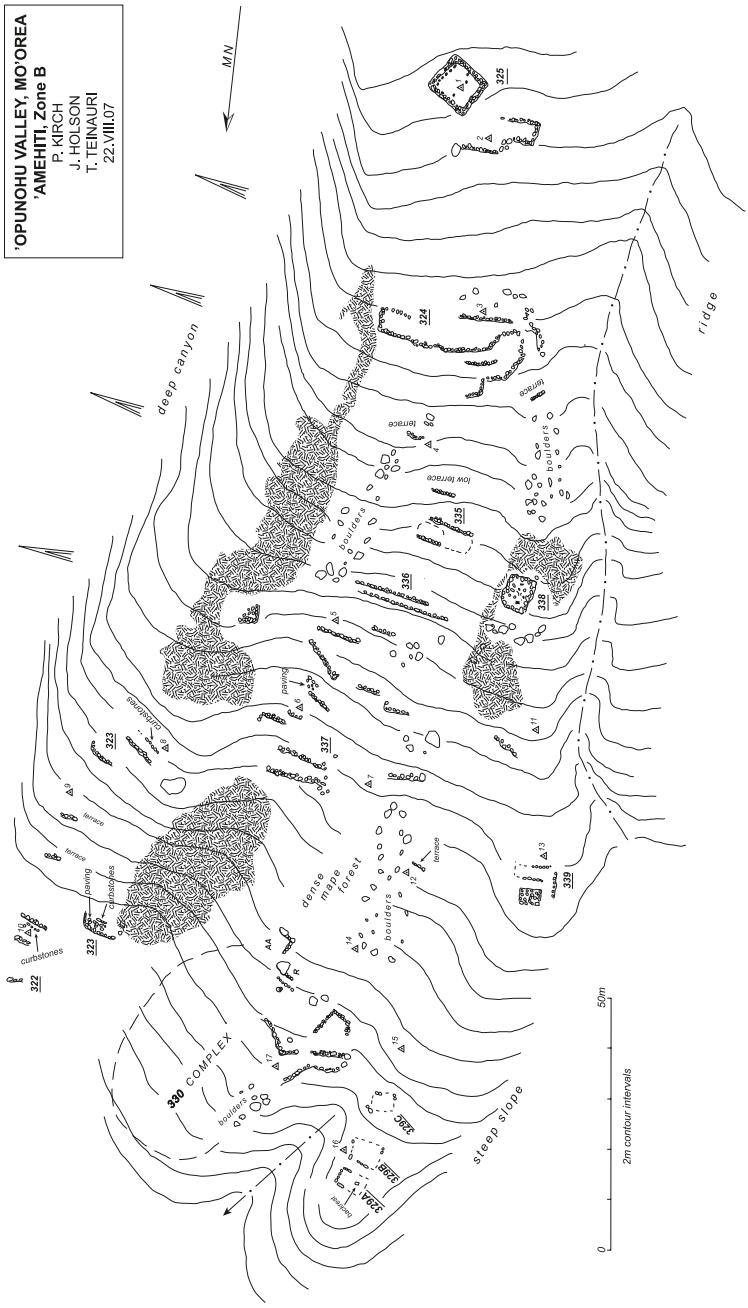

Figure 2. Plan view of the Amehiti Zone B residential complex, ʻOpunohu Valley, Moʻorea.

Figure 3. Plan view of the -325 *marae* with the associated terrace; inset shows plan view of excavated earth ovens in TP1.

Table 2. Feasting remains at main site complexes and structures discussed in the text.

Island	Complex	Site #	Site Type	Function/Status	Evidence for Feasting	Special Features
Mo'orea (ScMo-)	Zone B	325	Family temple with two attached terraces	Ritual; moderate	Two large earth ovens with multiple use events on adjacent terraces; thick midden with dense oven rake-out, charcoal, fire-cracked rock	Upper-most site in complex; well-constructed fronting terraces, cooking activities in open (?) area on terrace
		324	Terrace complex, lacks house curbstone outline	Ritual; moderate	One large earth oven, two smaller cooking hearths (one with dense oven rake-out, charcoal, fire-cracked rock); and breadfruit fermentation pit	Large and architecturally elaborate, well-constructed pavement on lower terrace, lower terrace deposits are remarkably clean and well-maintained; upper terrace has evidence for open air (?) cooking activities and is not well-cleaned
		326	Terrace complex, possible round-ended house	Residential cookhouse; moderate	None, but ample evidence for cooking both within a small pole-and-thatch structure and outside of it (moderate to small earth ovens (n=2), small cooking hearths, small food storage pits)	Poorly constructed facing walls, posthole alignments suggest robbed round-ended house; lacks clean open area
		323	Terrace complex, rectangular house	Sleeping house; moderate	Not excavated	Rectangular house found on well-constructed upraised terrace, -322E is found just downslope

	322	Terrace complex, rectangular house	Residential cookhouse; moderate	None, but ample evidence for cooking with a pole-and-thatch structure with three interior earth ovens, one exterior cooking hearth, and lacking food storage pits	Posthole alignments suggest pole-and-thatch structure, lacks clean open area
170-171	170	Round-ended house	Sleeping house, high	None, but evidence for cooking and food storage on fronting terrace includes small earth oven and four breadfruit fermentation or food storage pits, in association with charcoal-rich "dirty" deposits	Upslope of several rectangular houses, in opposition to simple *marae* located at the ridge promontory at bottom of the complex, most elaborate house architecture, large pavement, clean house interior
	171A	Rectangular house	Specialised house for craft activities, high	Two large exterior earth ovens, one external hearth, 11 exterior pits for breadfruit fermentation	Large living flat, cooking activities in open, L-shaped alignment with specialised storage, frequent lithic reduction in house interior, moderate sized pavement
	171B	Rectangular house	Sleeping house, moderate	None, but one earth oven and three small cooking hearths in exterior	Small exterior pavement with cook house(s); clean house interior
	171C	Rectangular house	Sleeping house, moderate	None, but small hearth in exterior, one exterior breadfruit fermentation pit	Exterior cooking activities associated with cook house(s); clean house interior
	171D	Terrace	Residential cookhouse, moderate	Four hearths and food storage pit	Cooking activities associated with cook house; no associated surface house

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Island	Complex	Site #	Site Type	Function/Status	Evidence for Feasting	Special Features
		171E	Terrace	Specialised terrace, moderate	Four food storage or breadfruit fermentation pits, hearth, ash dump	Cooking activities associated with open, well maintained area; pavement
		171F	Family temple	Ritual, high	No exterior excavations, faunal remains suggestive of ritual offerings and/or feasting	In opposition to ScMo-170 round-ended house located at the most elevated portion of the ridge
	103	103E, G, I, K, L, N	Community temple	Ritual, high	None, but limited excavations	Archery platform (-131), council platform (-181) and large round-ended house (-178) upslope
		103F, H, J, M	Attached shrines	Ritual, high	Not excavated	Interspersed between and among the temple sites
		103C	Round-ended house	Ritual, high	Three interior pits, three large exterior earth ovens (one >1.75 diameter), several smaller earth ovens in exterior, pig teeth, pig bone, fish bone, food pounder	Largest round-ended house in valley, associated with elaborate exterior pavement
Raiʻatea	VAV-1	RAI-56	Terrace complex fronting three temples, exterior to rectangular house	Ritual, high	No interior excavations, large earth ovens in exterior	Exterior cooking activities, close proximity to cooking features at RAI-57
		RAI-57	Terrace complex fronting three temples, interior of rectangular house	Ritual, high	Two cooking features, unknown size (not fully excavated)	Interior cooking activities, close proximity to cooking features at RAI-56

number of postholes recovered, these food preparation activities appear to have been carried out in the open air. It is likely that foods were produced on the upper terrace (A) for feasts that were situated on the lower terrace (B). These feasting activities were most likely associated with secular community events.

While not excavated, the architecture and layout of ScMo-323, a downslope house, suggest it served as a sleeping house for a moderate status household (Kahn and Kirch 2013). Just downslope of -323, excavations at the -322E rectangular house revealed a house interior with numerous earth ovens and hearths but lacking food storage pits. Site -322E has been interpreted as a cookhouse for the residents of -323 (Kahn and Kirch 2013). In sum, areas interpreted as feasting locales, in contrast to domestic cookhouses, had moderate to large open-air food preparation facilities with large cooking features, in one case with food storage pits. In all cases the feasting food preparation facilities were not associated with sleeping structures. One feasting locale was found in association with a "clean" area devoid of cooking remains that could have served as a food consumption locale.

Tupauruuru, ScMo-170/171

The ScMo-170/171 residential complex is found in the heart of the Tupauruuru District. This residential complex includes four house sites, one round-ended (-170) and three rectangular (-171A, B, C), in addition to stone-faced terraces with soil flats (-171D, E) (Fig. 4). A familial *marae* is found at the bottom of the complex, which also is the limit of the ridge, where it abuts the main stream. Terrace -171E can be considered a fronting terrace to temple -171F, given its close association to the southern enclosing wall of the temple, and the fact that the northern limit of -171F is bounded by a steep slope. Site proxemics and excavation data highlight that ScMo-170/171 was a high status residential complex (Kahn 2005, 2007).

As with Amehiti Zone B, feasting remains were recovered in two locales within -170/171, apparently differentiating zones of secular versus sacred feasting. Substantial evidence for supra-household food production and consumption was recovered along the large living flat associated with -171A (Fig. 5, Table 2). This rectangular house is situated below -170, the round-ended house found at the most elevated point in the complex which is both large in size and well-elaborated architecturally. Site -171A, the most elevated of the rectangular houses in the complex, has a moderately sized exterior pavement along its northern limit. Excavations within the house yielded dense lithic remains suggestive of adze manufacture (Oakes 1994). Given that an outdoor adze production workshop was found on the exterior terrace adjacent to -170, -171A likely served as a specialised house for adze production activities (rather than as a sleeping house) (Kahn 2005, 2007).

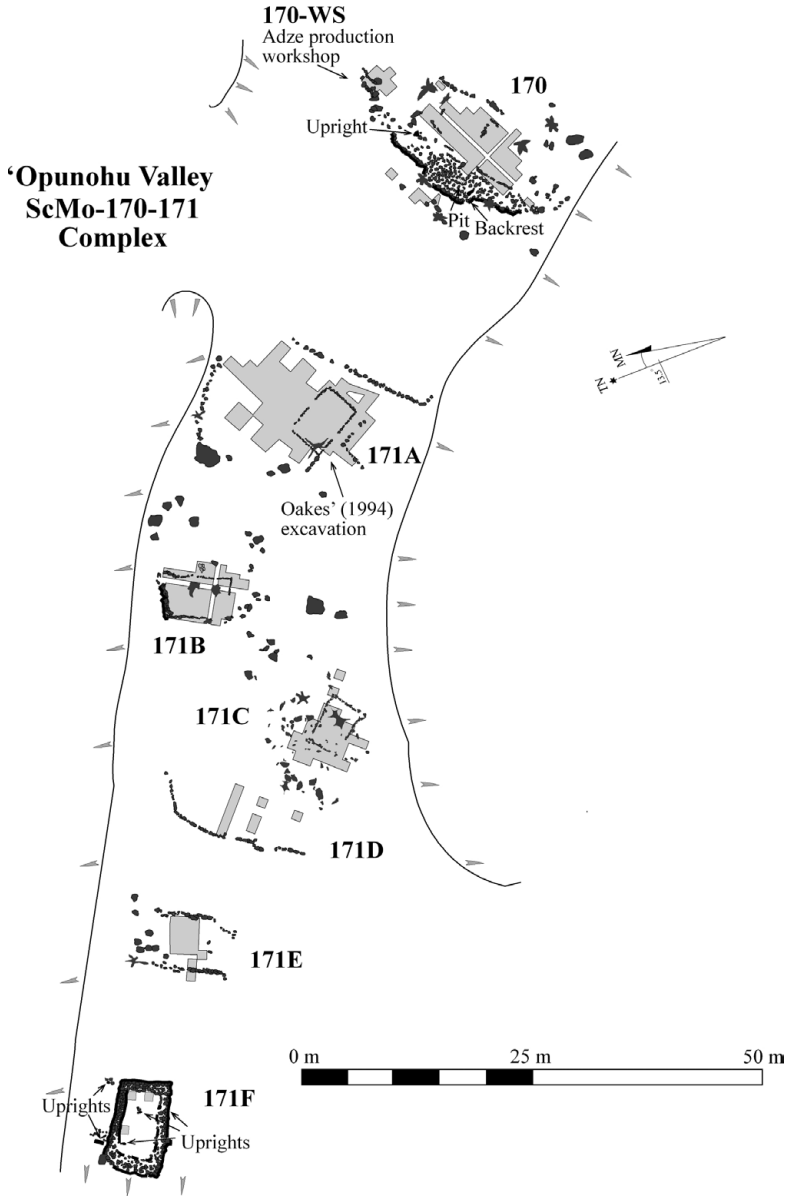

Figure 4. Plan view of -170/171 residential complex.

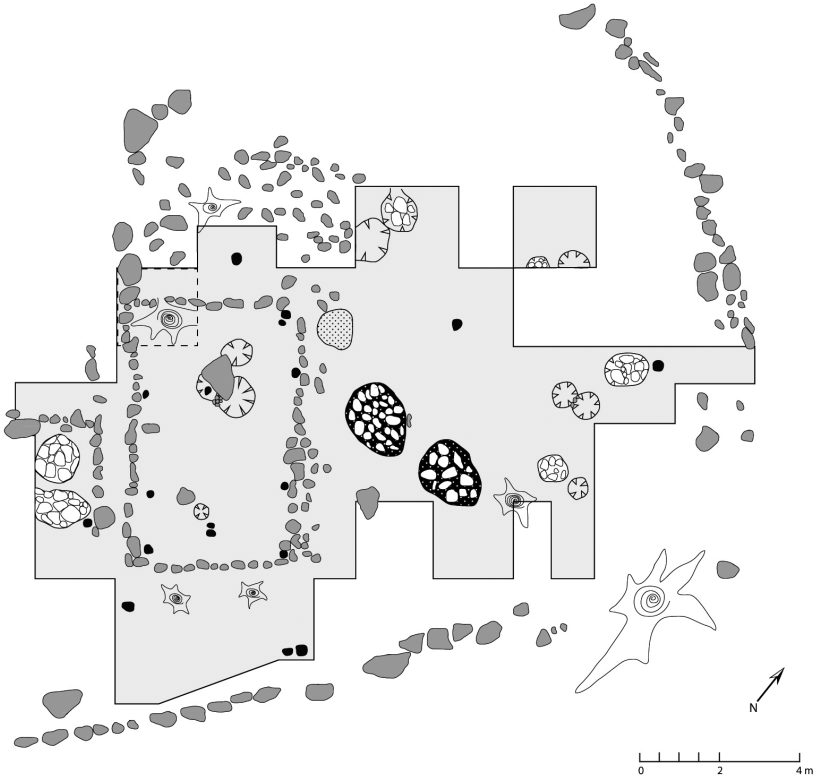

Figure 5. Plan view of -171A after excavation with sub-surface features.

Excavations revealed that the large living flat exterior to -171A had two large earth ovens and a cooking hearth, in addition to 11 pits for breadfruit fermentation, two of which were associated with an L-shaped stone alignment. These data demonstrate food production and consumption at levels beyond the needs of the residents of -170 and are indicative of domestic feasting. The intensity of food storage/fermentation pits signals material remains of the Polynesian "pudding complex", where fermented or semi-fermented starches were mixed with emollients such as coconut oil (Kirch and Green 2001), and sometimes cooked in earth ovens, to create specialty or luxury foods that featured prominently in Ma'ohi public feasts (Leach 2003). Given -171A's spatial location, its feasts appear to have been secular in nature and were likely sponsored by the headman of the corporate residential group residing in -170.

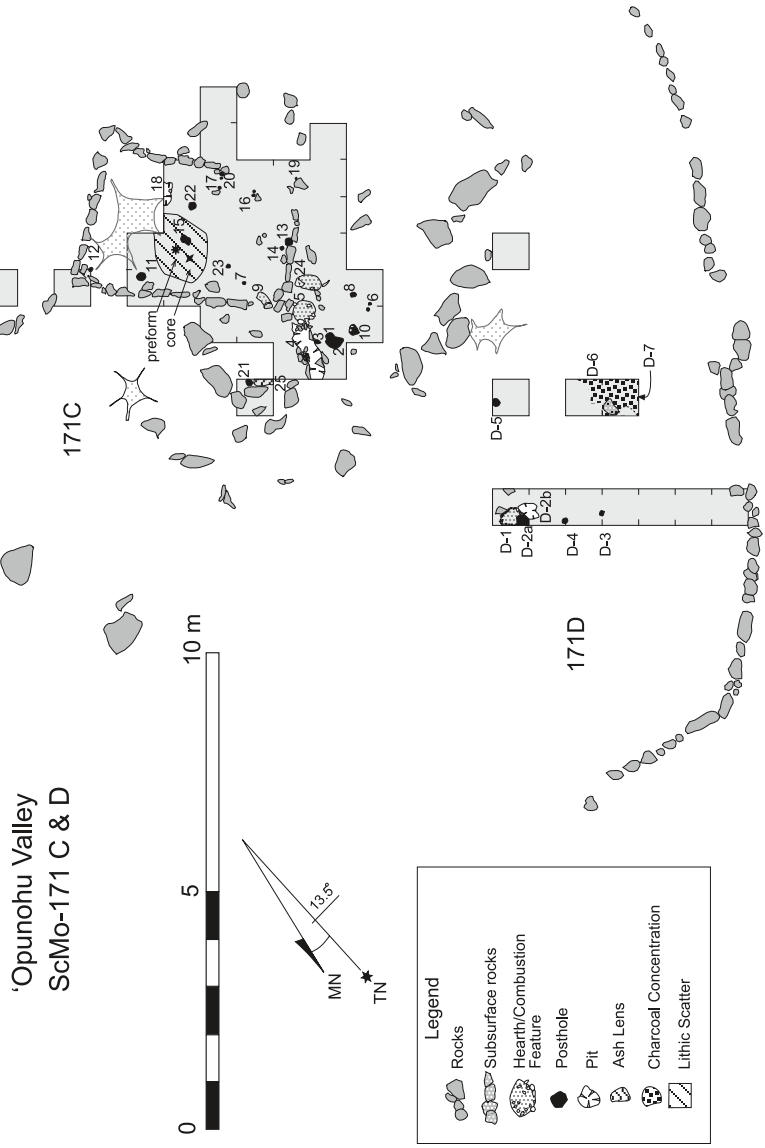

Figure 6. Plan view -171C/D after excavation with sub-surface features.

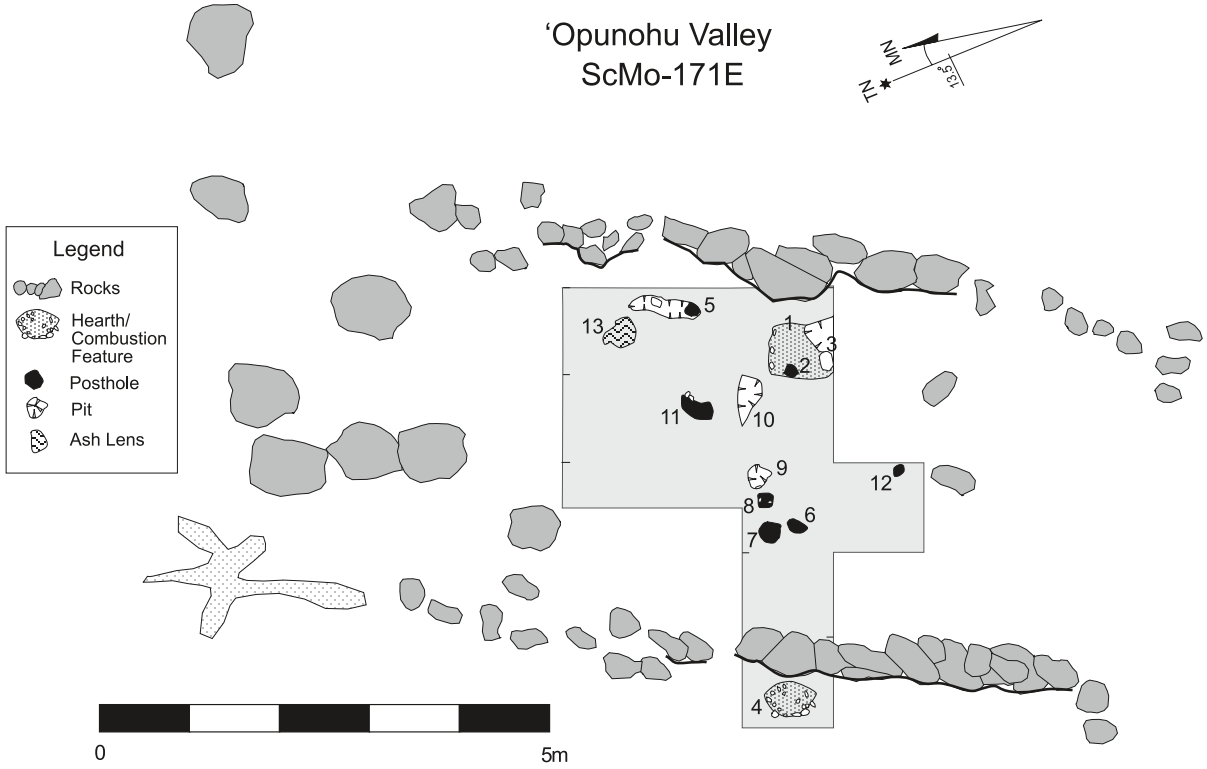

Figure 7. Plan view of -171E after excavation with sub-surface features.

Feasting remains were also associated with terraces situated below the last rectangular sleeping house (-171C) and just above the small familial *marae* (-171F) found at the bottom of the complex. Terraces -171D and -171E each included paired stone-faced terraces with interior soil flats; a portion of the -171E soil flat had a moderately sized pavement (Fig. 7). At both locales, suites of food preparation activities not associated with formal sleeping houses were found, suggestive of public locales for communal activities. For example, excavations at -171D recovered three hearths and a pit for food storage or fermentation, in association with substantial charcoal, oven rake-out, ash and fire-cracked rock. In a similar manner, -171E revealed substantial food preparation activities, including four food storage or fermentation pits, a cooking hearth and oven rake-out. However, in contrast to the "dirty" deposits recovered at -171D, some deposits at -171E, particularly those adjacent to the surface pavement, were "clean" and generally lacked fire-cracked rock or substantial charcoal. It seems likely that -171D served as a communal food preparation area for feasting events that took place on -171E. Because these events were outside of the -171F temple enclosure, they may have been secular events led by the residential headman that brought together members of this extended corporate group. However, given that archaeological data and site proxemics suggest secular feasting was associated with high elevation and the residence of the headman (-170) and specialised structures (-171A), feasting events at -171E could be interpreted as domestic ritual feasting events that were located in spatial opposition to secular domestic feasting events.

In sum, sleeping houses -170, -171B, -171C each had cooking areas either directly attached to the exterior of the house, as with lower status houses -171B and -171C, or situated on a fronting terrace, as with higher status house -170. These data conform to expectations for exterior cook-houses attached to specific households for everyday cooking. These data are in contrast to food preparation remains at -171A which are found in the open air in association with a specialised house and those at -171D and -171E which are found in open-air communal spaces. As with Amehiti Zone B, archaeological data suggest that feasting locales are more commonly associated with the presence of food storage or food fermentation pits or have higher frequencies of such sub-surface features than domestic cooking areas. As with Amehiti Zone B, feasting activities at -170/171 were also associated with well-constructed exterior pavements.

Tupauruuru, ScMo-103

ScMo-103 is situated in the middle of the Tupauruuru District lowlands. The complex is comprised of seven aggregated temples in addition to round-ended and rectangular house sites and raised stone platforms (Fig. 8). Round-ended

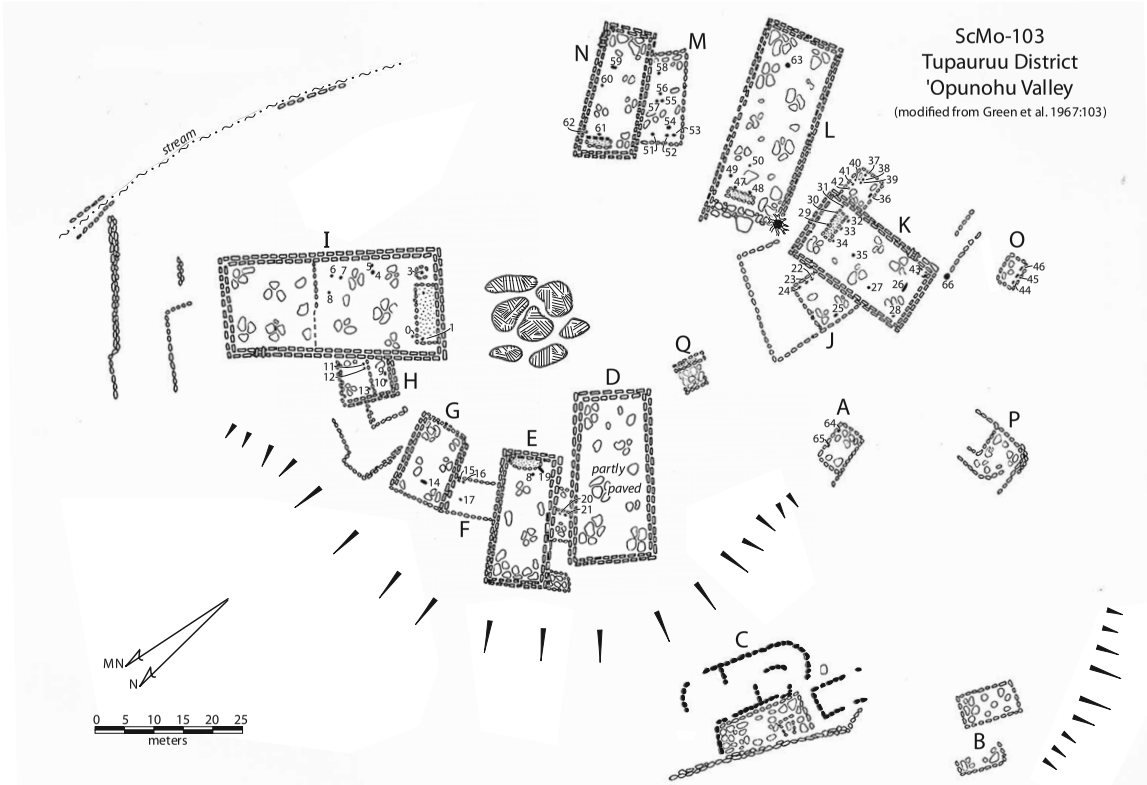

Figure 8. Plan view of -103 aggregate *marae* complex.

house site -103C is exceptionally large and is associated with a sizeable, well-constructed pavement. The complex is found adjacent to an archery platform (ScMo-131), another large round-ended house with an attached pavement (ScMo-178), and a chief's platform or council platform (ScMo-181). Council platforms (*tahu'a- umu-pua'a* or literally 'pig oven platform') signify an elite presence. These elaborate raised stone platforms served as loci for "national councils" of high chiefs, priests and landowners and also served as feasting areas (Kahn and Kirch 2014). Council platforms are rare in the valley and in all instances are associated with aggregate clusters of *marae* and other elite structures such as archery platforms (Green and Descantes 1989, Green *et al*. 1967, Kahn and Kirch 2014). Political deliberations or "national councils" held by chiefs at such platforms would be expected to be associated with feasting activities.

Green and colleagues (1967: 151) have argued that ScMo-103 served as a "focal point" or "major elite center" for settlement in Tupauruuru. I have argued that it served as one of four major ritual-political centres in the valley (Kahn 2011, Kahn and Kirch 2014), given that it is comprised of two or more elaborate temples in association with specialised sites such as archery platforms, council meeting platforms and large round-ended houses and rectangular houses of a specialised function. Such major ritual-political centres would have been the loci of ceremonies sponsored by district level chiefs, as well as areas where tribute was brought to the chiefs by the surrounding community. Current excavation and survey data suggest that such ritual-political centres in the 'Opunohu Valley are often associated with specialised houses, including rectangular houses that served as residences for ritual practitioners (Kahn 2013, 2015, Kahn and Kirch 2014; see also Orliac 1982: 164). Oral traditions describe how high priests could be attached to specific elite temple sites (such as community level *marae*), where participation in ritual was restricted to high status persons (Babadzan 1993, Henry 1928: 144). As Table 1 suggests, ceremonies at such temples were often followed by elaborate community feasts.

Green and Davidson's excavations at round-ended house site ScMo-103C recovered numerous breadfruit storage pits in addition to numerous exceptionally large earth ovens associated with charcoal, ash and fire-cracked rock (Table 2). Green and colleagues (1967: 138) interpreted the quantity and size of these features as suggestive of "lavish entertaining". Site -103C has been interpreted as a *fare i'a manaha*, a house to store sacred items used in *marae* ceremonies (Green 1996, Orliac 1982: 237). The size, frequency and context of its cooking features are suggestive of a feasting locale. Feasting events at -103C were likely both community-wide secular and ritual events

given their association with an aggregate *marae* complex of some elaboration. I recovered similar feasting events at a second major ritual-political complex in the ʻOpunohu Valley (ScMo-124), at a higher elevation in the Tupauruuru District. There, community-wide ritual feasting took place on a large terrace fronting two elaborate *marae* and adjacent to two elaborate pavements and a rectangular priest's house (Kahn 2015: 74, Kahn and Kirch 2014), while community-wide secular feasting took place in front of a council platform (Kahn and Kirch 2014).

The -103 feasting facilities share similarities with those found at Amehiti Zone B and 170/171. These include evidence for cooking facilities unassociated with sleeping houses, but found in close proximity to communal areas fronting *marae*, or to specialised structures such as priests' houses and council platforms. The -103 data support the hypothesis that feasting locales will have frequent and large cooking features and storage pits in associated with dispersed debris from cooking activities such as ash, charcoal, and fire-cracked rock.

EXTRA-AREAL COMPARISONS

Having highlighted the nature of feasting events at both community and familial level temples on Moʻorea, in addition to those found at residential complexes, I briefly turn to excavation data from other islands in the archipelago to parse out regional patterns. A survey of excavation reports from Tahiti illustrates that large earth ovens and hearths have been recovered in temple contexts, both within elaborate temple enclosures (community level *marae*), as well as near or within the *ahu* 'altar' (Belcaguy 1988, Garanger 1971, 1975: 43-44). Their context is highly suggestive of communal ritual feasting events, some of which may have taken place when architectural features of the temple, particularly the altar, were enlarged or elaborated. Data from the Papenoʻo Valley, particularly from TPP06 (Chazine 1978: Figures 35-38), highlight that terraces in front of large aggregate *marae* complexes (community level temples) were used for feasting events. The latter were likely associated with community secular feasts which followed rituals on the *marae*, similar to patterns found at Site-342, Amehiti Zone B.

Turning to the Leeward Society Islands, Edwards's (1988) survey of Faʻaroa Valley, Raiʻatea recovered numerous temple complexes of varying size and complexity. He argued that the VAV-1 complex was one of two extensive ceremonial complexes in the valley with elaborate temples and house sites (1988: 19), in effect, similar to the ritual-political centres found in the ʻOpunohu Valley. Faʻaroa survey data suggest that these two sizeable aggregate *marae* centres had large ritual structures functioning as district level temples.

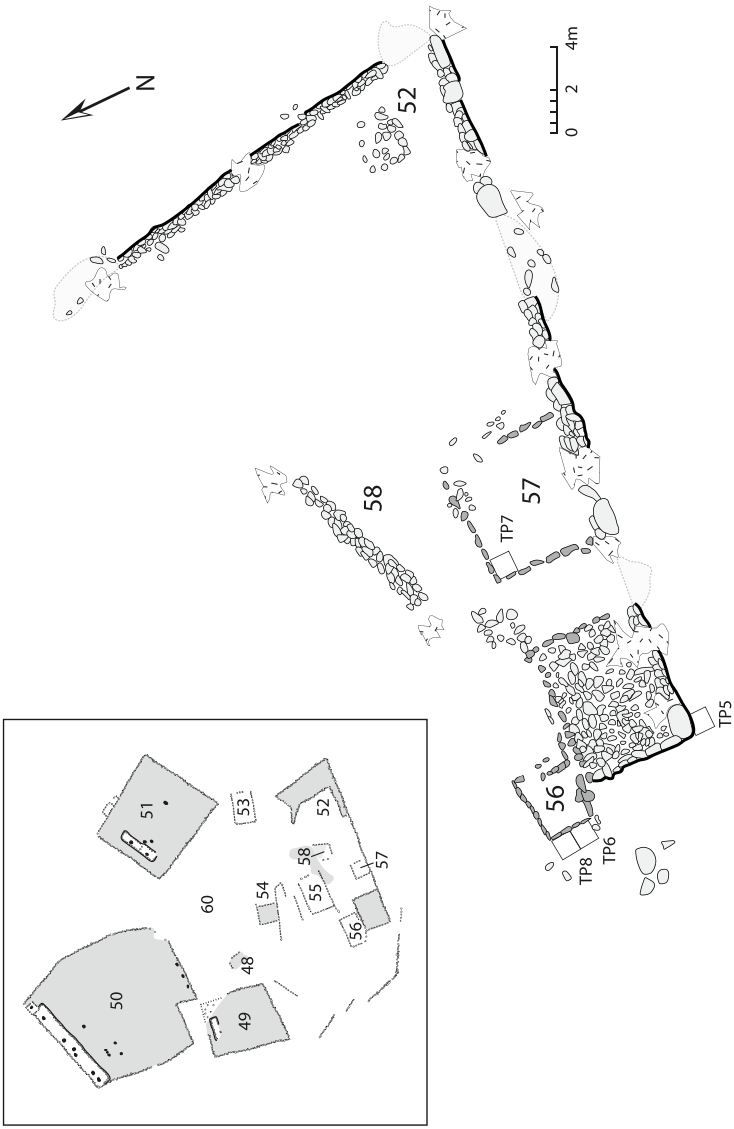

Figure 9. Plan view of -52 fronting terrace with house sites -56 and -57; inset shows plan view of VAV-1 aggregate *marae* complex, Faʻaroa Valley, Raiʻatea.

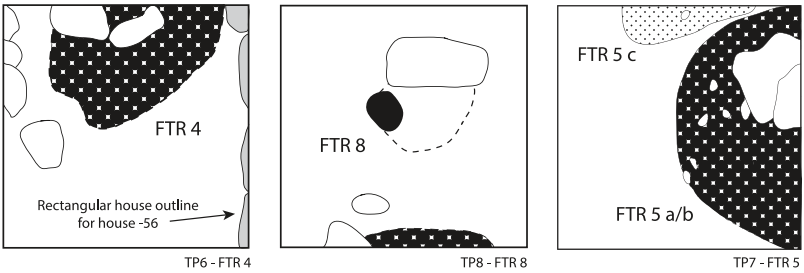

Figure 10. Sub-surface features associated with rectangular house sites -56 and -57, VAV-1 aggregate complex.

The eastern zone of the VAV-1 complex includes three elaborate temples situated on an extensive and well-constructed terrace which fronts the *marae* (Fig. 9). Several pavements and at least four rectangular houses are found on this fronting terrace. My recent excavations at two of these rectangular houses (RAI-56, -57) uncovered extensive evidence for food preparation activities, including four cooking features, two of which were sizeable earth ovens (Fig. 10).

One of the cooking areas was exterior to a rectangular house, while the other was found within a rectangular house. Both food preparation areas had extensive sheet midden replete with oven rake-out, fire-cracked rock and ash. Given the close association of these cooking areas to well-constructed pavements on fronting terraces, and the sites' close association with elaborate *marae*, it seems likely that they represent communal secular feasting locales. Rectangular house sites -56 and -57 may have in fact served as *fare tama'ara'a* or specialised eating sheds known to have been used in elite feasts in the Society Islands.

TEMPORAL TRENDS

Here I discuss dated feasting contexts (as reported in other publications) to assess whether domestic or supra-household ceremonial feasting intensified in the Society Islands through time. In terms of Amehiti Zone B, ritual and secular feasting at sites -325 and -324 calibrates to between the mid-15th to mid-17th centuries at 2 sigma (Kahn and Kirch 2013). Feasting events at -171A post-date AD 1641, and are also relatively late in the Society Islands sequence (Oakes 1994: 77), while the -171E and -171D contexts have not yet been dated.

Feasting events taking place in aggregate *marae* complexes interpreted as ritual-political centres also calibrate to the late prehistoric period. Feasting contexts at -103C, based on a large earth oven calibrated to the mid-17th to mid-18th centuries (Kahn 2011), most likely date to the period just prior to European contact (pre-AD 1767). Feasting events at a second major ritual-political centre in the ʻOpunohu Valley, ScMo-124, include dates from earth ovens associated with a priest's house. Radiocarbon samples from these two earth ovens most likely date to between AD 1690–1730 (Kahn and Kirch 2014: 191-92). Structures or feasting events in the Faʻaroa Valley VAV-1 aggregate *marae* complex have yet to be dated. However, the surface architecture of two of the associated *marae*, namely *Acropora* (coral) veneer facing of the *ahu*, suggest that the complex was constructed and used late in the Society Islands sequence, post AD 1620 (see Kahn and Kirch 2014, Sharp *et al*. 2010).

Clearly more residential and ceremonial feasting contexts must be dated in the Society Islands to develop a refined chronology for these important socio-political events. Current data tentatively suggest that domestic feasting at elite house sites began as early as the mid-15th century and likely became intensified in the mid-17th century. Lepofsky and Kahn (2011) and others (Green 1996, Kahn 2014) argue that status differences among and between Maʻohi residential complexes become pronounced by the mid-1400s, a time of major inland expansion in the archipelago, when communities established temples and house sites in interior valleys. Thus, small-scale household feasting correlates with a period of increasing status differentiation among households and tentatively suggests that local scale feasting events ultimately contributed to these larger social transformations.

By the mid-1600s, Maʻohi elites had increasing control over subsistence production, both at the local and community scales (Lepofsky and Kahn 2011). Feasting at aggregate *marae* complexes intensified in the 17th century and continued up to the era of European contact (AD 1767). This was a period of rising political centralisation in the Society Islands, characterised by increasing political power of ruling elites such as paramount and district level chiefs and ritual specialists. Archipelago-wide data suggest that feasting was increasingly exploited by the Maʻohi elite class in later prehistory as a means of centralising their political power, particularly post-AD 1650, a chaotic period with intensive warfare ending in the unification of the Tahiti and Moʻorea chiefdoms, and a period of religious upheaval with the translocation of the ʻOro war cult from the Leeward Islands (Kahn 2010, Maric 2012, Wallin 2014). These trends mirror worldwide patterns, where feasting, as both an integrative and diffractive political strategy, can intensify during periods of inter- and intra- polity conflict and competition and periods of socio-religious upheaval (Junker 1999, Schachner 2001). It appears that Maʻohi feasting had

broader social ramifications, ultimately leading to increasing social hierarchy at both the local (household) and community (district) scales. Such patterns have been documented in other complex societies, where feasting activities tend to proliferate as political centralisation intensifies (Chicoine 2011, Knudsen *et al*. 2012, Kolb 1994, 2006).

* * *

The Society Islands archaeological case studies illuminate several points with respect to the role of feasting in late prehistoric Ma‘ohi society. In terms of context, feasting events can be found within secular locales, including communal spaces in residential complexes, sometimes in close association with the headman’s residence, and terraces attached to, or fronting, temple complexes, sometimes in association with priest’s houses. Feasting events are also associated with ritual locales, such as the interior of temple enclosures or in close association to temple altars, in addition to political locales, such as council platforms. These archaeological data confirm hypotheses developed from the ethnographic record, notably that feasting was a strategy used by household leaders and regional political leaders, including chiefs and the religious elite (priests), at both the local and community (or district) level. It is clear that Ma‘ohi feasting events empowered different social groups at different social scales.

The archaeological case studies highlight the importance of context and site proxemics in both the identification of feasting activities and interpreting their specific function, yet sampling issues remain. Excavation data suggest that Ma‘ohi feasting was associated not only with open-air cooking facilities, often containing large and numerous earth ovens and hearths, but commonly with pits for storing and preparing starchy root crops and fruits that would be transformed into luxury puddings. Such creamy puddings played important roles as feast foods throughout Polynesia (Kirch and Green 2001).

Since we lack well-preserved material remains of feasting, including detailed evidence of the type, quality and quantity of foodstuffs, it is difficult to parse out feast type or feast function without relying heavily on the size and frequency of food preparation facilities, their relationship to specialised architecture and site proxemics. For example, current excavation data from the ‘Opunohu Valley indicate that small-scale domestic feasting was hosted by upper class households in communal spaces with pavements, however, additional excavations at lower status house sites may reveal other evidence for domestic feasting. Current data also suggest that local headmen hosted both secular and ritual feasts to reify and unify the corporate group, perhaps in face of tensions between households that may have arisen as a result of

varied access to material and immaterial symbols of wealth and status (Kahn 2005, 2007). Such small-scale domestic feasts likely materialised the ritual and socio-economic status of the residential headman to other members of the corporate group and visiting neighbours. This hypothesis must be tested with additional excavations at residential complexes of varying status to understand the "reach" of feasting events among and between domestic complexes of varying status.

At the archipelago-wide scale, the close association of ritual-political centres with feasting activities likewise supports how district or community level chiefs and high-status priests hosted feasting events as a means to extend their economic or political authority, as well as a means to engage in community building. Within these contexts, communal and secular feasting was often associated with specialised facilities, including elaborate pavements, specialised houses, priests' houses and elaborate terraces fronting *marae,* similar to data for supra-household feasting elsewhere in Polynesia and in other complex societies. In these contexts, community members, some of whom could not directly participate in the ritual events at the ceremonial *marae*, could be entertained by the largesse of political and ritual leaders with foodstuffs, oratory and entertainment. Community members reciprocated by literally providing the fruits of their labours as the foodstuffs to be consumed during the feasting events.

While more work is needed to clarify these trends, the political nature of Ma'ohi communal feasting is most strongly materialised in its association with council platforms in the two well-excavated political centres of the 'Opunohu Valley. Ethnohistoric texts describe how social units competed against one another to produce the best tribute in order to please the gods, suggesting that at least at the community level, feasting spurred the intensification of domestic production (Henry 1928: 174-75) and perhaps led to other social transformations. Certainly, intensive elite feasting in Hawaiian temples supported the ideological power of chiefs in illustrating their role as mediators between the greater populace and the gods (Kolb 1994), and we can expect that Ma'ohi chiefs profited in a similar manner from hosting sacred and secular community feasts. One possibility is that the chiefly lineages controlling the four major political-ritual centres in the 'Opunohu Valley were carrying out competitive corporate feasting as a strategy for indebting their neighbouring chiefs, but also as a means of alliance building and marriage exchange. These trends intensified after AD 1650, a period of major regional social upheaval and warfare that resulted in regional political centralisation and the introduction of the 'Oro war cult from the Leeward Islands.

Finally, there is some suggestion that the specific function of feasting differed at monumental architecture of varying scale and complexity, for

example, at familial temples versus larger, more elaborate community or district temples. At larger community aggregate temple complexes, archaeological evidence and ethnographic analogy for feasting in the late prehistoric period illustrate how Ma'ohi chiefly lineages actively demonstrated their social power by competing in cyclical rituals associated with tribute display and competitive feasting. Yet at familial level temples, archaeological evidence and ethnographic analogy suggest that household headmen utilised feasting as a means of status display as well as a signal of hospitality and of belonging to a particular social group. Thus, at both the household and community scales, Ma'ohi feasting is strongly correlated, but not uniquely associated, with ceremonial sites. Feasting in the late prehistoric Society Islands chiefdoms served varied secular and sacred functions. Such events actively solidified local and community level leaders' economic, socio-political and ideological power in varied ceremonial contexts and likely contributed to the high degree of political centralisation seen in the period just prior to European contact.

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ABSTRACT

Much of the research into East Polynesian ceremonial sites focuses on temple-altar (*marae-ahu*) complexes as sacred sites where varied religious rituals and rites of passage were performed. Yet ethnohistoric documents and the Tahitian lexicon suggest a broader role for Ma'ohi (indigenous Tahitian) ceremonial architecture as the foci of individual and corporate ceremonies of a religious, economic and political nature. Utilising a spatio-temporal perspective, I investigate the function of feasting at terraces attached to a range of community and familial level temples, in addition to communal spaces within residential sites in the Society Islands. My goal is to explore the ways that Ma'ohi household leaders, chiefs and priests may have utilised feasting to materialise their economic authority, while at the same time facilitating the formation of communal identities. I utilise archaeological data to identify feasting

at monumental architectural sites of varying scale and complexity and house sites of differing status. I then turn to ethnographic analogy and social theory to suggest differing functions of feasting at different site types. As I argue, feasting serves as a highly visible social act, representing not only a political leader's generosity, but delineating boundaries of particular social groups and control over resources. In the Society Island chiefdoms, at both the household and community scales, feasting is strongly correlated, but not uniquely associated with, ceremonial sites and served varied secular and sacred functions. I conclude that feasting actively solidified local and community level leader's economic, socio-political and ideological power in varied ceremonial contexts of the late prehistoric Society Island chiefdoms.

Keywords: feasting, ceremonial architecture, Society Islands, socio-political strategies, spatio-temporal analyses, communal identity.

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