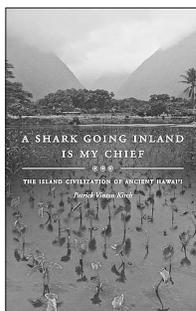


Francisco Mellén Blanco in a lesser-known volume in 1986. There is one new second-hand account, though; written by José de Moraleda two years after the expedition, and it is very interesting. In general, the Spanish accounts are highly descriptive and they agree with each other almost perfectly.

The section about the English expedition is probably the core of the second part of the book. It contains nine accounts of varying degrees of value: from Andrew Sparrman's one paragraph text to the rich narratives of Georg and Johann Reinhold Forster which, to me, represent the peak of this compilation. Of all the eighteenth century visitors, these two had probably some of the most lucid interpretations of what they saw on the island. Almost at the same level is La Pérouse's account of the French expedition in 1786. The other highly valuable text from this expedition is Bernizet's geographical information and detailed measurements of platforms and *hare paena* which should be of great interest for geographers and archaeologists. Again there is a one-paragraph account by Paul Méréault Monneron mentioning briefly that Rapa Nui was worthless and no European country would be interested in taking it.

The edition has the trademark Rapa Nui Press square book design and it is fully illustrated in black and white. Maps and iconography of the four expeditions support the contents of the volume wonderfully. I believe that Rolf Foerster's introduction is going to be cited in the future by scholars studying the early historic period of Rapa Nui. The book appears as a valuable contribution to scholars but also to general Spanish-speaking readers, since most of these accounts were rather obscure and difficult to find even in their original languages, and now they are readily available in a nice looking package that delivers an almost full picture of what Europeans thought they saw on Rapa Nui during the 18th century.

### Kirch, Patrick V. *A Shark Going Inland is My Chief: The Island Civilization of Ancient Hawai'i*



Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. 368 pp., 8 color illustrations, 17 black and white photos, 4 maps. ISBN 978-0-520-27330-6. US\$45.00 (hardcover).

Review by Mike T. Carson,  
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In his latest book, *A Shark Going Inland is My Chief: The Island Civilization of Ancient Hawai'i*, Professor Patrick V. Kirch marshals his decades of research

toward answering a singular question, posed by Captain James Cook in 1778: "How shall we account for This Nation spreading it self so far over this Vast ocean?" The "Nation" in this case referred to the people across the Asia-Pacific who shared a common ancestral language and cultural background. The question arose specifically after Cook's first encounter with the Polynesian inhabitants of the Hawaiian Islands, who perpetuated the language and culture of their "Nation" in a remarkably remote archipelago.

Professor Kirch probably is the most qualified among us to answer Captain Cook's question today. He draws on his decades of research in Hawaiian archaeology and cultural history, as well as his experiences farther afield in the Pacific Islands. Equally important, the author writes from his heart about the islands that he dearly loves. The result is a priceless gift of autobiography infused with both literary flare and scientific fact.

As many social scientists may expect, the book's driving question has no singular or succinct answer, but rather it fuels the engine for taking readers on a journey in pursuit of multiple answers. In this case, the journey itself truly is more important than the destination. Along the way, other questions arise, all equally fascinating and important, about how Polynesian culture developed and what specifically happened in the Hawaiian Islands. Professor Kirch further draws a distinction between questions of proximal "how" and ultimate "why," with richly variable answers.

The book's chapters are organized chronologically, in terms familiar to most students and practitioners of Asia-Pacific archaeology. Ancient roots of Austronesian society are mentioned in southern coastal China, Taiwan, and Island Southeast Asia, but the book's primary focus really is about much later events in Hawai'i, as expressed clearly in the book's title. The deeper background is covered as needed for a proper footing, and then the author takes us on a thrilling full-speed ride as the book progresses forward in its time-line.

The author hits his best strides when he addresses questions about how (and why) the historically known Hawaiian Kingdom came to exist. This discourse dominates the pages of the book. Hawaiian ethnohistory necessarily acts as the primary source of information, although it is greatly augmented (or some might say transcended) by the author's experience in archaeology, his familiarity with historical linguistics, and of course his work in islands outside Hawai'i. He thus gives readers a powerfully educated account that otherwise would be missing in narratives that favor only one of these lines of evidence.

For all its inherent scholarship, this book is intended for the general public, much like the products of Brian Fagan. Much the same style is used and

with great effect, conveying a strong sense of the human qualities behind the artifacts and midden that archaeologists find so interesting. Readers are treated to literary re-constructions of ancient events that may have happened, as well as the author's interpretative narratives of real historical events. I am aware that many academic colleagues dislike this style and approach, but we all owe ourselves at least one chance to cut loose from the iron-clad mentality of academia and enjoy reading what Professor Kirch offers us here.

The re-constructive narratives are juxtaposed with other literary elements for a thoroughly engaging set of chapters. We have the pleasure of reading delightful sketches of prominent individuals who have shaped the field of Polynesian and Hawaiian archaeology and anthropology. We likewise are given intimate access to Professor Kirch's autobiographical reminiscences, during the precious moments when he was involved in many of the key discoveries of Pacific and Hawaiian archaeology.

As noted, this book is intended for the general public, so it does not contain the scientific detail and scholarly discourse expected of an academic volume. For those purposes, Professor Kirch has written numerous other works. Here, the author succeeds in a different objective of engaging with the public, and many of us can learn from his example. He tells his own story, and he tells it well. Indeed, nobody knows this story better, because it recounts Professor Kirch's lifelong career up until now.

I can't help but imagine that Professor Kirch was inspired to write something like this book decades ago, enthused by his genuine compassion for the Hawaiian Islands and their captivating cultural history. I am glad that he waited, because now we all have the benefit of his decades of research and broad experience that he has, in a sense, brought back home to Hawai'i. Without any hint of hyperbole, I can say that Professor Kirch has made Hawaiian archaeology what it is today, and his latest book shares his story of how (and why) that happened.