Book and Media Reviews
the book indicates that 98 percent of the population is Christian (37). The state, Christianity, and local cultures usually contribute to our understanding of social change, conflict, and politics in Solomon Islands. Denomini- national membership may have played a role in the rationale for participation in the conflict by ex-militants. Churches also played an important role in the peace and reconciliation processes and activities following the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement and the cooperative intervention. This is an area of immense importance and may warrant further research if we are to really understand the perceptions shared by militants and their participation in war and peace. 

Greed and Grievance is a must-read for those who long to understand the views, aspirations, and stories of ex-militants during the crisis and in relation to their perception of the modern state in Solomon Islands. The book is a remarkable contribution to the literature on the Solomon Islands conflict, politics, and development. It furnishes evidence showing that Solomon Islands is struggling to build a modern state and may need to find ways to incorporate the different linguistic and cultural groups across the country to progress on this front. The views revealed by ex-militants are testaments to the fact that there is still a lot to do to unite Solomon Islands under a modern state. The book very well expressed the idea that, in the eyes of many ex-militants and citizens generally, the government is the successor of the colonial state, an “outsider,” and the inheritor of past wrongdoings. Unless the modern state recognizes this and works toward making amends, the fundamental views held by militants shown in the pages of the book will linger into the future.

GORDON LEUA NANAU
University of the South Pacific

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Most attempts at synthesizing the archaeology of the Pacific Islands have presented the big picture of human migration and adaptation to these diverse and insular environments over the last 3,500 years, none yet exceeding Patrick Vinton Kirch’s book On the Road of the Winds (2000). In the twenty-four chapters of Unearthing the Polynesian Past, Kirch instead presents a personalized account of the conflict between the development of scientific theory, the politics and funding of research institutions, and the political and logistical challenges of conducting archaeological research with indigenous communities over the last fifty years. Hypotheses will stand if data are repeatable and testable, but in archaeological research, especially in the Pacific Islands, this is not often possible, as Kirch attests. What could be excavated or collected in the 1970s and 1980s may now be irretrievable
on some islands, with sites destroyed by development or environmental change, and in an increasing number of cases, access to sites denied to archaeologists by indigenous societies or institutions that are struggling to control their identities under existing or impending social, economic, and environmental pressures. As Kirch laments, most archaeology conducted on the Pacific Islands since the 1990s is contract and development based, initially failing to engage with the indigenous community, and with little regard for empirical theory. This book offers some clues as to how to address the current practices of archaeology, which in some ways act against the primary goal of understanding the past.

With books like *The Evolution of Polynesian Chiefdoms* (1984) and *Feathered Gods and Fishhooks* (1985), Kirch’s research has inspired many of my peer group with anthropological or biological science backgrounds to undertake research on the Pacific Islands. But it was his later *The Wet and the Dry* (1994), which examined the ecological engineering of wetland irrigated and dryland cultivation systems in the development of complex sociopolitical structures on Futuna (East) and Alofi, that got me hooked. I had earlier read Douglas Yen’s classic *The Sweet Potato and Oceania* (1974), which led me on to Kirch and Yen’s collaboration in *Tikopia: The Prehistory and Ecology of a Polynesian Outlier* (1982). In 2010, I was lucky enough to spend a month on Tikopia, “the most stunningly beautiful island” (121), with the aim of extending Kirch and Yen’s work on environmental change. I was therefore intrigued to read this book, especially its three chapters on the Southeast Solomon Islands, to discern how different our experiences were.

As in 2010, the only way to get to Tikopia in 1977–1978 was by freight boats, which still only service the island every six to eight weeks or more. In May 1977, Kirch traveled to Tikopia on the *Bilikiki*, which is now a diving adventure ship still operating in Solomon Islands. During his voyage, the ship got blown off course, as the captain was navigating without charts and only using dead reckoning. Over thirty years after Kirch’s visits to Tikopia, I traveled there on a four-day trip from Honiara on a similarly retrofitted but overloaded long-line fishing boat, the *Solfish I*—which, after again being overloaded with cargo, tragically sank in a storm off the coast of Makira eighteen months later. (Fortunately, all forty-nine passengers survived, but they were stranded in life rafts for three days before being rescued.) Other things that haven’t changed since the 1970s include the accommodation with the back-breaking low ceiling (4.5 feet high) in a furniture-less but cyclone-proof thatched fare (house); the fabulous fruit (eg, natu, *Burckella obovata*) and nut (eg, voia, *Canarium harveyi*) orchards; the majestic tāmanu (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) groves; the masi (fermented mei, *Artocarpus spp*), like a more subtle Vegemite); the flies; and the “haere ki te moana” (go down by the sea) toilet facilities. Our return voyage to Honiara was by way of a reconstructed, traditional double-hulled lateen-rig vaka, gifted to the island by a German philanthropist, and my GPS:
the first Tikopian-led interisland voyage conducted since the 1890s!

The mana of the ariki (chiefs) of Tikopia has not changed, although recent reports of a Seventh Day Adventist—attempted disruption of this tradition are of concern. I was fascinated with Kirch’s negotiations with Tikopians over their cultural heritage. In 1978, on his second five-month-long field season in Tikopia, after excavating a burial of the Ngā Faea (a clan that, according to oral traditions, had been expelled from the island in the seventeenth century), the Ariki Tafua who presided over the burial ground voiced his displeasure at the body not being reinterred. His Tikopian coworkers who excavated the burial voiced no concern over the excavation, stating that it was not their ancestors so they had no problem. Kirch’s response to Ariki Tafua was that they “are Ngā Faea bones” (136), implying that there was no need to worry. But the shaking of a tanetane bush (Polyscias scutellaria) and the appearance of a skink in another excavation were both perceived as evidence of an “atua i Raropuka” (a bad spirit at the Raropuka marae), highlighting the caution that Tikopians place on unearthing their past and that has led to the denial of permission for further work in those areas, though not in others.

There is no textbook on how archaeologists should negotiate their work with indigenous communities, nor should there be. But in Unearthing the Polynesian Past, Kirch eloquently portrays the serendipitous way the practice of archaeology often works and how that often worked to Kirch’s benefit. His ability to sense and negotiate the Tikopian past with the ariki and other Tikopians was built on his having some language skills in pidgin and Proto-Polynesian, his unparalleled access to the vast oral traditions presented in Raymond Firth’s vast corpus of works about the island, and his personal charm. However, the latter did not work on Futuna, where he was denied permission to return to the island by the French authorities prioritizing their own research teams, and similar conflicts have clearly plagued aspects of his research in parts of the Hawaiian Islands, much of which he blames on the poor practice of consulting archaeology.

I especially enjoyed reading Kirch’s anecdotes about the logistical difficulties of conducting research in the Pacific Islands as well as his encounters with eccentric expatriates, especially British people, during the 1970s and 1980s. Imagine sitting in a Solomon Island village (Mbanwa, Nendo, Santa Cruz Group), on the eve of national independence, 6 July 1978, listening to an Englishman (the husband of a New Zealand palynologist) singing in his best drunken voice: “Rule, Britannia! Britannia rule the waves; Britons never, never, never will be slaves” (132). Colonial bigotry and prejudiced attitudes on the part of white expatriates, usually those who lived on a Pacific Island before independence (and throwbacks to the nineteenth century), can still be experienced today, especially in Melanesia. Kirch’s comments on his long list of students are mostly full of praise, but it was interesting to hear that there were also some slack Australian students back in the 1980s, and that some British students insisted on hav-
ing their teddy bears with them at all times in the field.

To the aspiring student of Pacific Islands archaeology, for whom I think it is mainly intended, this book is a must read. Remarkably, Kirch began his archaeological career leading an examination of the stone terraces in Hālawa Iki, Hālawa Valley, Moloka‘i, in 1964 as a fourteen-year-old. I’m not sure whether budding research students of this age from Mānoa will be hooked by this book today. The book, however, not only provides an overview of the archaeology of the Pacific Islands but also introduces the Pacific Islands research community as it has stood from the 1970s until the present. The contemporary Pacific Islands archaeological community is a tight vaka (canoe), filled with often eccentric but inspiring and supportive people, none less than Kirch himself. It’s a great community to be a part of and desperately needs more people in the face of rampant development and environmental change.

Research departments and subject areas come and go, but Kirch has shown that the Pacific Islands continue to attract attention and inspire fundamental questions about human behavior from many disciplines. Part of Kirch’s appeal to me as a scholar is not only his long-standing emphasis on “pluridisciplinary” research but also the sheer number of islands on which he has worked—in “Polynesia” (whose definition is becoming more obscure as our understanding grows concerning the genetic and material culture of the Pacific’s Lapita melting pot) as well as in the Austronesian-speaking societies of the Western Pacific. In the concluding chapter, Kirch admits his privilege as a white male researcher from an elite university and emphasizes the slow transition to the equitable inclusion of female and indigenous researchers in an unenviable and struggling research environment.

My only criticism of this book is the absence of comments on the future of Pacific Islands archaeology, given Kirch’s vast experience. I was intrigued by his quaint references to the past when life was simpler, before 1984 when his Kaypro-4/84 computer creaked into the digital revolution. Many of his students, some of whom I have collaborated with, are able to work on the islands after exchanging hundreds of e-mails and scrolling through Islanders’ Facebook pages. We now get to work with full-fledged indigenous researchers who open up numerous different ideas and angles for research. We work with communities who have very different ideas about the past, including some who fight for cultural heritage protection against the rampages of development as a remnant of the colonial past.

MATTHEW PREBBLE
The Australian National University

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He Nae Ākea: Bound Together.
The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

On 19 March 2016, as part of the He Nae Ākea: Bound Together exhibit, the ‘ahu‘ula (feathered cloak) and mahiole (feathered helmet) of Hawai‘i Island chief Kalaniōpu‘u returned to