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CHALLENGES



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Sustainable Past of maritime Kiribati?: Historical and ethnographic adaptations of Kiribati people to a changing natural environment

Examples from low coral atolls of Abaiang and Tarawa, Gilbert Islands, Republic of Kiribati in Remote Oceania

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AUSTRALIA ICOMOS
International Council on Monuments and Sites



ICOMOS PASIFIKA
International Council on Monuments and Sites



CULTURE: Conserving it Together
Suva, Fiji, 1-5 October 2018
An ICOMOS conference on heritage conservation across the Pacific

Brief introduction

HUMANS VERSUS THE ELEMENTS

“Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa”
“Health, Peace and Prosperity”
Official Motto of Kiribati



Federated States of Micronesia

Marshall Islands

Nauru

Howland Island
Baker Island

Kiribati

Jarvis Island

Tuvalu

Tokelau

Solomon Islands

Vanuatu

Wallis and Futuna

American Samoa

Fiji

Niue

French Polynesia

©2018 Google Imagery ©2018 NASA, TerraMetrics [Terms](#) 200 km

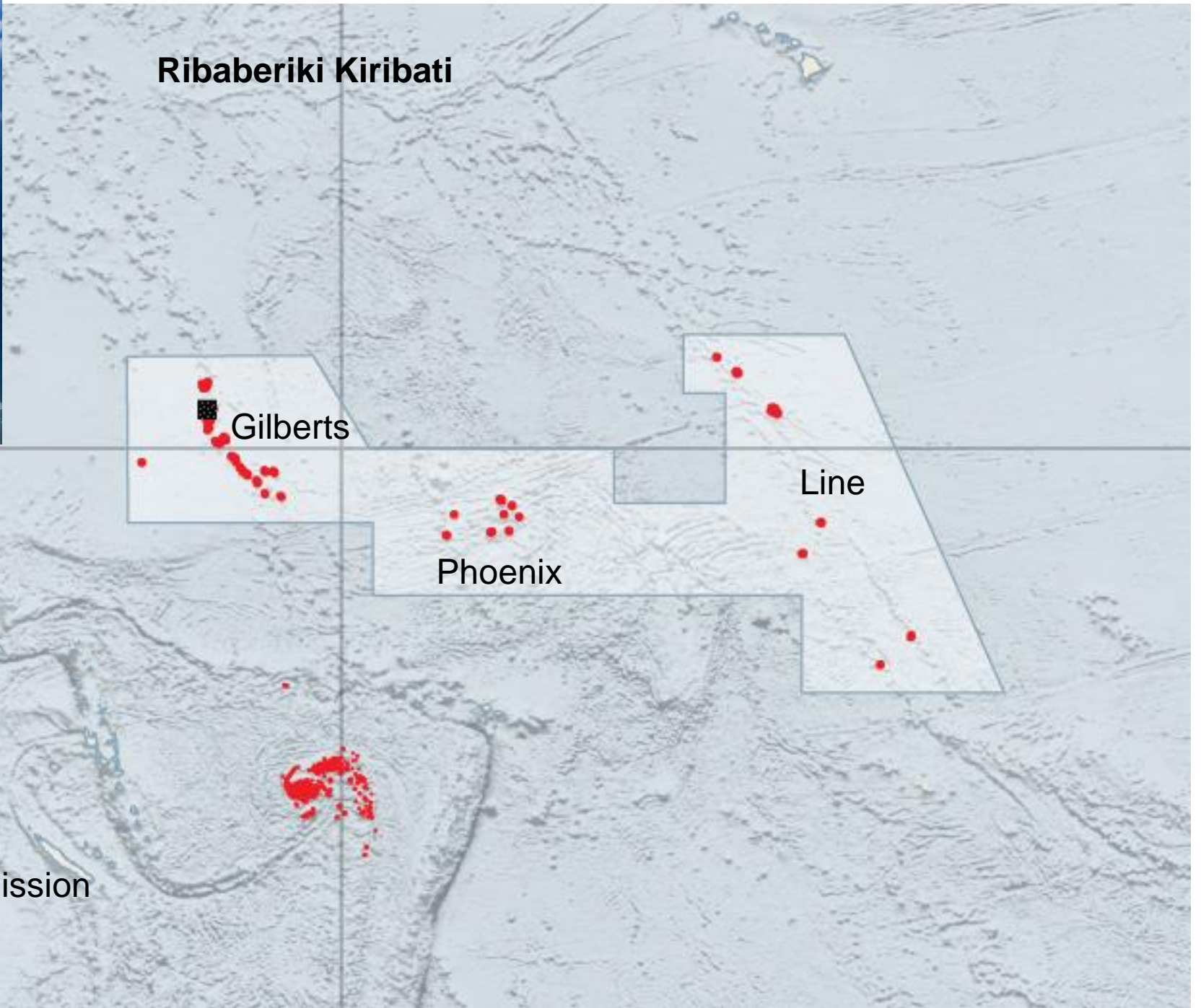
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Google My Maps

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Ribaberiki Kiribati



Gilberts

Phoenix

Line

Global Challenges-funded scoping mission
June 2018
Abaiang Atoll & North Tarawa

What belongs home - migration seafaring

TRANSPORTED LANDSCAPES AND PROTEIN-LEAD SUBSISTENCE STRATEGIES

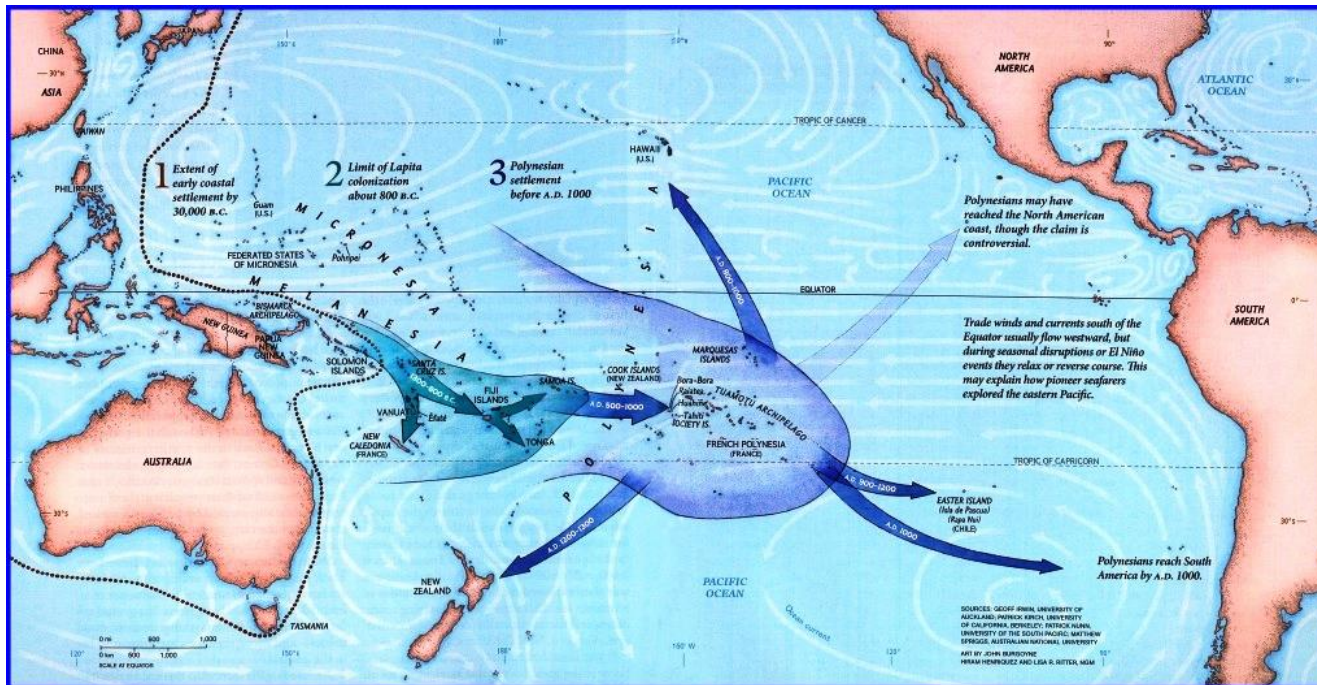
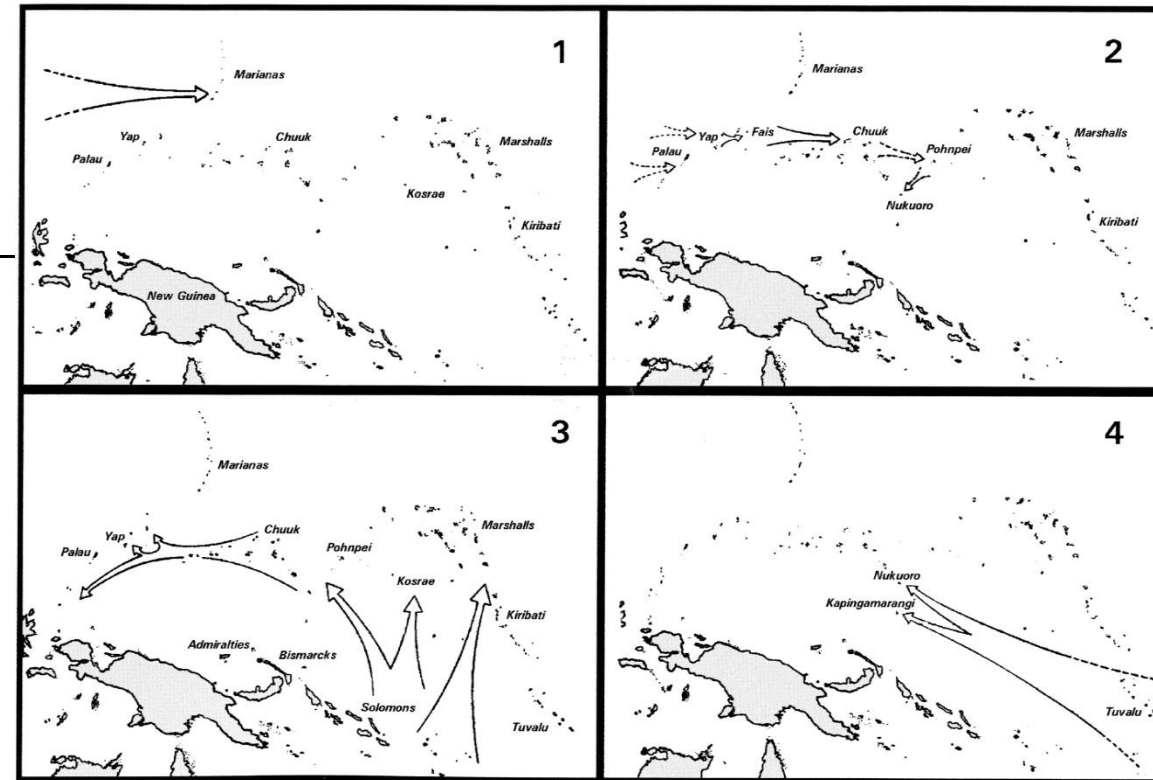
- Migration seafaring was related to colonising behaviours in various ways, one of them being through the **transport of cultivable plants and domestic animals, as well as weeds and commensal animals** (such as rats) – the ‘transported’ landscapes (E. Anderson 1952; Kirch 1982)
- The transported landscape didn’t come as a single package especially in the case of the Lapita. The **main Oceanic root crops are not evident in early Lapita macro-botanical remains** (Latinis 2000; Matthews and Gosden 1997), and in eastern Lapita at least, it is **doubtful whether pigs and dogs were carried in the initial migrations, and even the chicken may have arrived slightly later than the first landfalls** (Steadman et al. 2002).
- Throughout remote Oceania **initial emphasis was upon fragile but highly accessible resources of high food value (protein – especially shellfish)**, sometimes to the virtual exclusion of agriculture, and agricultural activity elsewhere was probably subordinate to foraging in most earliest colonising phases (Fitzpatrick 2008).



Colonisation models

REMOTE OCEANIA ANDS MICRONESIA

- Remote Oceania was colonized initially in **three migratory phases** (Anderson 2007):
 - the western archipelagos of Micronesia plus eastern Melanesia out to west Polynesia in the period 3500–2800 cal BP,
 - central and eastern Micronesia 2200–2000 BP
 - east and south Polynesia 1100–700 BP



Kiribati archaeology

BASED ON THOMAS 2009 AND 2014

- **First excavations in Gilbert Islands** in the 1980s by Japanese (1983 on Makin, followed by North Tarawa) – focus on culture history and typological approaches
- **Radiocarbon dating on Nikunau** (DiPiazza 1999), southern Gilberts, **North Tarawa** and **Abaiang** (Thomas unpublished), central Gilberts, suggests initial occupation about 2000 years ago consistent with earliest dates from the Marshall Islands to the north
- **Mystery islands**’ of Phoenix and Line chains are of Polynesian origins and have been researched since 1920s and 1930s
- DiPiazza’s and Pearthree (2001) concept of **‘mother communities**’, ‘satelites’ and ‘isolates’
- Research towards locating **Amelia Earhart’s crash site on Nikumaroro** yielded evidence for human settlement dating to the 12th c CE.

Amelia Earhart Archaeology

A discussion of research into the Nikumaroro Hypothesis on the 1937 disappearance of Amelia Earhart archaeologist Tom King.

Saturday, July 13, 2013

So You Want To Go To Nikumaroro?

With all the recent publicity about sonar images on the N
(<http://tighar.org/Projects/Earhart/Archives/Research/BU>)
and the discovery of 1939 aerial photos
(<http://tighar.org/Projects/Earhart/newzealandphotos/Ne>)
interest in visiting Nikumaroro by other groups and indi
Club of North Texas, WC5C, is raising money for a trip
(See <http://www.wc5c.org/WC5CClub/NikumaroroAm>)
historical filmmaker Matthew Arnold has a kickstarter c
mythological landscape” (See <http://vimeo.com/649762>)



Abaiang and N. Tarawa excavations - Photos Thomas 2014

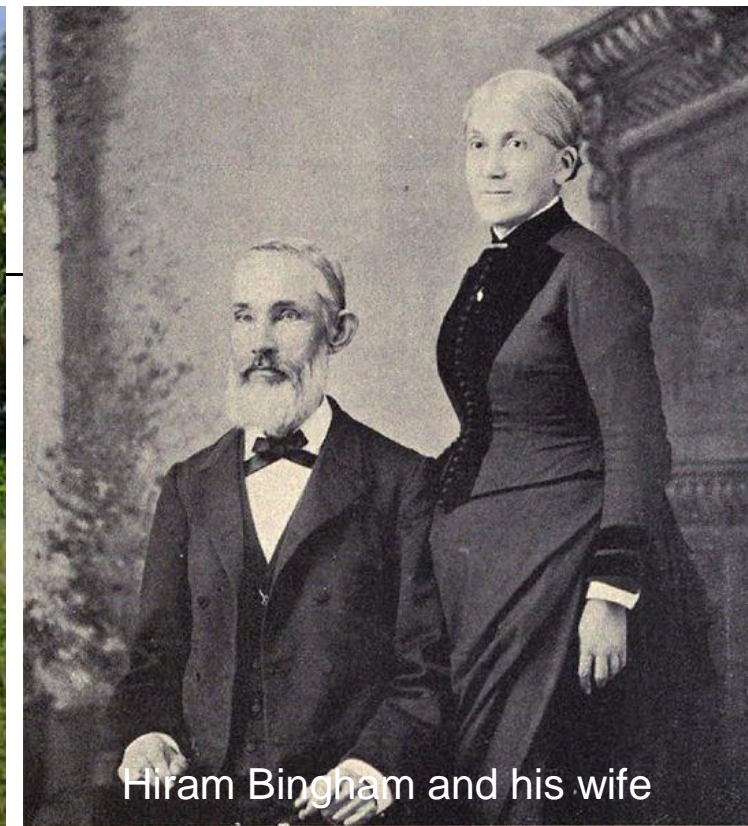
Kiribati recent past

COLONIAL HISTORY AND WWII

- The **first mission** in Kiribati was established on **Abaiang Island in 1859** by Reverend Dr Hiram Bingham II and his team – both the church and his monument remain relatively well-preserved.
- The islands were declared a **protectorate in 1892** and a British **colony in 1916**, with Kiribati becoming **independent in 1979**.
- Republic of Kiribati was formerly the first part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. The Ellice Islands, where the population is Polynesian, moved separately to independence as Tuvalu.
- The Gilbert Islands were **heavily involved in the Second World War, with the Battle of Tarawa**, from which there are guns, bunkers and other relicts left on the island of **Betio**.



Hiram Bingham's monument



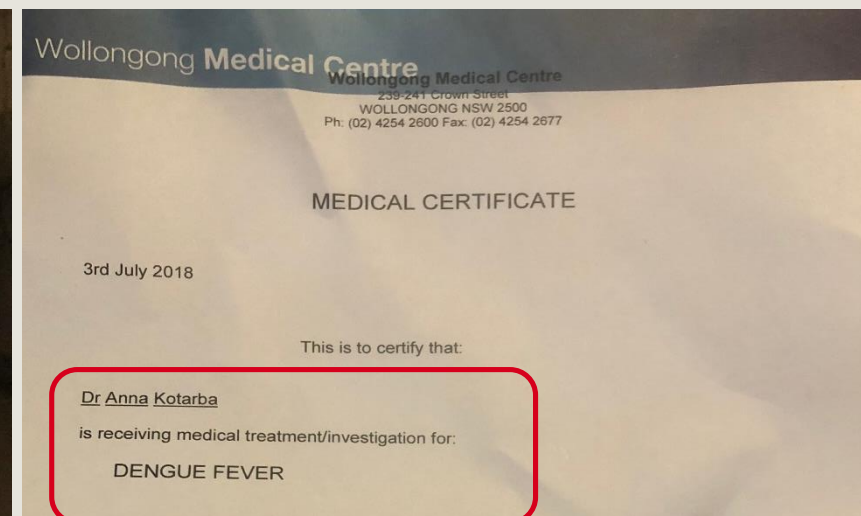
Hiram Bingham and his wife



WWII bunkers in Betio

Issues and limitations for research

CLIMATE CHANGE, NGOS, OVER-RESEARCH...



Kiribati in media

THE OUTSIDER



World | U.S. Politics | Money | Entertainment | Tech | Sport | Travel | Style | Health | Video | VR

International

Kiribati: The world's next Atlantis?

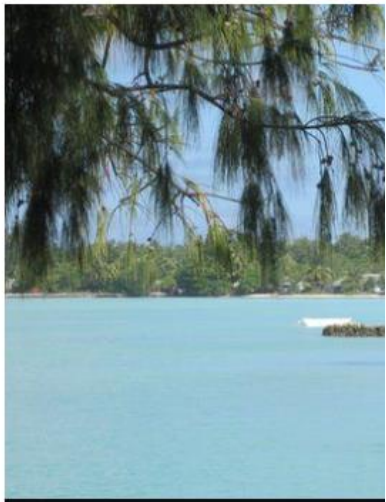
By Anna Therese Day, Special for CNN

Updated 2013 GMT (0413 HKT) December 5, 2014

Science & Environment

Kiribati island: Si

© 25 November 2013



Photos: Shrinking Kiribati

Tide of climate change swamping Kiribati – The U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identified Kiribati as one of the six Pacific island nations that "face a high risk of being completely submerged from sea-level rise." In a never-ending fight against the rising tides, the nation has begun to construct seawalls to preserve the land.

Life Expectancy In Kiribati

Disease is rife in Kiribati. The main source of foreign exchange comes from men crewing ships around the world, but when the men come home they bring more than money and HIV is spreading.

The nation also has one of the highest rates of infant mortality in the South Pacific – of every 1000 babies born, 55 are dead before their first birthday.

News & buzz



Aides stunned by respectful haka
Kavanaugh's...
Michael M...



Michael M...

The central Pacific nation of Kiribati has a few claims to fame. Its flag-bearer at the past two summer Olympics won international attention and became a meme because of his memorable dancing. The country — known under British colonial rule as the Gilbert Islands (the name Kiribati, pronounced KI-ri-bahss, is a local transliteration of "Gilberts") — has 33 islands spread over more than 1.3 million square miles, making it one of the world's largest nations in terms of sea area, though one of the smallest in terms of land. But what it gets the most attention for these days is its impending doom: The nation may be one of the first in line to be wiped out by the effects of climate change.

A Remote

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Climate change and climate refugees



Government-purchased land on Fiji



Misconceptions, Western views

...AND SOME SMALL GRAINS OF TRUTH

Kiribati and Tuvalu 'present one of the most limited resource bases for human existence in the Pacific' (Geddes et al. 1982)

'To picture [the islands], imagine that the continental US were to conveniently disappear leaving only Baltimore and a vast swath of very blue ocean in its place. Now chop up Baltimore into thirty-three pieces, place a neighborhood where Maine used to be, another where California once was, and so on until you have thirty-three pieces of Baltimore dispersed in such a way so as to ensure that 32/33 of Baltimoreans will never attend an Orioles game again. Now take away electricity, running water, toilets, television, restaurants, buildings, and airplanes (except for two very old prop planes, tended by people who have no word for 'maintenance'). Replace with thatch. Flatten all land into a uniform two feet above sea level. Toy with islands by melting polar ice caps. Add palm trees. Sprinkle with hepatitis A, B, and C. Stir in dengue fever and intestinal parasites. Take away doctors. Isolate and bake at a constant temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The result is the Republic of Kiribati' (Troost 2004: 16).



The image shows a screenshot of an ABC News website article. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Sites' and 'ABC' logos. Below that is the 'NEWS' logo and a menu with categories: 'Just In', 'Politics', 'World', 'Business', 'Sport', 'Science', 'Health', 'Arts', and 'Analysis'. A secondary navigation bar contains social media sharing options: 'Print', 'Email', 'Facebook', 'Twitter', and 'More'. The main headline reads 'Kiribati Government says no to foreign journalists wanting to cover ferry disaster'. Below the headline, it says 'Pacific Beat' by Pacific affairs reporter Liam Fox, and 'Updated 7 Feb 2018, 7:02pm'. The article features a photograph of a blue and white ferry boat named 'BUTI RAOI' docked at a pier with trees in the background.

Over-research...

...PERMITS, TRANSPORT, DISEASES, MISSIONARIES AND OTHER CIRCUMSTANTIAL RISK FACTORS

- Over-research represents a **complex range of ethical concerns**, and can refer to saturation, but also to a condition where a **local community bears a burden of research participation without sufficient reward, creating a sense of frustration that may lead to dwindling participation** (Marwick 2018)
- **Local community becomes 'indifferent' and 'numbed' by being over-researched** – planes full of aid workers, researchers and missionaries arrive on Tarawa twice a week
- This leads to potential limited support from local institutions and an offish and often suspicious undertone for a newcomer – ‘*So which NGO do YOU work for?*’ I was asked in the Office of President
- It is **extremely challenging to achieve truly collaborative partnerships**, for many reasons, one being structural power and resource inequities, which can limit opportunities for community involvement in research-related decision-making and result in community deference to researchers in decision-making (Marwick 2018)



Small Islands and their Heritage practices

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

SIDS – Small Islands Developing States

DIFFERENT BUT YET SO SIMILAR

- Spread across the **Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans**, as well as the **Caribbean and South China Seas**, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) form a ***distinctive group***
- Recognized as **among the most vulnerable states in the world**, SIDS face **many challenges** arising from, among others:
 - small size
 - large exclusive economic zones
 - geographical dispersion and remoteness
 - vulnerability to natural hazards and disasters
 - small but growing populations
 - economic vulnerability due to limited terrestrial natural resources
 - heavy dependence on imports
 - limited commodities
 - isolation from markets.
- Many of the SIDS also figure **in the list of least-developed countries** (LDCs).
- Kiribati is one of the poorest, remotest and least-developed countries in the world



Units of archaeological analysis?

REMOTENESS AND ISOLATION

- Are *islands convenient units of archaeological analysis*? Is Maritime Cultural Landscape of Kiribati easy to study then?
- In Western society, islands have been used to explore various cognitive behaviours – isolationism, hedonism, incest, conflict, among others.
- From a multitude of **tales** (e.g. Robinson Crusoe, Lord of the Flies), **films** (e.g. The Blue Lagoon, Jurassic Park) and **television shows** (e.g. Lost, Fantasy Island), islands have indeed **appeared to be suitable and comparable units**. (Fitzpatrick 2008)
- ‘*The ancestry of such views [negative] can be traced through western literature since the 16th century ... [and it] has led to a bias against island peoples ... [that can be] traced through popular literature, anthropology and on to its incorporation in contemporary island archaeology.*’ (Rainbird 1999)



SIDS thus far

PLENARY PANEL ON THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS

Emphasised the issues of:

- cultural identity and diversity,
- protection of tangible and intangible heritage,
- incorporation of local languages and traditional knowledge in formal education, and
- the economic opportunities provided by culture, in particular through cultural industries.

‘Expressed strong and enthusiastic support for the recognition of culture as an indispensable and all-pervading component of human living and development. Mention was also made of **‘Culture’ as a fourth pillar of sustainable development.**’
(Ikhlef WH38 2014)

Discussions were organized around three main themes:

- Life and love in islands (island lifestyles and cultures);
- My island home (safeguarding island environments);
- Money in my pocket (economic and employment opportunities).



© UNESCO/IS.Haraguchi

Figure 2. Panellists at the Plenary Panel on The Role of Culture in the Sustainable Development of SIDS in Mauritius.

Case study of Kiribati

BASED ON THOMAS & TEAERO 2010

- Kiribati boasts a **unique and rich cultural heritage** that is closely related to (Thomas & Teaero 2010):
 - oral traditions
 - the arts (including performance arts)
 - indigenous epistemologies
 - material culture
 - historical and cultural sites including architectural masterpieces
- Attempts have been made to document:
 - **language** (e.g. Eastman 1948, Bingham 1908, Sabatier 1971)
 - **cultural and historical sites and objects** (Koch 1986, Thomas 2002, Teaero 1989)
 - **history and development in general** (Macdonald 2001, Talu et al. 1984)
- Some of the cultural heritage sites have **fallen into disuse or have been adopted for other purposes** (i.e. *Mwanaeba ni Maungatabu* – house or parliament is now abandoned)

Table 2: Examples of historical and cultural sites and objects

	Examples	Location
Bangota (shrines)	Beia ma Tekaa	North Tarawa
Nikawewe (shrines for composers)		Buota, Abaiang
Architectural Masterpieces	Mwaneaba	All islands
Human-made structures	Tennabakana Te Neiniman River rock anchor for ancient canoe	Tabiteuea South Butaritari Manriki, Nikunau
Historical sites & buildings	1. Landing place of LMS missionary, Dr. Hiram Bingham. 2. Original Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu 3. New Mwaneaba ni Maungatbu 4. World War II relics 5. Migrating beach 6. Navigation Stones	Koinawa, Abaiang Bairiki, Tarawa Ambo, Tarawa Betio, Tarawa Arorae Arorae
Traditional objects	1. Suits of armour 2. Canoes 3. Tools	Bishop Museum Museums in New Zealand Various museums overseas; Te mwanibong.

Micronesian marginal islands

HISTORICAL ECOLOGY

Micronesian atolls are **marginal habitats for human settlement** (Thomas 2015) because of:

- Small and fragmented islet landmasses
- Poor soils (some of the poorest on earth)
- Lack of perennial surface fresh water
- Extreme vulnerability to flooding by storm waves
- Rising sea-level attributed to global warming
- Low elevation of the highly fragmented landmass, only a few meters above sea-level
- Resources scarcity – limited and at times fluctuating
- Relative isolation



Sustainable past of maritime Kiribati

Kiribati produced some of the earliest dates for human settlement of eastern Micronesia (at least 2000 BP – Thomas 2014, unpublished)– conveying a message of **resilience and sustainability**:

- **Relatively low population densities** (managing population growth through ritual celibacy, prolonged lactation, adoption as alternative to ensuring family continuity but also warfare, cannibalism, infanticide and abortion)
- **Low impact extractive technologies** (application of specialized agricultural techniques and fishing methods and understanding of environmental cues and fluctuations)
- **Efficient use of limited resources** (land tenure systems and kinship networks allow for maximizing access to resources allied with various cooperative strategies such as intermarriage, adoption or cyclical migration)
- **Application of intentional and unintentional conservation practices** (concept of taboo, intentional - deliberate extirpation of resource-competing pigs and unintentional – optimal foraging strategies)



Living off the sea! What will be left behind...

PRESERVING LIVING HERITAGE OF THE SMALL ISLANDS



Maritime Cultural Landscapes of small islands

1.1. CULTURAL AND 'TRANSPORTED' LANDSCAPES

- Human adaptation to the environments they encountered (although *not without environmental consequences*) can be seen all around Kiribati– i.e. **Transported Landscape**
- Climate change and other environmental hazards impact potential preservation strategies.
- Local residents do not perceive 'landscape' as 'heritage' – change of mindset might be challenging



Aquaculture

1.2. CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

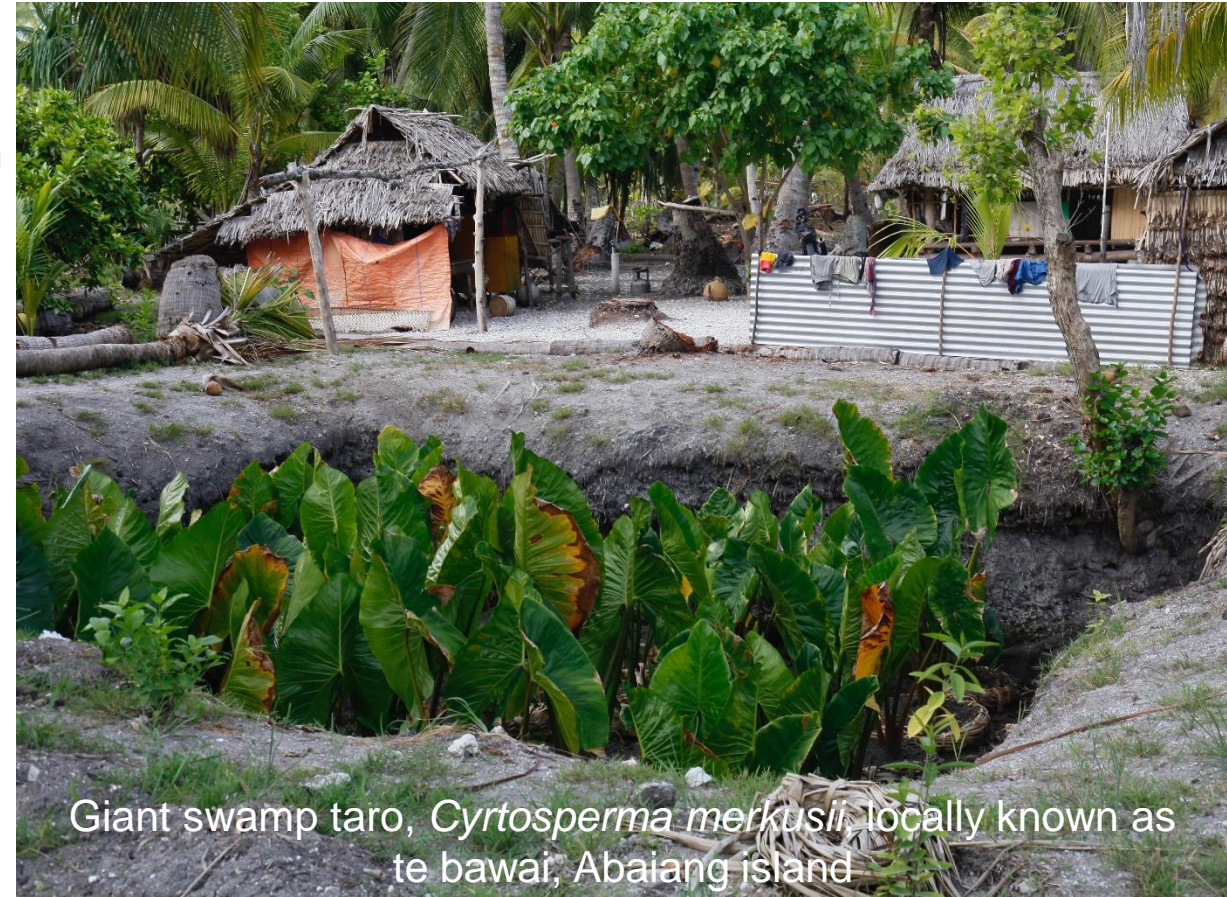
- Unique type of 'land use' in Kiribati and other Pacific islands
- Part of risk aversion strategies where placing the larger species of giant clams close to the shoreline may be considered a risk reduction strategy.
- It represents live storage of animal meat



Agroarboreal production, atoll agroforestry

1.3. CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

- Of all non-urban, Pacific Island agroforestry systems, those on **atolls operate under the most severe environmental constraints and greatest population pressures**.
- In response to these constraints and pressures, **atoll-dwellers have created the most intensive agroforestry in all the Pacific, with the greatest relative dominance of trees over non-trees** Most common economic plants on Kiribati are: **taro**, **coconut** (for copra), **pandanus**, **breadfruit**.
- Other commonly cultivated fruit-trees are **papaya**, **banana** and **plantain cultivars**, the **native fig**, or te bero (*Ficus tinctoria*), the **common fig**, or te biku (*Ficus carica*), and the **lime** (*Citrus aurantiifolia*). Occasionally lemon trees (*Citrus limon*) are found, and guava and mango have been introduced but are rare, and, in the case of mango, survive with difficulty.
- Other cultivated but minor tree-like food plants include **sugar cane** (*Saccharum officinarum*) and **hibiscus spinach** (*Hibiscus manihot*), both of which are found occasionally in villages around homes (UN Archive)



Copra plantations



Copra plantation destroyed by climate change, Makin Island



Living Vernacular Architecture

2.1. ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDINGS



New-build in the northern part of Abaiang

- Majority of buildings are '*kia kia*' houses with thatch roofs and open sides, built from local material, the roofs from pandanus leaf thatch.
- Of both traditional and non traditional (wooden or concrete walled) houses, majority had a thatched roof.
- Many village dwellings on outer island lie abandoned because of move to S. Tarawa but...
- People keep hold of their ancestral 'outer islands' land
- **All 'habitable' building on the outer islands are build in a 'traditional' style** and almost all cinder block buildings are quickly abandoned



Recently abandoned household in the central part of Abaiang

Building a new house

NORTH TARAWA



City village

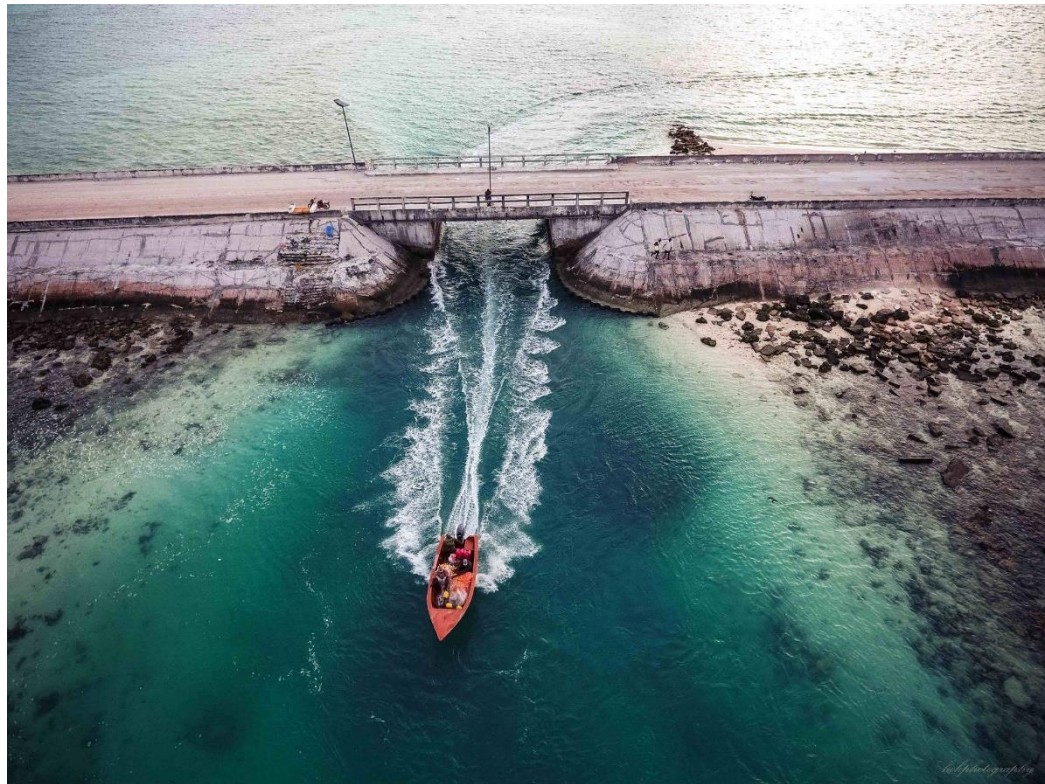
VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE OF SOUTH TARAWA

- Despite developmental and in-migration pressures, in terms of vernacular architecture, and with regard, too, to social traditions, *Kiribati has remained characteristically I-Kiribati* (Royle 1999)
- **Growing population of S Tarawa is being accommodated in fairly traditional vernacular styles but often using 'new' materials - mostly due to depletion of traditional resources**
- In S Tarawa, in appearance at least, its **population growth is simply generating a denser distribution of rural-style dwellings** (Royle 1999)



Modern buildings and infrastructure

- Rather poor state of preservation
- Disrepair and change of function
- Lack of resources and enforcement laws and mechanisms
- Absence of regulatory bodies

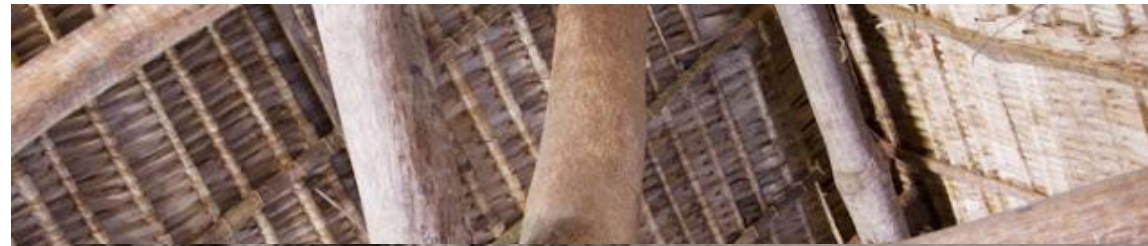


Ceremonial buildings - mwaneabas

2.2. ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDINGS



- Mwaneaba is a community meeting house for village or any recognized group of people where **social or ceremonial occasions are held and public affairs discussed** (Geddes et al. 1982)
- There is a **set form for mwaneabas**: they have a steeply pitched roof which comes quite close to the ground and is supported on pillars. The sides are open to allow air to pass through. As the roof descends so low, it provides some protection from rain; but, more significantly, provides maximum shade - getting out of the sun is the most necessary response to weather in Kiribati (Royle 1999)
- The **public mwaneaba are of similar design to the residential huts, but on a larger scale.**
- Even the metal-roofed maneabas tend to follow this design and *the flaring-out of the roof line at the gable ends is the most characteristic feature of I-Kiribati building, residential, community and public* (Royle 1999)



Colonial 'Historical' buildings

2.3. ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDINGS

- **Permanent traders** established themselves in the Gilberts in the **1850s**. The first traders were Rendell and Durant who, in **1846**, started coconut oil and turtle shell manufacture on on the northern—wet— island of **Butaritari** and then Durant moved south to **Makin**
- Not all agents were foreigners though –local man Kaiea of Abaiang was also trading with coconut oil
- Mid 1850s followed with **introduction of Protestant missionaries** who first came to Butaritari and Makin with Rendell being a translator and guide.





The challenge of studying colonial archaeology in Oceania lies with how to interpret this material in terms of ongoing struggles over land, resources, and identity in the region today, encapsulated by the tension between global and local (Flexner 2014)

World War 2 Sites

2.4. ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDINGS

- Sheer quantity of objects and their current location on beaches of poorest and most densely populated neighborhood in S Tarawa – Betio make conservation efforts challenging
- There have been *some ad hoc* preservation efforts and campaigns by WW2 enthusiasts and army veterans



Environmental resilience



Seafaring practices

3.1. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

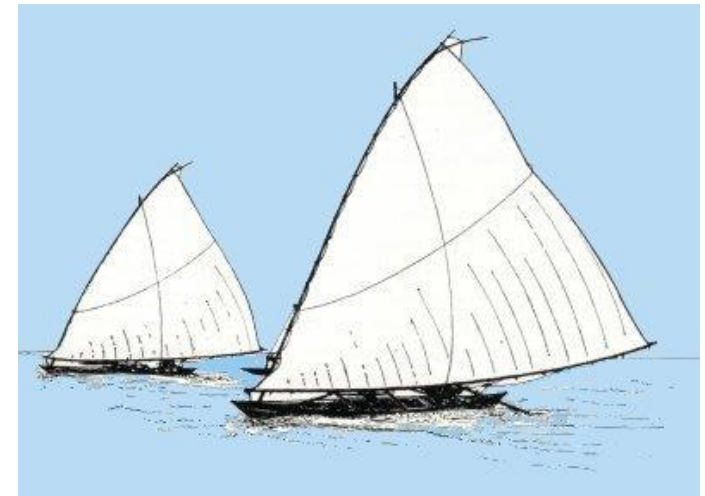
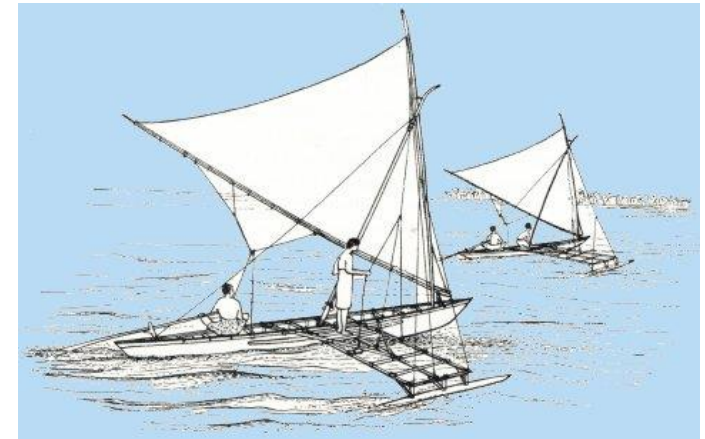
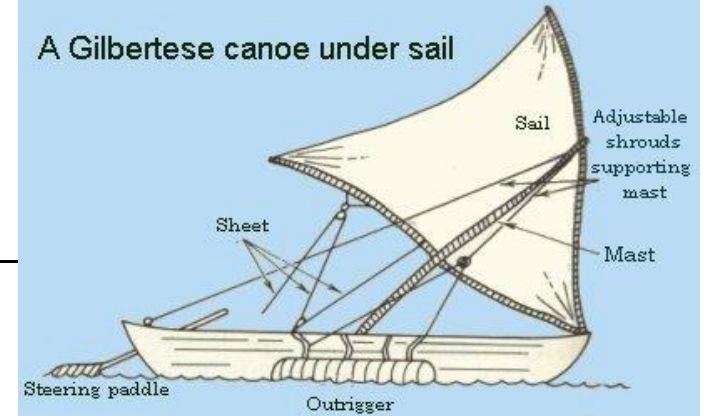


With the slightest of a breeze
And the greatest of ease
She skims over the shimmering blue
A most remarkable craft
From the fore to the aft
The incredible Kiribati canoe!

Like a frigate bird on a wing
The rigging and sails sing
A melodious song of the deep
About the spirits of the sea
And what has come to be
The incredible Kiribati canoe!

Poem by Dame Dr. Jane Resture

A Gilbertese canoe under sail

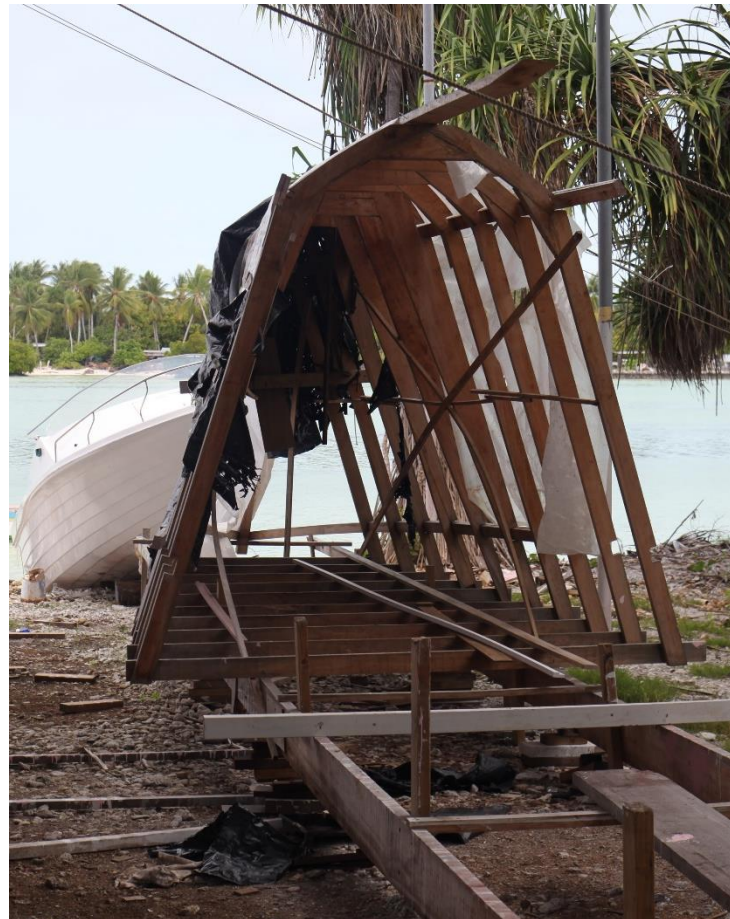




Shipbuilding

3.2. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Shipyards on North Tarawa
and Kiritimati



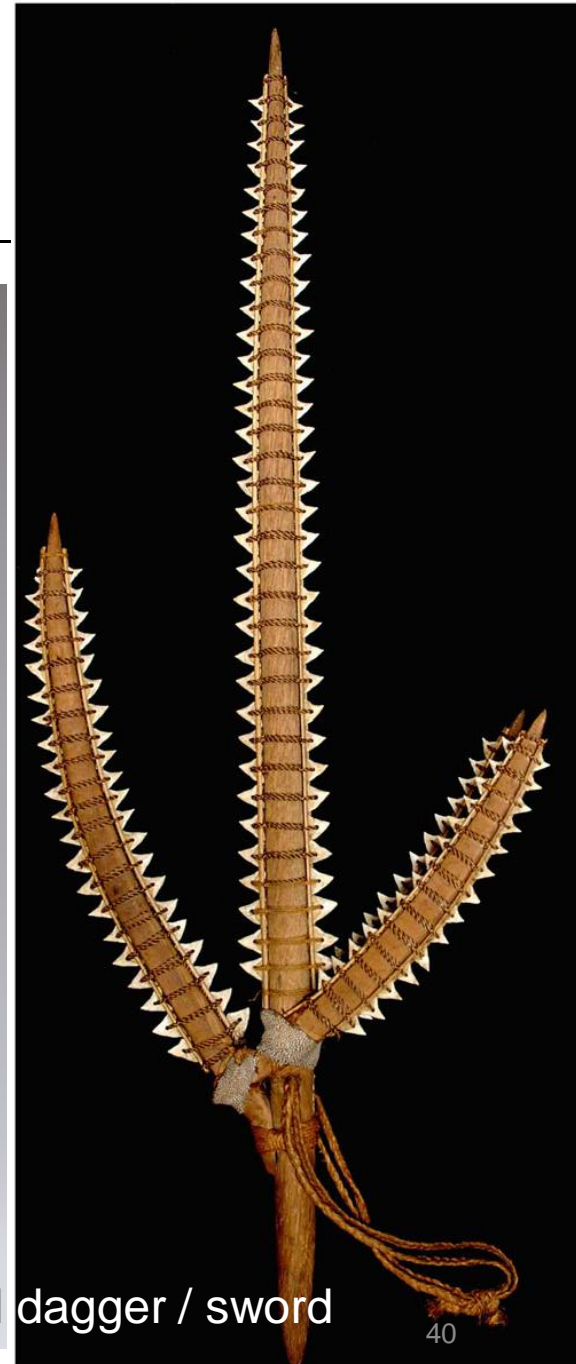
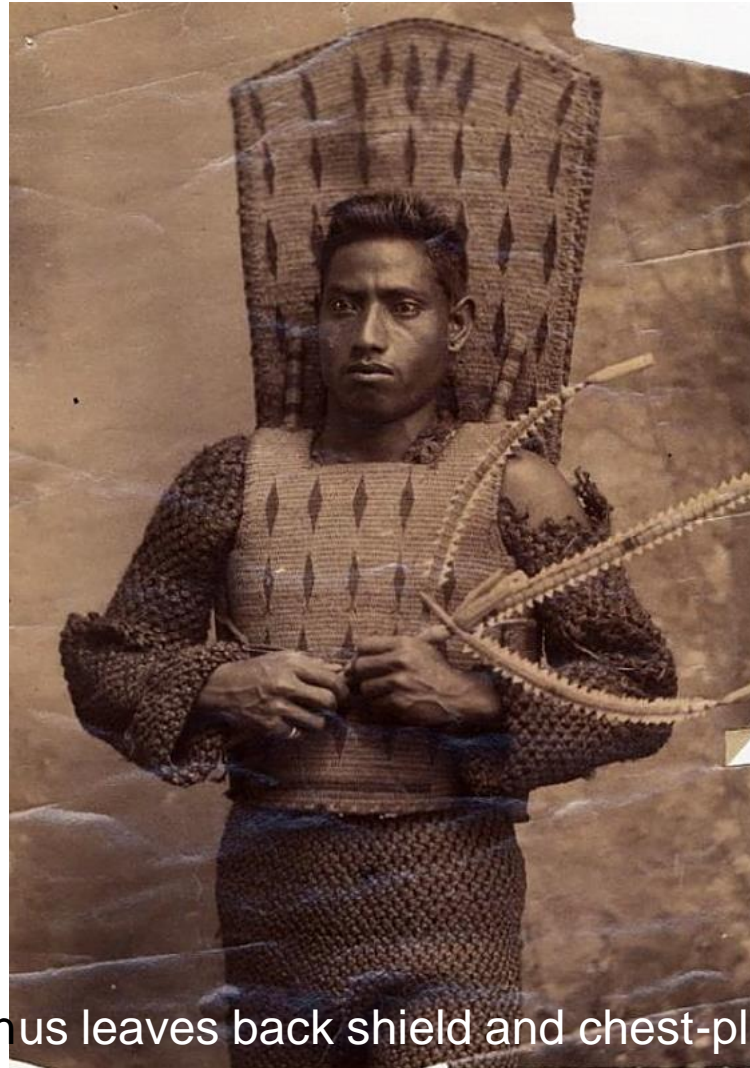
Fishing practices

3.3. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE



Traditional tools and weapons

3.4. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE



Porcupine fish helmet, pandanus leaves back shield and chest-plate and shark-teeth ritual dagger / sword

Traditional crafts and tools

3.5. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE



Food preservation and preparation technologies

3.6. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE



4.1. ORAL TRADITIONS & ARTS

- According to I-Kiribati mythology, the giant spider Nareau was the creator, followed by spirits (*anti*), half spirits, half humans, and finally humans.
- The *anti* were the most important figures in I-Kiribati worship before Christian missionaries arrived, and they remain respected in everyday life.



According to the legends of Beru and some other islands Te Kaintikuaba, was made from the spine of Na Atibu. It was a tree, in Samoa, which was the home of spirits who, together with Nareau the Wise, made the islands of Tungaru (the Kiribati islands). It is a legend that has many variations.

As one legend goes, Nareau the Wise was in Samoa, procreating with the spirits there. One day, he decided to trace the whereabouts of his two children who left Te Kaintikuaba. He left Samoa, heading north, and on his way he created a resting place by trampling the sea and uttering powerful magic. Behold, land was formed with spirits inhabitants on it. This land is now called South Tabiteuea. Feeling satisfied with his marvellous work, he left and went further north. At last, he sighted Tarawa. He stayed on Tarawa and started his work of creating new lands. He used his power to create Makin, Butaritari, Marakei, Abaiang, Maiana, Kuria, Abemama and Aranuka. These are now referred to as the islands of North Kiribati.

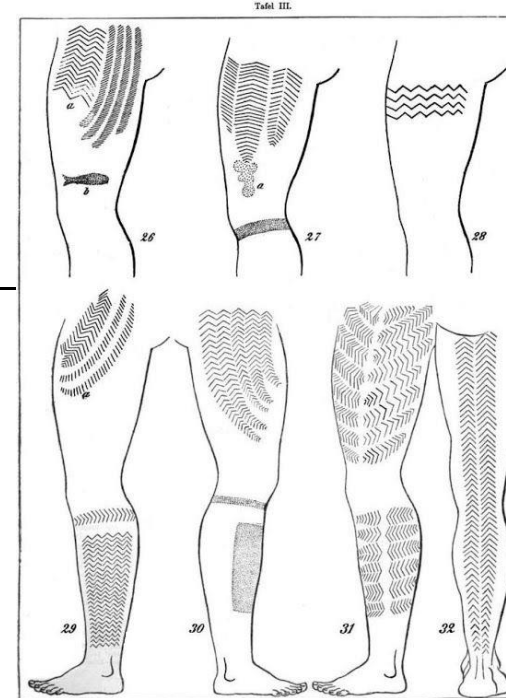
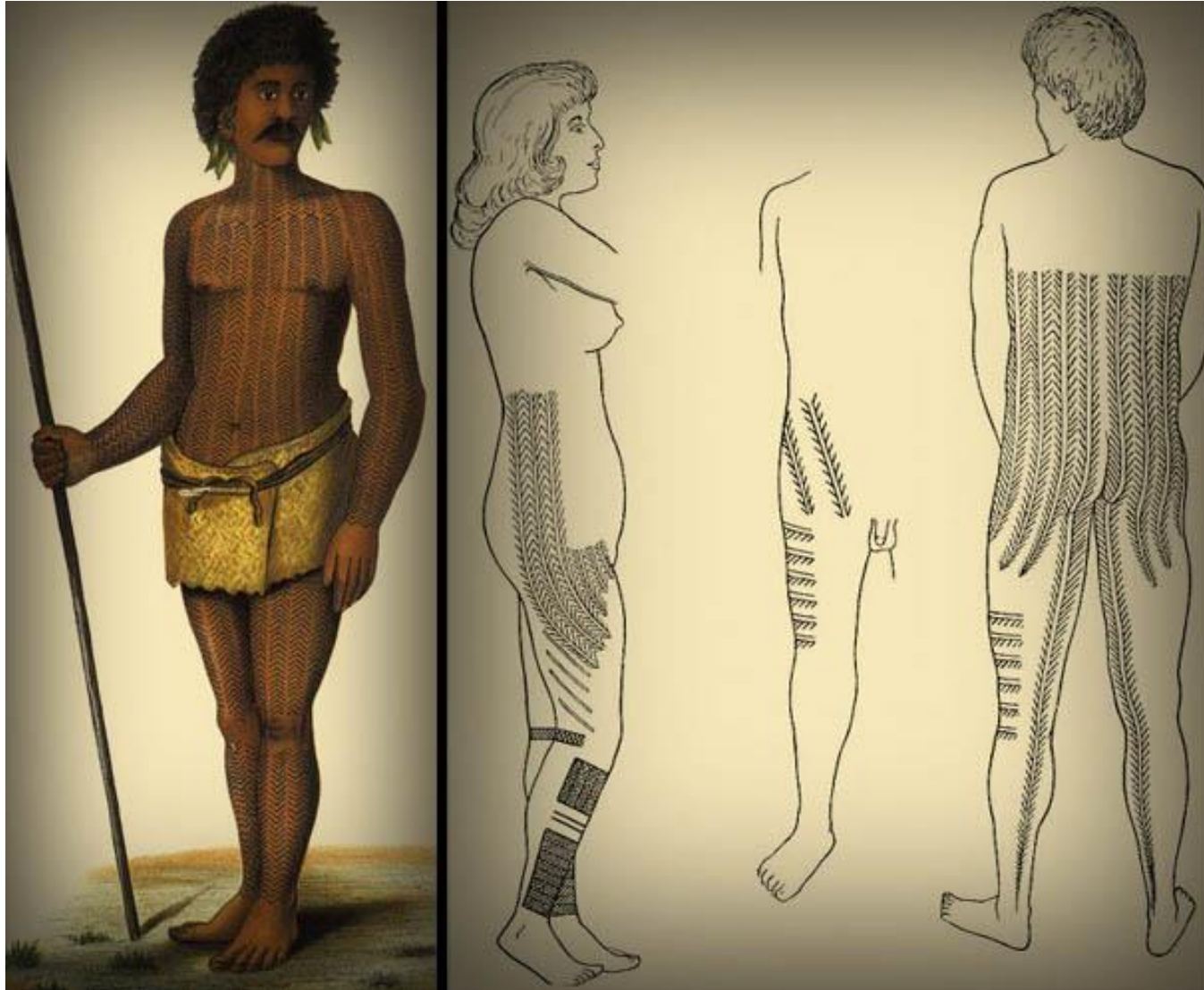
Performance arts - dancing

4.2. ORAL TRADITIONS & ARTS

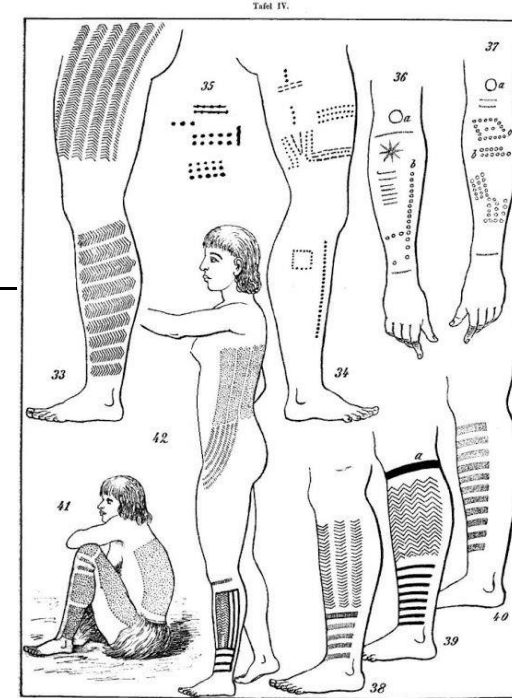


Tattoos

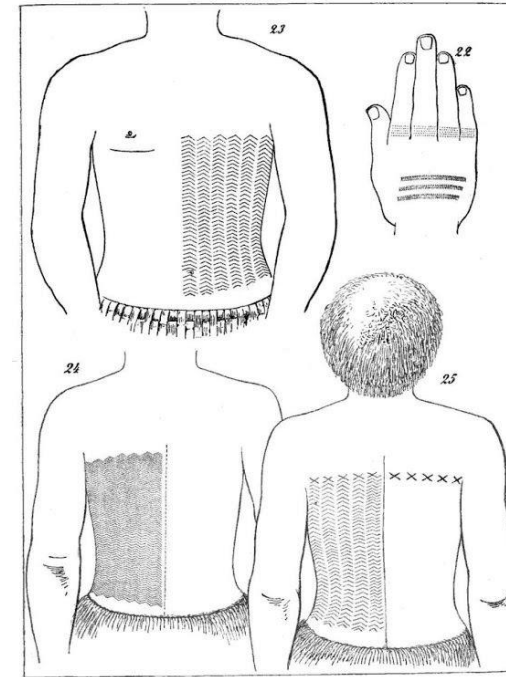
4.3. ORAL TRADITIONS & ARTS



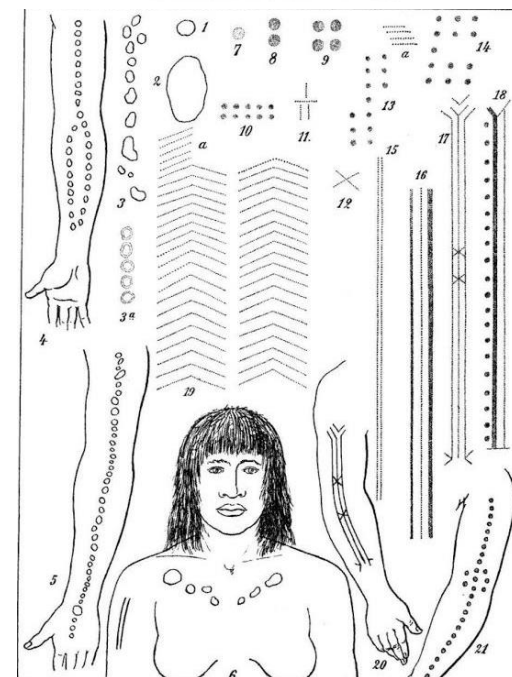
Tafel III.



Tafel IV.



Tafel V.



Tafel VI.

Culture as a non-renewable resource

IN SUMMARY



World Heritage Convention



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

PACIFIC WORLD HERITAGE ACTION PLAN 2016 – 2020¹

Vision for 2020

Pacific Island heritage is protected and enriched for current and future generations

Preamble:

We the people of the Pacific offer a unique contribution to the World Heritage community, through our enormous wealth of cultural diversity, as well as the island and marine biodiversity of our region which covers one third of the earth's surface.

For us, indigeneity is inseparable from heritage. Our indigeneity has the following characteristics:

- Heritage in the Pacific defines our cultural identity and remains inseparable from our social, economic and environmental well-being, now and for future generations;
- Our heritage is holistic, embracing all life, both tangible and intangible, and is understood through our cultural traditions;
- There is an inseparable connection between the outstanding seascapes and landscapes in the Pacific Islands region, which are woven together by the rich cultural, historical and genealogical relationships of Pacific Island peoples;
- The region contains a series of spectacular and highly powerful spiritually-valued natural features and cultural places. These places are related to the origins of peoples, the land and sea, and other sacred stories;
- The Pacific is a region of distinct and diverse responses to oceanic environments;
- Protection of our heritage must be based on respect for and understanding and maintenance of the traditional cultural practices, indigenous knowledge and systems of land and sea tenure in the Pacific.

Notes for future

CULTURE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- Culture is a vital link between past, present and future and on Kiribati encompasses both **places and people**
- Local residents don't care about preserving places *per se* but only in relation to particular traditional activities
- **Culture is still firmly rooted in kin- and community- obligations**
- Traditional term '**cultural heritage**' in Remote Oceania ought to be **expanded** to include maritime cultural landscapes, aquaculture, vernacular architecture, agroforestry (i.e. transported landscape), traditional knowledge and oral tradition
- **Archaeological surveys on low-lying atolls are extremely challenging** and have generally yielded few traces of ancient human activities (Addison et al. 2009)
- Stratified cultural deposits tend to be concentrated **where people live today** (i.e., on the larger islets), although **later settlements expanded from the centre toward the lagoon**, facilitated by land progradation (Thomas 2014)
- It has been suggested that **smaller islets were later exploited for birds, turtles, fish, and shellfish, perhaps as a result of a decline in resources near populated areas** (Weisler 1999; 2001).

Conserving it **together** – sustainably?

ISSUES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Cultural monuments and historical buildings in disrepair need urgent attention – *ad hoc* conservation is not enough but **continuous management practices and plans for the future with allocated resources need to be developed**
- International conservation standards ought to be **adapted to suit regional purposes** using scientific knowledge (about climate change driven shore erosion or temperature rise for example)
- Development of management plans and strategies should be **undertaken on-the-ground, in co-operation with relevant stakeholders, and by local institutions rather than by fly-in fly-out consultants** – this is crucial and extremely challenging to achieve
- It is difficult to ‘compete’ with projects preventing diabetes, water resources management, sustainable fisheries and other, which benefits are ‘easy to explain’ but **culture should be imbedded in educational curriculum as one of the key pillars of sustainable development!**
- Local museum and Cultural Centre (*Te Umwanibong*) established in 2005 has a more localised mission catering mostly to local primary and secondary schools and documenting oral traditions of outer islands
- A lot of efforts of promoting heritage to the outsiders has been taken over by tourism agencies such as Tobaraoi

Legislation and education

WHAT FOR THE FUTURE?

- Lack of heritage legislation – issue of land ownership (belongs to the clan not to the whole country) makes it difficult to ‘formulate or implement appropriate legislation for this purpose’ (Thomas and Teaero 2010)
- Other Micronesian countries, except Nauru, follow American legislation models
- Attempts have been made to incorporate specific issue of land ownership in the Pacific into legislation (e.g. Spennemann 1992)
- Some archaeologists advocate education rather than legislation (Williamson 2001)
- Capacity building and training are key – but this can only be successful if interest is raised at an early stage of education.
- Job security, status and pay are important considerations for young graduates. Training and funding should be directed at selected individuals with job security who would use the knowledge in the future.
- **Local preservation initiatives show what is important to local community!** (Thomas and Teaero)

Thanks for your attention

