

ASAO Book Series, 2007 to present  
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I began serving as editor of the ASAO series in 2007, at the same time that the ASAO board had negotiated a contract for publishing the series with Marion Berghahn of Berghahn Books. This involved a transition from working with university presses to a commercial publisher, but a press that had long been independently supportive of anthropological publishing on the Pacific specifically.

One early ambiguity that arose in relations with Berghahn was the numbering and titling of the series, and its continuity with the prior decades of ASAO titling. For marketing and other reasons, Marion Berghahn was firm that the series numbering with her press begin with Volume 1. Additionally, in the contract negotiations the ASAO Board had established that the series would include single-authored monographs, which by definition would not have been incubated through an ASAO meeting process. Thinking about this adjustment also raised the issue of the slight anomaly that the series had hitherto been named a “Monograph” series but that it consisted entirely of edited collections; in contemporary usage, edited collections are not often referred to as “monographs,” even when having the special level of thematic coherence typical of an ASAO meeting-generated volume. For these reason, a retitling and relaunch of the series as now *ASAO Studies in Pacific Anthropology* seemed a congenial option in many respects, except for the loss of title and series continuity with the earlier twenty-one volumes of the “Monograph Series,” but we have attempted to emphasize continuity on the ASAO webpage itself.

New ASAO books have been brought out with Berghahn at a rate of roughly one per year. Berghahn has been very supportive of the series. As series editor, I have run the peer reviewing directly, and then brought readers’ reports and a recommendation to publish to an Associate Editor at the publisher, who would arrange for honorariums to the reviewers and confer with Marion Berghahn about a final decision to issue a contract. All books that have been recommended by reviewers and myself for publication have been accepted by the press. With many other series, Berghahn runs peer reviewing themselves.

Of the first nine volumes published or under contract with Berghahn, three are edited collections incubated in ASAO meetings, one is an edited collection resulting from a separate conference in Australia but with heavy representation of long-time ASAO members and supporters, and five are single-authored monographs. The relatively small number of meeting-generated volumes probably reflects a more general drift toward the format of journal special issues as a more favored type of outlet, due to greater publication speed, better online distribution, and greater flexibility as to numbers of papers, among other advantages.

The greatest downside to our relation with Berghahn has been pricing, and uncertainty of paperback distribution. Berghahn’s financial model depends on forcing libraries to purchase a hardback in the early years of a volume’s availability, to recoup basic publication costs, and only issuing paperbacks of volumes that sell well. To date,

only one volume published by Berghahn has later been reissued in a cheaper paperback. Moreover, around 2014 there was a 20 percent hike in the pricing of hardbacks, putting all titles in the range of US\$100 and up. Thankfully, many Pacific-focused anthropologists can get Berghahn books at some discount at conferences or in other promotional or service contexts, but the pricing is particularly discouraging for authors who want their books to reach student or non-academic Pacific Islander audiences, among others. On the other hand, publishing economics grow only more challenging each year, and one reading of the situation is that we are quite fortunate to have a publisher that has been stable across this period and that supports Pacific anthropology this well.

At the time of my appointment, the ASAO board also appointed a three-member editorial board, and I have occasionally leaned on members of that board for advice or service help. In practice, though, it is exceptionally challenging just to keep up with communications between authors, Berghahn staff, and peer reviewers. Keeping a further constituency to the communicative chain early on proved unrealistic, and the editorial board arrangement has been largely dormant.

For personal calendar reasons and due to lack of institutional support, the series editor has not attended an ASAO meeting since 2013. At first this regrettable situation seemed like it was specific to the given year and location and would be reversed in the next year, but now it has settled into a long-term pattern. The ease of electronic communications, the fact that many series authors are also not attending these meetings, and the support of board members and informal proxy representatives of the series have all meant that this non-attendance by the editor is not severely damaging to the series. On the other hand, such a pattern would probably have been unthinkable in earlier stages of the series' life, and probably accelerates the drift further away from the idea of "publication in the ASAO monograph series" as being the paradigmatic further sequitur to a three-year progression from "informal session" to "working session" to "symposium." Presumably the next editor, or an eventual co-editor, will be someone who has better capacity to attend meetings than I do, which will rectify this situation somewhat. On the other hand, some levels of this pattern reflect structural changes in the geography, temporality, and economics of academic work more generally. The ASAO board and officers have been navigating these shifting structural conditions and their challenges to the organization's earlier templates in other areas besides publication.