

Landscapes of History in the Anahulu Valley, Hawaiian Islands

Patrick V. Kirch

Introduction

A landscape is continually in process of being renegotiated; writes Barbara Bender (1993:3): "It is part of the way in which identities are created and disputed, whether as individual group or nation state." Following Inglis (1977), Bender labels *landscape* a concept of "high tension." When Captain James Cook commanding H.M.S. *Resolution* and *Discovery* came upon the Hawaiian Islands in 1778—breaking some fifteen centuries of splendid isolation—the archipelago's landscape already reflected a complex mosaic of competing economic, social, and political interests. A sophisticated system of land rights and tributary obligations linked a large commoner populace with an elaborate hierarchy of chiefs and subchiefs. By the closing decade of the eighteenth century, Hawaii had become enmeshed in the Pacific sector of the expanding World System, first as a major point of "resupply and refreshment" on the Canton-Northwest Coast fur trade; it would later become the major overwintering station for the North Pacific whaling fleet. In the brief time span from A.D. 1778 to 1852 (a date which effectively signals the demise of the *ancien regime* of chiefs) the Hawaiian landscape became a terrain of constant renegotiation, not only between Polynesian chiefs and commoners, but among beachcombers, missionaries, traders, cattle ranchers, sugar cane planters and all the other novel socio-economic groups that crossed the islands' beaches to lay claim to its verdant lands.

The historiography of Hawaiian land use has a rich tradition and literature (e.g., Kykendahl 1938; Chinen 1958; Cooper and Daws 1985; Kent 1983; Kame'eleihiwa 1992), but until recently the subject was largely ignored by ethnographers or anthropologists, who preferred instead to concentrate on idealized reconstructions of "traditional" Hawaiian culture (e.g., Handy and Handy 1972; Dunis 1990) prior to foreign contact. So too, archaeologists in Hawaii have focused heavily on prehistory, leaving the matter of post-1778 cultural change to the historians. Pursuing a sub-disciplinary collaboration not often evidenced in American anthropology (despite its much-touted "holistic, four-field" perspective), Marshall Sahlins and I have sought to bring the potential analytical power of an integrated historical anthropology (ethnography *plus* archaeology) to bear through a joint study of the Anahulu Valley, on the northwestern side of O'ahu Island. The project has occupied us intermittently for two decades, and bore fruit recently in a two volume synthesis of our findings (Kirch 1992; Sahlins 1992). In this paper, I will touch only on a narrow aspect of our research: the ways in which two main classes of sources—the written and the wrought—must both be exploited, sensitively and critically, to read the changing history of contested (and contexted) landscapes in the Kingdom of Hawaii.



Figure 1. The written: Land Commission Award survey of the claim by Kamakea, at the 'ili of Kapuahilua in the Upper Anahulu Valley, dated November 5, 1852. Note the two houses depicted on Kamakea's land

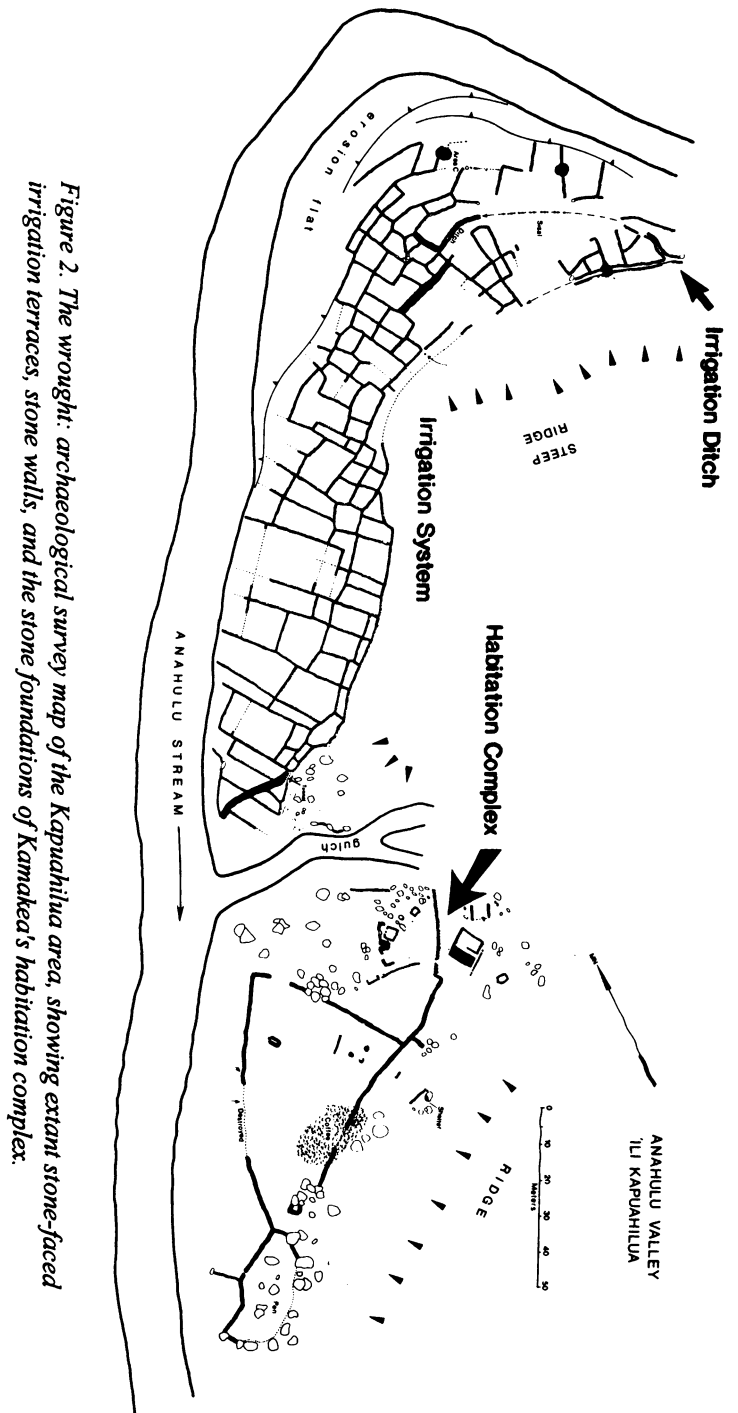


Figure 2. The wrought: archaeological survey map of the Kapuahiua area, showing extant stone-faced irrigation terraces, stone walls, and the stone foundations of Kamakea's habitation complex.

Sources: archive and artifact

In our project, we chose to privilege one particular landscape—the valley of Anahulu, principal geographic feature within the traditional *ahupua'a* or land segment of Kawaihoa, itself one of nine such segments in the district of Waialua. For us, Anahulu is a “microcosmic” landscape, in which the particular minutiae of small dramas successively played out and sedimented upon the land are both historically unique, yet paradigmatic of the grander transformations that swept the archipelago as a whole. Other valleys might have served equally well, or even revealed some trends more clearly. But Anahulu offers certain advantages, both in the corpus of historical texts treating of its lands and people, and in the surviving archaeological record (see Sahlins 1992:4–14, and Kirch 1992:23–24 for detailed descriptions of these sources).

The unusually rich and varied documentary record pertaining to Anahulu owes its existence largely to two factors. First, Anahulu and other lands within Waialua District formed the principal estate of certain high-ranking chiefs and chiefesses of the early Hawaiian Kingdom, notably Ka'ahumanu (favorite wife of the famed conqueror, Kamehameha I), her sister Pi'ia, and later Kina'u, daughter of Kamehameha and wife of Kekuanao'a (Governor of O'ahu from 1832–68). The political status of these *haku 'aina*, or “lords of the land,” lent Anahulu a significance beyond that of similarly productive agricultural districts elsewhere in the Islands. The archives of the Hawaiian Kingdom (now curated in the Archives of the State of Hawaii) contain numerous texts detailing the linkages between these political elite (largely resident in the emerging capitol of Honolulu) and the valley's multi-tiered local society. Typical of such documents are the letters from Paulo Kano'a (secretary to the Regent Kina'u) written to Gideon La'anui (resident overseer [*konohiki*] of Anahulu) conveying demands for tribute and labor. Secondly, beginning in 1832 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions established at the mouth of Anahulu Stream a mission station and church, under the pastoral care of the Rev. John S. Emerson. A prolific writer, Emerson's correspondence (frequently written on behalf of native Hawaiian concerns) and the Waialua Church records add another “voice” to the textual sources for Anahulu. Moreover, when the Hawaiian government from 1846 to 1852 undertook the sweeping land reforms known collectively as the Great Mahele (Chinen 1958), Emerson encouraged his native flock to submit their land claims to the Board of Commissioners to Quiet Land Titles. The Land Commission's voluminous records of claims and testimony—and subsequent surveys, royal patent awards, probates, and other court documents—provide invaluable data on land use, agriculture, local kinship relations, chiefship and tribute, and other matters in mid-nineteenth century. In brief, it was from these and other written sources that Sahlins has endeavored to produce an “historical ethnography” of Anahulu from late prehistory to 1852 (Sahlins 1992).

Archaeology, for its part, takes the “wrought,” the *artifactual* world, as its text. Early on in our research, we discovered that the upper sector of the Anahulu Valley—largely abandoned as a locus of permanent habitation and intensive cultivation soon after the Great Mahele (by the 1860s–70s)—comprised a landscape of walls, stone-faced irrigation terraces, and habitation platforms that could be directly linked to the eighteenth-century texts through certain land records and surveys. Thus, for example, the ethnographically reconstituted extended household of one Kamakea, prominent *kama'aina* (old-time resident) and church-

member, could be linked to a set of house platforms and taro-irrigation fields on the river flat at Kapuahilua, several kilometers inland (Figures 1 and 2). Kamakea's "voice" can still be heard in the claims and testimony before the Land Commission in 1847, laying bare one commoner's view of his landscape:

I am a *kama'aina* of Kawailoa. I lived as a *kama'aina* with my parents and my grandparents and they received rights to several lands and house sites in that long ago, and we lived with them; and when they died these came to me (Land Commission, Native Register 3:682).

These words and the competing views of those who gave testimony could be compared with the material record of land modifications sedimented on the little river flat in upland Anahulu (see Kirch 1992:88–96 for the archaeological details of Kamakea's estate). During an intensive season of archaeological fieldwork in 1982, we mapped and excavated sites on some 20 of these inland commoner estates, yielding an archaeological "text" for our microcosmic Anahulu landscape.

Having thus briefly characterized the sources from which the historical transformation of the Anahulu landscape may be read, let me now turn to some of the ways—at times unsuspected—in which archive and artifact mutually informed our research. My examples follow the historical periods set out in Kirch and Sahlins (1992).

Conquests

One of the exciting developments of the past two decades in Pacific studies has been the mutual discovery of history by anthropology and vice versa (e.g., Sahlins 1985; Dening 1988; Thomas 1989; Biersack 1991). As Sahlins opines: "I now think that historians are [not] entitled to ignore these exotic histories just because they are culturally remote and as recorded do not go very far back" (1985:xviii). Yet if ethnographers have now abandoned the fantasy of a timeless "ethnographic present," they are still reluctant to "go very far back," that is to the prehistoric past (in Hawaii, prior to 1778). Most would probably concur with Ohnuki-Tierney's claim that "the *longue durée* is not easily accessible for histories of nonliterate peoples" (1990:3 fn.). But when ethnography and archaeology can agree to collaborate, post-contact history can be more fully contexted within the "long run" of prehistory leading up to the "conjuncture" of World System and indigenous cultures.¹

Such collaboration was of the essence in reconstructing the transformation of the Anahulu landscape in the first few decades following European contact. This period—marked most distinctly by the conquest of O'ahu in 1795 (and its reoccupation in 1804) by the famous war chief Kamehameha I—is certainly the least well evidenced in documentary texts, and consequently the most in need of archaeological clarification. Writing reflexively on the course of our Anahulu research, Sahlins (1992:1) commented on how the archaeological results from 1982 "sent [him] back to the historic record and to the revaluation of certain known facts about the occupations of O'ahu in 1795 and 1804 by the conquering Hawai'i king Kamehameha, facts whose significance for the history of Anahulu had been overlooked." Originally, the archival sources were interpreted such that Kamehameha's conquest and occupation precipitated only the usual redistribution of lands to subchiefs, without significant

impact upon the common populace or to the cultural landscape of the valley. But the archaeological investigations were to suggest quite a different story: that prior to 1804 the upper Anahulu Valley was a zone of low-intensity land use, primarily for shifting cultivation (with intermittent occupation in rockshelters) and forest product exploitation. The billeting of Kamehameha's army and their followers *en famille* around O'ahu (including Waialua, see Kamakau 1961:231, 376–77) apparently resulted in a radical transformation of land use and tenure in the upper Anahulu. This included a burst of agricultural intensification, with the construction of substantial taro irrigation field complexes, accompanied by permanent habitations (see Kirch 1992:47–56 for details).

In short, the events of the Conquest Period—as translated into modifications of the Anahulu landscape—are understandable only when the archival texts can be evaluated against the material record of house sites and irrigation structures. This required nothing less than an archaeological projection of the valley's land use history back more than five centuries (Kirch 1992:30–49). In other words, only by first reconstructing the *longue durée* of Anahulu's "nonliterate" past, could the "structure of the conjuncture" including Kamehameha's conquests be given an anchor in the sea of history.

The sandalwood era

If archaeology and the artifact sometimes have the power to send historical ethnographers back to their archives, the reverse is equally true. This was the case with certain archaeological structures in Anahulu Valley dating to what we term the Sandalwood Era (A.D. 1812–1830). The aging Kamehameha kept tight control over expanding trade between the people of his dominions and foreigners until his death in 1819. What ensued thereafter, however, was a frenzy of chiefly competition, especially among certain affinal relatives of the late king. These chiefly "grandees" vied to reap the benefits of the newly developed sandalwood trade, producing a "political economy of grandeur" (Sahlins 1990). Whereas Kamehameha I had undertaken efforts at agricultural intensification, and encouraged the productive cultivation of lands by his subjects, the chiefs now commanded the people into the mountains—often for weeks at a time—to cut and haul the precious sandalwood cargoes down to the coast. This drain on the energies of the *maka'ainana* was compounded by a sickening demographic decline (see Stannard 1989).

Of these commercial activities—and the sumptuous displays of material wealth upon which the chiefs expended their earnings—the contemporary written sources expound at length. "They consume without cease, and never pay up" reported a French visitor (Sahlins 1992:65). Their effects on the common people in the countryside, however, must be sought in the archaeological record. Whereas the upper Anahulu Valley witnessed a dramatic transformation of land use immediately after the 1804 conquest—evidenced by works of agricultural intensification and the construction of permanent household enclosures—a period of decline now set in. Several houses and their adjacent field systems were abandoned during the Sandalwood Era, archaeological events that can be properly interpreted only in the light of the Kingdom-wide political economy and its accompanying demographic context. At 'Ili Kaloalua, for example, a land section some 7 kilometers inland, three out of four households were abandoned, and a major portion of the irrigation complex fell into disuse. Here, then, is a

case where the consistent explanation of a set of archaeological phenomena benefit from the context in which they can be placed by virtue of the archival sources.

The whaling era

Depletion of the Hawaiian forests and the new discovery of abundant, cheap sandalwood in Vanuatu led to an abrupt collapse of the Hawaiian sandalwood trade in 1829–30. The chiefs, who had “thought [the sandalwood] would never come to an end” (Wyllie 1856:23), were left with massive debts and just as much desire to acquire the China plates, linen coats, bolts of silk, cut glass decanters, and other “showy articles” offered for sale by the traders. (On the vast possessions acquired in storehouses by the prominent chiefs, see the typical probate inventories given in Sahlins 1992, Appendix B.) But relief was at hand, in the guise of the rapidly expanding North Pacific whaling fleet, which had found at Lahaina and Honolulu the sources for “resupply and refreshment” during the winter seasons. Relief, that is, for the chiefs, who looked once again at their vast estates as sources for produce and other goods to feed the whale ship’s needs. (In 1830 there were 157 whaling ships calling in the Islands, a number that was to grow to 549 in 1859, just before the advent of the American Civil War; Sahlins 1992, table 5.1.)

For Waialua, including the Anahulu Valley, this new development in the political economy is archivally attested in the correspondence from Kano’a to La’anui, detailing seemingly endless demands upon the common people for the productions of the countryside. Herein an example:

Aloha to you Gidiona:

Here is an order to you: the ship has come; it sails forth for the sweet potatoes and also the annual 20 pigs for the ali’i [chief], also fish, also a little taro.

(July 17, 1837; letter in Archives of Hawaii)

“A little taro” frequently ran to requests for hundreds of calabashes of *poi*. Only just relieved of their arduous servitude cutting sandalwood in the mountains, the common folk were now exhorted to reactivate their taro irrigation systems and other agricultural plots.²

While the political economy of the Whaling Period (ca. 1830–1860) can be reconstructed from the archival sources, its repercussions on the landscape of the countryside—and for the lives of the rural Hawaiian cultivators—must again be revealed through archaeology. In the upper Anahulu, this required detailed archaeological mapping and excavations of the agricultural field complexes themselves. For example, on the land segment called Kaloalua, certain key rearrangements of the irrigation canal network were revealed by archaeological excavations, and could be matched with the archival evidence for the imposition of a chief’s man—Kaneiaulu by name—on the lands of an older *kama’aina* cultivator in about 1845 (see Kirch 1992: 138–154 for the details of this irrigation study). But archaeology was able to show more than just the material rearrangements of the economic armature occasioned by this new phase of politically-directed agricultural (re)intensification. Through our cartographic analysis of the archaeologically-extant irrigation features, it was

possible to arrive at quantitative estimates of the level of agricultural production (see Kirch 1992:157–164). These estimates, in turn, could be compared with the known demography of the upper Anahulu (derived from mission census and chiefly tax records), to calculate probable levels of surplus extraction. Our calculations of surplus levels of 50 percent or greater help to clarify the agronomic infrastructure that underwrote the indigenous Hawaiian polity, “elevating” it to levels of socio-political hierarchy and stratification not matched elsewhere in indigenous Oceanic societies.

The Mahele and its aftermath

Throughout the Conquest and Sandalwood periods, the upper Anahulu Valley remained largely a contested landscape of indigenous *Hawaiian* interests, that is between competing commoner and chiefly segments of the society, even as these were increasingly influenced by the expanding integration with the World System. By the 1830s–40s, however, several non-indigenous groups began to encroach directly upon the lands of Waialua, bringing with them wholly foreign concepts of the cultural landscape. One such group was the Yankee missionaries, hailing from a New England landscape of ordered towns and neatly fenced farmsteads. The instructions drafted by their Prudential Committee read in part: “You are to aim at nothing short of covering those islands with fruitful fields and pleasant dwellings, and schools and churches” (ABCFM 1838). Such concepts did not mesh well with indigenous Hawaiian practices of land use and land tenure, as for example the ancient rights of commoners to gather from the entire *ahupua’a* segment such resources as *pili* grass for thatch, firewood, forest birds, and so forth.

Another *Haole* interest group in Waialua during the 1840s were the cattle ranchers, who found the grass-covered tablelands surrounding Anahulu and other valleys to be prime terrain for running large herds of semi-wild cattle (by 1846 there were 3–4000 head in Waialua; see Sahlins 1992:148–49). That these cattle would periodically descend into the valleys to wreak havoc in the taro pondfields of the commoner Hawaiians was of little concern to the cattle barons. The Rev. Emerson found himself compelled to author protests to the Government on behalf of his human flock; archaeology testifies to a spate of stone wall construction around irrigation systems and house lots at this time, the common people’s defense against these unwanted depredations (Kirch 1992:169). Then too, there were the first stirring interests in the possibilities of sugar cane cultivation. Certain Chinese immigrants had begun small-scale crushing of indigenous Hawaiian cane using ox-powered stone mills in the early 1800s (Morgan 1948:174). Rev. Emerson himself had some land planted to cane (he frequently dabbled in various small commercial interests, in addition to carrying on the Lord’s work).

By 1846, the political pressure mounting from these various foreign interests (not to mention the long-standing interests of the chiefly elite) came to a head, as Kamehameha III agreed to a division of the Kingdom’s lands between the Crown, the Government, and the major chiefs. This Mahele was soon followed by the Kuleana Act, which empowered the common *maka’ainana* to make claims on the small cultivations and house lots they customarily held under the chiefs. (For a Native Hawaiian perspective on the Mahele and its consequences, see Kame’eleihiwa 1992.)

As we have seen, the documentation produced by the Great Mahele—under the auspices of the Board of Commissioners to Quiet Land Titles—was vast, and from the anthropological viewpoint provides the critical textual sources that allow for a close linkage between historical ethnography and archaeology. The Mahele records also reveal the systematic disenfranchisement of the common people from their traditional rights in the *ahupua'a* at large, and indeed, very often the denial of claims of usufruct by greedy chiefs whose influence with the Land Commissioners was considerable.

For its part, the archaeological record of upper Anahulu from the time of the Mahele into the second half of the eighteenth century is one of rapid decay and abandonment of this indigenous rural Hawaiian landscape. The few house sites that continued to be occupied into the 1860s and 70s (such as those of Kainiki, Kamakea, and Kaneiaulu) display a newfound wealth of *Haole* material culture (ale bottles, cheap Parisian perfume, muskets, saddles, and western-style clothing for example) that speak eloquently but sadly to the disintegration of traditional Hawaiian culture. The young people were not interested in the rigors of a back-country existence in taro farming; not when Honolulu offered so many inducements. In 1893 Kamakea's surviving children conveyed their father's Royal Patent grant to his lands at Kapuahilua to one W. E. Rowell for \$100. Kainiki's widow sold his estate at Koilau in 1885. The principal purchaser of these Hawaiian lands was the expanding Waialua Agricultural Co., whose great sugar plantation would soon come to blanket the fertile tablelands of the district, and whose Directors wished to secure uncontested title to the region's water rights.

Conclusion

Today, the landscape of the upper Anahulu gives the appearance of an untamed and primeval forest, although the discerning eye will note the crowns of foreign mango and *Albizia* trees among the native *koa* and *kukui*. But the valley still lies at the intersection of competing socio-economic and political interests, whether these be the desires of Native Hawaiians for sovereignty and land reparations, of multi-national land holders for golf courses to lure Japanese tourists, or the clandestine cultivation of marijuana under the tropical forest canopy.

Anahulu has always been a *contested* landscape, but to read the history of that land, and of the varied social groups and individual actors who sought to control its wealth, requires as well that it be *contexted*. As I have attempted to demonstrate here, the process of historical contextualization is refractory to an approach that relies solely on archive or solely on artifact. Rather it is in the rich interplay between documentary text and material record that they many voices which have laid claim to Anahulu's landscape may be "heard" again.

Notes

- 1 The concepts of *longue duree* and *conjoncture* obviously derive from Braudel (1980). Sahlins (1981, 1985), in particular, has adapted these Braudelian temporal schemes in his work on Hawaiian and Pacific cultures.
- 2 In addition to taro, there was increased emphasis on the dryland cultivation of paper mulberry (*wauke*) during the 1830s and 40s. Traditionally used to manufacture barkcloth

for clothing, *wauke* it seems provided a highly suitable batten for caulking the hulls of whale ships loosened and leaking after a season in Arctic waters. The trade in *wauke* was, of course, controlled by the chiefs in Honolulu and Lahaina.

References

- ABCFM (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions)
 1838 *Instructions of the Prudential Committee to the Sandwich Islands Mission*. Lahainaluna: Press of the Missionary Seminary.
- Bender, Barbara
 1993 Introduction. In B. Bender, editor, *Landscapes: Politics and Perspectives*. London: Berg Publishers.
- Biersack, Aleta, editor
 1991 *Clio in Oceania: Toward a Historical Anthropology*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Chinen, John J.
 1958 *The Great Mahele*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Cooper, George C. and Gavan D. Daws
 1985 *Land and Power in Hawaii*. Honolulu: Benchmark Books.
- Dening, Greg
 1988 *History's Anthropology: The Death of William Gooch*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Dunis, Serge
 1990 *Homme de la Petite Eau, Femme de la Grande Eau: Ethnologie d'Hawai'i*. Paris: Presses Universitaires Créoles.
- Handy, Edward Smith Craighill and Elizabeth Green Handy
 1972 *Native Planters in Old Hawaii: Their Life, Lore, and Environment*. Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 233. Honolulu.
- Inglis, F.
 1977 Nation and community: a landscape and its morality. *Sociological Review* 25:489-514.
- Kamakau, Samuel M.
 1961 *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii*. Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press.
- Kame'eleihiwa, Lilikala
 1992 *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea La E Pono Ai?* Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press.
- Kent, Noel
 1983 *Hawaii: Islands Under the Influence*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Kirch, Patrick V.
 1992 *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History in the Kingdom of Hawaii. Vol. II, The Archaeology of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kuykendall, Ralph S.

- 1938 *The Hawaiian Kingdom: Volume I, 1778–1854, Foundation and Transformation*. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii.

Morgan, Theodore

- 1948 *Hawaii: A Century of Economic Change, 1778–1876*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko

- 1990 Introduction: The historicization of anthropology. In *Culture Through Time*, pp. 1–25. Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, editor. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Sahlins, Marshall

- 1981 *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- 1985 *Islands of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 1990 The political economy of grandeur in Hawaii from 1810 to 1830. In *Culture Through Time*. pp. 26–56. Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, editor. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 1992 *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History in the Kingdom of Hawaii. Vol. I, Historical Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stannard, David

- 1989 *Before the Horror: The Population of Hawai'i on the Eve of Western Contact*. Honolulu: Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawaii.

Thomas, Nicholas

- 1989 *Out of Time: History and Evolution in Anthropological Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wyllie, Robert Crichton

- 1856 *Supplement to the Report of the Minister of Foreign Relations*. Honolulu: Government Printer.