

Community-Based Research: The next step in Hawaiian archaeology

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ABSTRACT:

In a 1997 keynote address to the Society for Hawaiian Archaeology, Patrick V. Kirch assessed the development of Hawaiian archaeology, past, present, and future. Kirch lamented the shrinking role research institutions played in Hawaiian archaeology, and challenged archaeologists to be more engaged with descendant communities. The landscape of Hawaiian archaeology has changed since Kirch's 1997 assessment, and more partnerships between archaeologists and Hawaiian community groups have developed since that time. This paper presents an example of community-based archaeology, in which a grassroots group seeks to protect a *heiau* (place of worship) threatened by harbor expansion. The assembled group includes Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) elders and community members, students, State archaeologists, and Kānaka Maoli archaeologists. A brief contextual background of the sociopolitical history of Hawaiian archaeology is provided, as well as coverage of the development of the project and its potential to serve as an example for similar community efforts elsewhere in the islands.

Keywords: community-based research, Hawai'i, Hawaiian archaeology

ROOTS OF ENGAGEMENT

By the early twentieth century, the bulk of Hawai'i lands were in the hands of non-Hawaiians. Contributing to this situation was the introduction of private land ownership in the mid-1800s, called the Māhele, and the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, which served to disenfranchise Kānaka Maoli (genuine people, Native Hawaiians) (Andrade 2008; Iaukea 2012; Kame'eleihiwa 1992; Silva 2004). To address this loss of land in the Territory of Hawai'i, United States President Warren Harding signed the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act in 1921. The Act was intended to return Kānaka Maoli to their lands and enable a self-sufficient lifestyle, including the preservation of Kānaka Maoli values, traditions, and culture. Kēhaulani Kauanui has problematized this federal law, highlighting the difference between returning the people to the land, and returning the land to the people (Kauanui 1999, 2008). The Act not only brought land and people together in a specific way, but it also introduced a system of cultural identity into the Hawai'i legal system that defines a 'native Hawaiian' as someone with 'not less than one-half part of the blood of the races inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands previous to 1778' (Hawaiian Homes Commission Act 1921).

The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act is not the focus of this paper, but issues of blood quantum, marginalization, and sovereignty contribute to the complex sociopolitical environment in which Hawai'i archaeologists currently work (Kawelu 2014). The focus of this discussion is community-based archaeology, a developing approach within the discipline that addresses the multifaceted and challenging sociopolitical contexts within which archaeology operates.

For several decades, archaeologists have critically examined the discipline, coming to acknowledge that research does not exist independently of contemporary society, but instead is inextricably linked to it (Gamble 1993; Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990; Pinsky and Wylie 1989). A growing number of practitioners not only recognize that archaeologically produced knowledge is value-laden and utilized beyond purely academic purposes (Abu El-Haj 2001; Appadurai 2001), but advocate for the active participation of researchers in the lives of people in struggle (McGuire 2008; Stottman 2010). Such change within the discipline as well as within descendant and indigenous communities over the past two decades has created space for the practice of archaeology from a different perspective, a community-based approach, which accounts for the sociopolitical context in which archaeology is practiced.

Despite the underlying mechanisms of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act working to perpetuate Kānaka Maoli disenfranchisement, many strong Kānaka Maoli communities solidified as a result of this act. One of the co-authors of this article, Kathleen Kawelu, is a member

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Submitted 13.12.2013, accepted 20.4.14

of the Hawaiian Homes community of Keaukaha, Hilo, Hawai'i Island, and her involvement in community-based archaeology is rooted in this close-knit homestead. The other co-author, Donald Pakele, also has family ties to Keaukaha and was an administrator for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, based in Keaukaha, throughout the 1990s. In Keaukaha *kuleana* (responsibility), respect, sustainability, and cooperation are central values, which are also key aspects of community-based archaeology. Our desire to protect the place which has nurtured our families for generations has engendered a vigilance, to ensure future generations will inherit a healthy homestead. Kawelu's social investment manifests academically in community-based archaeology, which combines the desire to support a thriving culture and her training as an archaeologist, to create a practice that is relevant and sustainable because it addresses contemporary issues. Pakele's passion for Kānaka Maoli culture and desire to protect a unique cultural site for future generations prompted him to call upon a variety of individuals, including archaeologists, to initiate the project discussed later in this paper. The purpose of this article is to advocate for a community-based archaeology in Hawai'i. The paper begins with a brief discussion of Patrick V. Kirch's preliminary steps within public archaeology, which serve as a precursor to our own work. We also present an overview of community-based participatory research, along with an example of a project impacting the Hawaiian Homestead of Keaukaha.

FORAYS INTO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A necessary element of community-based research is an invested scholar, and for several decades, Patrick V. Kirch has championed the advancement of Hawaiian archaeology, which has gradually grown to include the concerns of descendant people. While community-based research was never a central objective for Kirch's archaeological projects, he has taken preliminary steps toward community work by recognizing the importance of cultural sites to contemporary efforts of native peoples and by involving stakeholders in the archaeological process. Kirch's awareness of some of the concerns of Kānaka Maoli inevitably stems from having grown up in the islands, and witnessing the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s (Kanahele 1982). The cultural florescence of the Renaissance manifested in a revitalization of Kānaka Maoli language, music, navigation, hula, and crafts, including increased political advocacy and activism that critically looked at archaeology and the protection of cultural sites. The Hawaiian Renaissance sparked activism concerning the island of Kaho'olawe, which had served for much of the twentieth century as a site for United States military training and bombing exercises. Archaeology, more precisely the cultural sites and landscape, figured prominently in the fight to end the desecration of Kaho'olawe and the Navy finally surrendered the island in 1994, with oversight and con-

trol of access finally transferring to the State of Hawai'i in 2003 (McGregor 2007). Kirch was keenly aware of the developments on Kaho'olawe, and was invited by community advocates to experience the island during the period of struggle. Undoubtedly the sociopolitical context in Hawai'i influenced Kirch, and over the years he has involved Kānaka Maoli in archaeological projects.

In 1981, a year after being elected president of the newly formed Society for Hawaiian Archaeology (SHA), Kirch was contacted by Legal Aid and the Moloka'i grassroots organization Hui Alaloa. The group was fighting against the proposed development of a condominium and beach park at Kawakiu Bay, on the western shores of Moloka'i Island. Six years previously the group had successfully protested to maintain public access to the bay, and now they were concerned the proposed development project would negatively impact the rural lifestyle of residents by disturbing Kānaka Maoli cultural sites and increasing urban development along the coastline. The grassroots organization contacted SHA, via Kirch, to provide testimony to the Maui Planning Commission regarding the quality of archaeological work carried out by the contract archaeologist. The testimony of the SHA archaeologists regarding the inadequate work and the protests of Hui Alaloa and Legal Aid did not stop the Planning Commission from issuing permits, however, the development was eventually stopped in 1982 when the Hui took their case to the Hawai'i Supreme Court. This was the first time the SHA was asked to police the actions of practicing archaeologists in the State, and one of the earliest examples of Kirch contributing to Kānaka Maoli efforts to protect cultural sites (Kawelu 2007; Major 1995).

Kirch developed a more sustained and involved relationship with another Kānaka Maoli group, Ka 'Ohana o Kahikinui, on the island of Maui beginning in 1993. Some of the goals of Ka 'Ohana were to replenish Kahikinui's forest resources, manage the cultural heritage of the area, and ultimately resettle the district through a Department of Hawaiian Home Lands Kuleana Homestead Program (Group 70 International 2011). The purpose of Kirch's multi-disciplinary research program in Kahikinui was to address questions about the development of Hawai'i's pre-contact complex society. The location of thousands of cultural features on the Kahikinui landscape through large-scale surveys, and site function via aerial excavations of selected sites, provided evidence of the capacity of the district to support a population far greater than were recorded in the nineteenth century and later. Ka 'Ohana o Kahikinui members frequently participated in archaeological surveys, and were regularly updated on the progress of the research project. The preliminary findings of Kirch's team, as well as the findings of two other research groups in the district, were published in a volume edited and funded by Kirch, with the explicit purpose of disseminating the archaeological information in a timely fashion and in non-technical language to the public, particularly

Ka 'Ohana (Kirch 1997). The identification of habitation, agriculture, and religious sites supported Ka 'Ohana arguments that Kahikinui could indeed support a sizeable community, and today roughly 32 individuals live off-the-grid in Kahikinui, Maui (Group 70 International 2011; Kirch 2014).

Kirch initiated one of the more heated discussions in Hawaiian archaeology with his keynote address at the Tenth Annual Society for Hawaiian Archaeology conference on Kaua'i in 1997. His passion for the discipline was center-stage during his keynote address, where he took the opportunity to look at the *longue durée* of Hawaiian archaeology, the intellectual contributions made by archaeologists, the institutional leadership at the time, and the possible trajectory of the discipline regarding its relationship with Kānaka Maoli stakeholders (Kirch 1999). His speech was well received by many at the conference, but not by all, and subsequent discussion and debate developed regarding his characterization of the ability of long-standing institutions such as the Bishop Museum, the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD), and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to guide the discipline (Cordy 1999; Griffin 1999; Sinoto 1999).

Others took issue with his dooms-day scenario in which economic interests would trump those of historic preservation, wherein government programs, laws, and regulations would be gutted, and Kānaka Maoli would not 'shed any tears' at archaeology's demise (Kirch 1999). Such a scenario has partially unfolded, wherein development interests succeeded in shaping historic preservation laws for their benefit, as was the case in the 2013 passage of Act 85 (introduced as Senate Bill 1171) authorizing the phased review of development projects, allowing the initiation of construction before an entire project area has been assessed for cultural impacts in Hawai'i. Act 85 limits the opportunities for adjustments to development plans if cultural sites and *iwi kūpuna* (ancestral burials) are identified in later phases of archaeological work, and undermines the State's ability to best protect our cultural heritage. Fortunately Kirch was not correct in his assessment of Kānaka Maoli reactions to the demise of Hawaiian archaeology and the Federal and State laws protecting our heritage. As predicted by Cachola-Abad and Ayau (1999), threats to heritage management were not met with apathy but instead stirred advocacy, and Kānaka Maoli stood alongside archaeologists, cultural practitioners, students, environmentalists, lawyers, and individuals in public and private institutions to combat efforts to weaken historic preservation laws (Hitt 2013).

As a brief note, the majority of archaeological work in the United States is initiated by land development, such as the Honolulu Rail Transit project that sparked the passage of Act 85, and compliance with historic preservation laws enacted to mitigate adverse impacts to cultural sites stemming from such development. Federal laws, such as the National Historic Preservation Act and the National

Environmental Policy Act, and State laws like Hawai'i Revised Statute Chapter 6E and Hawai'i Administrative Rules Chapter 300, are central to the protection of our collective heritage, and require government agencies and developers to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties. Such laws are in place to prevent further loss of the historical and cultural heritage of the islands. Attempts to weaken heritage laws diminishes our ability to protect cultural sites and *iwi kūpuna*, and therefore our capacity to contribute to the perpetuation of the living culture of Hawai'i's indigenous population.

The 2013 collaboration between archaeologists, Kānaka Maoli, and other stakeholders in challenging the passage of Senate Bill 1171 (subsequently Act 85) revealed the progress made since Kirch's keynote address on Kaua'i. Not all archaeologists working in Hawai'i, or interested Kānaka Maoli, agreed with Kirch's assessment of the state of Hawaiian archaeology at the end of the millennium, but his SHA address wasn't intended to be historical window dressing; it was a call to action. He critically examined the practice of archaeology in Hawai'i, inciting archaeologists to do more, to provide stronger leadership within the discipline, and to engage descendant communities, particularly Kānaka Maoli. His talk motivated Kānaka Maoli as well, who desired a voice and influence in the discipline, without the filter of archaeologists speaking for them. Kānaka Maoli participation and training in archaeology has increased exponentially since 1997, resulting from a combination of endeavors including Kānaka Maoli-led training programs such as the Wahi Kūpuna Internship Program for undergraduate students (Uyeoka 2013), renewed efforts by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH Mānoa) through their Applied Archaeology M.A. program initiated in 2007, and the sustained efforts of smaller institutions such as UH Maui, UH West O'ahu, and UH Hilo (Mills 2001).

While Kirch's primary research has not focused on public archaeology, we see various levels of engagement over the years, ranging from a basic awareness of the importance of cultural sites to Kānaka Maoli sovereignty efforts, then involving descendants in archaeological projects on Maui, and finally to training Kānaka Maoli graduate students. Kawelu has taken up Kirch's call for increased engagement with Kānaka Maoli descendants, and views community-based archaeology as one means of addressing the need for greater disciplinary accountability and accessibility to descendant communities. Thus, when Pakele put out the call to help protect a cultural site in Hilo, she saw the potential to contribute to the project.

COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHAEOLOGY

Community-based archaeology is part of a larger public archaeology movement that gained traction in the United States in the 1970s (Little 2002; Matthews, *et al.* 2011; Shackel and Chambers 2004). Public archaeology was

initially associated with cultural resource management, and was viewed as a way to gain public support for the discipline, primarily through a one-way flow of information to the interested public via outreach. The protection of ‘archaeological sites’ (more appropriately called cultural sites, as they are cultural sites studied archaeologically) and securing funding for archaeological endeavors requires public awareness, and public outreach was a natural development in the field (Atalay 2012). However, public archaeology is now considered more than a one-dimensional and one-directional subfield of archaeology, it encompasses ethical obligations in service to the public, rather than for the benefit of archaeologists alone. Archaeologists who practice public archaeology broadly analyze the public dimension of doing archaeology, and examine the many ways archaeologists interact with the many publics (McDavid 2011).

Several kinds of archaeologies fall under the larger umbrella of public archaeology, including indigenous archaeology and community-based archaeology, which developed alongside each other and overlap and intersect in their aims. Indigenous archaeology is the practice of archaeology with for and by indigenous peoples that seeks to situate native peoples and their concerns at the center of archaeological practice (Nicholas 2008; Watkins 2000). So while indigenous archaeology often utilizes a community-based practice, it does not necessitate this approach. In addition, community-based projects often involve indigenous communities, but not all descendant or local communities are indigenous (Atalay 2006; Silliman 2008).

Community-based archaeology, an application of community-based participatory research (CBPR) (Strand *et al.* 2003), begins with a mindset situating archaeologists within communities of descendants and other stakeholders who value heritage management. A community-based archaeology goes beyond consultation, facilitating greater involvement and control of heritage management by invested groups (Marshall 2002). CBPR does not operate using an exact set of procedures; rather key principles guide projects. Much of the discussion in this section comes from the first book-length treatment of this archaeological approach (Atalay 2012). Sonya Atalay identifies five core principles common to projects utilizing this approach: 1) using community partnerships; 2) collaborating with communities in all phases of research; 3) recognizing multiple knowledge systems; 4) fostering reciprocal benefits for partners; and 5) building community capacity. Ultimately, by critically addressing these core principles, researchers and communities develop a program that best suits their collective needs. There is much overlap between these principles, and we view collaboration, incorporation of multiple knowledge systems, and seeking social justice as the focus of community-based archaeology. We briefly discuss Atalay’s identified principles here.

The first principle, using community partnerships, speaks to the process of de-centering the discipline and

archaeologists as the primary figures in heritage management. The principle asks archaeologists to change their view of indigenous and descendant peoples as subjects of study, and to situate these groups as partners in the production of knowledge (Agbe-Davies 2011). Communities are equal partners in the research process and authority and decision-making is shared amongst a larger group. In order to achieve a true partnership archaeologists must be self-reflective, to recognize typical power imbalances where community members may leave decision making to ‘the experts.’

This redistribution of power relates to the next principle that gets at the heart of CBPR, collaboration. Community partners take part in all aspects of research on a daily basis, contributing to conceptualizing the project, gathering and analyzing the data, and disseminating that information. Partnership does not mean simply including community members as informants, but entails a substantive involvement of a group that is interactive rather than reactive (Greer *et al.* 2002). Collaborating with communities is approached just as a researcher would approach a multi-disciplinary or multi-institutional project, with the understanding that partners have their own strengths and goals. That said, partnership has its challenges for all involved, starting with the identification of partners, recognizing the strengths and limitations of collaborators, and the time investment required and the longer timeframes usually involved. Working through such complexities is worthwhile because partnership and collaboration resists forces that reaffirm entrenched power structures, and increases the relevance of the discipline (Pyburn 2009). The goal here is not to compensate for previous power imbalances in historic preservation by situating descendant and indigenous partners above archaeologists, but to recognize that our mutual interests in historic preservation are better served through meaningful partnership. Modifying the production of archaeological knowledge through these new lines of communication also works to increase disciplinary relevance, accountability, and sustainability.

From its inception, archaeology has captivated the interest of the public, recall the images of finely dressed Victorian era men and women sitting at cultural sites observing the excavation work of antiquarians (Stocking 1987). Today public lectures are common and there are magazines and television channels dedicated to disseminating archaeologically produced knowledge. Archaeologists are most familiar and comfortable with this one-way flow of knowledge. However, community-based archaeology demands that knowledge not only be presented to the public, but that descendant and indigenous communities take part in producing this knowledge as well. Recognizing the contributions that multiple knowledge systems have to offer research projects is another principle of community-based archaeology. Critical archaeology raised our awareness of the situated nature of archaeological knowledge (Gamble 1993; Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990), and schol-

ars acknowledge that participants incorporate multiple knowledge systems within a project when their varied backgrounds and experiences are taken into account. In his early writings Ian Hodder says (1984: 29):

It is probably the case that most professional archaeologists come from a fairly limited range of social backgrounds. The past that interests them (us) may not be of such interest to others.... Whatever the reasons, educational, cultural or social, for such differences, it is clear that we cannot assume that the stories we are writing are socially neutral. There is a need to examine carefully the effects of the past we reconstruct.

Acknowledging the contributions multiple knowledge systems bring to projects also addresses issues of power, and whose knowledge is considered legitimate. Yet, presenting multiple understandings or interpretations in a project isn't simple, and must be approached purposefully, as local or indigenous understandings of the world can appear colloquial if not integrated into the larger research agenda meaningfully.

CBPR rejects 'value-neutrality' as a standard of archaeological practice and instead of researchers who strive for distanced objectivity, this approach demands a commitment to communities and the use of research for some applied purpose. The final two principles of community-based archaeology are about decolonizing archaeology and ultimately seeking social justice. Increasingly scholars, particularly indigenous scholars, advocate for decolonizing the academy (Bruchac, *et al.* 2010; Mihesuah and Wilson 2004; Smith and Wobst 2005). Within archaeology this can involve addressing reburial and repatriation issues, revising ethics principles, training indigenous people in archaeology, and increasing collaboration with descendant communities. In part, decolonizing archaeology means ensuring that the benefits of the practice are reciprocal and shared amongst the many invested communities and stakeholders.

Clearly, archaeologists benefit from the practice of archaeology by gaining knowledge, earning jobs, and securing grant monies. The research and academic publications that result from collaboration translates into financial compensation for archaeologists. Community partners should also gain from archaeological research, and reciprocal benefit to partners is another principle of community-based archaeology. For example, archaeological research is used in repatriation efforts, land claims cases, building local economies through cultural tourism, and protecting cultural sites from indiscriminant land development. These examples demonstrate some of the benefits to doing archaeology, and community-based work seeks to ensure such concrete results for local and descendant groups.

However, community collaborators often volunteer their time, or receive minimal compensation for their

work in heritage management. This inequitable economy of collaboration, wherein archaeologists are economically compensated and partners often are not (which is the case in the co-author's current project), deserves mention. While we strongly advocate for a community approach, this imbalance reveals some of the challenges to doing this kind of work. How do we equitably compensate collaborators, and does financial compensation undermine values such as *kuleana* (responsibility, right) within cultural stewardship? If compensation is not addressed, is it realistic to expect community collaborators to participate in all stages of a project? We do not explore these questions here, but do recognize that collaboration involves complexities that must be addressed to truly embrace the principles of community-based archaeology.

Building community capacity is another way partners can benefit from the archaeological process, and is the final principle discussed here. Partnering not only brings together varied knowledge systems and skills, but it also allows for the acquisition of new abilities. In the spirit of give and take, archaeologists can learn new skills like cultural protocols of how to enter and leave sites, nuanced ways to approach and engage communities, and expand social networks through sustained interactions. Community capacity can improve in areas like public speaking, community organizing, computer and technology literacy, and social networking in government and professional organizations. Skills gained through partnership can then be used by community members in other contexts, and by archaeologists on other research projects. The co-authors' first attempt to apply a community-based approach in Hawaiian archaeology began on the island of Hawai'i, near the Hawaiian Homestead neighborhood of Keaukaha.

HO'OPAKELE HEIAU – A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNITY-BASED ARCHAEOLOGY

Hawai'i imports between 85–90% of all its food into the State, and 98.6% of imports arrive on cargo ships (Office of Planning 2012; SSFM International 2011). The island of Hawai'i has two harbors, Hilo Harbor located on the east side of the island, and Kawaihae Harbor on the west (Figure 1). The importance of these State harbors is undeniable under current practices, and the need to improve and expand harbors is inevitable under such unsustainable approaches. When one of the co-authors, Pakele, read through the *Hawai'i Island Commercial Harbors 2035 Master Plan* and noted the proposed construction of additional piers at Baker's Beach along the Hilo coastline where a documented *heiau* (religious site) stands (Figure 2), he sprang to action (SSFM International 2011). He feared the cultural site would be destroyed if the community was not aware of these development plans scheduled for the State owned property.

Pakele's worries that economic demands would trump site preservation were well founded, since the previous

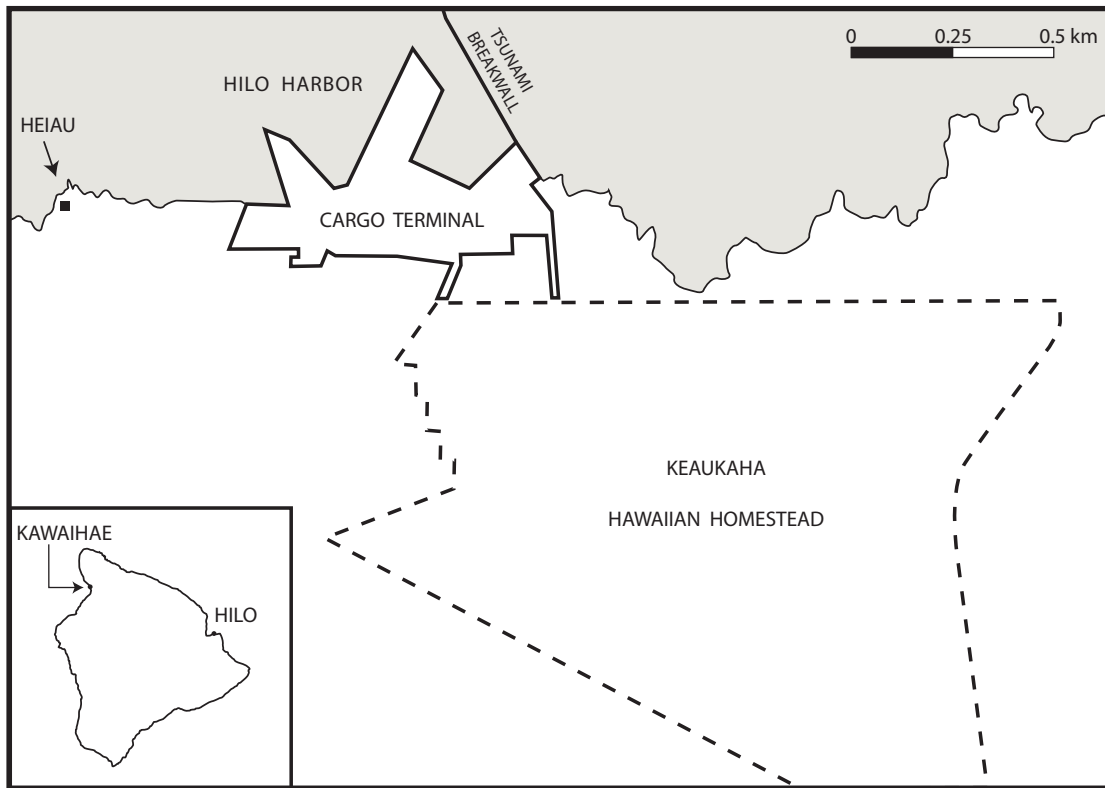


Figure 1: The location of Kawaihae and Hilo Harbors, showing the Hawaiian Homestead community of Keaukaha adjacent to Hilo Harbor.

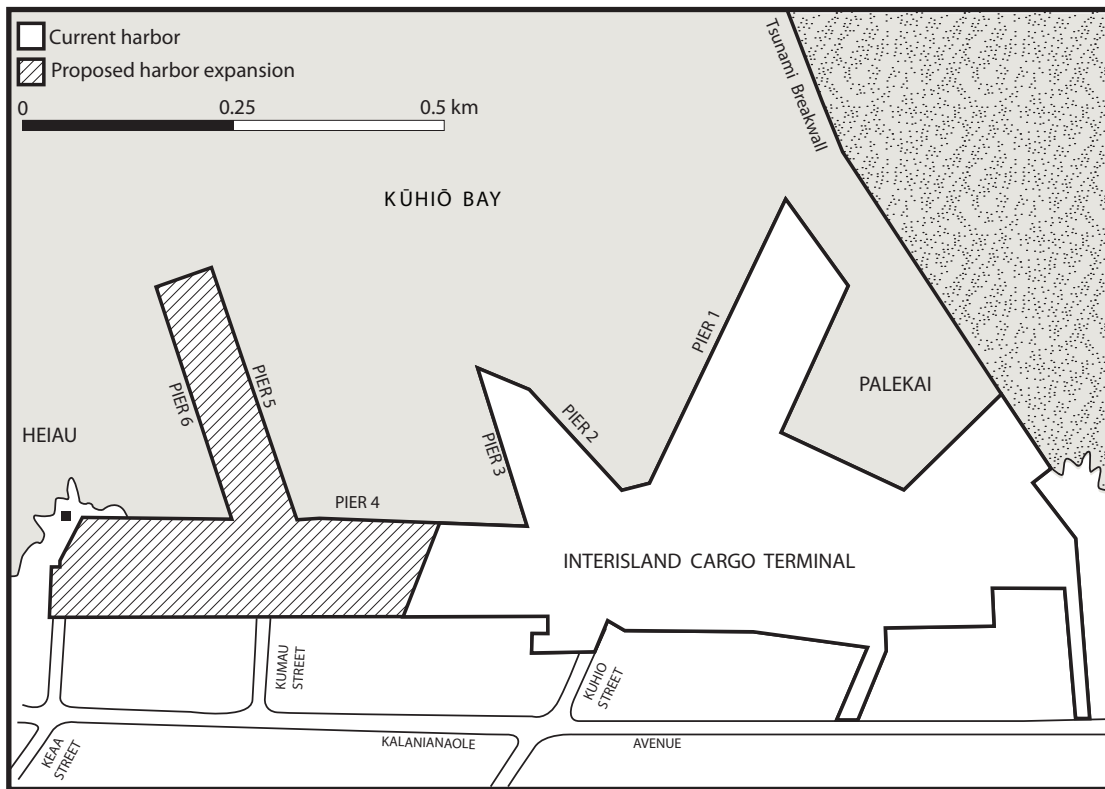


Figure 2: Close-up of Hilo Harbor, the documented heiau, and the proposed harbor expansion along the shores of Kūhiō Bay.

2020 Master Plan's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) suggested constraining harbor development would cause the combined loss of nearly \$12 billion for the two Hawai'i Island harbors, Kawaihae and Hilo (R.M. Towill 2001). Seemingly, to ensure cultural sites would not constrain proposed development plans in Hilo, the significance of the documented *heiau* was steadily minimized in the final EIS written by R.M. Towill Corporation (Haun and Henry 2000). The first description of existing conditions in the project area noted, 'the only traditional Hawaiian sites identified by the studies are a heiau next to the West Project Area' (R.M. Towill 2001: 4–8). Three paragraphs later the site is demoted to a 'possible heiau near the West Project Area' (R.M. Towill 2001: 4–11), and one page later it is further downgraded to an 'unconfirmed heiau site' (R.M. Towill 2001: 4–12). Finally, the sacred site is essentially dismissed when it is described as an 'unconfirmed heiau' located near the project site' (R.M. Towill 2001: 4–15). In a matter of eight pages, this *heiau* went from a documented sacred site, noted on Tax Maps as early as 1932, to an unconfirmed site requiring quotation marks.

For the subsequent 2035 Master Plan the State Department of Transportation held several meetings with harbor users and stakeholders in 2009 and 2010 (SSFM International 2011). However, none of these meetings, 20 in total, were held with the Kānaka Maoli community living adjacent to the Hilo Harbor in Keaukaha. Instead, these meetings included State, Federal, and Local government agencies, shipping companies, and private businesses. The only meeting held with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, which oversees the homestead community of Keaukaha on Hawai'i Island, took place at the Kapolei, O'ahu Island headquarters. In May 2009, the State held general stakeholder and public informational meetings in Hilo, with a follow-up meeting in December 2009 where summaries of the spring meetings were provided. The Kānaka Maoli residents directly impacted by the proposed development were never given an opportunity to voice their concerns beyond the forums provided to the general public.

Armed with an understanding of government agencies and processes, from decades of government employment, and a deep concern for Kānaka Maoli cultural sites, Pakele began raising community and government awareness regarding the impact to the cultural site. Beyond its obvious sacred nature, Pakele recognized the significance of the site as one of the only known *heiau* existing in the town of Hilo. Even in pre-contact times Hilo was an important social and political center, and many *heiau* were documented by Kānaka Maoli historians (Kamakau 1992) and museum scholars (Stokes 1991) in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We are currently unaware of other *heiau* structures in Hilo town. However, lacking a comprehensive survey of the town, test excavations, or interviews with knowledgeable elders, we can't say for certain that this is the last standing *heiau* in Hilo. Regardless,

the protection of this solitary *heiau* is significant.

Taking the lead on the community-driven project, Pakele brought together individuals from local Kānaka Maoli communities in addition to three archaeologists. From the project's inception it has been collaborative, and community concerns initiated our grass-roots group, called Ho'opakele Heiau (to protect/to rescue *heiau*), rather than archaeological concerns. The group originally included Kihei Seto and Kihei Nahale-a, Kanaka Maoli community advocates; Theresa Donham, the Archaeology Branch Chief of the State Historic Preservation Division (formerly the Hawai'i Island lead archaeologist); and Sean Nāleimaile (now a Hawai'i Island archaeologist with the State Historic Preservation Division) and co-author Kawelu, both Kanaka Maoli archaeologists. Collectively our goal is to protect this *heiau*, and spare it from the fate of many other known *heiau* in the Hilo area. Our group, Ho'opakele Heiau, seeks to protect the sacred site by conducting background research, interviewing former residents of the area, clearing the overgrown site, documenting the structure via photography and mapping, and bringing public awareness to the *heiau* largely through partnerships with educational institutions and groups.

Each member of the assembled group brings our own set of experiences and skills to the project, beginning with Pakele, who spearheaded the government permitting process. He engages a dizzying array of State and County agencies, including the State Historic Preservation Division, Land Division, Harbors Division, and the County of Hawai'i Planning Department. Theresa Donham, and now Sean Nāleimaile, of the State Historic Preservation Division, also help in this capacity. It took 11 months to secure all the necessary permits to access the *heiau* before we could begin the clearing process. We recently submitted a request for a multi-year curation agreement with the historic preservation office, so our work can continue without the need for annual permit renewals.

With permits in hand, and a number of stakeholders invested in the project, the group gathered at the *heiau* in April of 2012 to begin clearing the site. Our efforts that day, and every workday, begin and end with Kānaka Maoli cultural protocols, primarily chants, to introduce ourselves to those ancestors tied to the land and to ensure the ancestors remain on the land at the end of the day. The group is advised in the cultural protocols by Kihei Seto and Kihei Nahale-a.

That day in April 2012 our organizing group was joined by residents living in the surrounding neighborhood, members of the Keaukaha homestead community, and University of Hawai'i at Hilo students and staff. Subsequent workdays have expanded our group to include more residents of Keaukaha and other community members who regularly utilize the area for recreation and subsistence activities. We cleared a quarter of the *heiau* that day, and subsequent work has slowly revealed what remains of the structure, which is significantly smaller

than initially anticipated. The centuries of natural events like tsunamis, and the construction of residences, train tracks for transporting sugarcane, and the harbor in the immediate vicinity have taken a toll on the site. Nevertheless the *heiau* persists, despite the encroachment of time and development. The resiliency of the site mirrors the spirit of Kānaka Maoli people as a whole, and the ability to persevere in the face of adversity. Such persistence allows contemporary communities to engage in the protection of cultural sites, and renew connections to the land and the culture. In a broader sense the persistence of cultural sites and the renewal of these places, sites, and practices through community work ensure the culture lives.

In addition to the workdays at the *heiau*, our group is networking with other partners, like the scholars in the Spatial Data Analysis and Visualization Lab (SDAVL) of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Ho'opakele Heiau and SDAVL are collaborating on a digital archiving project that will create a publicly available 3-D photorealistic model and interactive 3-D tour of the *heiau*. By providing virtual access, the project simultaneously allows our group to raise awareness about the significant cultural site, while protecting it from the potential negative impact of having large numbers of the public physically visit the site. We plan to incorporate video clips on the virtual tour, including interviews with Pakele who has done much archival research on the *heiau*, as well as oral histories with elders who previously lived by the *heiau* and learned about it from older relatives.

No one in our group or the larger pool of stakeholders has expressed a desire for an archaeological excavation of the sacred site, and planned archaeological work currently calls for more archival research, continued interviews with knowledgeable individuals and families from the area, surveying of the surrounding landscape, and mapping of the site. The *heiau* was never mapped in detail, and this is an activity where students can actively contribute to the process, using skills from archaeological practice within a community context. Currently we have organized a bi-monthly work schedule so the *heiau* can be cleared and cared for by community members and the next generation of stewards.

Ho'opakele Heiau is a small project, but has the potential to serve as a model for other communities who also seek to care for cultural sites in their own areas. An 11 month permitting process is more than most grass-roots groups can endure, and clarifying the process is important to fostering cultural stewardship in other communities. We have begun this process of capacity building by recording the steps needed to secure government permits to care for cultural sites. The strong collaborative nature of this community-initiated project that incorporates multiple knowledge systems, and works not only to stop the destruction of a cultural site but to build the capacity of other local groups to do similar work in their own areas are all key aspects of community-based archaeology. Prac-

ticing a community-based approach works toward social justice and disciplinary sustainability, because archaeology no longer pretends to be removed from the larger socio-political context in which it operates, but instead chooses to situate itself firmly within larger communities invested in heritage management. Our group is still in its infancy, despite coming together some two years ago, which only makes sense if you recognize this project as a *kuleana* requiring sustained efforts for many years. We reached this place in Hawaiian archaeology because of the call for more engagement from Kānaka Maoli and archaeologists. Patrick Kirch was one archaeologist who called for collaboration, and our discipline and island home has benefitted from the increased participation of descendant and local people.

Acknowledgements

We thank the many volunteers who have helped Ho'opakele Heiau with its goal of protecting the heiau at the Baker's Beach area. The Ocean View Community Association at Baker's Beach has been supportive of our efforts, and we appreciate their patience and open communication. Area residents Moon Brown, Wally Aki, Dan Lapala, Hari Anderson, Lavonne Stewart, Dr. Maya Baylac, Rudy Rudolph, and Kent Hollinger have been especially accommodating. Former residents of the Baker's Beach area have also been helpful, particularly the Bell family, sharing their knowledge of the site and surrounding area. Members of the Hawaiian Home Lands community of Keaukaha have served as advisors and have volunteered countless hours to clear the heiau, John Kanui has been particularly indispensable in our work. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo Anthropology club, Kūikapiko, has also been critical to the success of the project. Other individuals, like Kerry Okinishi, who fish in the area have also sustained the project by regularly volunteering their time. Several businesses in Hilo have donated tools and equipment for our work including Del's Farm Supply, Farm Supply Cooperative, Garden Exchange, HPM Building Supply, KTA Super Stores, Long's Drugs, Ace Hardware, Home Depot, and Walmart. Our paper has benefitted from the comments of Windy McElroy, Mark McCoy, and Lori Hager, however, all shortcomings found herein are our own.

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