
Let me preface my contribution to this review forum by saying that I do not agree with the notion of a review forum. A forum, yes. In a forum all contributors are equally responsible for a constructive contribution to a given theme. A review forum, no. Three contributors are in a privileged position in relation to the authors. They do not have to context their opinions. They can reduce a hundred-thousand-word book to a few slogans; they are not obliged to answer any questions they ask. They force the authors into defensive poses. They approach the study from the moment of its dreaming stage—what it might be—rather than from what it is once any options have been taken. I would rather not participate in review forums, but have agreed to do so and have my say about them.

That being said, I am quite prepared to celebrate the brilliant contributions of Marshall Sahlins and Patrick Kirch to Pacific studies. I doubt if there is anywhere in the world where scholars of such international repute in such different, even competing, disciplines have completed such an integrated study. Their volumes are state-of-the-art scholarship in their separate disciplines. Their combined study, done from universities and states thousands of miles apart, is what a myriad centers and area studies programs say they are born to do but never do. Sahlins and Kirch pay us the compliment of never talking down and of never retreating to the high position of a personal synthesis of their own expertise. They exhaust all the sources; they explore every disciplinary methodology and technique; they provide the means of their own critique; they make a reference point by which all scholars who follow them in Pacific studies must measure themselves. I am very happy to celebrate that achievement enthusiastically and to thank them for it.

Let me savor only two of the many splendid qualities of these volumes. The first is that they are true “history from below,” probably the first we have experienced in the Pacific. The other is their creative narrative form. “History from below” is not a phrase Sahlins likes. It smacks too much of a trendy and crude Marxist historicism. So I won’t labor him with it. “Total History,” “Rounded History,” “Two-sided History” might be better, but they, too, are phrases skewed by particular approaches. One of the seminal books in historical studies of our time surely has been E. P. Thompson’s The Making of the English Working Class. Thompson showed how class is a self-constructing relational process giving identity to self and others at the same time in infinitely complex ways. Sahlins and Kirch are just as seminal. They take an interlocking moment between prehistory and history, when
archaeology loses its usual anonymity of place and artifact, and history by reason of state systems creates a particularist archive. The whole landscape becomes individualized. Instead of an “ethnographic present” where history is lost in superimposed generalizations, the enlarging characteristics of culture are uncovered where they actually happen. Sahlins and Kirch do not look at the interlocking moment, like most scholars have, for its generalized ethnography. They have made a whole new Hawaiian past. They have discovered a whole new historical past for Hawaiian history. It is history from “below,” but because of their relational concepts—*kamāʻaina/aliʻi*, landscape/event, island/world systems—it is not a crude oppositional class history. No one, but no one—from the lowliest undergraduate essayist to the PhD student to those who make academic studies “relevant”—can now ignore the fact that a whole new population is available for those who want to write history as it actually happened. In one step Sahlins and Kirch have taken Hawaiian history out of the antiquarianism that has largely dominated it into state-of-the-art historiography. Those who do not know this new history are doomed to repeat the old.

Given the sad connotations of the word, Sahlins and Kirch might not feel complimented when I say that I think one of the graces of their book is its narrative form. They tell a story in such a way that the reader knows that every particular detail is larger than itself, and that history is never just “one damn thing after another,” but has a dramatic form. At the heart of every cultural act in Sahlins and Kirch’s history is what Aristotle called *catharsis* ‘enlightenment’.

The first chapter of Sahlins’s volume, *Landscapes of Tradition*, must be the most satisfying piece of historical ethnography in all of Pacific studies. Some of Sahlins’s earlier writing on Hawaiian historical ethnography was bedeviled by his own genius. He was too good for the rest of us, who became impatient with his vocabulary and were “conned” into thinking that his procedures were easy. His critics thought that all they had to do was read the superficial historical sources everyone knew about, invent their own vocabulary, negate Sahlins, and become instant historical ethnographers. None of his critics that I have read has come near to Sahlins’s dedication to exhaust every historical source. All of them, even the loudest, even the most prestigious, have been butterflies to his mole. In *Landscapes of Tradition*, Sahlins is patient enough to spell out all his deepest insights and to give historical substance and image to his theoretical understandings. In all the great anthologies of anthropology in all its dimensions, when did you last find one without a contribution from Sahlins? As historical ethnography moves into another gear because of *Anahulu*, you will find *Landscapes of Tradition* the prime example of how it should be done.

Mostly such ethnographic descriptions are set apart. They make a sort of disembodied “ethnographic present” beside which the main story is told. This is not true of *Landscapes of Tradition*. It permeates the whole of Sahlins’s narrative. Look at the titles of the parts of the first volume: “I Con-
Patrick Kirch and Marshall Sahlins's two-volume study of the Anahulu river valley will no doubt be hailed by some as a great work, but probably not by Native Hawaiians. Following in a long line of foreign denigrators of Hawaiian society—people like Hiram Bingham, Sheldon Dibble, Lorrin Thurston, and William D. Alexander—the Sahlins analysis of Hawaiian history (happily accepted by Kirch), will be used by the colonial powers, and their academic supporters, to attack the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.

The main thrust of Sahlins's argument is that Hawaiian chiefs were "venal" and "draconian" and were to blame for the loss of Hawaiian sovereignty (118), implying that the chiefs were hated by the commoners, whom they terribly oppressed. Those who oppose Hawaiian self-determination and Hawaiians regaining political control of our country have already begun (in the local press) to cite the Anahulu study and Sahlins's historical analysis to excuse the American takeover of Hawai'i. If Hawaiian chiefs were so bad, weren't commoner Hawaiians fortunate to have been conquered by democracy-loving Americans? This history will be loved by those who love to hate Hawaiians.

Of course, in many ways the Anahulu study can be called a great work. A team of noted scholars participated in the research—including Matthew Spriggs, Marshall Weisler, and Dorothy Barrere—as well as Kirch and Sahlins. The stated project objectives are long overdue: the excavation of a site established in historical times in conjunction with a concurrent examination of pertinent land records. Although one wonders why an anthropologist, rather than a historian, was chosen, the research and findings will prove valuable to many scholars. I found Spriggs's chapter on irriga-
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tion systems most enlightening, and as usual Sahlins presents a meticulous array of quotes from primary sources not often cited. Had the authors confined their analysis to Anahulu, the work would have been excellent.

However, much of volume 1 is not about Anahulu land awards, which is not surprising since Anahulu never has been terribly central or important at any time in Hawaiian history. Instead, Sahlins uses the historically inconsequential place, Anahulu, as a vehicle to present an allegedly novel view of Hawaiian history, although the analysis is not so new. He argues for a familiar litany of evil, oppressive chiefs, lazy, disgruntled commoners, low contact population, constant warfare, and selfish Hawaiian women aborting or murdering their children to keep their bodies beautiful (although if a woman bears a child and then kills it, the damage has already been done to the beauty of her body). In fact, Sahlins has not one good word to say about Hawaiian chiefly society, which is a marked departure from his previous work, Islands of History, wherein he admired and celebrated Hawaiian chiefly culture.

As a native Hawaiian, I was disappointed in Sahlins, because I had mistakenly supposed him to be one of the few foreign academics who had aloha for us, which is a ludicrous assertion. In fact, commoners have always loved their ali`i, and continued to do so until after the overthrow. In all accounts of the ali`i nui processions through the islands, Hawaiians delighted in bringing forth ho`okupu ‘gifts’ to honor and cherish their leaders. This custom continued after the 1848 Māhele, during the reigns of Kamehameha IV and V, Lunalilo, Kalākaua and Lili`uokalani, when commoners, holding private titles to land, had no need to fear eviction by their “draconian” chiefs. At the time of the 1893 overthrow, when by
Sahlins's reasoning commoners should have resented the long oppression of their chiefs most keenly, thousands of commoners gathered to support their Ali'i Lili'uokalani, saying, “There is much love in the heart, much love in the breast, for our Queen Lili'uokalani, the Queen foremost in our aloha, standing firm and preserving the peace” (Ka Leo o ka Lāhui, 17 January 1893—my translation).

After the Queen was arrested, a commoner wrote a Mele Ko‘ihonua no Lili‘u ‘Political Chant for Lili‘u’:

Oh Lili‘uokalani,
Sacred queen of Hawai‘i,
The beloved of the native people,
The precious leader of the Pacific,
Consecrated by the Heavens,
By the all-powerful sacred Lord,
To work on behalf of the Kingdom,
To lead the native people,
For you are the heavens,
For you are foundations of the earth,
For you is the sea,
For you is the land,
[your mana is everywhere],
I ask for life for my Hawaiian land,
Life for my Hawaiian people,
Life for Lili‘uokalani,
Until you sit upon your royal throne again.

(Buke Mele Lāhui, ed Anton Rosa, 1895)

Sahlins misunderstands Hawaiian culture. The ali‘i were like our parents, and while we may dislike the tasks they have given us, we love and cherish them nonetheless.

Sahlins argues that capitalist pressures engendered by the sandalwood trade caused the chiefs to oppress the people of Waialua and quotes from foreign observers of the period, who frequently disliked chiefly power because they could not appropriate it for themselves. Hawaiians did not agree. Samuel Kamakau, who was of O‘ahu lineage and was born and raised in Waialua during the very sandalwood period described by Sahlins, said:

The foreign races are quick tempered and hold nothing sacred in their anger, not even kings or chiefs. . . . The Hawaiian nation loves its kings and chiefs. If a chief expresses a wish, his people see to it that his words are not spoken in vain. . . . The Hawaiian people welcome the stranger freely; rich and poor; high and low give what they can. The strangers call this love ignorance and think it good for nothing. (Ke Au ‘Oko‘a, 26 August 1869)

Sahlins implies that the commoners were oppressed by the “forced labor” corvées for sandalwood, while quoting the missionary Charles Stewart who said Hawaiians worked only four or five hours a day. However, in 1829, after years of continued cutting and alleged “oppression,” at least four hundred fifty people volunteered to go with the high chief Boki to cut sandalwood in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), saying,

Very well! There is no harm in doing that. The king’s debt will soon be paid, then we will cut for ourselves and trade for clothing and money. The chief has been kind to us and fed us well. How else can we repay him? Nothing else was thought of but the expedition after sandalwood, and more offered to enlist than the ship could hold. (Samuel Kamakau, Ruling Chiefs of Hawai‘i, 1961, 293)

Sahlins tries to impute a false distance between “foreign” chiefs of Māui and Hawai‘i lineage and the “native” commoners of Waialua, O‘ahu. He forgets how closely related the chiefs of
different islands were, and that the commoners traveled from one island to another, living where they pleased; they too intermingled with people of different island lineages.

He begins by describing the ancient O'ahu Mo'ī Mā'ilikūkahi as a legitimate and good king, as opposed to the "foreign" Kahekili and his son Kamehameha who were conquering chiefs, although both descend from Kākūhihewa, a famous O'ahu Mo'ī. He also ignores that the good Mā'ilikūkahi had to kill Haka, his predecessor and senior lineage cousin, who was the legitimate heir. Referring to the chiefs as the ali'i 'ai ahupua'a 'chiefs who "eat" the ahupua'a' in order to show that chiefs were rapacious, Sahlins ignores that 'ai also means "to rule," and in Hawaiian 'ai has no connotation of cruelty.

Sahlins describes the rule of Mā'ilikūkahi at length, establishing all the behaviors required of a good chief—just rule of the land, love of the commoners, attentive religious worship—neglecting to mention that a similar description was given for the reign of Kamehameha, whom Sahlins refers to as a "brooding sorcerer" (2). Not only is this an unfair characterization of Kamehameha, who was a beloved chief, but the negative connotation of the term sorcerer, arising out of the Christian context, is entirely inappropriate to Hawaiian metaphor. One would think that any well-trained anthropologist would be more sensitive to the Hawaiian cultural context. Perhaps Sahlins refers to 'anā 'anā, which are prayers and rituals performed for the gifts of both life and of death. (When Hi'iaka brings Lohi'au back to life, she does so with the help of 'anā.) Many practised 'anā 'anā, but despite all the great accomplishments of Kamehameha, he was not renowned for his 'anā 'anā.

Using the continued celebration of the makahiki festival as a sign of commoner protest against the chiefs was another strange metaphor. Sahlins confuses the god Lonoikamakahiki with the chief of the same name (128). The chief, not the god, was a "victim of the usurpers in power." Lonoikamakahiki the chief was named for the god, just as his half-brother was named for Kanaloa, god of the ocean; such naming was a common practice among the chiefs. It does not mean that the god takes on the persona of the chief, just the opposite. In Aotearoa, the Maori (whose arrival in Aotearoa predated the chief Lonoikamakahiki) worshipped Lono as Rongo, and both were gods of fertility and sweet-potato planting. When the commoners celebrated makahiki-like festivals after the breaking of the 'aikapu, it was probably because they liked to celebrate, not because they identified with a god who was supposedly a "victim of usurpers"—and who was not a victim in any event.

Another peculiar analysis was of the 1848 Māhele. Sahlins argues that the chiefs agreed to the private ownership of land so that they could sell the lands, since they weren't able to squeeze enough money out of the commoners (134). However, the chiefs had argued against private ownership for ten years, against the constant advice of the missionaries.

Sahlins would have us believe that 252 chiefs got 63 percent of the land, dispossessing the commoners who got only 1 percent (135). He fails to men-
tion that it was not the chiefs, but the
Land Commission, run by the haole
missionary William Richards, who
awarded land to the commoners, and
that while Richards allotted 2–3 acres
to each commoner, missionaries re­
quested 560 acres each for themselves,
knowing that such an amount was
needed for successful capitalist enter­
prise. He also ignores that at the time
of the Māhele no survey of chiefly
lands was done; they were divided by
the number of ahupuaʻa 'valleys', and
no one knew how much land went to
whom until the map surveys of 1880.
Moreover, each of these chiefs was
required to relinquish control of 50 to
75 percent of their holdings, and most
of these (218) were mere konohiki 'land
stewards' who had only ʻilī 'a small
portion within an ahupuaʻa' awards
(see my Native Land and Foreign
does he mention that commoners were
allowed to claim parts of the chiefly
lands, and in the areas of 'Ewa,
Kāneʻohe, and Kailua on Oʻahu, such
claims were extensive.

After all, however, I must agree with
Sahlins; Hawaiians did make mistakes.
We listened respectfully to and ac­
cepted advice from foreigners whom
we thought trustworthy and knowl­
edgeable about the western world.
Perhaps now Hawaiians should learn
from the mistakes of our ancestors and
reject advice (and attacks) from
"knowledgeable" foreigners about our
society—especially when it comes from
the brooding sorcerer of Chicago.

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These two volumes describe the ethno­
history and historical archaeology of
the Anahulu Valley, Oʻahu, within the
contexts of Hawaiian and Pacific his­
tory. Volume 1 (Sahlins) is a richly
detailed account of Hawaiian protohis­
tory that weaves back and forth
between events at a local level, espe­
cially in the Anahulu Valley, and the
broader historical processes that
prompted them. Volume 2 (Kirch)
describes archaeological investigations
in the largely undisturbed upper Ana­
hulu Valley (Kawaiola-uka), with ref­
erence to documentary history of land
ownership and use. Threaded through
both volumes, but more prominent in
volume 2, is evidence of the greater
objective that held this project to­
gether: to relate ethnohistory to
archaeological features at the level of
documented people, structures, and
events, in order to reveal "how the
cultural structures and processes of
Hawaiian history have been sedi­
mented in the ground of the Anahulu
Valley" (2:1)—the ultimate ambition,
no less, of processual archaeology. The
authors insist that their quest was suc­
cessful, and certainly little scholarly
effort or ingenuity was spared, but
between documents and diggings there
still remains, in my view, a tantalizing
gap across which is thrown a rickety
bridge of tailored argument and specu­
lation.

Chapter 3 of volume 2 provides
examples of some of the problems.
Here, the authors first outline for each
ʻilī in Kawaiola-uka how blocks of land
were apportioned by the mid-nine­
teenth-century Land Commission.
Many claimants argued that their
rights stemmed from settlement in the
area following the arrival of forces associated with Kamehameha I in AD 1804. The archaeologists then set out to find evidence of this influx, and other events, by attempting to match house sites and other archaeological features with recorded individuals. But even in 'Ili Mikiai, regarded as the simplest of the cases, the results are questionable. In this block, land was granted in 1848 to Mailou and Kawaihaomau. The authors sought Kawaihaomau's house site on his land without success and argued that it had perhaps been a simple garden house or shed whose remains cannot now be seen. In Mailou's case, several indigenous Hawaiian coconut palms observed on his land grant were regarded as the clue to the location of his house site on an adjacent terrace. Test pits revealed stone artifacts of prehistoric type but no historical remains. The authors note the inconsistency of this result with the historical record—they expected iron, beads, glass, and so forth, as on other nineteenth-century house sites in Anahulu. A radiocarbon date from a posthole fill gave the calibrated result AD 1658–1954 at one standard deviation, with the highest probability at AD 1716–1886. One intercept, at AD 1804, is picked out as a more than coincidental correspondence with the date when Kamehameha's forces arrived in the district, and so the house site is attributed to Mailou's father and the lack of historical remains is explained by the relative paucity of these among Hawaiians at that early stage.

All this reads dangerously like special pleading, in which refractory archaeological results are interpreted to fit historical evidence, without rigorous consideration of alternative explanations. For example, the archaeological remains indicate that the "Mailou" house is prehistoric, and therefore that Mailou built no house, or a house for which undiscovered remains, or no remains, exist elsewhere on his land, as is argued for his neighbor, Kawaihaomau. Further, particular arguments constructed for the attribution of "Mailou's house" are ignored elsewhere in Kawaiola-uka when they are less convenient. In contrast to the absence of exotic goods in "Mailou's house," a bottle manufactured AD 1790–1810 and some early nineteenth-century beads were found in "Kainiki's house" nearby. These are used to support an occupation span also reaching back to AD 1804, and thus made consistent with historical records of Kainiki. So neither presence nor absence of chronological markers in the archaeological markers in the archaeology can alter a conclusion of settlement at AD 1804, which is desired on documentary grounds. Then, in the case of "Kalua's house," another bottle dated to AD 1790–1810 is simply passed over in the argument that the occupation span was mid- to late-nineteenth century, consistent with historic records of Kalua, who was only born about AD 1800 and could not have taken up the land until about AD 1830.

Among numerous similar inconsistencies of argument may be noted the emphasis on a large household with variety and abundance of exotic goods at site D6–51, which is attributed to the big man Kamakea, while the other big man in upper Anahulu, Konohiki, is evidently represented by no house on his land at all, let alone any signs of
special status. Only several mango trees possibly mark his former residence. If this is so, then any other historical claimants may be equally elusive in the archaeological remains, and it is possible that just as some features are anonymously prehistoric, others may be attributed to unknown contemporaries of the documented individuals—the probable boundary stone inscribed without the unrecorded name “Kewe Kamawai,” is a case in point (although it is perhaps a misspelling of “Kanawai” whose father, Kalua, owned the adjacent block).

More crucial to the intention of the project than argument about structures and artifacts, however, is the use of radiocarbon dating, for it is largely on the radiocarbon assays that the post-Kamehameha I expansion into upper Anahulu is perceived in the archaeological remains. Archaeology has improved its understanding of radiocarbon dating since the Anahulu investigations, so it would be unfair to criticize the evident shortcomings of sampling method too stringently—the use of unidentified wood charcoal, so that in-built ages are unknown, the dating of only one sample per site, and so on—but the use to which the results are put is highly dubious. Calibration curves for the last three hundred years spread probability such that closer interpretation of most of the Anahulu dates is extremely problematical, even at the level of one standard deviation that the authors use (two standard deviations is the standard range). The likelihood that any particular peak or intercept represents the calendar age of the event in question is exceedingly slight, and even if it did, the likelihood of some inbuilt age in the samples would mean that the actual date was younger again. Consequently, there exists no radiocarbon dating support for the contention that much of the archaeological evidence of upper Anahulu can be dated to the early nineteenth century, and certainly none to back the naive, but crucial, claim by Sahlins (152) that the developments documented by archaeological remains in the upper Anahulu “can be dated by carbon 14 almost precisely to 1804.” In fact, there are too few radiocarbon dates or any other chronological data to rule out the possibility that many of the house sites, and the irrigation systems, were first occupied or constructed prehistorically by people of undocumented identity.

None of this is to say that the interpretations preferred by the authors are wrong. My point about this worthwhile and ambitious project is, rather, that for reasons all too frustratingly familiar, it has proven impossible to close the gap between archive and archaeology by demonstrating the essential connections that a robust “archaeology of history” must exhibit. Nevertheless, the exemplary exposition of Hawaiian ethnohistory and the archaeological results, together with scholarly interpretation of the evidence in its own terms, will ensure that the Anahulu volumes are valued and much-consulted resources in Pacific history.

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