

### What is archaeology?

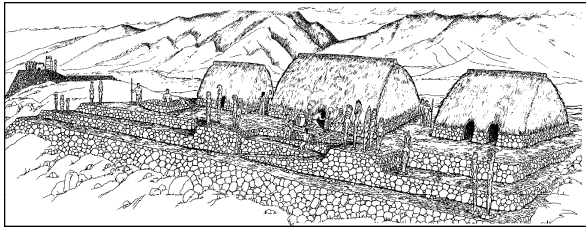
Archaeology is a study of past cultures based on physical evidence and supported by research of written records and oral history. Through archaeological research we seek answers to questions about the past.

### Why do archaeology?

In Hawai'i today, many of the archaeological studies are done when land development is proposed to determine if archaeological sites are known or likely to be found on the land. Other archaeology is done as research projects. Each archaeological project contributes something to our knowledge of the past.

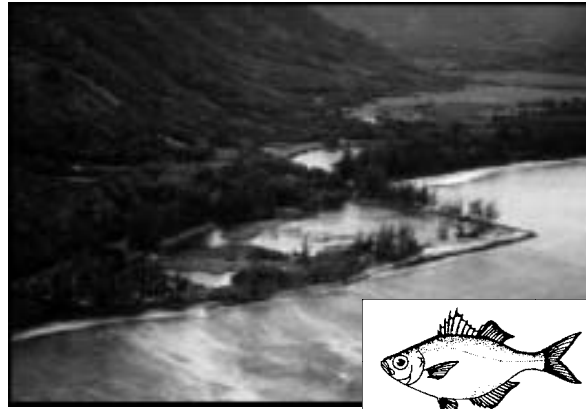
### What is an archaeology site?

Sites are places where people lived, worked, and worshipped. Sites are marked by what people left behind, including abandoned *heiau* and housesites, agricultural terraces, fishponds, rock walls, discarded tools and rubbish piles. Archaeologists study these sites to learn more about how people lived, where and when they lived, and how they adapted to the natural environment.

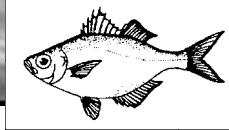


*Heiau* are religious sites and are the largest and most impressive Hawaiian sites. Defined by massive stone platforms or extensive rock walls, *heiau* illustrate the importance of religion in Hawaiian culture. For these reasons, many *heiau* have been preserved.

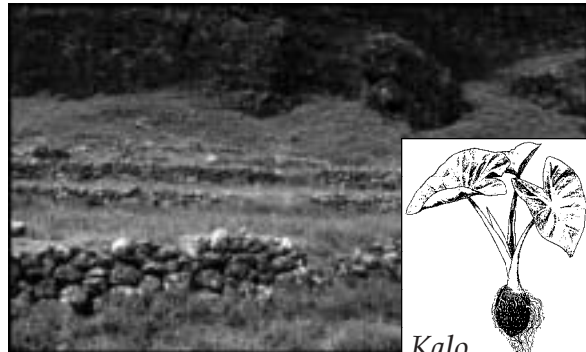
*Ki'i pōhaku* (petroglyphs) are the forms carved or pecked on stone surfaces. Many of these are human forms. The *papamū* (checkerboard) was used for the game *konane*.



Huilua Fishpond, Kahana, O'ahu

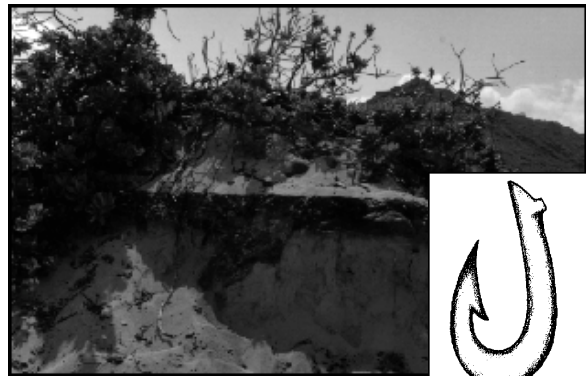
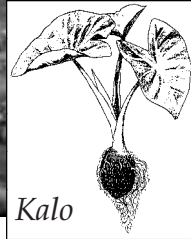


*Fishponds* were built along shorelines and streams to raise fish for ready harvest.



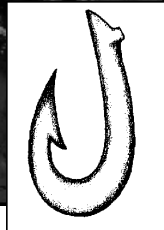
Agricultural terraces, Nā Pali, Kaua'i

*Agricultural terraces* mark areas where the land was levelled and stepped with rock walls for the cultivation of *kalo*, the staple Hawaiian crop.



Buried Living Floor, Coastal Dune, O'ahu

Cultural deposits indicate where people lived and are marked by charcoal staining, stone pavings, artifacts, and midden.



### What is an artifact?

Artifacts are the things made by people, including tools, domestic implements, and ornaments.



*Fishhooks* were made of bone and pearlshell and ranged in size depending on the fish being caught. Both one and two-piece hooks are common.

*Adzes* were the major stone tool made and used by the Hawaiians. These forms were hafted and lashed onto a handle for woodworking.



Drilled *dog teeth* were a common ornament. These teeth were lashed together to make bracelets and anklets.

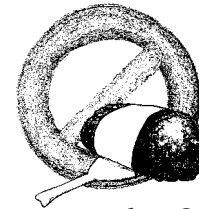
*Auger shells* were drilled for the attachment of a string and used as a gourd stopper.



### PRESERVE THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

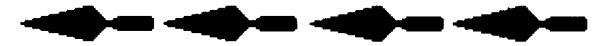
You are welcome to visit many of the Hawaiian archaeological sites found in parks and botanical gardens. However, you are asked to remember that these sites are fragile and subject to damage and collapse. Please visit with respect and preserve these cultural places for future generations.

- View the site from the exterior. Please do not climb on or over the rock walls. The stacked rock is unstable and may collapse.
- It is unlawful to take, excavate, destroy, or alter any historic site on state land. Any person who violates this law is subject to a fine of \$10,000 (HRS Chapter 6E-11).
- Wrapping a rock in a ti leaf is not a traditional offering. This damages the integrity of the site.



For more information, contact the State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Historic Preservation and State Parks Divisions on Hawai'i, Kaua'i, Maui, and O'ahu.

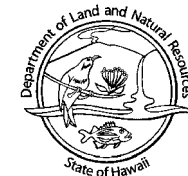
# LEARNING ABOUT HAWAII'S PAST



## An Introduction to Hawaiian Archaeology



*E mālama no kēia mua aku*  
Preserving the Past for the Future



STATE OF HAWAII  
Department of Land & Natural Resources



SOCIETY FOR HAWAIIAN  
ARCHAEOLOGY

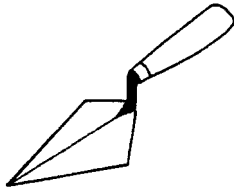


### What do archaeologists do?

Archaeological research is conducted to learn more about people of the past by studying what they left behind. Before going into the field, archaeologists conduct research in libraries and archives where they study written histories, *mo'olelo* (traditional histories), maps, photographs, and previous archaeological reports for the area. This research provides clues to what kinds of archaeological sites might be expected in the area.

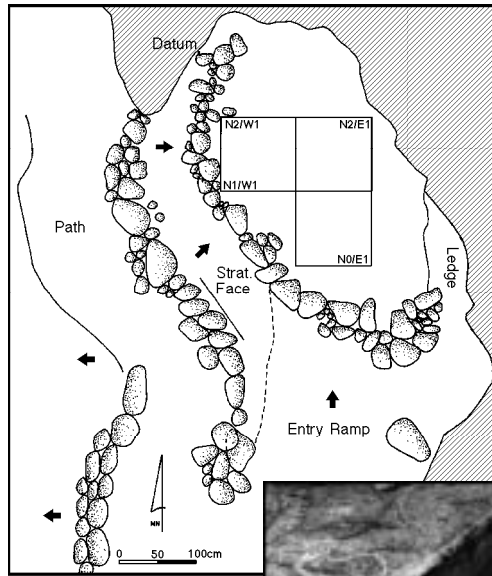
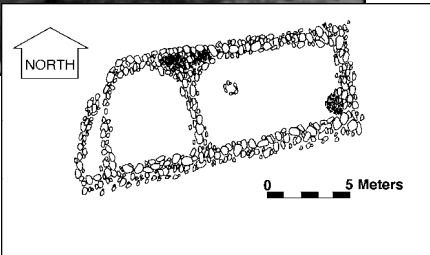
### What are the tools of the archaeologist?

During excavations, information is both gathered and destroyed. Therefore, it is important that archaeologists work slowly and carefully to obtain all the information and record it accurately. This means using hand-tools, such as a trowel, dustpan, and brush. Screens are used to gather what may be missed when excavating.



### FINDING SITES: survey

Walking surveys are conducted to locate sites, including surface structures and buried cultural deposits. Archaeologists record the sites they find with maps, photographs, and written descriptions. These sites may include rock walls, living floors, firepits, and refuse pits.



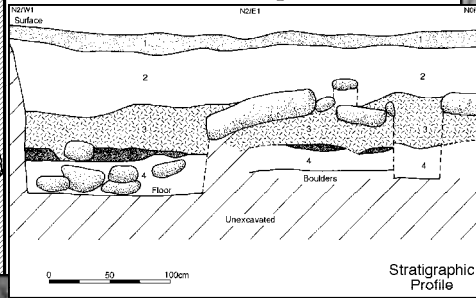
### DIGGING THE PAST: excavation

By carefully digging through layers of soil and cultural remains, archaeologists gather information on how an area was used and how people lived. They excavate in square units and measure distances and depth in metrics.



The location of artifacts and features within the unit (*context*) is very important to understanding the use, function, and relative age of the site.

The sequence of layers (*stratigraphy*) is used for relative dating - the deeper the layer, the older the occupation.



Concentrations of food remains (*midden*) indicate what people ate and how they used their environment. Tools (*artifacts*) are clues to their technology. For example, the presence of many stone flakes (*lithics*) suggests an adze workshop while a *poi* pounder indicated *kalo* (taro) in the diet.



### BACK AT THE LAB: analyzing the finds

Analysis of the excavated materials provides a greater understanding of past environments, lifestyles, and technology. Analysis may be as simple as the weighing of shell and bone to learn about diet and ecology. Or it may involve complex microscopic analysis of plant remains (*pollen*) and soil to study past environments. Charcoal is dated (*radiocarbon dating*) to establish a chronology for site use.

### MAKING SENSE: writing the report

Archaeological reports document the work performed, interpret the findings, present conclusions, and identify questions for future research. These reports are maintained by the State Historic Preservation Division.



Mo'okini Heiau, North Kohala, Hawai'i

### PRESERVATION & INTERPRETATION: products of archaeological research

Significant archaeological sites are preserved as an important part of Hawai'i's unique cultural history. Our understanding of the site from the archaeological research can be shared in tours, signs, and brochures. Preserved sites can be found in parks, gardens, resorts, golf courses, and other attractions.

### What can you do?

You can become a site steward and help protect Hawai'i's archaeological sites from damage and vandalism. Report disturbances, share your knowledge, and educate others.



Interpretive Sign at Haleki'i and Pihana Heiau, Maui