CHAPTER 1

From Chiefdom to Archaic State: Hawai'i in Comparative and Historical Context

Polynesian social evolution reached its greatest development in the Hawaiian Islands, where all changes in direction or further elaborations of traditional forms under way elsewhere finally came to fruition.

Goldman (1970:200)

Kingship implies that politics is a cosmological affair as much as cosmology is a political reality.

Valeri (1985b:92)

For more than nine-tenths of our history as a distinct species, we humans organized ourselves exclusively in small social units, in which social distinctions were dictated largely—if not indeed exclusively—by age and gender. Then, during the early Holocene, with the domestication of plants and animals, and the creation of agriculturally based economies and the population growth this spurred, we embarked on a series of experiments in social organization, with new kinds of status positions, including heritable rank. By around five thousand years ago in Mesopotamia and Egypt, slightly later in China and the New World (specifically in Mesoamerica and the Andes), these experiments in large-scale social organization led to the emergence of what have been called "archaic states." Such sociopolitical structures took slightly different forms in different places, but they all shared several criterial characteristics, including class-endogamous social strata, typically organized into at least three and often four administrative levels, with

divine kings at their apices (Feinman and Marcus 1998). Just how such archaic states developed, and the causal factors and dynamics responsible for these changes, continue to pose major research issues for anthropological archaeology.

Isolated in the central North Pacific, thousands of kilometers from any other land or peoples, and discovered and settled by humans only very late on the stage of world history, the Hawaiian Islands might seem to have little relevance to this major anthropological problem. Indeed, while Hawai'i has contributed its share to anthropological theory, its indigenous society has most often been classified as a chiefdom—perhaps the most complex chiefdom ever documented (Earle 1997:34; Johnson and Earle 2000)—but not as a state. One aim of this book is to overturn such received anthropological wisdom. The thesis I advance here is that at the time of its fateful encounter with the West, late in the eighteenth century, Hawai'i consisted of three to four competing archaic states, each headed by a divine king. These unique economic, social, and political structures emerged out of an earlier, more typical Polynesian chiefdom society within the previous two to three centuries.

Nearly everywhere else in the world, archaic states first emerged long before there were detailed historical records. They were not observed in the process of formation; their existence can only be inferred from the archaeological record. But if my argument is correct, in Hawai'i we have a unique case of several emergent states that arose so late on the stage of world history that they were indeed historically observed and recorded—in the annals of Captain James Cook (AD 1778–79) and other European voyagers at the close of the eighteenth century. In fact, Hawai'i's own rich political history—encapsulated in indigenous oral traditions—offers an account of this critical period in distinctly Hawaiian cultural terms. Moreover, precisely because Hawai'i was so thoroughly isolated from the rest of the world prior to European contact, its transformation from chiefdom to archaic state cannot have been influenced by external forces. This is not a case of "secondary" state formation, but truly one in which the processes of change were wholly endogenous. Thus in Hawai'i we have an especially good opportunity to understand the conditions—whether environmental, demographic, economic, social, ideological, or, most likely, some combination of all these—that led to the emergence of primary states, along with their most salient feature, divine kingship.

I am not the first to suggest that prior to contact with Europeans, Hawai'i crossed the threshold between societies based on an ideology of

kinship (chiefdoms) and societies incorporating qualitative class distinctions, the latter organized around the concept of divine kingship. Robert Hommon (1976) advanced just such an argument, while Allen (1991) did not hesitate to classify Hawaiian political organizations as archaic states. Van Bakel (1991, 1996) likewise treats contact-period Hawaiian society as a state (see also Seaton 1978). Spriggs (1988:71), pointing to the extreme isolation within which Hawaiian social change occurred, ventures that "Hawaii perhaps represents a unique ideal type, a real '*isolierte Staat*.'" Most scholars, however, taking their lead from Service (1967) who regarded Polynesia as the type region for chiefdoms in general, have preferred to place Hawai'i at the pinnacle of the "chiefdom" category (e.g., Cordy 1981; Johnson and Earle 2000; Kirch 1984; Earle 1997). Timothy Earle, for example, regards contact-period Hawai'i as "the most complex of any Polynesian chiefdoms and probably of any chiefdoms known elsewhere in the world" (1997:34). To some, the question may simply be a pointless diversion into semantics or—heaven forbid—neoevolutionary typologizing (Yoffee 2005). I take the view that if Hawaiian society did indeed change in fundamental ways late in its precontact history—so that it no longer fits comfortably within the range of sociopolitical variation evidenced elsewhere among Polynesian chiefdoms—then it offers a special historical case that may lend understanding to more general processes of social change and transformation.

Fortunately, we do not need to rely exclusively on archaeological evidence in attempting to discern whether the term "archaic state" should apply to those Hawaiian polities in existence at the moment of contact with the West, in AD 1778 to 1779. The documentary sources of Hawaiian ethnohistory are exceedingly rich, and include not only the extensive accounts of Western explorers and observers beginning with Cook, but also an array of indigenous Hawaiian oral traditions and historical narratives, many written down by Hawaiian elites in the early to late nineteenth century (e.g., Malo 1951; Kamakau 1961, 1964; see Valeri [1985a:xvii–xxviii] for an excellent discussion of these sources). Drawing on this wealth of anthropological material, in Chapter 2 I critically evaluate how Hawaiian polities compare with a set of key criteria widely regarded to be indicative of archaic states (for these, see Feinman and Marcus 1998).

In short, I will argue that Hawai'i on the eve of European contact, having crossed the qualitative divide separating one fundamental kind of human sociopolitical organization, the chiefdom, from another, the

archaic state, encapsulates a history that—despite its isolation and recent time scale—has a significance larger than itself. Hawai'i offers a "model system" for how differences in rank originally dictated by kinship gave way to a durable inequality legitimated in new cosmogonic and religious ideologies, how control over the means of production passed from the domestic to political economies, and, ultimately, how chiefs became kings.

WHAT ARE ARCHAIC STATES?

Before going further, it is probably a good idea to set out what is meant by the term "archaic state." What are the criterial features of an archaic state, and how do these differ from the classic characteristics of chiefdoms? First, I must stress that the particular definition of "archaic state" used here refers to *primary* states that emerged directly out of less complex social formations. By "primary" state we mean a political formation that developed through endogenous processes, and not in response to interactions with an external state or states; these latter are referred to as *secondary* states. There are numerous historically and ethnographically described secondary states (one thinks, for example, of the Buganda and other Nilotic kingdoms, or of the Shan states of highland Burma), but these do not meet the definition of an archaic state as used here. Indeed, because the term *archaic state* as I use it refers exclusively to primary states, it is an archaeological construct. Archaic states have never been studied by ethnographers; they are known only from the archaeological record—except, as I argue in this book, for the case of Hawai'i at the moment of European contact.

Definitions of the "state" in general have a long and tortuous history, tracing back to the classical philosophers and continuing with social theorists such as Hobbes, Rousseau, Morgan, Marx, and Spencer. Morgan (1877) may have been the first to consider the state in a "modern" social science context. Service's influential book (1975; see also Haas 1982; Wright 1977) pointed to the difficulty that archaeologists frequently face in deciding whether a particular phase in a prehistoric sequence should be classified as a "chiefdom" or a "state" (1975:304). Indeed, since early states are regarded as having frequently developed out of "ranked societies" (Fried 1967) or "chiefdoms" (Carneiro 1981), the very fact that we are dealing with continual processes of change, with an evolutionary continuum, makes such broad unilineal classifications problematic (Crumley 1987; Yoffee 2005). And yet, at the same time,

most archaeologists would tacitly acknowledge that states were in certain fundamental ways different from chiefdoms or ranked societies.

In this book, I follow the position outlined by Marcus and Feinman (1998) in their important edited volume *Archaic States*. They note that all of the participants in their advanced seminar did not agree on a uniform definition, but that there was general consensus on a few key criteria. To quote them:

> [I]n contrast to modern nation states, archaic states were societies with (minimally) two class-endogamous strata (a professional ruling class and a commoner class) and a government that was both highly centralized and internally specialized. Ancient states were regarded as having more power than the rank societies that preceded them, particularly in the areas of waging war, exacting tribute, controlling information, drafting soldiers, and regulating manpower and labor. . . . For some well-known states where texts are available, one could add to this stipulation that archaic states were ruled by kings rather than chiefs, had standardized temples implying a state religion, had full-time priests rather than shamans or part-time priests, and could hold on to conquered territory in ways no rank society could. (Marcus and Feinman 1998:4–5)

As I demonstrate in Chapter 2, this definition could have been written explicitly for contact-era Hawai‘i. While some scholars (e.g., Service 1967, 1975) have emphasized the importance of a monopoly of force in defining state power, it seems to me that the emergence of *divine kingship* is equally critical, as suggested by Marcus and Feinman. While chiefs may enjoy a special relationship with the gods, they are not descended from gods. Early kings, on the other hand, were "often deified, or allowed to flirt with notions of human deification" (Possehl 1998:264). Possehl goes on to elaborate:

> The political form we have come to call the archaic state has a strong focus on kingship, or centralized leadership, that is in all likelihood given to the aggrandizement of the individuals who rise to this office. The economies of states tend to be centralized, heavily (not exclusively) controlled from the office of the king, so that it can effectively serve the diplomatic and military needs of the political apparatus. This implies a staff of functionaries (a bureaucracy) to implement and monitor the economic decision making, as well as to collect revenue and produce for the use of the center. (1998:264)

In addition to such important qualitative characteristics of states, the latter are also generally regarded as having important quantitative differences that set them apart from chiefdoms, especially with respect to the sizes of governed populations, and to territorial scale. Feinman

(1998) discusses these matters, noting disagreements among scholars. For example, some have suggested that the upper population limit for chiefdoms is around 10,000 (Sanders and Price 1968:85; Upham 1987:355–56), whereas others put that bound closer to 50,000 (Baker and Sanders 1972:163). Feinman draws attention to research showing that when societies reach and surpass the "magic number" of 2,500, it is no longer possible for information to be shared by all members of the society (1998:108). As a consequence, "all societies with communities greater than that size had at least two levels of decision making." Renfrew (1986) proposed that early state modules typically controlled about 1,500 km^2 of territory, although we also know that many archaic states controlled substantially larger areas.

In this book I take the following to be essential characteristics of archaic states: (1) they exhibit well-developed class endogamy; (2) they were ruled by kings who typically traced their origins directly to the gods, and who were often regarded as instantiations of deities on Earth; (3) their political economies were to a large degree centrally controlled by the king's bureaucracy; (4) the king's status and power were legitimated by state cults involving a formalized temple system, overseen by full-time priests; (5) the king's power was maintained by a monopoly of force, involving a full-time warrior cadre or standing army; and (6) the king and his court occupied special residential quarters (palaces), and enjoyed various privileges and material luxuries supplied by a cadre of full-time specialists and craftspersons. As I demonstrate in Chapter 2, all of these criteria are amply fulfilled by the Hawaiian polities ethnohistorically known at the moment of first contact with Captain Cook's 1778 to 1779 expedition, and on into the early decades of interaction with the West.

THEORIES OF PRIMARY STATE FORMATION

It is not my aim to criticize or evaluate prior theories of primary state formation, which now constitute a considerable body of literature; such a task would be well beyond my present scope. Haas (1982) reviewed many of the early formulations, beginning with Plato, and continuing with Hobbes, Rousseau, Morgan, Marx, and Spencer. He finds that virtually all theories, including those of more recent times, can be grouped into either "integration" or "conflict" schools of thought, depending on the author's view of the role of the state (see also Cohen 1978). By the mid-twentieth century, philosophical speculation about

the role of the state, and its origins, began to be replaced by anthropological theories that were grounded in comparative ethnographic data derived from a variety of state and nonstate societies in different parts of the world. An important work that drew on comparative data from various Old World societies was Wittfogel (1957), who saw the key to state origins in the control and management of large scale irrigation works. Among the most influential of the comparative anthropologists, however, were Morton Fried (1967) and Elman Service (1967, 1975; see also Cohen and Service 1978). Haas (1982) regards Fried as a proponent of the conflict school, and Service as a champion of the integrationist position. Both anthropologists drew attention to the likely role of *chiefdoms* as the stage of stratified or ranked society from which the first primary states emerged. (For both Fried and Service, the Polynesian ethnographic literature provided the type examples for chiefdoms.) Of course, their theories were grounded in comparative ethnography, and therefore lacked any direct historical evidence for the transformation of chiefdoms into states. Another highly influential ethnographer of this time period is Carneiro (1970, 1981), who advanced a "circumscription" theory of state origins. In Carneiro's model, chiefdoms became states through conquest warfare and expansion, after reaching conditions of environmental circumscription when agricultural land became limiting.

Archaeological efforts to understand the mechanisms of state origin can be traced back to Gordon Childe (1936, 1942), who synthesized archaeological data from the Near East using a Marxian framework. But with the development of "processual" archaeology in the 1960s and 70s, the rise of sociopolitical complexity, and in particular the origins of the state, became major research themes. Heavily influenced by the writings of Fried and Service, archaeologists began to seek empirical evidence for the transformation of chiefdoms into states, especially in the Near East, the Aegean, and Mesoamerica (e.g., Adams 1966; Parsons 1974; Peebles and Kus 1977; Renfrew 1982; Sanders 1974; Sanders and Price 1968; Wright and Johnson 1975). Various causal factors began to be debated as new streams of archaeological data were generated; these included population pressure and circumscription (Carneiro 1970), warfare (Webster 1975), trade (Rathje 1972; Wright and Johnson 1975; Wright 1977), and peer-polity interaction (Renfrew 1986). One result was that unicausal or "prime mover" explanations favoring a single variable were seen to be overly simplistic, not meshing with the complexities of the archaeological record (Wright 1977). Processual archaeology thus advanced the case for

evolutionary processes involving the interaction of multiple factors, often conveyed graphically in terms of systems diagrams. A classic example of the processual mode of explanation of state origins is Flannery's (1972) paper on the cultural evolution of civilizations, which applied evolutionary principles such as "promotion," "linearization," and "hypercoherence."

Inevitably, the emphasis on macroscale process led to a critique that processual archaeology had distanced itself from the real nexus of social change—the repetitive interaction between individual agents of change and the structures of everyday life. With the integration of practice theory and concepts of agency into anthropology (e.g., Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979; Ortner 1984), archaeological discussions of sociopolitical complexity including the origins of the state have broadened the frame of discourse (Pauketat 2001). Marcus and Flannery (1996) were among the first to meld together evolutionary ("processual") theory with what they called "action theory" (e.g., agency), in their archaeologically well-documented study of the rise of urban society in the Oaxaca Valley of Mexico (see also Flannery 1999). Recent research on the origins of states in the New World has continued to advance a productive integration of process and agency, for example in the work of Spencer (1990, 1998; Spencer and Redmond 2001, 2004) and Stanish (2001). It is within such an integrated "process-practice" theory of sociopolitical evolution that I situate my own attempt to understand the long-term evolution of Hawaiian society.

HAWAIʻI AS A MODEL SYSTEM FOR STATE EMERGENCE

The value of Hawaiʻi for understanding fundamental processes of sociopolitical evolution stems from more than just its isolation and late timing on the stage of world history. It owes as much to the now well-established knowledge that the Polynesian societies—of which Hawaiʻi is just one out of 30 ethnographically attested groups—form a historically cohesive unit of cultural evolution, making them ideally suited to the anthropological tradition of "controlled comparison" (e.g., Goodenough 1957, 1997). Sahlins (1958), Goldman (1970), and other pioneers in the Polynesian field recognized that these societies were all, as Sahlins put it, "members of a single cultural genus that has filled in and adapted to a variety of local habitats" (1958:ix). More recently, application of a rigorous phylogenetic approach in historical anthropology, which combines the methods and independent data sets

of historical linguistics, comparative ethnography, and archaeology, has refined our understanding of the historical relationships among the various Polynesian descendant societies (Kirch and Green 1987, 2001). This allows us not only to understand better Hawai'i's place in the broader spectrum of Polynesian societies, but to trace in quite specific ways how Hawaiian society diverged from an earlier Ancestral Polynesian society antecedent to all of the ethnographically known Polynesian groups.

In biology, as in anthropology, much analytical power comes not only from the application of controlled comparison (Kirch 2010a), but from choosing certain special cases as "model systems." Krogh (1929) proposed that for many problems in science, there is some particular species of choice on which the problem may best be studied, with the results nonetheless applying generally (see Krebs 1975). For example, the *Drosophilia* fruit flies have proved to be the animal of choice for many problems in genetics. Recently, ecologist Peter Vitousek has argued that oceanic islands—and the Hawaiian archipelago in particular—offer ideal model systems for understanding both natural ecosystem processes and human-environment interactions (Vitousek 2004). Our own joint Hawaiian Biocomplexity Project, focused on dynamically coupled natural and human systems (Vitousek et al. 2004; Kirch et al. 2004; Kirch 2007a), seeks to employ this model system concept to address the problem of how island societies "faced the challenge of making a transition from intensive, exploitative use of their island's obviously limited resources, to more sustainable use of those resources" (Vitousek 2004:23).

Hawai'i, in my view, also offers a model system for understanding a particular stage in the evolution of sociopolitical formations, the transition from chiefdoms to archaic states. Precisely because Hawaiian society crossed this critical threshold so late in world history, because it was observed and described in considerable detail, and because its archaeological record is particularly rich and increasingly well understood, Hawai'i offers an unusually clear window on the processes whereby chiefs became kings.

My argument progresses through several discrete analytical stages and, in keeping with my commitment to a holistic historical anthropology, integrates multiple lines of inquiry and independent data sets. My analytical strategy begins with comparative ethnography and linguistics, moves to ethnohistory, then to indigenous oral histories, and finally to archaeology. This kind of historical anthropology and the specific theory and methodologies that it entails have been discussed at length by Kirch and Green (2001).

I begin, in this introductory chapter, by applying a comparative ethnographic and linguistic approach to situate Hawai'i within its broader Polynesian context. A phylogenetic model is required, as well as the use of controlled linguistic analysis for key Polynesian concepts and their Hawaiian semantic values. Such analysis will show that Hawai'i does not conform to the patterns typical of other Polynesian chiefdoms, that it had been transformed into something qualitatively different by the time of contact with the West.

In Chapter 2 I turn to a rich corpus of ethnohistoric and ethnographic sources to trace the contours of the Hawaiian archaic states that were functioning at the time of first contact with the West. These sources include both Western accounts of Hawai'i at the close of the eighteenth century, and extensive Native Hawaiian writings compiled by an indigenous intelligentsia in the mid-nineteenth century. My discussion follows the major categories held to be criterial for archaic states, and tests the hypothesis that the contact-era Hawaiian polities are properly conceived of as states, rather than as chiefdoms.

Chapter 3 is the first of a pair of chapters concerned with properly historical analysis. Taking advantage of a rich corpus of indigenous Hawaiian oral traditions, set in a genealogical framework of the principal ruling dynasties, I trace the rise of the Hawaiian polities through an "insider" or emic perspective. These historical accounts provide important clues into the power strategies employed by the Hawaiian elites, including usurpation, incestuous marriage and other alliances, and conquest warfare. And, most important, situated as they are in the actions of individual persons, the traditional histories offer a perspective that privileges *agency* over long-term process.

My second historical data set, presented in Chapter 4, counterposes the emic with an etic methodology, based on archaeology. Drawing on the rich record of archaeological surveys and excavations accumulated over the past half century, I query this material evidence for major trends in demography, settlement, economic intensification, specialization, monumental architecture, and other material correlates of sociopolitical transformation. Just as the Hawaiian traditions evoke personal agency, the archaeological data sets allow one to privilege *process*, the longer-term contexts within which individual actions were situated. Extensive radiocarbon dating lends these archaeological data an "absolute" chronology of change that can be compared with the relative dating provided by the traditional genealogies.

Finally, Chapter 5 strives to meld emic and etic—and agency and process—in an explanatory model of cultural change in Hawai'i. Anthropologists realized some time ago that single "prime mover" causes (warfare, trade, or population pressure) while often important factors in the emergence of sociopolitical complexity, in and of themselves do not offer satisfactory explanations. I will argue that to understand such a complex process as the emergence of divine kingship and an archaic state mode of social formation necessitates disentangling *proximate* from *ultimate* causations. Not only were multiple causal factors at work, they operated at different spatial and temporal scales. This is the route I shall follow in attempting to understand, not merely describe, archaic state emergence in precontact Hawai'i.

MARSHALL SAHLINS'S CHALLENGE

In a classic refutation of diffusionism, Edwin G. Burrows (1938) first demonstrated that the cultural diversity exhibited within Polynesia did not require multiple migrations, but could be accounted for through endogenous processes of change. Subsequently, anthropologists came to appreciate Polynesia as a true *cultural region* (Sahlins 1958; Goldman 1970; Kirch and Green 2001). To borrow Kim Romney's phrase (1957:36), the Polynesian cultures collectively constitute a "segment of cultural history." They share a common genesis, having diverged and differentiated over time from a common ancestral culture. Most of the similarities among Polynesian cultures thus are the result of *homology*, or shared inheritance. By the same reckoning, the 30 or so ethnographically documented Polynesian cultures diverged over two and a half millennia, and cultural innovations including adaptation to differing island ecosystems have led to a fascinating range of variation within this segment of cultural history (Kirch 1984, 2000).

From this vantage point of controlled comparison, Hawai'i has always stood out as somehow special, apart, from its sibling Polynesian cultures. Sahlins (1958) enumerated many of the traits that characterized—and often uniquely distinguished—Hawaiian culture as recorded in the early decades of encounter with Europeans. Indeed, Hawai'i has been taken to represent a historical working out of the inherent possibilities of the "chiefdom type" of social formation (Service 1967). In *Stone Age Economics*, for example, Sahlins wrote that "a few of the Polynesian societies, *Hawaii particularly*, take the primitive contradiction between the domestic and public economies to an *ultimate crisis*—revealatory [*sic*]

it seems not only of this disconformity but of the economic and political limits of kinship society" (1972:141, emphasis added). Later, in *Islands of History* (1985a), Sahlins identified a key aspect of what sets Hawai'i apart, something of the greatest possible import for understanding how a chiefdom might be transformed into an archaic state. This is the apparent sundering of the classic Polynesian structure of land-holding descent (or more properly, "ascent") groups and its replacement with a system of territorial land control.

> Hawaii is missing the segmentary polity of descent groups known to cognate Polynesian peoples: organization of the land as a pyramid of embedded lineages, with a corresponding hierarchy of ancestral cults, property rights, and chiefly titles, all based on genealogical priority within the group of common descent. Not that these concepts have left no historic traces, or even systematic functions. (Sahlins 1985a:20)

Controlled comparison allowed Sahlins to recognize just how significant this absence of the classic "segmentary polity" is for ancient Hawai'i. Yet while he alludes to "historic traces," as a comparative ethnographer dependent largely on historical and ethnographic texts it was not the *longue durée* of Hawaiian history that engaged Sahlins, but rather the "structure of the conjuncture" that was played out in the first contact between Hawai'i and the West (Sahlins 1981, 1985a). Yet the deep-time historical question of when, and how, Hawai'i became *qualitatively* distinctive among the array of Polynesian sociopolitical formations continues to lurk in the wings. For example, we cannot understand what happened in Hawaiian postcontact history without appreciating that it was the preexisting distinctiveness of Hawaiian cultural structures that "gave capitalism powers and effects unparalleled even in other Pacific societies" (Sahlins 1992:216). Thus in Volume I of *Anahulu*, Sahlins returns to the same question:

> Everything looks as if Hawaiian society had been through a history in which the concepts of lineage—of a classic Polynesian sort, organizing the relations of persons and tenure of land by seniority of descent—had latterly been eroded by the development of the chiefship. Intruding on the land and people from outside, like a foreign element, the chiefship usurps the collective rights of land control and in the process reduces the lineage order in scale, function, and coherence. *Of course, no one knows when, how, or if such a thing ever happened.* (Sahlins 1992:192, emphasis added)

That final phrase, "no one knows when, how, or if such a thing ever happened," is tempting bait to attract the archaeologist and historical

anthropologist! Contrary to the view of Ohnuki-Tierney (1990:3, fn. 2), that "the *longue durée* is not easily accessible for histories of nonliterate peoples," I beg to dissent. Historical anthropology does possess the tools to trace historical transformations such as those that led to a radical transformation of the Polynesian lineage system in Hawai'i. Accessing the *longue durée* of the "peoples without history" is difficult, but not intractable. Let me briefly review how we might proceed.

If the deep-time history of Hawai'i is to be historically unraveled and dynamically understood, at least two things will be required. First, we must know—with some degree of empirical certainty—what came before. Second, we must be able to trace, with rigorous chronological controls, changes in Hawaiian sociopolitical structures. Since these "structures" are themselves ephemeral (i.e., not "material"), their transformation cannot be tracked directly, but only by means of "proxy" signals or indicators that have left material traces, sedimented in and on the Hawaiian landscape. Alternatively, we may attempt to read such structures from the indigenous Hawaiian accounts of their kings, warriors, and priests. Better yet, both kinds of proxy data on historical structures can be compared and contrasted, using one to cross-check the other.

In the remainder of this chapter, my task is to situate Hawai'i within the broader spectrum of Polynesian societies. I will do this with reference to a specific *phylogenetic model* of Polynesian cultural and social differentiation (Kirch and Green 2001). Using such a model allows the historical anthropologist to achieve two important goals: first, we can define with some precision the contours of the ancestral culture and society that were antecedent to the later, descendant cultures and societies known to us through ethnohistorical and ethnographic sources. Second, by comparing certain key characteristics of contact-era Hawaiian society (especially as these are lexically marked by distinctive terms) with the ancestral forms of those characteristics, we can gain some notion of just how far Hawai'i had diverged over the course of a thousand years of independent history.

A PHYLOGENETIC MODEL FOR POLYNESIAN CULTURAL EVOLUTION

A holistic anthropological approach to cultural history, adducing independent lines of evidence from linguistics, ethnography, human biology, and archaeology, can be traced back to Sapir (1916). But the modern

formulation of a phylogenetic model for cultural evolution is owed to Romney (1957). Observing that there is no necessary correspondence among language, biology, and culture, Romney noted that when "a group of tribes" shared "a common physical type, possess[ed] common systemic patterns, and [spoke] genetically related languages" this was powerful evidence that these tribes shared "a common historical tradition at some time in the past" (1957:36). Romney called this a "segment of cultural history," and pointed out that "it includes the ancestral group and all intermediate groups, as well as the tribes in the ethnographic present." This idea of a group of historically related cultures, along with their antecedents, was taken up by Vogt (1964, 1994) who applied it to the Maya. Vogt laid out a detailed methodology for establishing such "segments of cultural history." Vogt's research strategy was later applied by Flannery and Marcus (1983) to investigate cultural divergence among the Zapotec and Mixtec populations of Mesoamerica.

Realizing the potential of this approach, Kirch and Green (1987) took up the phylogenetic model in order to trace the historical diversification of the Polynesian cultures. One of the strong advantages of Polynesia for applying a phylogenetic model lay in the significant advances that historical linguists had made in unraveling the genetic relationships among the Polynesian languages. Biggs (1967, 1971, 1998) and Pawley (1966, 1967) had used the classic "genetic comparative method" of linguistics, thereby establishing through exclusively shared patterns of phonological, lexical, and grammatical innovations, the specific branching pattern of the Polynesian linguistic tree.[1] This allowed us to construct a Polynesian phylogenetic model on a robust linguistic framework, one that did not depend on dubious lexicostatistical similarity matrices.

Following our initial articulation of a phylogenetic model for Polynesia (Kirch and Green 1987), we tackled the detailed reconstruction of Ancestral Polynesian culture, culminating in our 2001 monograph.[2] This required a refinement of the theoretical apparatus for historical anthropology, including a "triangulation method" for reconstruction (Kirch and Green 1987, 2001).[3] Polynesia proved to be admirably suited for such a phylogenetic approach, both because multiple lines of evidence confirm that the 30-plus ethnographically documented Polynesian cultures share a common ancestor, and because the cultural phylogeny, or branching pattern of cultural diversification, can be quite precisely defined thanks to the linguistic framework. Moreover, the branching pattern indicated by the linguistic phylogeny is

independently confirmed by archaeological evidence for sequences of dispersal and island settlement, by human population relationships (both somatic and genetic, i.e., mtDNA), and most recently by proxy indicators of mtDNA lineages of Pacific rats (*Rattus exulans*) spread by the Polynesians during their voyages (Matisoo-Smith et al., 1998). Ultimately, the value of this Polynesian phylogenetic model lies in the power it lends to assess whether a particular cultural trait is (1) *homologous*, a shared retention of the ancestral culture, (2) a shared innovation of one cultural subgroup, (3) a *synology*, or borrowing, or (4) the result of parallel convergence. The details of applying a phylogenetic model are, of course, complicated and are addressed at length in Kirch and Green (2001).

How does the application of this phylogenetic model to historical reconstruction in Polynesia help us to understand the emergence of "archaic states" in Hawai'i? The critical point is that by establishing a precise phylogenetic model for the divergence of the varied Polynesian cultures, and by reconstructing the ancestral form of Polynesian culture that existed prior to that divergence, the historical anthropologist can assess in just what ways later Hawaiian society and culture changed from the common, ancestral condition. In any study of evolutionary change—biological or cultural—establishing the ancestral state is essential. Only by knowing this original baseline can we accurately determine what has later been innovated, and distinguish innovations from retentions of the ancestral condition.

It is now well established that Polynesia constitutes a *monophyletic* group of cultures, which had its origins in a branch of the more widespread Lapita Cultural Complex around 900 BC (Kirch 1997; Green 1979, 1997). The Far Eastern Lapita subgroup rapidly established itself in the Fiji-Tonga-Samoa region of the central tropical Pacific. By around 500 BC distinct subpopulations and speech communities had differentiated between those occupying the Fijian islands and those who had claimed the Tonga-Samoa archipelagoes (along with smaller Futuna and 'Uvea). It was in this Tonga-Samoa region that the distinctive Ancestral Polynesian culture, and its Proto Polynesian language, emerged out of the founding Lapita antecedent. Proto Polynesian, as a language interstage, is robustly marked by approximately 1,400 lexical innovations (Marck 1996b, 2000). Archaeologically, this early stage in the development of a distinct Polynesian culture is attested by more than 30 excavated sites containing Polynesian Plainware ceramics along with other artifacts (Kirch and Green 2001: Table 3.2).

After something like a millennium in their ancestral Polynesian homeland, internal cultural and linguistic differentiation had already begun to develop. This was marked by a split between the southern Tongic languages and the northern Nuclear Polynesian languages, suggesting a breakdown of the original widespread Proto Polynesian dialect chain at its longest and hence weakest link, between the archipelagoes of Tonga and Samoa. Around the middle of the first millennium AD or slightly later, the ancestral Polynesian populations of the homeland region began to expand eastward, into seas and islands that had remained up to this time unexplored and unsettled by humans. The central Eastern Polynesian archipelagoes of the Cooks, Societies, Marquesas, Australs, and Mangareva were settled first, between circa AD 600 and 900. This eastward expansion was associated with a number of cultural and linguistic innovations that were shared among the newly founded Eastern Polynesian communities who maintained contact through frequent long-distance voyaging (Green and Kirch 1997). Finally, from the tropical core of central Eastern Polynesia even longer voyages of exploration led Polynesian groups to the most remote of Pacific islands: Easter Island, the New Zealand temperate islands (named Aotearoa by the Polynesians), and in the North Pacific, Hawai'i.

In the remainder of this chapter, I outline the essential features of what has been reconstructed for the social and political world of the Ancestral Polynesians, those predecessors of the first Hawaiians who occupied the "homeland" islands of Western Polynesia from about 500 BC until the great diaspora into Eastern Polynesia that seems to have begun sometime after AD 600 to 800. This is an essential first step in our primary goal of understanding how in the later stages of Hawaiian history, an archaic state form of society emerged. What were the essential characteristics of the earlier, underlying form of society? We must know the answer to this question if we are to account for the process that resulted in the late precontact Hawaiian leaders becoming kings, rather than chiefs.

THE NATURE OF ANCESTRAL POLYNESIAN SOCIETY

In our 2001 book, Green and I present exhaustive evidence for the reconstruction of six major "domains" of Ancestral Polynesian life: the environment and how it was cognized and classified; subsistence including horticulture and fishing; patterns of food preparation and cuisine; material culture; social and political organization; and the realm of gods

and ancestors, and how these were worshipped and invoked in a yearly ritual cycle. For each of these domains, we began with the extensive lexical reconstructions of Proto Polynesian (PPN) vocabulary, augmenting these with semantic history hypotheses derived from close comparison of ethnographic texts, and wherever possible cross-checked with the material evidence of archaeology.[4] Here, I limit myself to a brief summary of the last two domains, those pertaining to sociopolitical organization and to ritual. In seeking to understand the emergence of archaic states in late precontact Hawai'i, it is essential that we have a clear perspective on the social and ideological contours of the antecedent culture, in this case Ancestral Polynesia. For only then can we be sure that we are correctly identifying those *innovations* that were essential to change, distinguishing them from features of Polynesian culture that are widely shared and hence are retentions from the ancestral condition.

Social Groups

Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of the *sociétés à maison*, or "house society" has significantly informed anthropological analysis of Austronesian social organization. First brought to the attention of anglophone anthropology in *The Way of the Masks* (Lévi-Strauss 1982:172–87; see also Lévi-Strauss 1971), the house society was succinctly described by Lévi-Strauss as "a corporate body holding an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth, which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods, and its titles down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or affinity and, most often, of both" (1982:174). Ethnographers of Austronesian-speaking cultures distributed throughout Oceania and island Southeast Asia quickly recognized the relevance of the house society concept for understanding traditional social organization (e.g., Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Fox 1993b; McKinnon 1991, 1995; Waterson 1990). The relevance of the house society concept has likewise caught the attention of Polynesian archaeologists (e.g., Kahn and Kirch 2004; Kirch 1996; Green 1998).

As Kirch and Green argue (2001:201–7), early Polynesian societies are best understood as house societies. The two most important, lexically marked social groups were the PPN **kainanga* and the **kaainga*.[5] The former we reconstruct as a land-holding or controlling group, exogamous, probably unilineal, tracing "ascent" from a founding

ancestor.[6] The latter was a more restricted social group controlling rights to an estate, along with the principal dwelling or house site of that estate; a residential group. The **kainanga* was the larger and more extensive kind of social group, incorporating all of the descendants of a common ancestor or ancestral pair. Its leader was the **qariki*, a senior ranked male who served as the group's secular and ritual leader. Rights to land, as well as other privileges, were determined by membership in a specific **kainanga*. However, as Goodenough (1955, 1961) recognized long ago, in most Oceanic societies there are two distinct types of kin group associated with land rights, with the second kind of group being residential; in Ancestral Polynesian society this was the **kaainga*. Residential affiliation with a particular **kaainga* gave one access to a named house site and its estate, with garden lands, access to adjacent reef or other resources, and other privileges. Thus the larger and more inclusive **kainanga* would be made up of a number of smaller **kaainga*, each constituting a residential group and indeed constituting the domestic units of production and consumption. These individual **kaainga*, as is typical in house societies, were ranked relative to one another, in terms of their relationship to the founding ancestor of the larger **kainanga*. Such internal ranking is likely to have promoted a degree of "heterarchy" (Ehrenreich et al. 1995), with competition between individual **kaainga* for access to resources and for prestige.

These Ancestral Polynesian social groups, and their PPN terms, were so fundamental to Polynesian social organization that they have persisted over more than 2,000 years, and have been carried forward into almost every ethnographically attested Polynesian society. Variants of PPN **kainanga* are widely described for Western Polynesian and Polynesian Outlier societies, while in Eastern Polynesia a lexical innovation at the Proto Central-Eastern Polynesian (PCEP) language interstage prefixed **mata* to **kainanga*, to form the compound PCEP word **mata-kainanga*.[7] In most Eastern Polynesian societies, reflexes of PCEP **mata-kainanga* reference the largest kind of social group, as in the Marquesan *mataʻeinaʻa* ("tribe"; Handy 1923) or Society Islands *mataeinaʻa* ("tribe or clan"; Oliver 1974). Only in Hawai'i was the meaning of **mata-kainanga* radically transformed with major consequences for social organization, as I shall demonstrate shortly. Similarly, PPN **kaainga* also has widespread persistence throughout Western, Outlier, and Eastern Polynesia. In most cases, the descendant terms reference a homesite, place of residence, and often also lands associated with the group of kin occupying such a residence (Kirch and