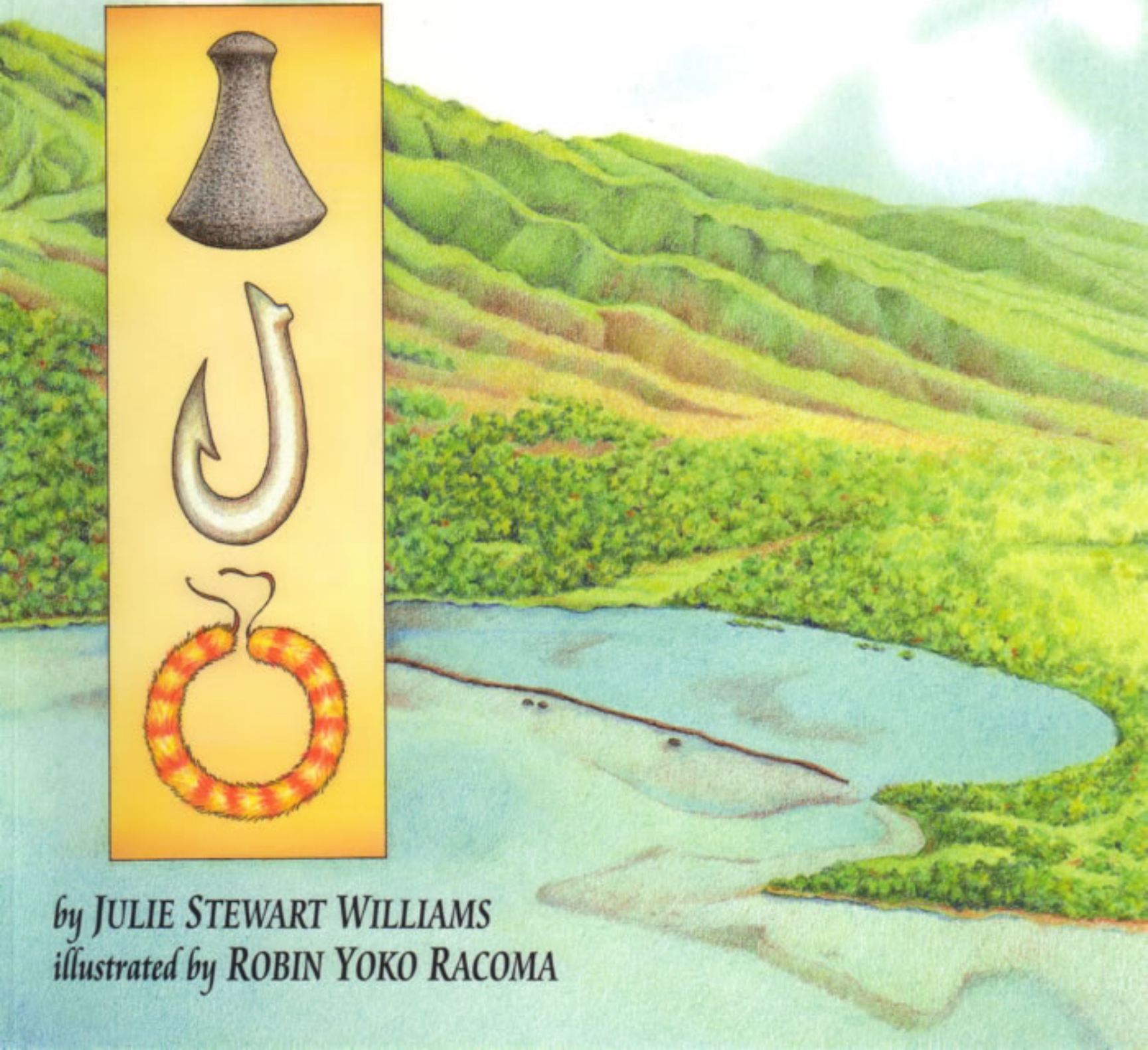
From the Mountains to the Sea

Early Hawaiian Life



by Julie Stewart Williams
illustrated by Robin Yoko Racoma

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Kamehameha Schools Press
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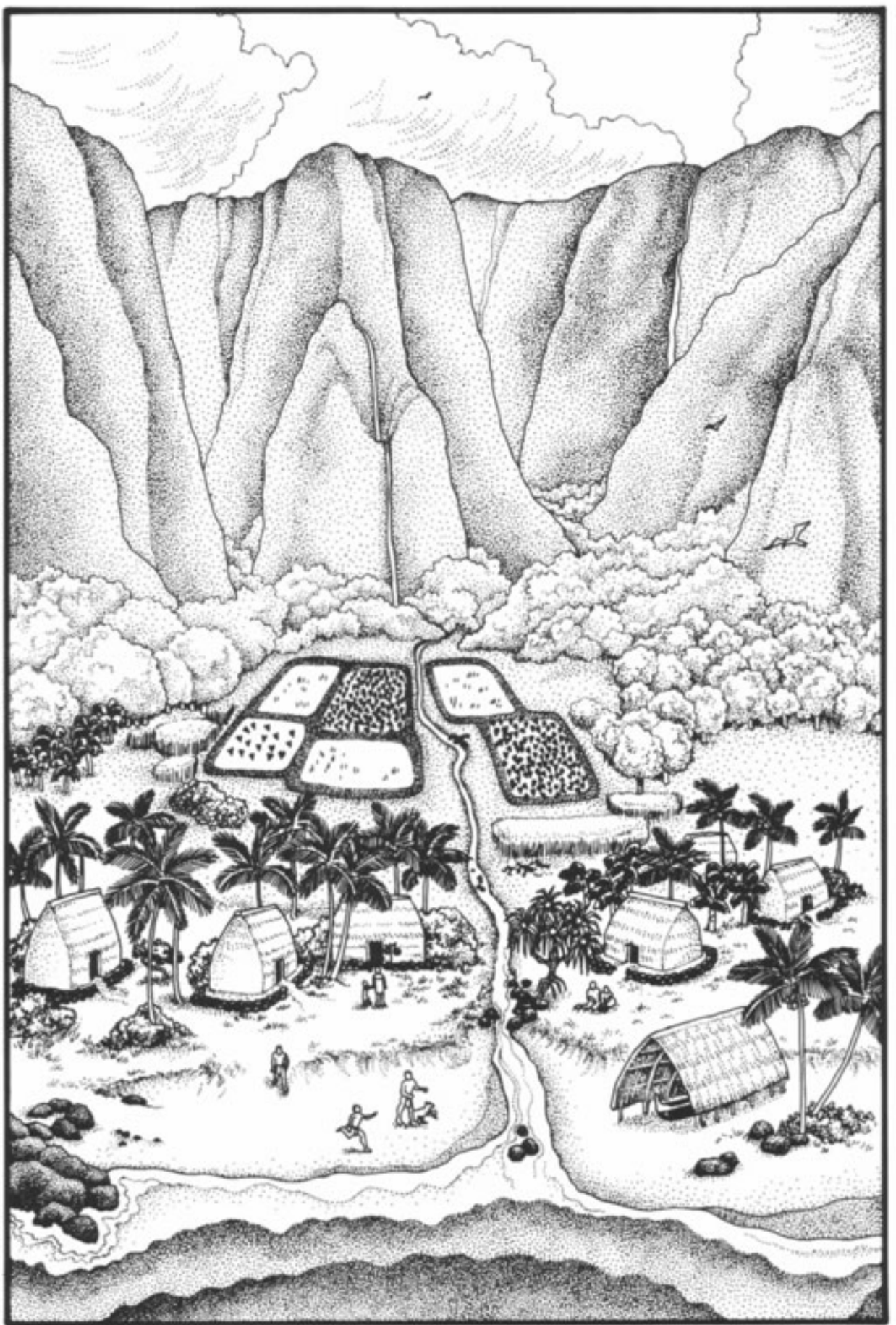
This book is dedicated to
Beatrice H. Krauss and
the late Donald D. Kilolani Mitchell…
my friends and
my teachers of things Hawaiian


R. RACOMA

Contents

Preface

This book is one of a series originally written by faculty in a Kamehameha reading program. The books were designed to increase students' reading skills and their knowledge of Hawaiian history and culture by focusing on topics such as the Hawaiian monarchy.

Some of these books have been translated from their original English into Hawaiian through the efforts of the staff of the Kamehameha Schools Hawaiian Studies Institute.

We are pleased at the reception both the English and the Hawaiian editions have received from educational and general audiences.

Michael J. Chun, Ph.D.
President
Kamehameha Schools

Acknowledgments

A book such as *From the Mountains to the Sea: Early Hawaiian Life* is possible only because of the prior work of many dedicated researchers. Their careful studies of Hawaiian history and culture have culminated in a host of publications, many noted here in the bibliography. This book is based upon their efforts. To all of these researchers and writers I remain forever grateful.

I am especially indebted to *Beatrice H. Krauss* and the late *Donald D. Kilolani Mitchell,* both of whom, in addition to what they offered in their books, personally shared their knowledge and *mana'o* with me.

I wish to thank my friends and colleagues at Kamehameha Schools for their encouragement and invaluable assistance—in particular *Mahela Rosehill, Noelani Chun, Charlene Hara* and *Roxanne Ramones.*

Special thanks to Hawaiian Resource Specialist *Nu'ulani Atkins* for critiquing the manuscript for cultural and historical accuracy and the correct spelling of Hawaiian words. Many thanks also to teacher *Alice Kimura* who reviewed the text for its appropriateness for use by students in the elementary grades. I am also deeply grateful to *Henry Bennett,* who spent many hours editing and revising successive manuscripts and then seeing the book through to completion.

Renowned artist and author *Herb Kawainui Kane* reviewed the manuscript and illustrations for authenticity and generously shared his *mana'o* concerning the "Spirits of Nature" and "'Aumakua." To him I owe a debt of gratitude. Noted writer and historian *O.A. Bushnell* provided valuable suggestions regarding specific wording. A heartfelt *mahalo* to Dr. Bushnell for his attention to significant aspects of the text.

To artist *Robin Yoko Racoma,* a very special *mahalo* for the beautiful illustrations that not only enhance the book's appearance but increase, as well, the reader's understanding. A note of appreciation also to Trustee *Lokelani Lindsey* for reading and reviewing the manuscript.

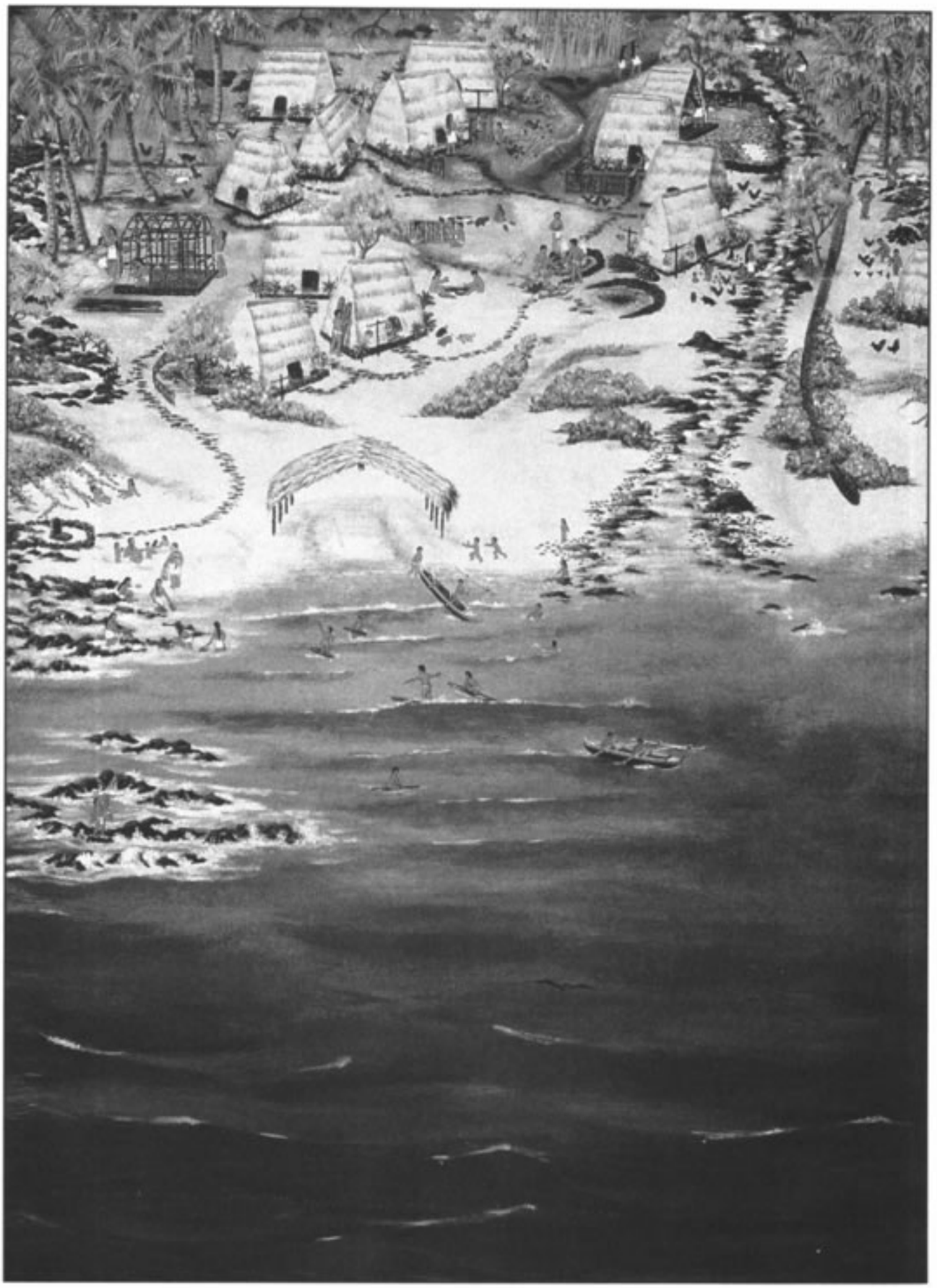
J.S.W.

Editor's Note

Hawaiian words used in the text, other than proper names, are identified through the use of italic type. These words will usually be defined, or explained, in the sentence in which they are first used.

Most Hawaiian words, like most words in English and other languages, can have more than one meaning depending on how and where they are used.

Many Hawaiian words form plurals through the use of preceding articles or by changes in the diacritics (accent markings) within the words. For example, *kahuna* is a singular form and *kāhuna* is a plural form. So sometimes you may see it one way and sometimes another.



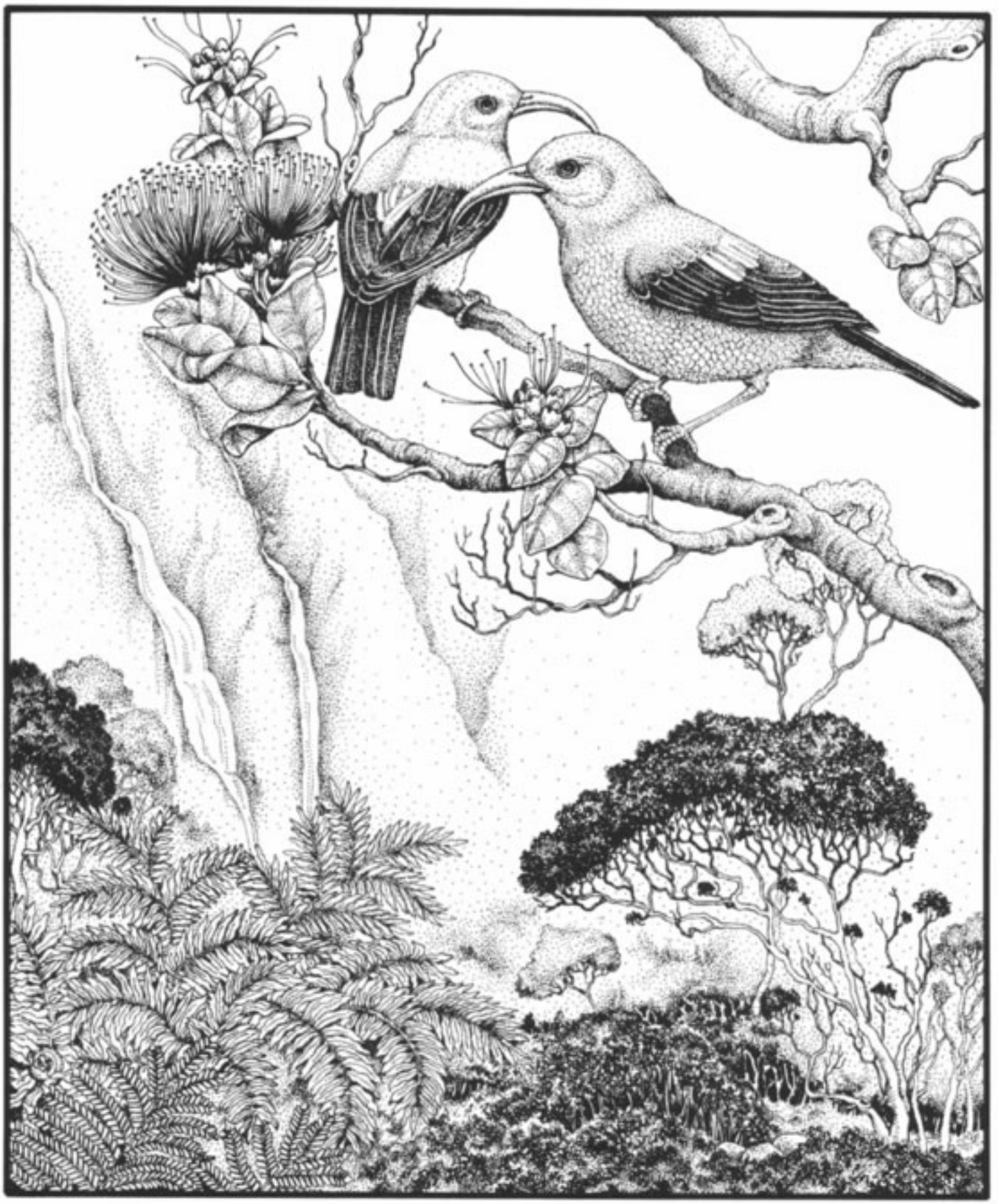
Lower left corner detail from the Ahupua'a Poster (Revised Edition), *Marilyn Kahalewai, 1993*

Introduction

Try to imagine Hawai'i five hundred years ago. What do you suppose life in the islands was like then? How do you think people survived?

From the Mountains to the Sea: Early Hawaiian Life will help answer these questions. It will give us a glimpse of our early Hawaiian ancestors. We will see where they lived and how they lived.

We will learn about their close ties to nature. By observing their relationship with this natural environment we will discover that these early Hawaiians were creative, industrious, observant, skillful and wise people.



ʻIʻiwi *birds in a forest of ferns,* ʻōhiʻa lehua *and* koa *trees*

Polynesian Discoverers

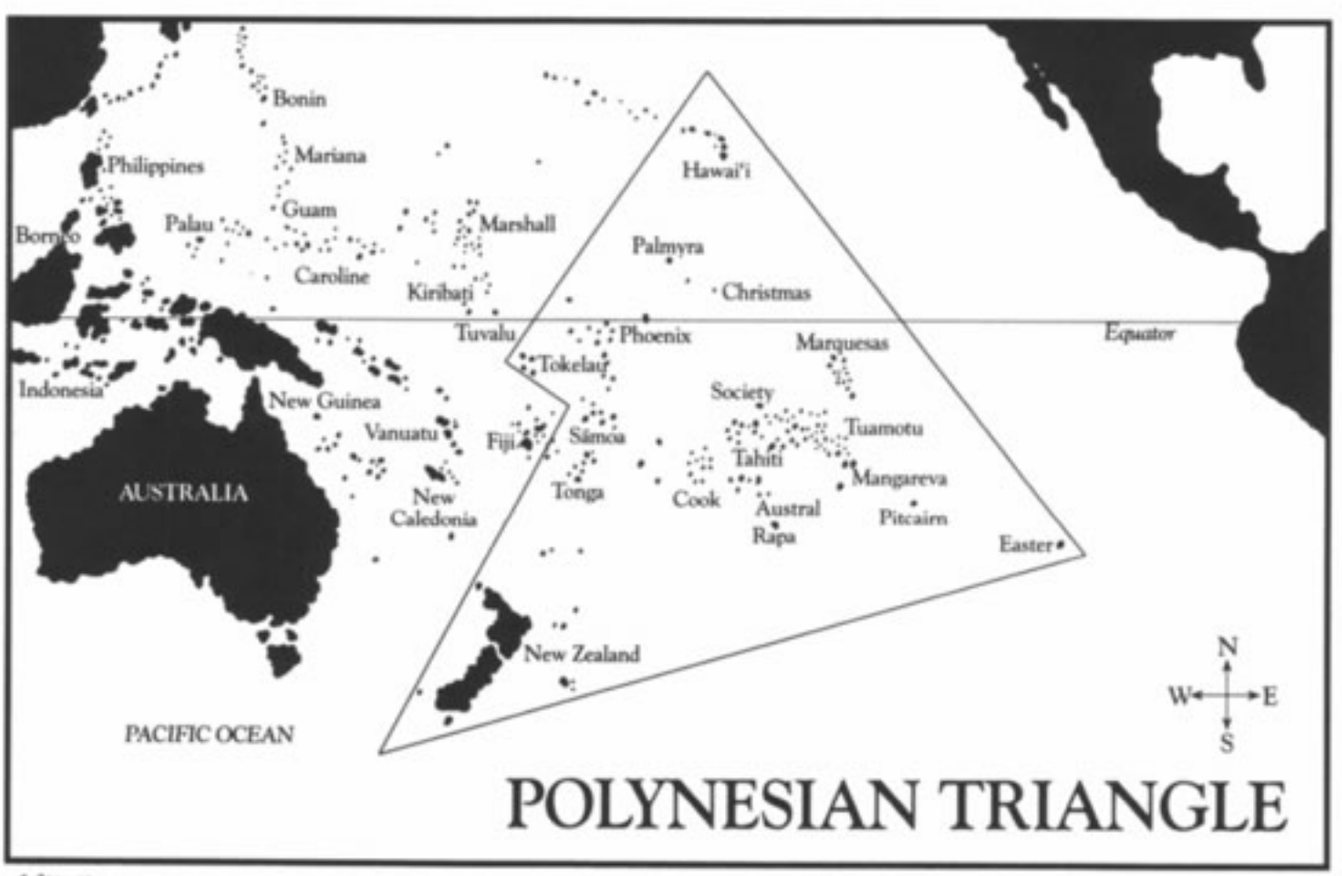
For thousands of years beautiful volcanic islands lay isolated in the North Pacific Ocean—without people and without a name. From the mountains to the sea, these islands were abundant with the gifts of nature: lovely green forests with colorful birds, fresh water, a mild climate and sandy beaches with plenty of fish in the surrounding sea.

Marquesans

Then one day, many scientists believe about the year A.D. 300, people discovered these islands. The people were Polynesians sailing in voyaging canoes. These particular Polynesians are believed to have been Marquesans from the Marquesas islands.

But why would the Marquesans have sailed from their home over eighteen hundred miles southeast of these islands? Was it their love of the sea? Were they just curious to find what lay beyond their own islands? Or were they actively searching for a new place to live?

No one knows their reasons for sure. But archaeologists now believe that it was these early Marquesans who settled down and made these islands their new home. These beliefs are based on objects the scientists have found in old living sites they have excavated, or dug up. Stone adzes and fishhooks have been found buried deep in old Hawaiian villages. These adzes and fishhooks are very much like those made by early Marquesans.



R. Rezoma

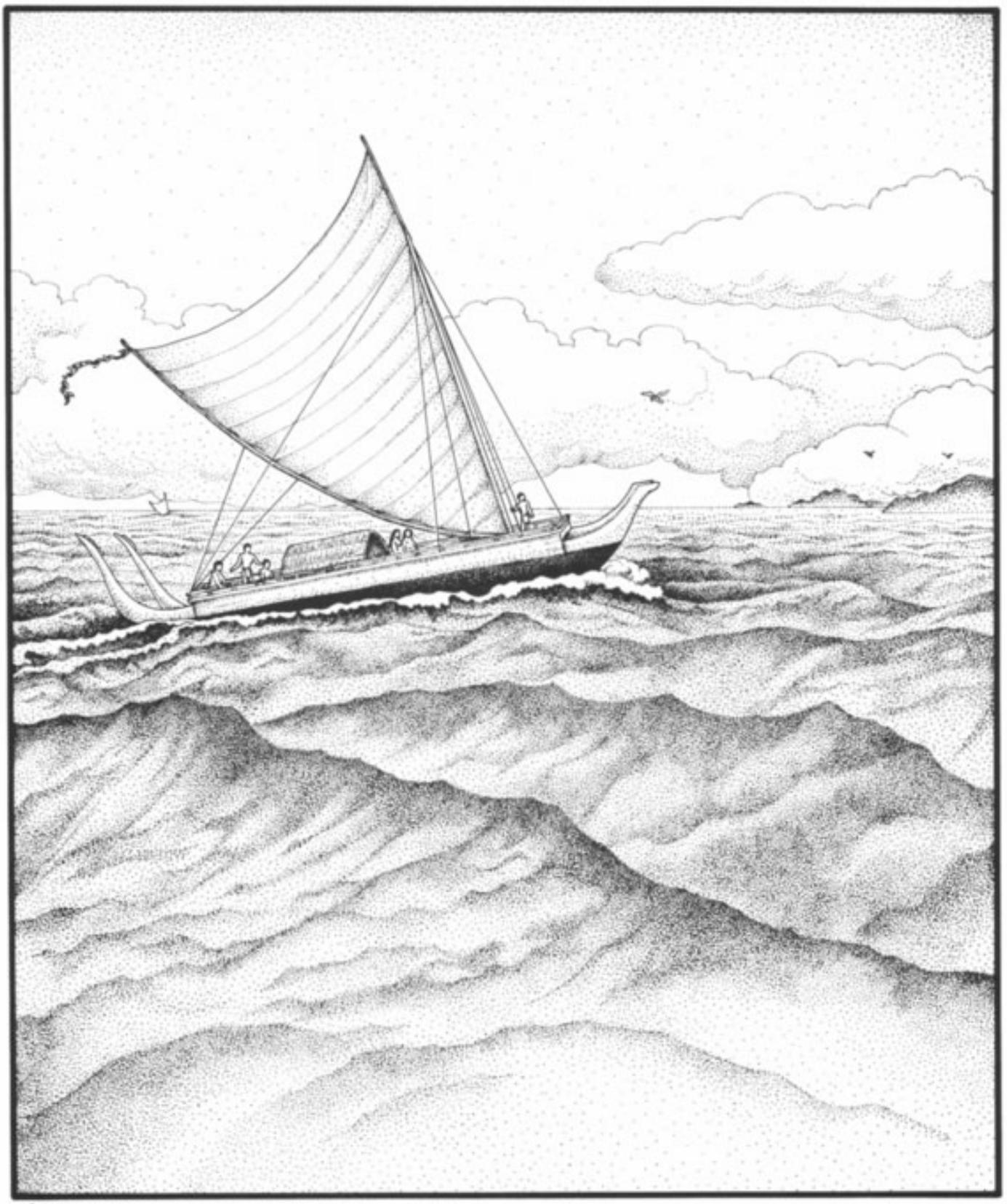
Tahitians

Many years later, around 1200 according to some scientists, a second group of Polynesians arrived in the islands. These explorers are believed to have sailed twenty-seven hundred miles from Tahiti, in the South Pacific. They were known as Tahitians. Like the Marquesans they, too, may have been searching for a new home.

These Tahitians settled in the islands and gave their new home the name of their old home—Havaiki. No longer Tahitians, they became Hawaiians.

Havaiki was the ancient name for the Tahitian island Ra'iātea. Havaiki is said to be the mythological homeland of the Polynesians.

Chants and legends tell about the great *ali'i,* or chiefs, of those days and their voyages. Back and forth they sailed between their old home in Tahiti and their new home in Havaiki. Each voyage brought more people and more of the things they needed to survive in a new land.



Traditional double-hulled sailing canoe

ʻUmi Divides the Land

As time went on the number of people grew and grew. The best places to live became crowded.

Different areas of each island were ruled by different chiefs. ʻUmi, son of the great High Chief Līloa, was one of the ruling chiefs on the island of Hawaiʻi.

In the late 1400s, through warfare and alliances with other chiefs, ʻUmi gained control of the rest of Hawaiʻi. ʻUmi made himself the *aliʻi nui,* or high chief, for the whole island.

ʻUmi divided his island into separate *moku,* or districts. These *moku* were subdivided into smaller sections called *ahupuaʻa.*

Map showing the traditional names of the **moku**, or districts, of Hawai'i

Moku on Kaua'i

Halele'a
Kona
Ko'olau
Nāpali
Puna

Island of Ni'ihau

The entire island is a *moku* of Kaua'i.

Moku on O'ahu

'Ewa
Kona
Ko'olauloa
Ko'olaupoko
Waialua
Wai'anae

Island of Lāna'i

The entire island is a *moku* of Maui.

Island of Kaho'olawe

The entire island is a *moku* of Maui.

Moku on Maui

Hāmākualoa
Hāmākuapoko
Hāna
Honua‘ula
Kā‘anapali
Kahikinui
Kaupō
Kīpahulu
Ko‘olau
Kula
Lāhainā
Wailuku

Island of Moloka‘i

The entire island is a *moku* of Maui.

Moku on Hawai‘i

Hāmākua
Hilo
Ka‘ū
Kohala
Kona
Puna

'Umi's system of dividing his island was copied by chiefs on the other islands. Like Hawai'i, the *mokupuni,* or islands, of Kaua'i, Maui and O'ahu were divided into *moku.*

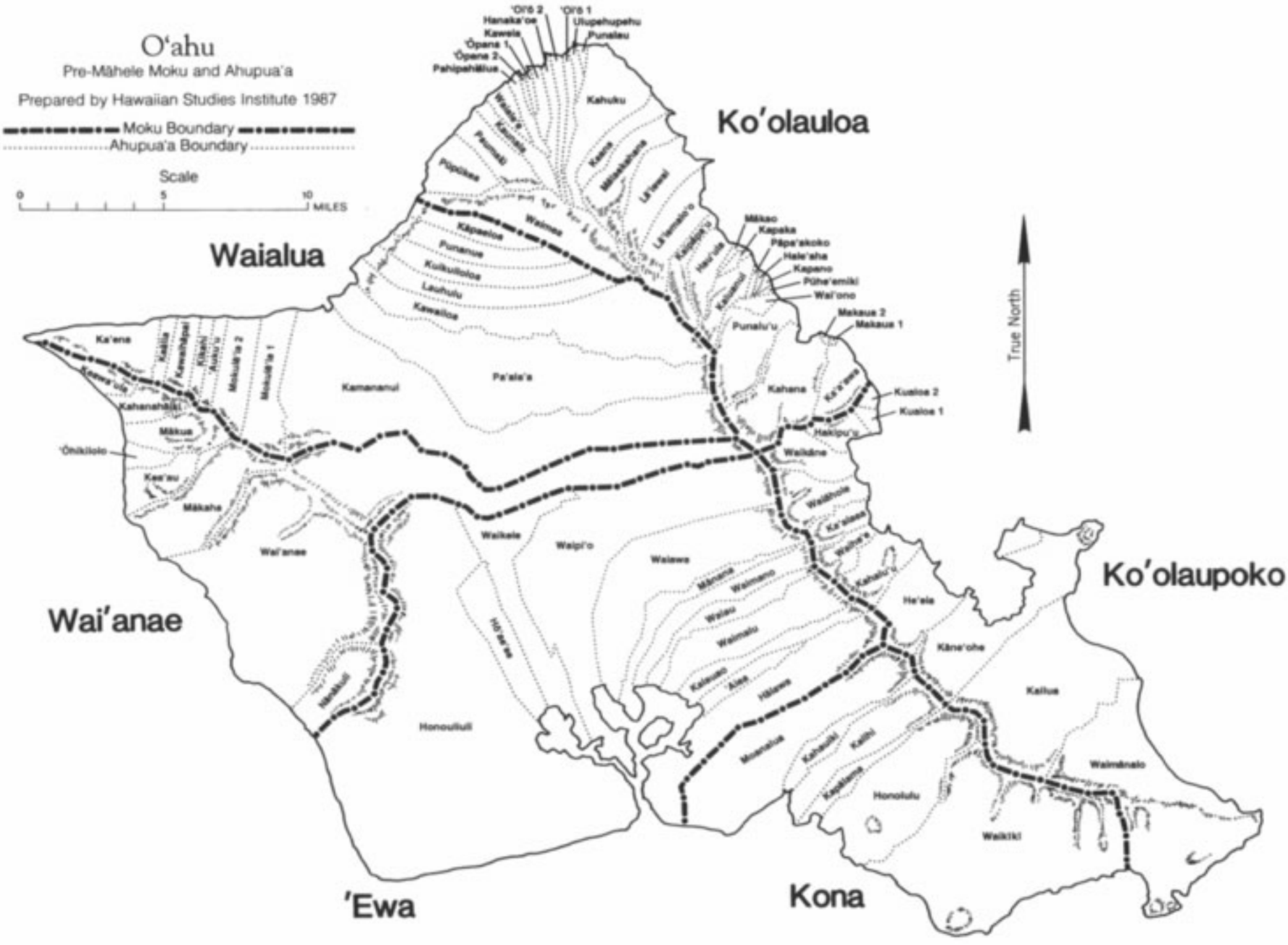
The small islands of Kaho'olawe, Lāna'i and Moloka'i became *moku* of Maui. The small island of Ni'ihau became a *moku* of Kaua'i. These *moku* were then subdivided into *ahupua'a.*

Still smaller sections within an *ahupua'a* were called *'ili,* strips of land worked by an individual or a family. They often, but not always, lived right on their *'ili.*

Ahupua‘a

Thus was born the most important of the land divisions within Hawai‘i—the *ahupua‘a*—a section of land most often running from the mountains to the sea.

Ahupua‘a varied in size and shape. A typical *ahupua‘a* was a long strip of land, narrow at its mountain summit top and becoming wider as it ran down a valley into the sea to the outer edge of the reef. If there was no reef then the sea boundary would be about one and a half miles from the shore.

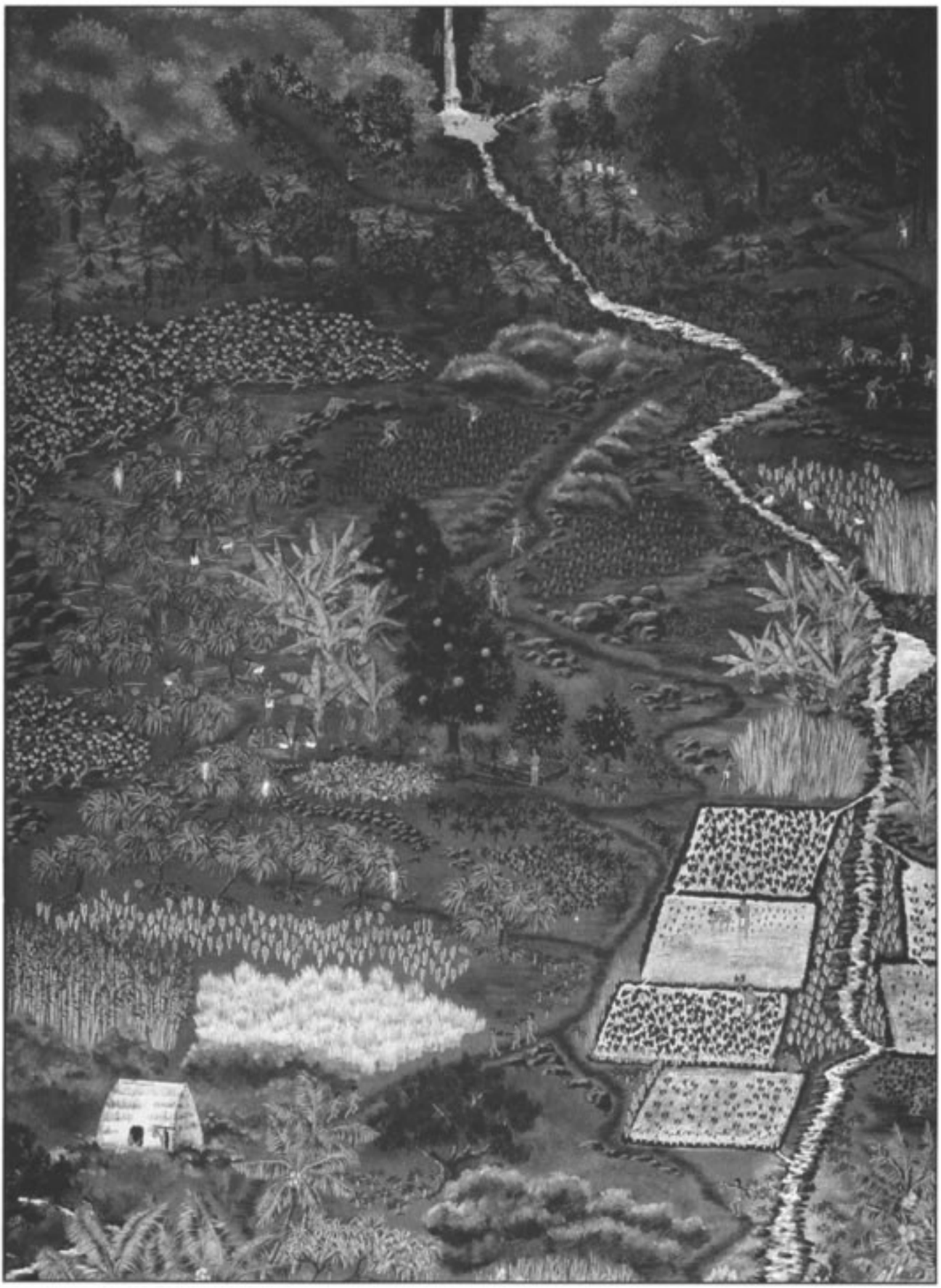


The ahupua'a *and* mokupuni *of O'ahu*

Each *ahupua'a* had its own name and carefully fixed boundary lines. Often the markers were natural features such as a large rock or a line of trees or even the home of a certain bird. A valley *ahupua'a* usually used its ridges as boundaries.

People living in one *ahupua'a* were free to use whatever grew wild in that *ahupua'a.* But a resident of one *ahupua'a* could not take anything from another *ahupua'a.* Boundaries were important and people carefully learned their locations.

Why did the chiefs divide the land into sections running from the mountains to the sea? They realized that within these sections were three different areas important to life in early Hawai'i: upland, plain and sea. They knew that together these three areas contained the range of products and resources their people needed to survive.



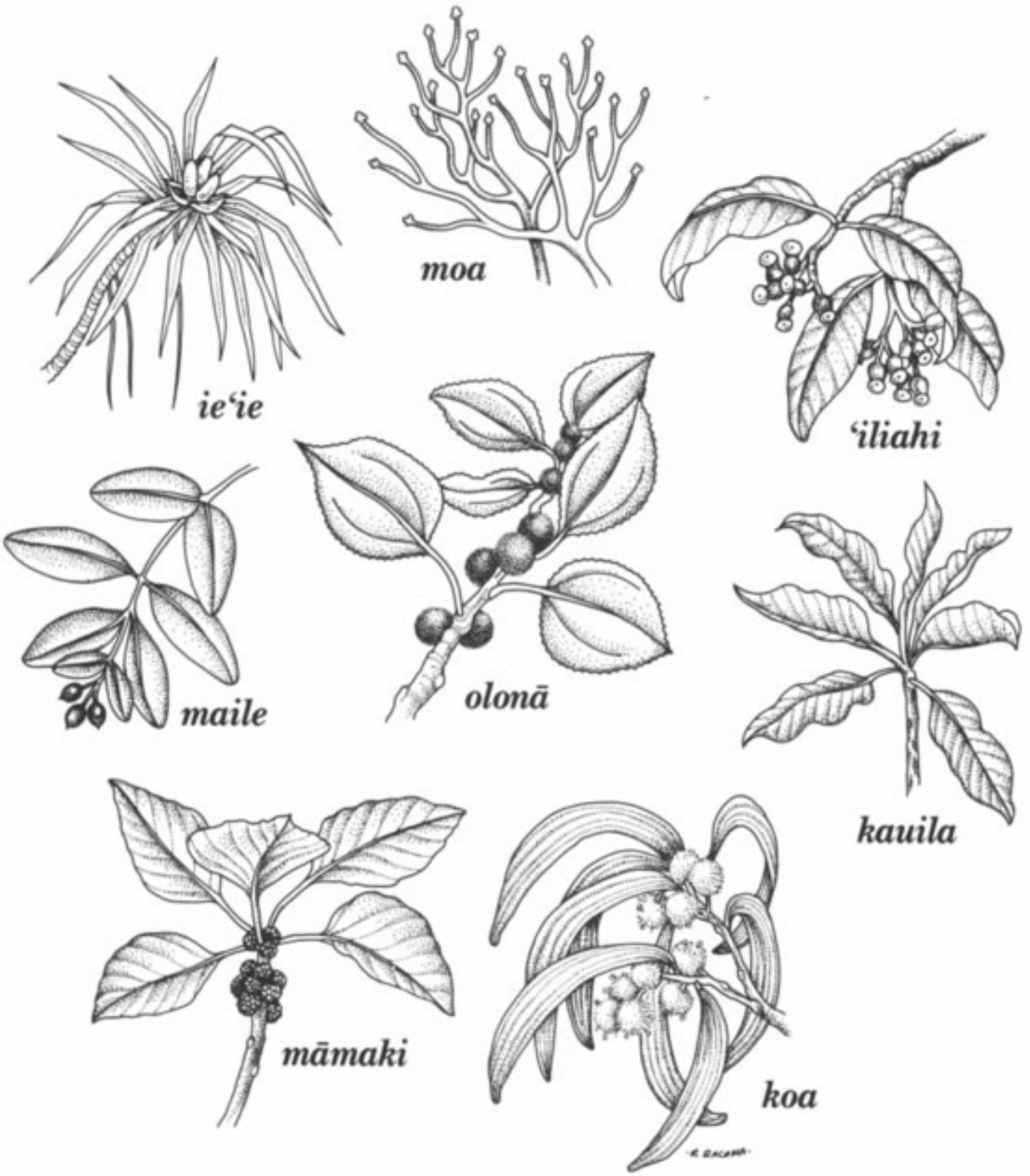
Upper left corner detail from the Ahupua'a Poster (Revised Edition), *Marilyn Kahalewai, 1993*

Uka: Mountains and Uplands

From the *uka* came many resources needed by early Hawaiians. *Koa* wood was used for canoes, houseposts and images of spirits. *Kauila* hardwood provided spears and tools. Pliable stalks of *'ūlei* were used as rims for fish nets and for the musical bow, *'ūkēkē*.

The *olonā* plant made the strongest cordage for fish lines, fish nets and network for feather cloaks. Plants and herbs such as *ko'oko'olau* and *moa* had medicinal uses.

Maile vines made fragrant *lei* and decorations for the *hula* altar. The strong roots of the *'ie'ie* vine were woven into carrying baskets and fish traps.



Details of uka *plants and trees*

Māmaki bark was used for *kapa*. *'Iliahi*, or sandalwood, when ground or shaved, supplied a sweet scent for bathing and scented containers used for storing clothing.

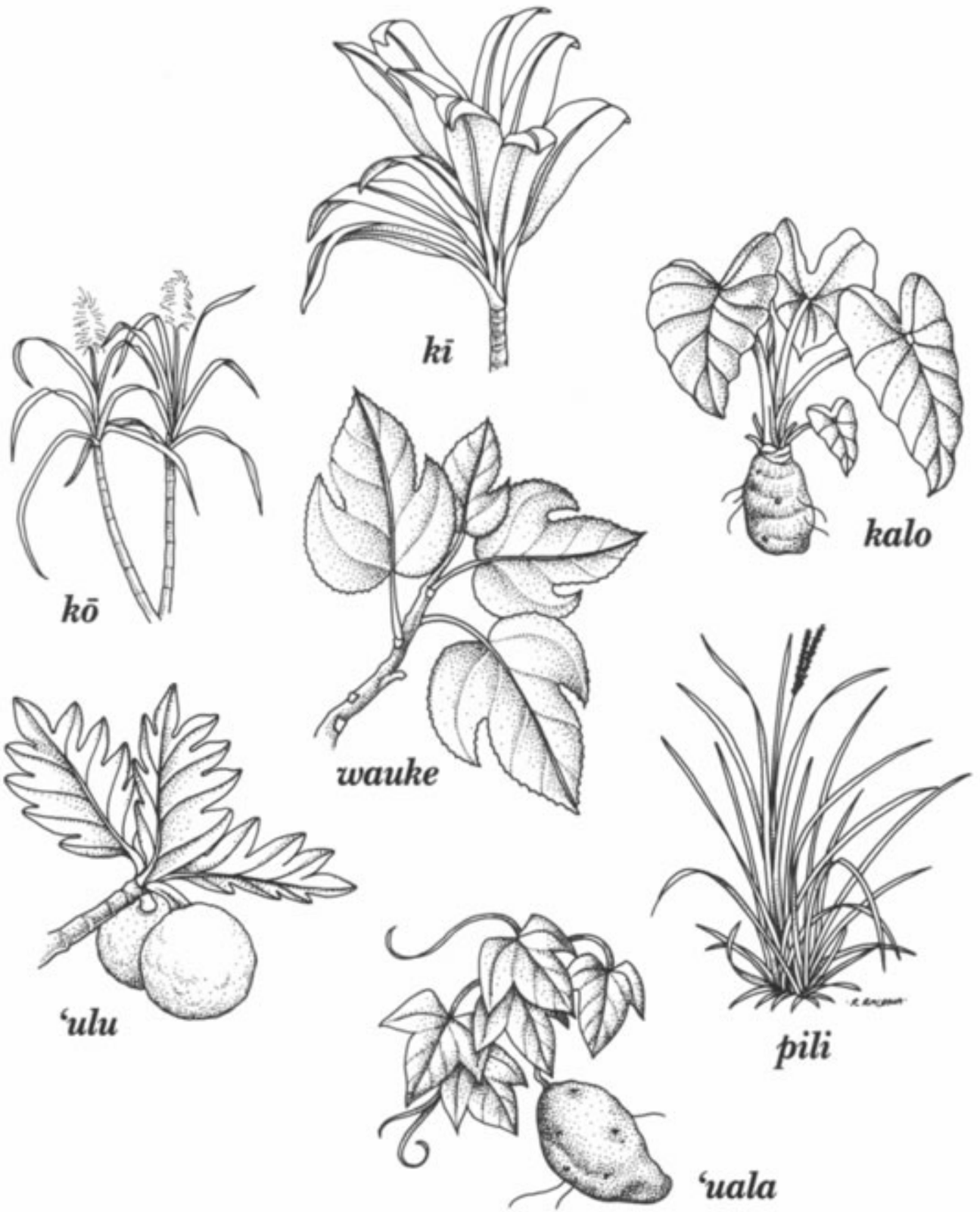
Colorful birds provided the feathers for the cloaks and helmets worn by *ali'i* and for *kāhili*, the feather standards used as symbols of chiefly rank.

Wao is the general term for the inland forest region. *Wao kanaka* is the most accessible of the forest areas and the one most valued by the early Hawaiians. *Wao kele* is the rain forest where tree ferns and other ferns and giant trees grow. Lands higher in the mountains were known as *wao akua,* forests of the spirits, where Hawaiians believed only these spirits resided.

Kula: Plains and Fields

Kula were the flat and sloping lands between the *uka* and the *kai*. Many useful products were made from plants growing in the *kula* area. *Kukui* trees provided nuts used for oil and lighting. *Wauke* trees offered bark for the finest *kapa*. *Pili* grass for thatching houses grew here.

Bamboo was used for fishing rods and as stamping tools for patterning *kapa*. Gourds became containers and musical instruments. *Kī* leaves were used for food wrappings, rain capes, sandals and thatching. Other plants offered many of the ingredients used in Hawaiian medicines or beautiful flowers for decorations.



Details of kula *plants and trees*

Food plants in great variety were raised in the *kula.* There were bananas, dry-land *kalo,* sugar cane, sweet potatoes and yams. *Lo'i kalo,* or ponds for wet-land taro, were built near the *kahawai,* "the place having fresh water."

Poi, the most important food of the early Hawaiians, was made from *kalo.* All the parts of the *kalo* plant were prepared as food in one fashion or another and eaten.

'Ulu fruit was another primary starch food. In addition to getting food from the fruit, wood of the *'ulu* plant was used for *hula* drums, *poi*-pounding boards and surfboards.

Kai: The Sea and the Lands Nearby

The third major division of an *ahupua'a* was the *kai,* the sea and the area nearby. From the *kai* came fish and life-sustaining salt and a wide variety of other seafoods. The *kai* provided a medicine used for such ailments as dizziness, fever, nausea and stomach ache. The sea water itself was the medicine.

Pure salt was extracted from the sea water through evaporation. This Hawaiian salt, *pa'akai,* was used as medicine, for preserving food, in religious ceremonies and as a seasoning.

Hawaiians gathered and ate many kinds of algae and seaweeds, or *limu. Limu* was a major source of vitamins and minerals in their diet.

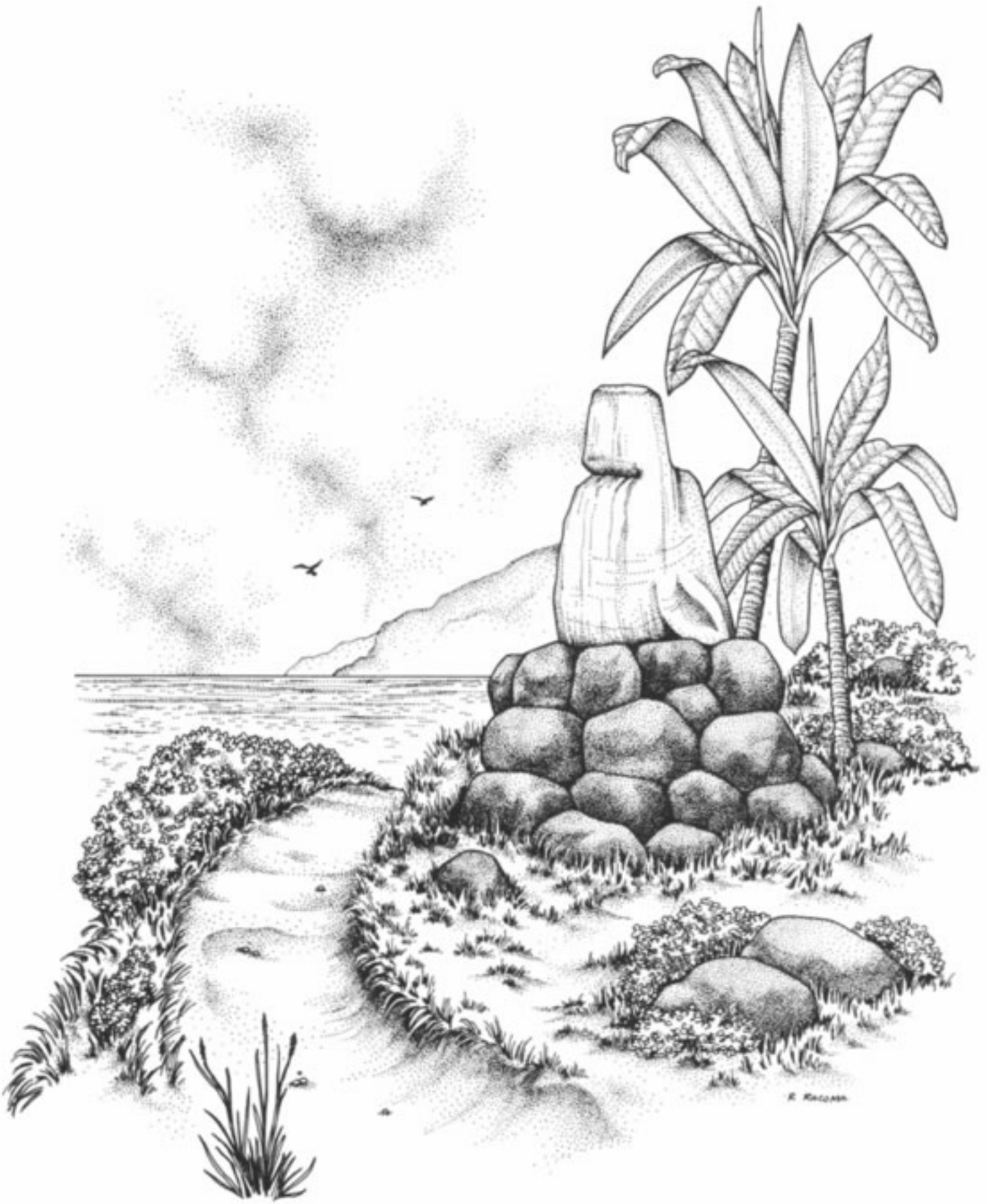
Growing along the shore was the tree for which Hawaiians had found more uses than any other plant they knew—the coconut tree. Its trunk provided bowls, drums, small canoes and spears. Leaflets became brooms, fans, game balls and *lei*-making needles. Fibers from the husk surrounding the nut itself became cordage. Shells from the nuts were made into small bowls and knee drums. At different stages of development the nut provided various forms of food and drink.

Hau was another tree growing in the near-ocean lowlands. Its tough-but-light wood was used for adze handles, massage sticks, and outrigger canoe booms and floats. *Milo* trees grew only along the beach, not in the uphill forests. Its rich brown wood was prized for food bowls. *Noni* was a near-shore shrub whose fruit was used for medicine and whose inner bark was the basis for a yellow dye.

So it was that by dividing islands into districts running from the mountains to the sea, the *ali'i* made certain their people would be well-supplied with the different products of the *uka, kula* and *kai.*

The word *ahupua'a* is made up from *"ahu,"* which means altar, and *"pua'a,"* which means pig. People built an altar of stones where the *ahupua'a* boundary intersected, or crossed, the main trail circling the island. That altar was dedicated to Lono, the spirit of fertility, peace and rain.

An image of a pig's head, carved out of ***kukui*** wood and stained with *'alaea,* red dirt, was placed upon the altar. Lono was believed to reside within this image.



The ahupua'a *monument or altar marked the boundary of the land division*

Spirits of Nature

Early Hawaiians believed in many natural spirits or "gods." While unseen, these spirits of nature were essential elements of the world of the early Hawaiians. They were not "supernatural" or outside of or apart from the rest of their world.

Mana was a natural force or power made visible in the talent of a person, the growth of a plant or the energy of the surf. To these early Hawaiians *mana* was a vital part of their lives and the world around them. *Mana* flowed from the major spirits to humans. *Ali'i* were given more *mana* by the major spirits than were the *maka'āinana,* or working people. The higher the rank of an *ali'i* the greater was his or her *mana.*

Each of these natural spirits had a name and special powers. Hawaiians prayed to these spirits and honored them with offerings. If the spirits were pleased by the offerings, people's prayers would be answered. Prayers and offerings were part of every event and activity.

Hawaiians felt a oneness with their spirits and saw their presence in all of nature. Hawaiians believed their spirits had earthly forms as well as spiritual forms. They called these earthly forms *kino lau,* or many bodies.

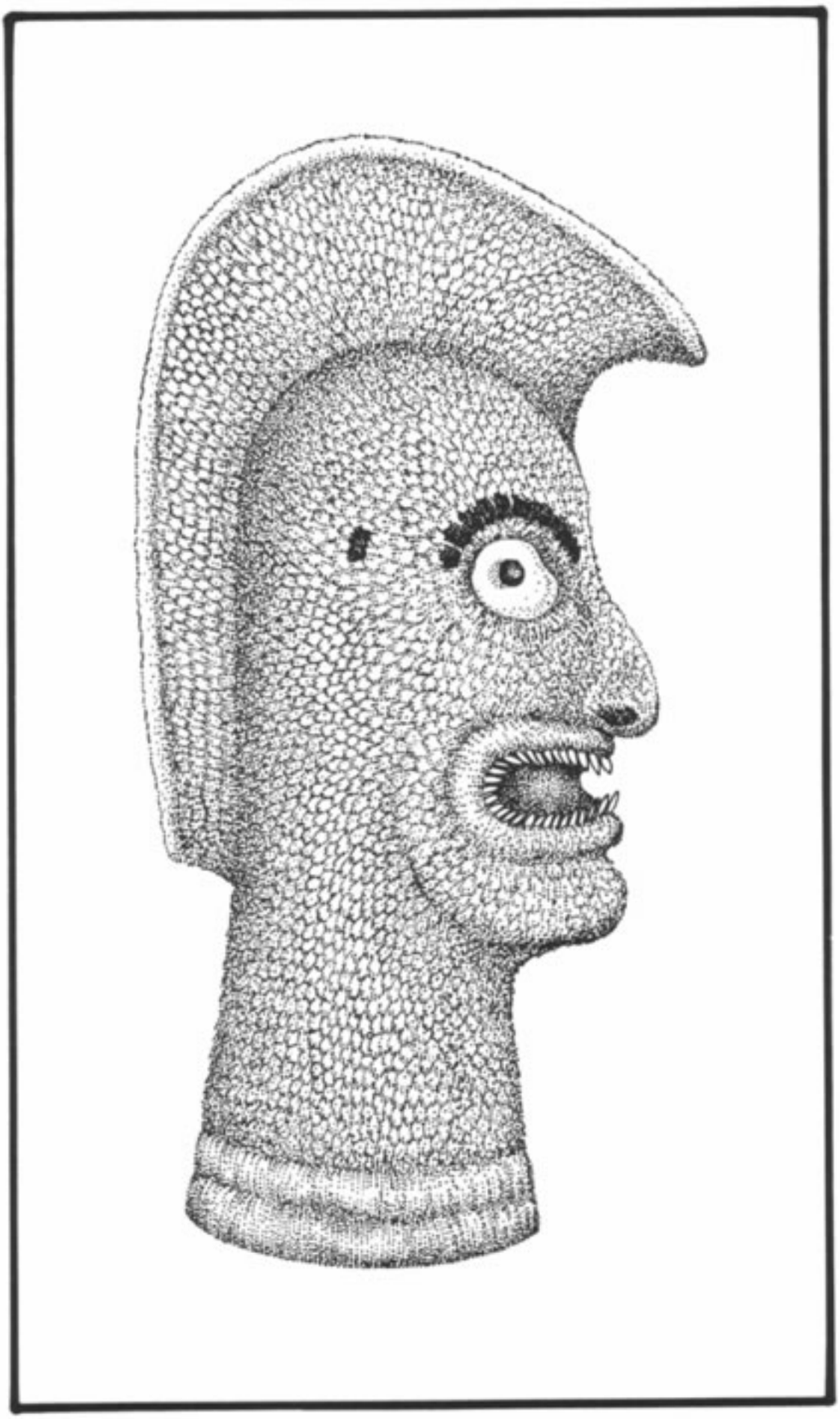
Nā Akua: The Major Spirits

Kāne, Kū, Lono and Kanaloa were the four major male spirits. Major female spirits included Hina, spirit of the moon, and Pele, spirit of the volcanoes. Spirits could and sometimes did take human form and mingle with normal people.

Kāne was called "the leading spirit among the great spirits." He was the spirit of creation and the ancestor of chiefs and the *maka'āinana.* He was also the spirit of forests, fresh water and sunlight. His *kino lau* were the bamboo, *kalo, 'ōhi'a lehua* and sugar cane. *"Kāne"* means man or male.

Kū was the patron spirit of the major works of men—including adze making, canoe making, farming, fishing, government and warfare. His *heiau* were the most elaborate. They were *luakini heiau,* the *heiau* of government. Here the ruling chief could offer the spirit the highest of gifts, that of the life of a man (never a woman).

Kū took many forms. One was Kūkā'ilimoku, the feathered war image of Kamehameha the Great. Another form was Kū'ula, the patron spirit of fishermen. Kū's *kino lau* are breadfruit trees, the coconut, *'ōhi'a* and the *'io,* or hawk. *"Kū"* means upright or standing.



Kūkā'ilimoku, Kamehameha's feathered war image

Lono was the spirit of fertility and peace. He was also the spirit of clouds, rain and winds. Lono was the last great spirit to come from Kahiki, more commonly known as Tahiti. He was the patron spirit of the Makahiki, the fall harvest festival.

Lono's *kino lau* have the features of pigs. Besides the pig itself, they include gourds and the *kukui* tree, sweet potato and *humuhumunukunukuāpua'a,* or pig-snout triggerfish. *"Lono"* means news or report.

Kanaloa was the spirit of the ocean and the ocean winds. He often took the form of a great *he'e,* or octopus. The *he'e* and the herb *'ala'alapūloa* are his *kino lau.* The common name for this herb is *'uhaloa.* Its root is used to treat sore throats. *'Ala'ala* is the liver of the *he'e. "Kanaloa"* means secure and firm.

In human form Kanaloa and Kāne traveled together from island to island. Whenever they came to a dry area Kāne would thrust his *kauila* wood rod into the ground and a freshwater spring would appear.

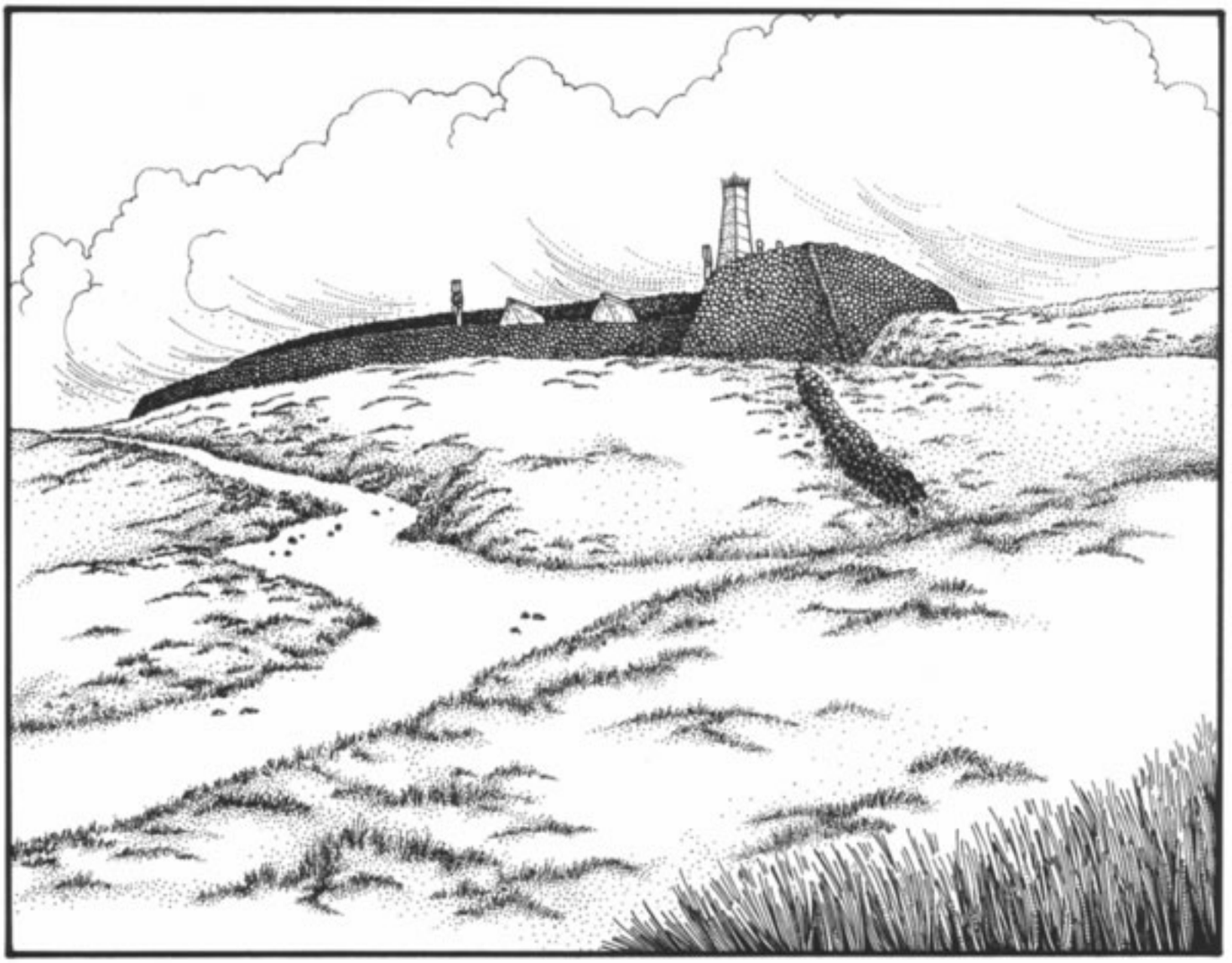
Heiau: Places of Worship

Hawaiians built many *heiau,* or places of worship. Some were small shrines, others were large structures. *Heiau* were built for special purposes and were dedicated to specific spirits.

Luakini were the largest and most elaborate *heiau.* They were built by the highest chiefs and dedicated to Kū, the patron spirit of government and war.

Waihau were agricultural *heiau* for the worship of Lono, the spirit of fertility and peace. Prayers were made here for food crops. The main offerings were bananas, coconuts and pigs. There were many *heiau waihau.*

Heiau ho'ōla were *heiau* for treating the sick. Of all the Polynesians only the Hawaiians had a special *heiau* for healing. There was at least one *heiau ho'ōla* in each district.



Pu'ukoholā, a luakini heiau *near Kawaihae, Kohala, Hawai'i. Built by Kamehameha for his feathered war image Kūkā'ilimoku.*

Pu'uhonua were sacred places of refuge set aside by ruling chiefs. *Pu'uhonua* sanctuaries provided protection and shelter to all who could reach their border. An entire *ahupua'a* could be a *pu'uhonua,* as were Kualoa and Waikāne on O'ahu. *Kapu* breakers, those who had broken any of the many restrictions, could escape death by coming there. Warriors running from their enemies could stay in such a refuge in safety.

In times of conflict non-warriors, such as women, children and the elderly, moved to these areas for protection. There was at least one *pu'uhonua* in each district.

Stone images called *kū'ula,* sacred to fishermen, were set on open altars near the sea to attract fish. Fishermen placed their offerings to their *kū'ula* on these altars.

Ko'a were small shrines of coral or stone. Fishermen built these along the shore and by fishponds or streams. There the fishermen prayed for increasing supplies of fish.

Ko'a were also built in forests and on sea-bird islands by birdcatchers. Birdcatchers prayed at such shrines for success in taking greater numbers of birds.

Nā Kapu: The Forbidden or Sacred

The *kapu* system was a strict set of laws regulating what Hawaiians could and could not do. There were many *kapu* and they affected every part of life in early Hawai'i.

Behaviors or items considered *kapu* were forbidden or set aside as sacred. One *kapu* forbade men and women to eat together. Another *kapu* forbade women to eat pork and most types of bananas.

Men and women did not eat together because men, and not women, were considered sacred. Food was also thought to be sacred. Men would lose their sacredness if they ate with women.

Spirits and all things related to the spirits were *kapu,* or sacred. Since chiefs were believed to be descendants of the spirits, they also were *kapu.* A chief's family, his possessions and the land around his houses were all *kapu.* The *kapu* system set chiefs apart from the *maka'āinana.*

A chief could place a *kapu* on a person, place or thing at any time. When he walked through a village people had to kneel, sit or stretch out face down. These positions depended upon the chief's rank and his level of sacredness.

Penalties for breaking various *kapu* were extremely harsh. Often the punishment was death.

Nā Kānaka: The People

Some historians believe that in the earliest times all the people, *maka'āinana* as well as *ali'i,* had genealogies linking them to the spirits. All were descended from the same ancestors, Wākea and his wife Haumea, who was also known as Papa.

Some of the early Hawaiians, for reasons no longer remembered, seem to have forgotten or lost track of their genealogies. Because of this loss these people became the *maka'āinana.*

In early Hawai'i people belonged to one of four social classes. The *ali'i* were the highest class, chiefs of various ranks and their families. Next in line were the priests and experts—both groups were called *kāhuna.* Then came the largest group of all, the *maka'āinana,* the class of working people.

Kauā were the lowest class. They were outcasts who were looked down upon by the others and were forced to live apart from everyone else. Along with defeated enemy warriors, *kauā* were offered as human sacrifices for important ceremonies held in the *heiau luakini.* How the *kauā* class came to be is not known.

Nā Aliʻi: The Chiefs

People did not own land in early Hawaiʻi. Hawaiians believed that land belonged to the spirits. They also believed that the *aliʻi,* or chiefs, were direct descendants of the spirits. This made the *aliʻi* the keepers and guardians of the land. This gave the *aliʻi* the power to govern the land and the people.

The *aliʻi nui,* or high chief, ruled the *mokupuni,* the island. He divided the *mokupuni* into *moku,* or districts. He appointed a lesser chief to govern each *moku.* That chief was called *aliʻi ʻai moku.*

A mokupuni, *one or more islands, was ruled by an* aliʻi nui.
A moku, *or district, was ruled by an* aliʻi ʻai moku.
An ahupuaʻa *was ruled by an* aliʻi ʻai ahupuaʻa.

The *ali'i 'ai moku* subdivided the *moku* into *ahupua'a*. He then chose still lesser chiefs to manage these *ahupua'a*. These chiefs were called *ali'i 'ai ahupua'a*. A headman, or *konohiki,* supervised the people who lived in the *ahupua'a*. Sometimes the *ali'i 'ai ahupua'a* was also the *konohiki*.

Based on their genealogy *ali'i* were ranked from the highest *kapu* chiefs down to the lowest *kapu* chiefs. This made their genealogy very important. The *ali'i* made sure that men of special ability memorized their long genealogies, making sure their descent from the spirits would be remembered.

A chief could become *ali'i nui,* or high chief, two different ways. One was simply to be born to the rank. The other was by using his strength, intelligence and abilities in negotiations and warfare to make himself ruler over other chiefs. From boyhood young chiefs were trained in Hawaiian sports, traditions and warfare.

Ali'i nui planned the strategies for their battles and led their warriors in combat. They wore *kīpuka,* or shoulder capes, and *mahiole,* helmets covered with feathers. Their *malo,* or loincloth, would be of fine *kapa.* Around their neck they would often wear a *lei niho palaoa,* a *lei* of braided human hair with a whale-tooth pendant. Lesser chiefs also wore *kīpuka* but they usually did not wear *mahiole.*

'Ahu'ula, or full-length feather cloaks, *kīpuka, lei niho palaoa* and *mahiole* were all considered symbols of royalty. Only *ali'i* could wear these special items.

The *ali'i* ruled the *maka'āinana*. *Maka'āinana* produced the food the *ali'i* ate and the goods the *ali'i* used. *Maka'āinana* were the troops who fought the battles. Wise *ali'i* treated their people with respect and provided them with a sense of security. In return the *maka'āinana* cared for and were loyal to their *ali'i*.

Ali'i enjoyed the best of everything. They usually lived near the best fishing places. They had several houses, each serving a special purpose. Clustered nearby were houses of relatives and attendants.

An ali'i nui *wearing symbols of his royalty*

Lower right corner detail from the Ahupua'a Poster (Revised Edition), *Marilyn Kahalewai, 1993*

Nā Kāhuna: The Priests and Experts

Every high ranking *ali'i* had *kāhuna,* priests or experts, as advisors. The *kahuna nui* was the high priest and an advisor to the ruling chief. Religious or spiritual *kāhuna* could communicate with the spirits and only they could perform ceremonies in the *heiau.*

Kāhuna were also the "experts" of any profession. Many *kāhuna* who were not priests also lived in the *ahupua'a.* These intelligent and knowledgeable men were highly skilled in their fields.

One important group were the *kāhuna lā'au lapa'au,* or medical *kāhuna.* They were like family doctors. They treated people's illnesses and used plants for medicine. Helping the *kāhuna lā'au lapa'au* were other specialists trained in specific areas of healing. Some of these experts specialized in the use of *lomilomi,* or massage. Others were trained in the use of *kī*-leaf wrappings for bandages and relieving headaches.

In the *ahupua'a* were other professions, each with its experts. The *kahuna kaula* was a prophet who foretold coming events. The *kahuna kālai* was the carving expert.

Kāhuna *included those who served as priests as well as experts of other professions*

The *kahuna kilo hōkū* studied the stars and understood navigation and the seasonal changes. The *kahuna kālai wa'a* was the master canoe builder.

At very young ages boys were sent to live with *kāhuna*. They remained with their *kahuna* for many years while being trained in his field of expertise. Under the guidance of the *kahuna* the young boys mastered the skills and knowledge special to their *kahuna*.

After finishing their training they would become *kāhuna* themselves. In this way the knowledge, skills and traditions of each profession were passed on from one generation to the next.

Nā Maka'āinana: The Working People

The largest group of people living in the *ahupua'a* were the *maka'āinana,* the workers. They were the planters, the fishermen, the craftsmen, the warriors. Plots of land within the *ahupua'a* were assigned by the *konohiki* to the *maka'āinana.* The land was theirs to use—it was not theirs to own.

Each plot of land was assigned a specific purpose. One plot would be for raising *kalo.* Another might be on an upper slope for growing sweet potatoes. Still another might be a site near the beach for a house.

Maka'āinana cultivated, or prepared, planted and harvested, their own plots for their food. They also worked the lands of their *ali'i*.

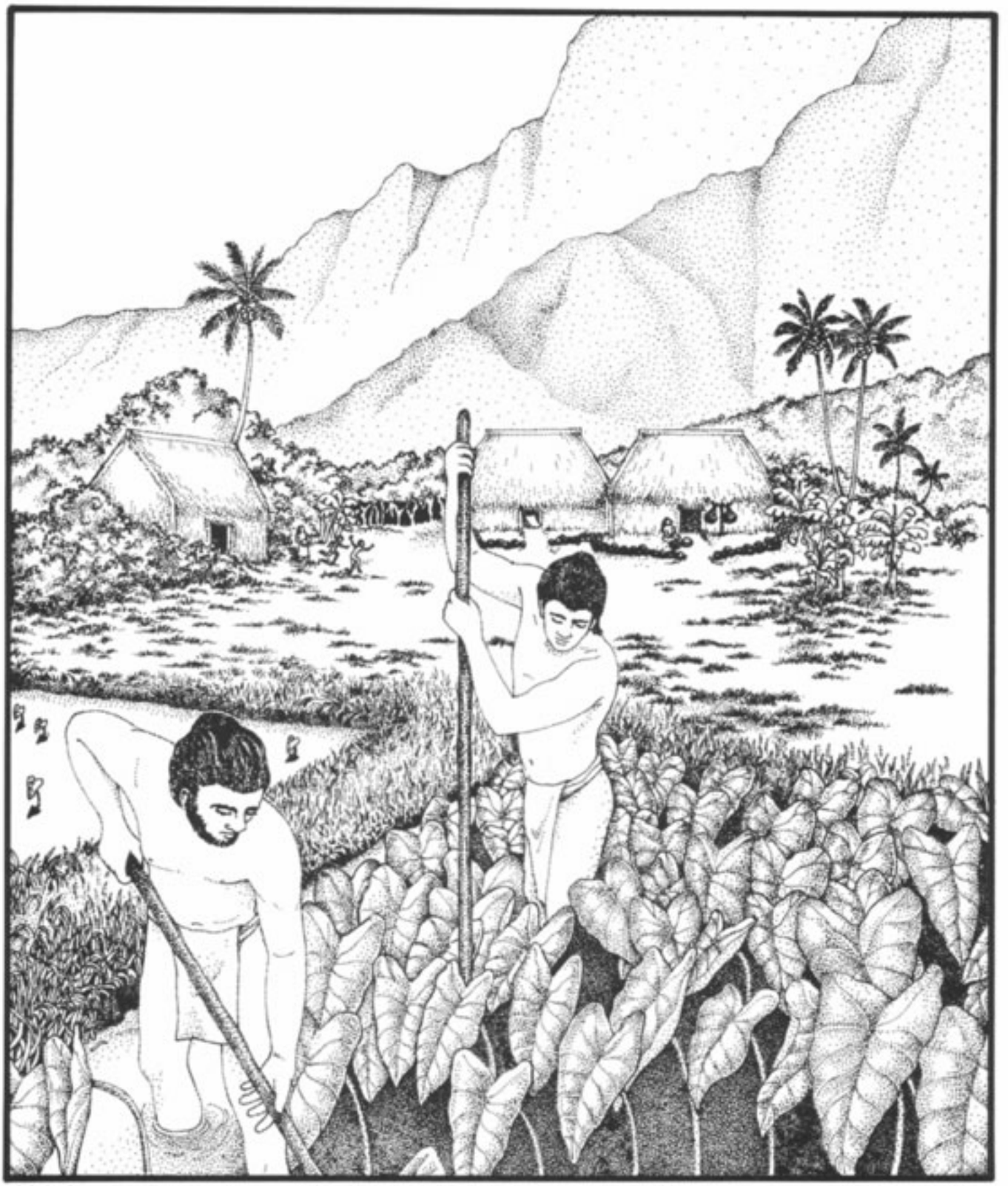
Maka'āinana, more so than the *ali'i,* were the permanent residents of an *ahupua'a*. Families would often live in the same location for generations.

Life could be very different for an *ali'i*. If he lost a major battle and survived, an *ali'i* would still probably be forced to move away from the *ahupua'a* he had ruled.

But while they ruled the *ahupua'a* the *ali'i* were very powerful. The *maka'āinana* knew that at any time they could be expelled, or removed, from the *ahupua'a.*

On the other hand, if the *maka'āinana* felt their *ali'i* treated them unfairly they were free to move to another *ahupua'a.*

As long as they made their annual offerings and remained loyal to their *ali'i,* the plots of land and the fishing rights of the *maka'āinana* were generally safe. If an *ali'i* gave his people a sense of security, they would, in return, give him their respect and *aloha.*



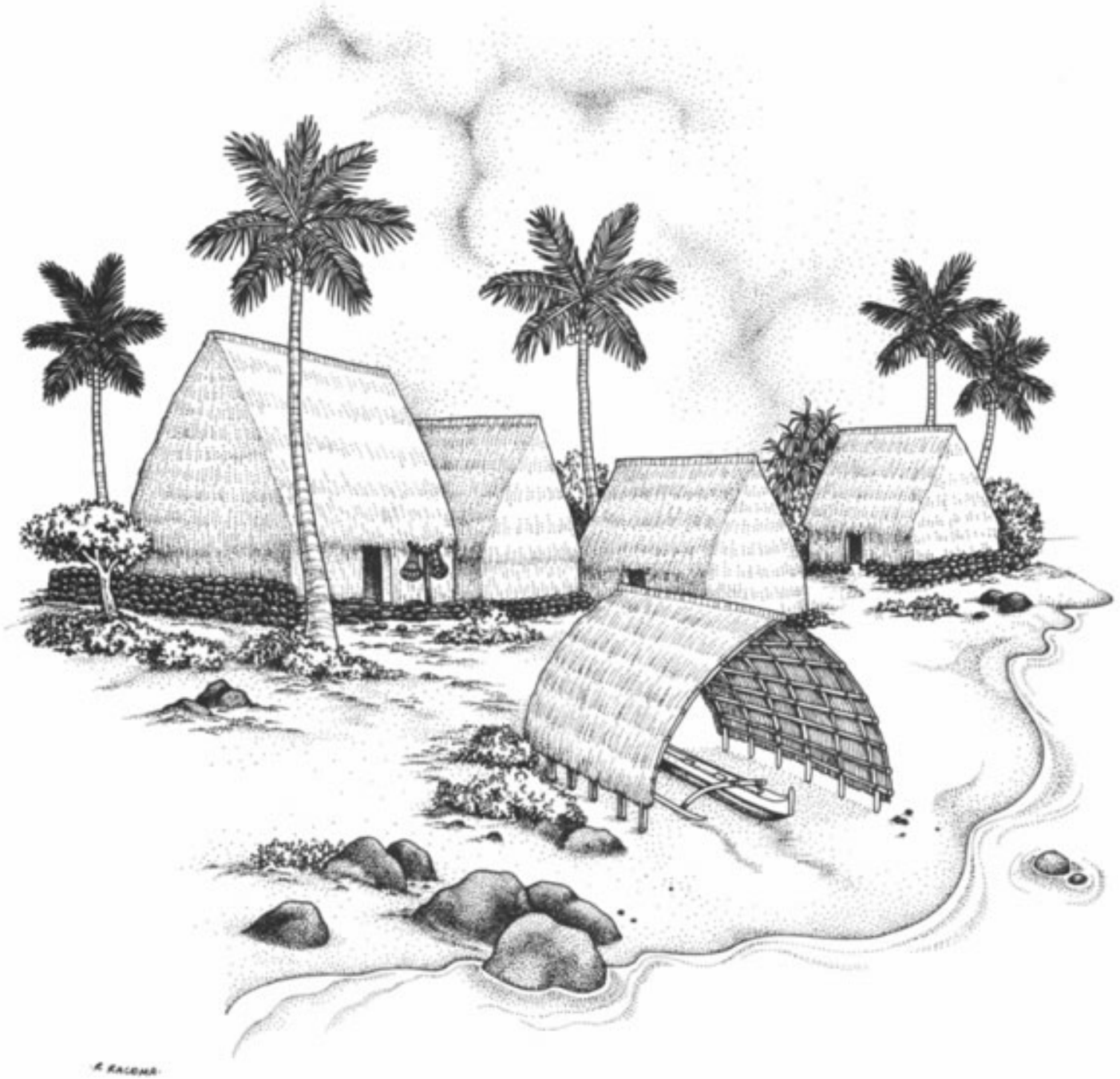
Maka'āinana *at work in a field of* kalo

Instead of having a single house Hawaiian families lived in a group of houses called *kauhale.* Each house served a different purpose.

The *hale noa* was the sleeping house for the whole family. It was also a place for talking and playing quiet games. *Noa* means "free from the *kapu* which keeps men and women apart."

All the food eaten by both men and women was prepared by the men. However each group ate in a separate house.

The *hale mua* was the men's eating house. It was *kapu* to women. Inside the *hale mua* was an altar for worshipping the *'aumākua,* the family spirits. Each day the men gave prayers and offerings to their *'aumākua.*



A group of houses called a kauhale *formed the Hawaiian family's home.*

The *hale ʻāina* was the women's eating house. It was *kapu* to men. Boys younger than five or six years ate with the women.

To mark his move from eating in the *hale ʻāina* to eating in the *hale mua* a special ceremony would be held for a boy. This was usually during his sixth year of life. After that ceremony he would wear a *malo* and eat with the men.

Hale papaʻa were the storehouses where clothing, food, tools and other items were kept. *Aliʻi* usually had more than one storehouse.

Hale imu were the outdoor ovens. Two *imu* were needed—one to cook the men's food and one to cook the women's food. All of the cooking was done by men.

Hale kuku was the house where women beat and decorated *kapa*. *Kapa*-making tools were kept in the *hale kuku*.

Hale pe'a was a small house where women stayed during their monthly menstrual period. It was built some distance away from the rest of the *kauhale*. Food was brought to the *hale pe'a* by other women in the family.

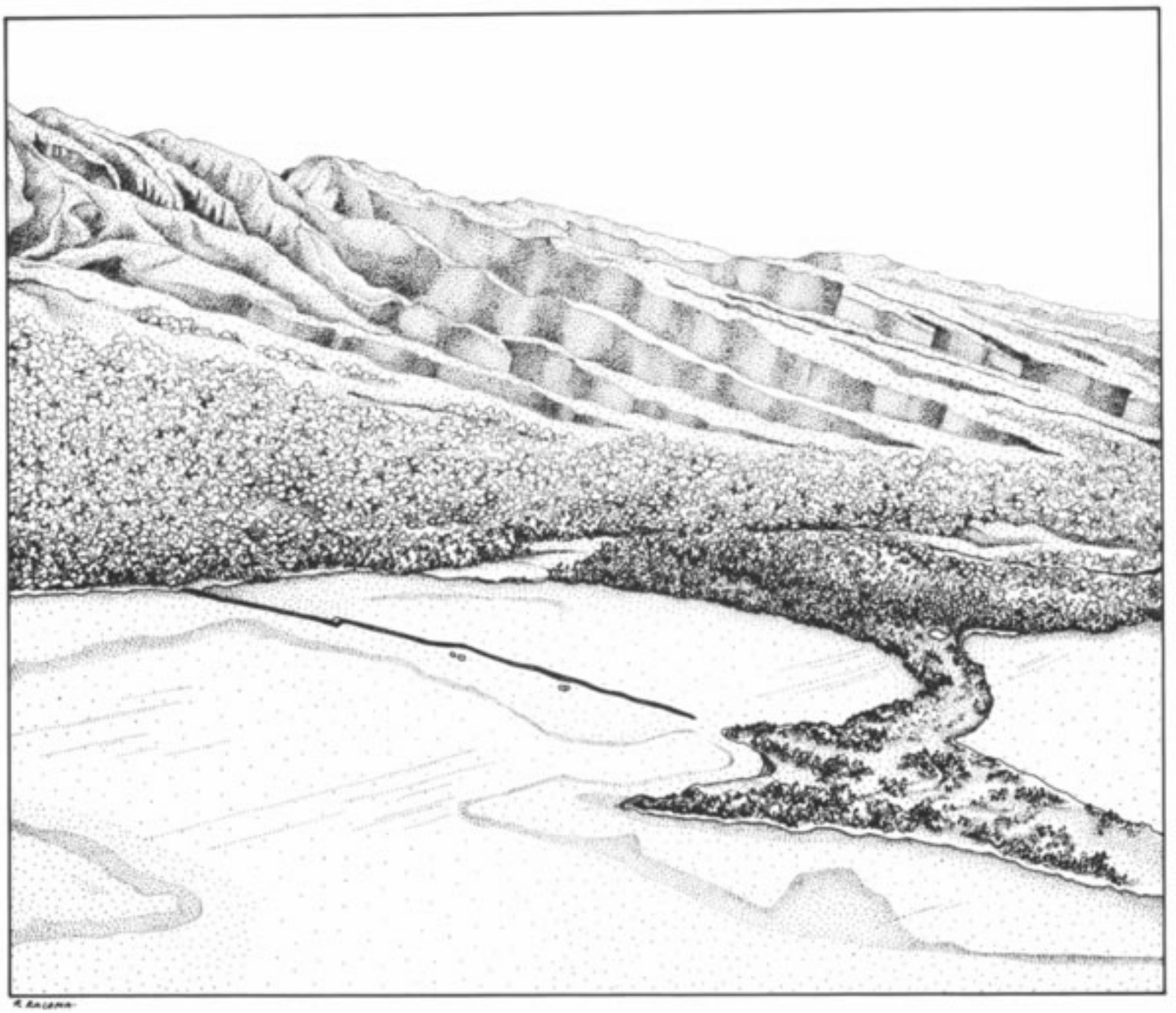
Hālau wa'a was a house in the fisherman's *kauhale* near the sea. This *hālau* had a thatched roof and open sides. It was a canoe shed where canoes, fishnets and other fishing and canoeing things were kept.

Kauhale could be found throughout the *ahupua'a*. Many families lived near the seashore or within sight of it. Some lived along the banks of streams, on ridges and hills, in gulches or in wooded areas.

Where they lived depended upon the terrain of the land, the kind of work they did and the location of fresh water. A fisherman's *kauhale* would be along the seashore near good fishing grounds. A planter's *kauhale* would be near his gardens.

Hawaiians showed greater skill in building and engineering than other Polynesian peoples. They created three special types of structures. *Konohiki* organized and supervised the building of these structures.

One type of structure was large *lo'i*, or ponds, for growing *kalo*. Another was the elaborate irrigation systems for bringing fresh water into these *lo'i*. The third was fishponds built along the shore with walls enclosing sea water.



Fishponds were often built along the shoreline.

These fishponds were used to raise, fatten and store mullet and other saltwater fish. Fishpond walls were made of stones laid very carefully. Special gates called *mākāhā* let small fish enter and leave the pond but kept larger fish inside from getting out. While fishponds were built elsewhere in Polynesia, *mākāhā* were features only of fishponds found in Hawai'i.

Fish raised in these ponds belonged to the *ali'i*. Seafood for the *maka'āinana* came from what could be caught nearshore or on the open sea.

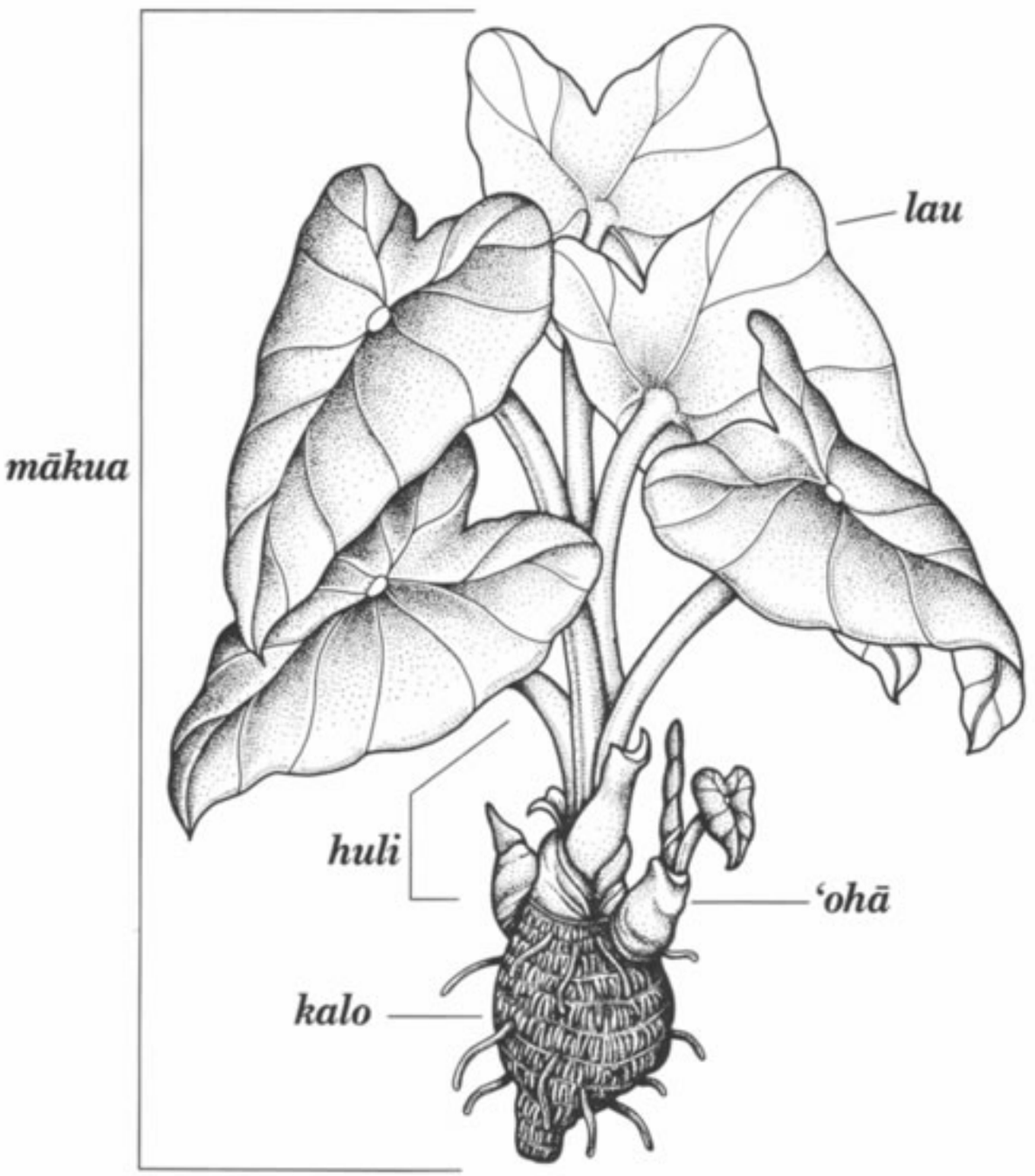
Food and other products were shared among the families within an *ahupua'a*. Sometimes products were exchanged with people in other *ahupua'a*. An *ahupua'a* which grew much *kalo* but caught only a small amount of fish might exchange their *kalo* for fish with an *ahupua'a* having lots of fish but only a small supply of *kalo*.

Ka ʻOhana: The Family

ʻO*hana* is the Hawaiian word for family and relatives. *ʻOhana* consists of everyone related by blood, marriage and adoption or *hānai*. It includes deceased ancestors from whom the family members are descended. The population of the *ahupuaʻa* was made up of many *ʻohana*.

The word *ʻohana* comes from the most important plant in the lives of the early Hawaiians—*kalo*. In Hawaiian tradition people are descendants of the *kalo* plant. So important was *kalo* that words used to name the members of Hawaiian families come from those used to name the parts of the *kalo*.

A human parent, like the parent *kalo* plant, is a *makua*. A human offspring, or child, like a *kalo* sprout, is an *ʻohā*. A human extended family, like the offshoots of the *kalo* plant, is an *ʻohana*.



Kalo

Children were brought up under strict discipline. Much of what children needed to know was learned in their own homes. Their chores were part of their family's daily routines. Through play and imitation even very young children learned.

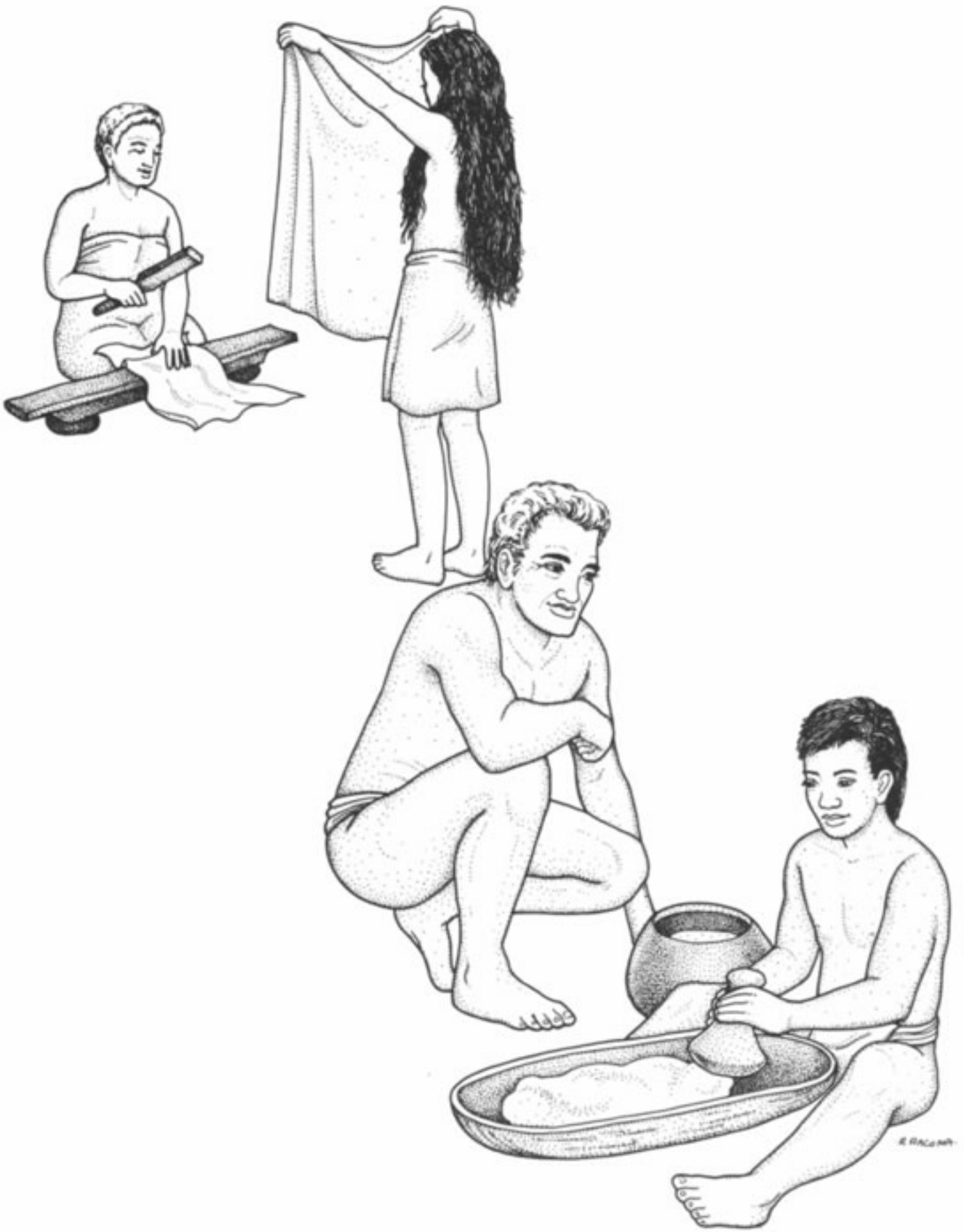
Children's ages were figured not by birthdate but rather by their physical abilities. Tasks were assigned based on each child's size and strength.

Around two years of age a child might be expected to carry a small gourd of water. Around five or six years a child might be expected to carry two coconuts. By about ten years of age many children might be carrying a still-smaller child on their backs.

Children's ages were identified by the various tasks they could perform.

Ali'i children would have a *kahu,* or tutor, to teach them. But children of the *maka'āinana* were mostly taught by their *kūpuna,* or grandparents. *Kūpuna* helped care for the little children. They taught the children games and told them legends. The *kūpuna* taught the children about important *kapu.*

Kūpuna were the ones who passed on the history and traditions of the *'ohana. Kūpuna* were often closer to the children than were parents who spent their days busily working—often away from the home.



Kūpuna *taught their* mo'opuna, *or grandchildren*

Girls and small boys helped the women. One simple task would be to walk to the stream, fill a gourd with water and carry it home. Girls cleaned the *hale noa* and worked in the sweet-potato garden. Girls learned to make *kapa* and plait *lau hala* mats.

Boys carried bundles of *pili* grass to the place where a house was being built. They carried firewood that was needed for the *imu*. They helped with caring for and feeding the chickens, dogs and pigs.

Older boys learned as they worked side by side with the men. They learned to plant. They learned to pound *kalo* and make *poi*. They gathered the stones for the *imu*, the underground ovens. They learned to prepare food to be cooked in the *imu*.

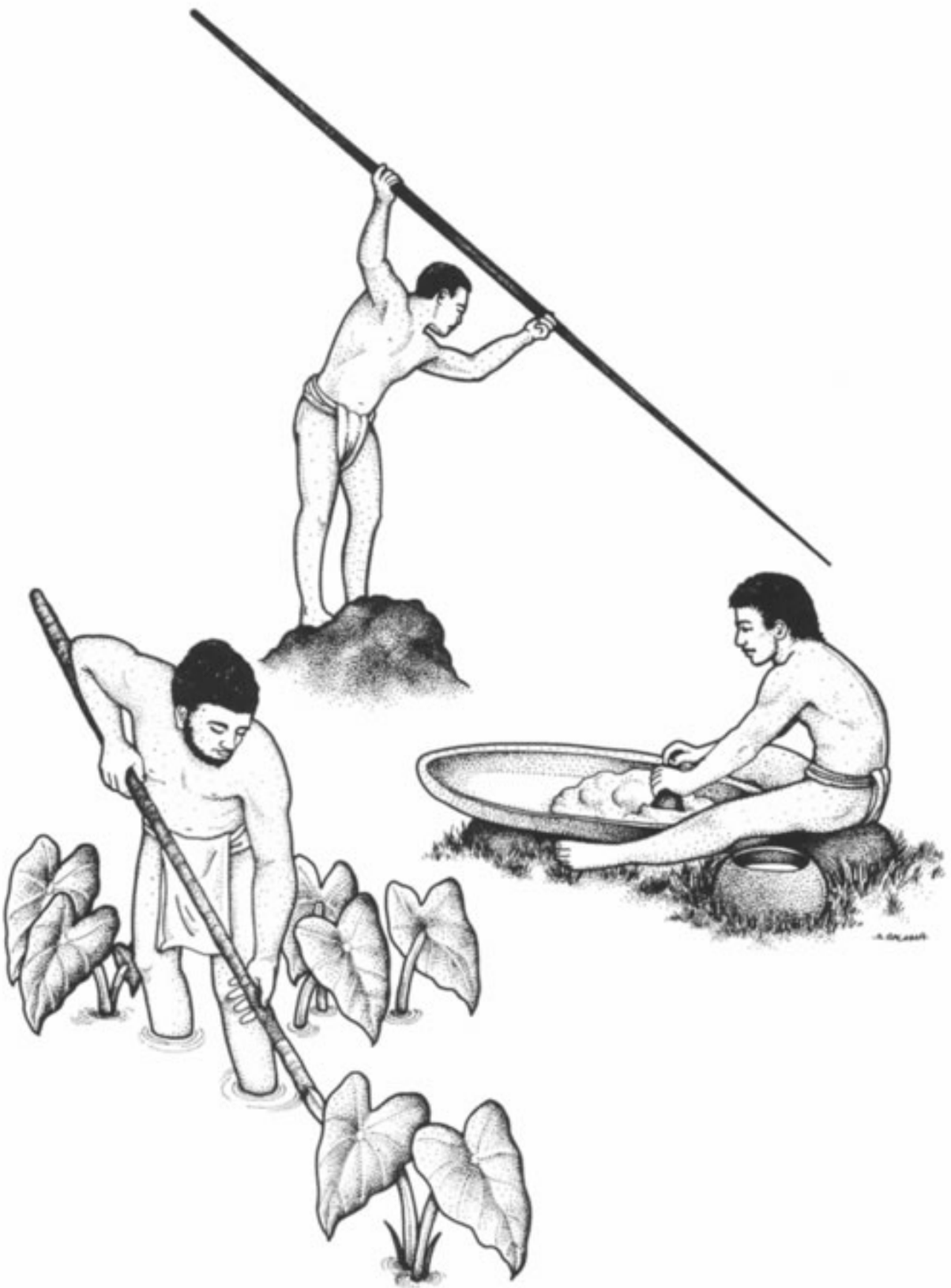
If their father was a fisherman they learned to fish. They helped by carrying fishing lines, hooks and bait packed in big gourds to the canoes.

Women had many important tasks. They plaited baskets and mats of *lau hala.* They made *kapa* from *wauke* and *māmaki* bark. They did most of the spinning of cordage—using their fingers to roll the fiber on their thighs. They helped with the work on gourd containers and the nets for carrying the gourds.

They took care of their children. They cleaned the *hale noa,* or sleeping house. They gathered salt, collected shellfish and picked *limu,* or seaweed.

There were some things that women were not allowed to do. Cooking was *kapu* for them. While women could catch fish in the freshwater streams, along the shore, on the reefs and in lagoons, all other fishing was *kapu.* Sweet potatoes were the only plants they could grow on their own.

Women plaited baskets, made kapa *and took care of the children*



Men did the fishing, planting and prepared the food

Men were the *mahi'ai,* or planters. They worked in the fields, planting and harvesting. In addition to raising the food, they prepared the food and did all of the cooking.

Men were the *lawai'a,* or fishermen. They used many different fishing methods and fishing implements. They caught fish by hand, by hook and line, with nets, with nooses, with spears and in traps.

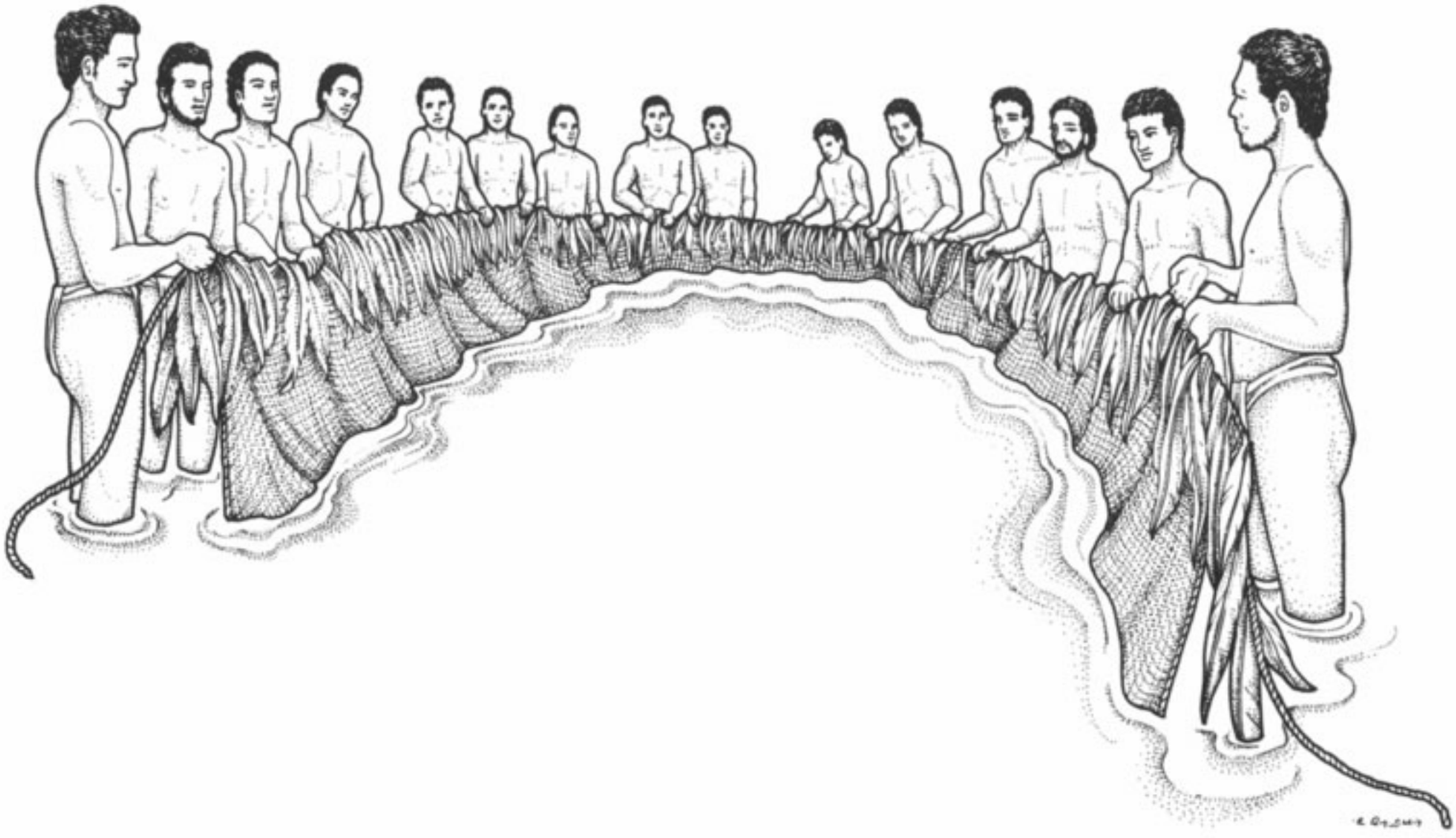
Men were the builders. They made canoes, houses, tools, and weapons. They built fishponds, irrigation ditches and *kalo* ponds. They did all the heavy work. They carried the large stones. They cut and brought in the big stalks of banana.

Each *'ohana* chose its own overseer, or *haku*. The *haku* was someone who could meet with the *konohiki* and *ali'i* and speak for the family. The male *kupuna* best able to do this became the *haku*.

Haku made sure that their families paid their yearly tribute to the *konohiki* before the Makahiki season. These tributes were in the form of food and other products and were placed upon the altar of Lono marking the boundary of the *ahupua'a*.

Families supported each other's efforts in the *ahupua'a* by *laulima,* or working together, and by *kōkua,* or helping. *'Ohana* who lived in the uplands and *'ohana* who lived in the lowlands would exchange products with each other. Such exchanges of food and supplies were recognized in an old saying, *"Ko kula uka, ko kula kai,"* "Those of the uplands, those of the sea."

It was a natural thing for people to assist their own *'ohana* as well as other *'ohana.* Family members worked together on such efforts as building homes, preparing a *pā'ina,* or feast, and going *hukilau* fishing. The *haku* supervised these cooperative projects.



Hukilau *fishing needed many people using nets and long ropes hung with leaves, usually of* ki

Sometimes a whole village took part in *hukilau* fishing. *Huki* means pull and *lau* means leaf. Long ropes were hung with leaves which were usually *kī* leaves.

Moved through the water by long lines of people, the leaves would frighten the fish into a large net. The net was then pulled ashore. The hundreds of fish usually caught were divided among all those who helped with the *hukilau*.

Every family had one or more *ʻaumākua,* or family spirits. Most *ʻaumākua* were ancestors of the family. They were spirits who could communicate with their descendants, guiding and advising them.

ʻAumākua could appear in the forms of animals such as *ʻalae,* mudhens; *honu,* sea turtles; *manō,* sharks; and *pueo,* owls; or as plants or clouds. It was also believed they could abide within stone or wooden images. Of all the *ʻaumākua* forms sharks were perhaps the most widely revered.

Prayers and offerings were made everyday to the *ʻaumākua,* honoring them as well as family members. Special ceremonies were held when someone in the family died. The body or bones of a *makaʻāinana* were buried under his house, in the earth near his house, in the sand or in a cave.

When an *ali'i* died his bones were placed in a *heiau* or in a secret cave known only to his trusted *kahu* and closest friends. Bones of an *ali'i* contained some of his *mana*. Sometimes the bones would be hidden so that enemies of the descendants of that *ali'i* could not steal the bones and gain control over his spirit.

The *'ohana* felt a deep loyalty to their *ahupua'a*. It was their *'āina*, their homeland. *'Ai* means "to eat." *'Āina*, the word for homeland or birthplace, means "that which feeds." It was the *'āina* that nourished, or fed, the *'ohana*. This made it the responsibility of the *'ohana* to take care of their *'āina*.

Hawaiians used two other terms to describe their homeland. The first term was *one hānau,* which means "sands of my birth, birthplace." The second was *kulāiwi,* or "native land, homeland." Both show the oneness of the body with the soil that nourishes it. Both terms are in the first line of the song *"Hawai'i Aloha."*

> *"Ē Hawai'i ē ku'u one hānau ē, ku'u home kulāiwi nei."*
> "Hawai'i, sands of my birth, my (beloved) native home."

Nā Mahi'ai: The Planters

Most Hawaiian men were *mahi'ai,* or planters. They were responsible for the cultivation of the soil and the growing of food. This was accomplished by using nature's resources wisely. These resources included many wild plants and trees, rich soil, stones, sunlight and fresh water.

For most Hawaiians fishing occupied a very small part of their time and energy. While hundreds would be planters living on the plains and slopes and in the valleys only a few would be fishermen living along the ocean coasts.

Upper right corner detail from the Ahupua'a Poster (Revised Edition),
Marilyn Kahalewai, 1993

Within the *ahupua'a* planting was the most important of the men's occupations. This we know because young boys were dedicated to Lono, the patron spirit of abundance, fertility and growth. They were not dedicated to Kū, the patron spirit of all men's works.

Mahi'ai fed and cared for the chickens, dogs and pigs they kept near their homes. They knew a great deal about the planting and raising of various crops. The *mahi'ai* understood the seasons, soil, water and weather.

They knew and planted hundreds of different varieties of bananas, *kalo,* sugar cane and sweet potato. They knew which elevation, moisture level, soil, sun exposure and terrain was best for each variety. Just as their plants sent roots into the earth, so did the *mahi'ai* become "rooted" to their *'āina.*

Kalo has been the staple food for Hawaiians from the earliest times to the present. All parts of the plant are eaten, but its underground corm makes the Hawaiians' most important food, *poi.*

Hawaiians found or developed more than three hundred varieties of *kalo.* They named each variety for its shape or color or after a bird, fish or flower. They knew the most useful qualities of each. Some were preferred for *poi,* others for their large tender leaves and still others for medicinal uses. Those with specially good flavors and colors were reserved for the *ali'i.*

'Uala, or sweet potatoes, were more the daily food of the *maka'āinana,* but *kalo* was a part of their celebrations and was the select, or choice, food of the *ali'i.* It was the prized item on Lono's altar during Makahiki.

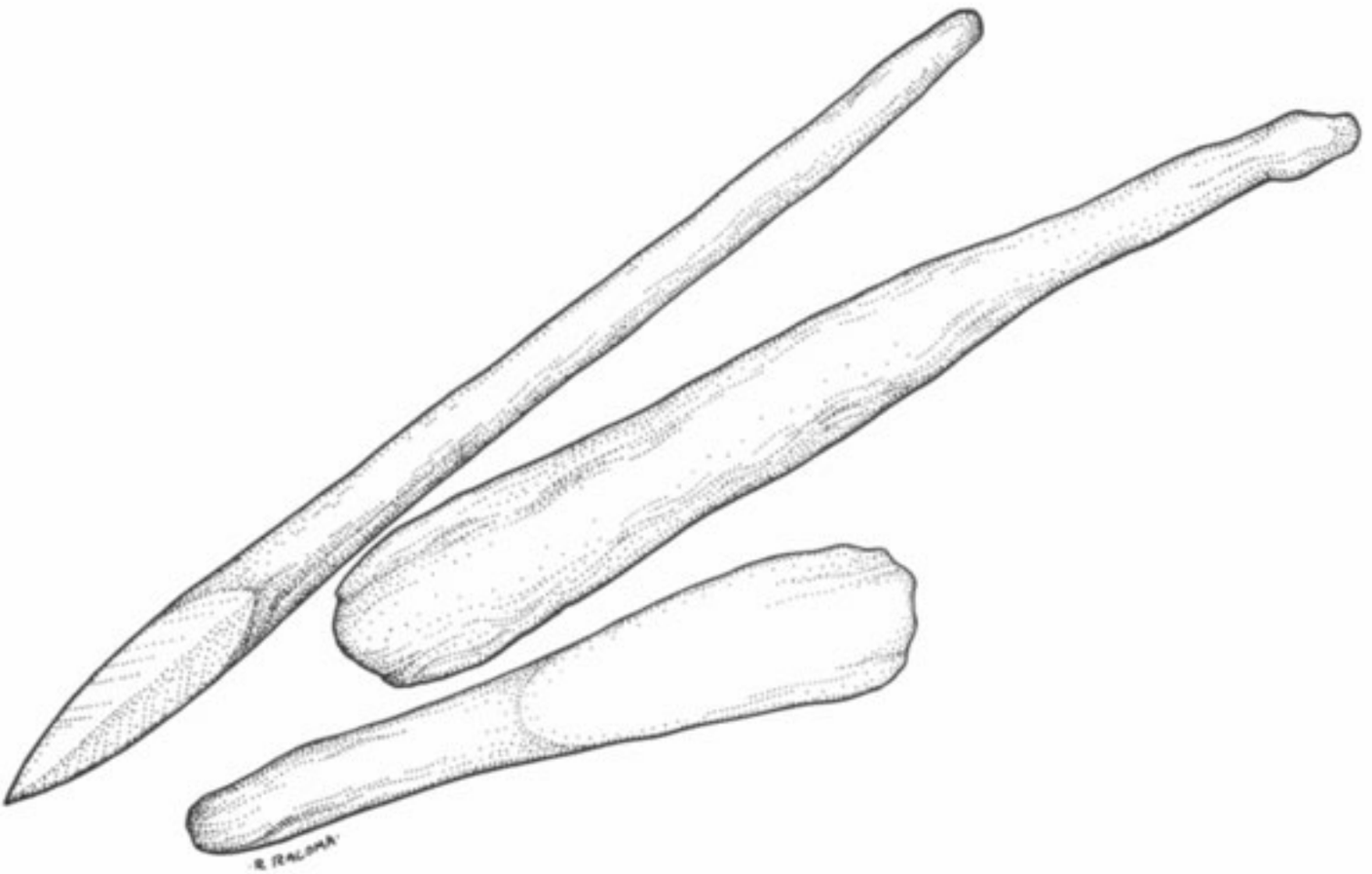
Tools of the Mahi'ai

Mahi'ai developed strong hands and feet. These were their most useful tools. Historian Dr. Donald D. Kilolani Mitchell wrote:

> "With their hands they weeded, raked, cleared the soil, and planted their gardens. They pushed soil around the plants, built mounds for planting certain crops, and trampled the soil in the bottom of the taro ponds with their feet."

The most important tool made by the *mahi'ai* was the *'ō'ō,* or digging stick. It was made from *kauila, uhiuhi, alahe'e* or *'ūlei* wood. They used stone adzes, or *ko'i,* to cut saplings from which to make their *'ō'ō. Mahi'ai* prayed to Kū, spirit of the forest, that their *'ō'ō* might be strong and useful.

Mahi'ai believed that each *'ō'ō* had more or less of certain powers. When a crop turned out to be especially abundant, or plentiful, the *mahi'ai* saved the *'ō'ō* that had been used to tend that crop. It would carefully be kept in the family and used again only when a new crop was to be planted. Other *ō'ō* would be used for weeding and rough work.



'Ō'ō, *or digging sticks, were made by the* mahi'ai *from various hardwoods*

Where to Plant

In deciding where to plant, *mahi'ai* looked for areas where wild growth thrived. Laka, the spirit of wild growth, was known to like such areas. *Mahi'ai* understood that the land would be fertile in these places.

Mahi'ai would cut the wild growth, turn it under and leave it to decay and enrich the soil. They did the same when weeding plants, mixing the weeds back into the soil.

Hawaiians believed that wild growth and weeds contained some of the essence, or important qualities, of the land. They believed that this essence should not be wasted. Farmers today understand that decaying plant matter contains many of the nutrients needed to fertilize new crops.

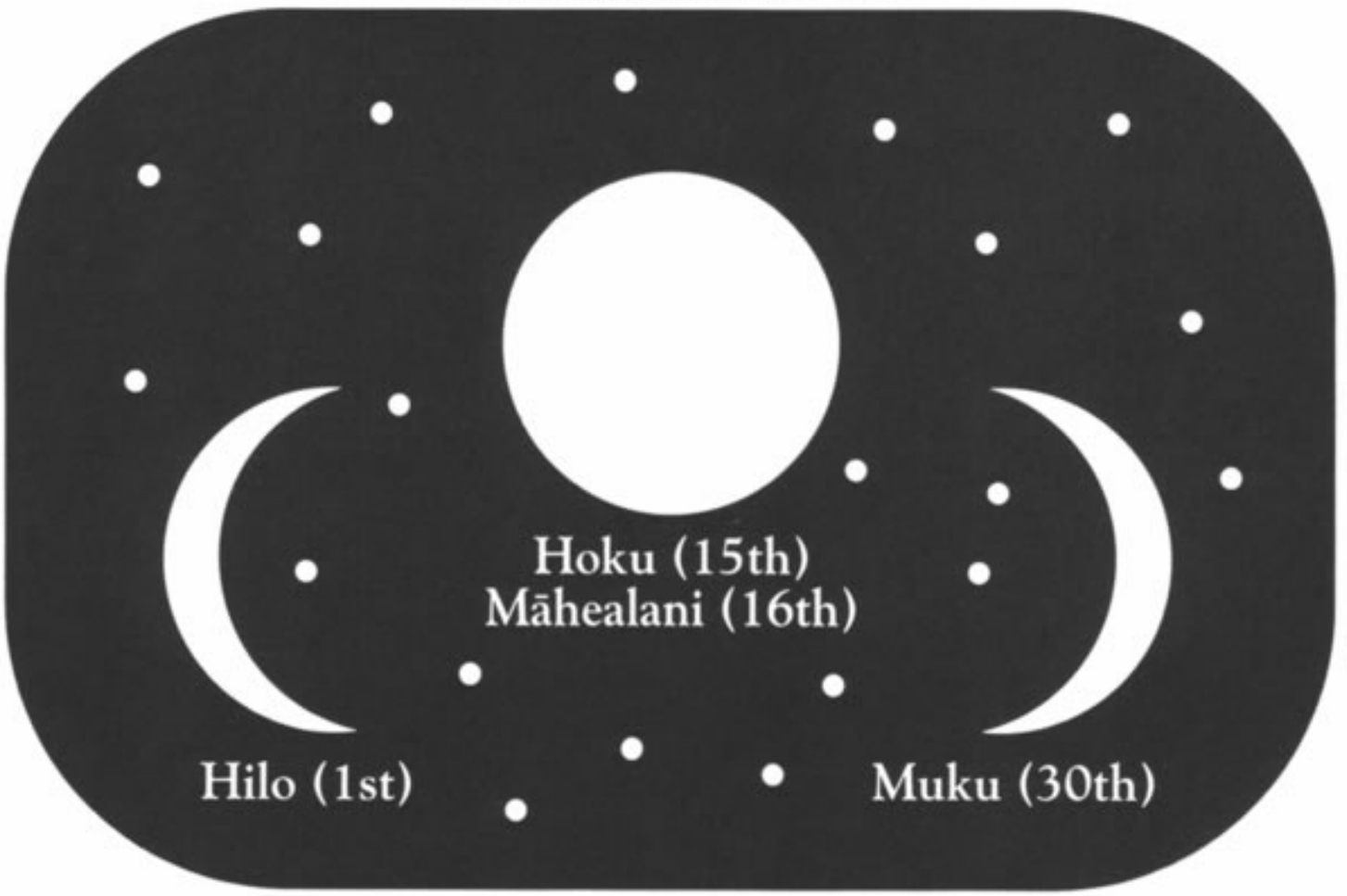
Most food plants were grown on the plains and the lower slopes of hills. This was the area of the *kula* where the soil was richest.

When to Plant

Mahi'ai were very careful about selecting the best days for planting. They prayed to Hina, the moon spirit, for help. Observing the phases of the moon helped determine the right time to plant.

The Hawaiian calendar gives each day of the month its own name. The month begins with Hilo. The night of Hilo is the night of the new moon. One custom was to plant foods primarily used for their leaves on such a night. The twelfth and thirteenth days, Mōhalu and Hua, were best for planting those foods used for their roots.

NĀ MAHINA



Four of the names for the daily phases of the moon

Prayers and Offerings

Every step in the process of cultivating the *ʻāina* included prayers and offerings to the spirits. If the wet-land *kalo* needed sunlight, people prayed and offered gifts to Kāne, the spirit of sunlight. If dry-land *kalo* on the upper slopes needed water, prayers and offerings were made to Lono, spirit of rain.

The Joy of Planting

While the planting was hard work, *mahi'ai* could enjoy the satisfaction of watching their crops grow into beautiful plants.

Historian John Kepelino wrote:

> "Taro planted in dry lands is an excellent thing, an amiable friend and one pleasant to the heart of man. The leaves, stems and blossoms have a pleasant smell in the patch. It is a lovely sight, really delightful, to see taro growing and the different varieties as you sit down to rest, perhaps, among the hills of taro."

Because they so loved their plants, *mahi'ai* of the old days were known to weep when, for some reason, they became too disabled to work. "Plants are beloved children," said the farmers.

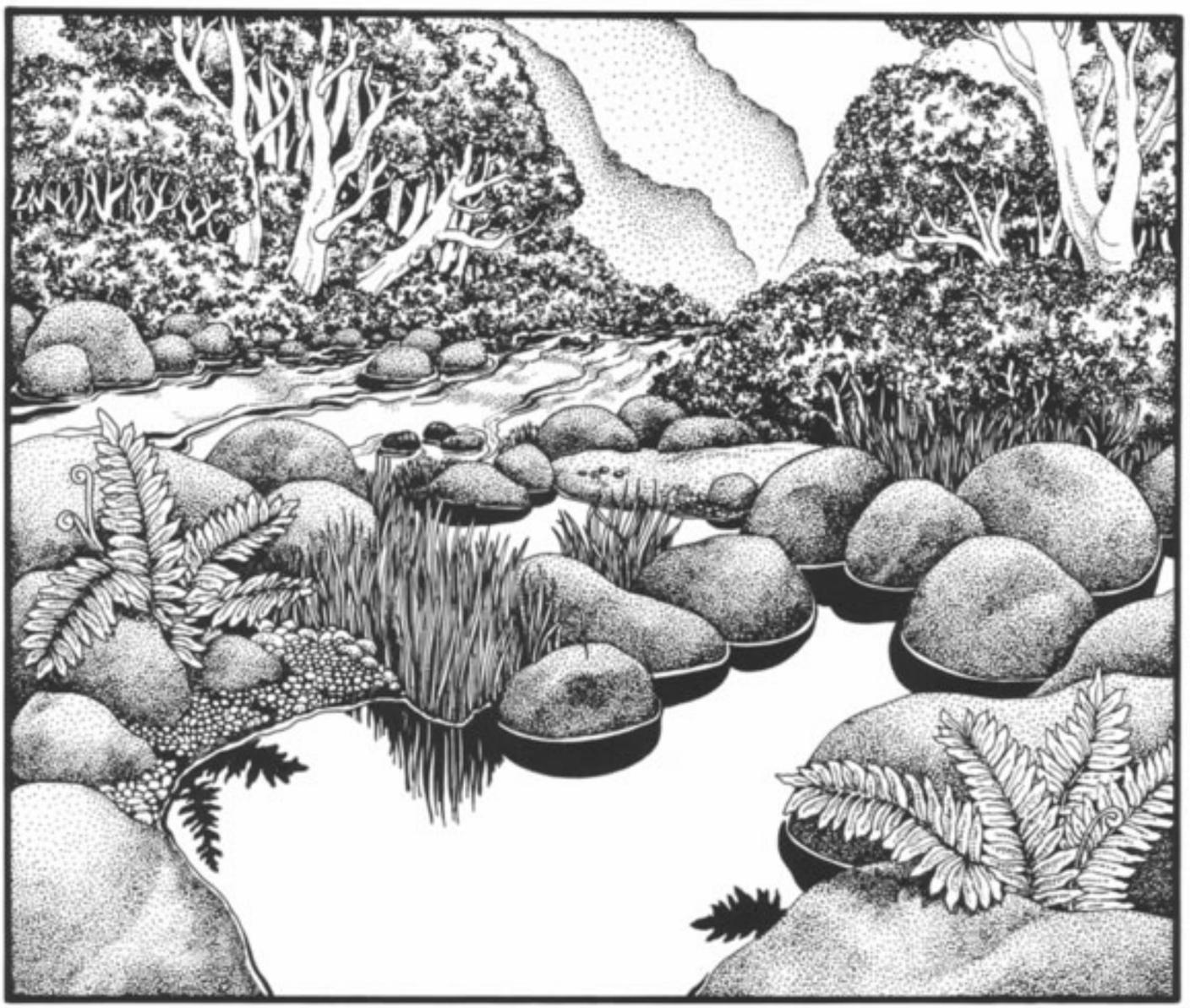
Historian Samuel Kamakau described a happy *mahi'ai:*

> "He rejoiced in his labors, as he saw the banana stalks bent over with the weight of their fruit, the tall bunches of sugar cane with their ripened stalks tied together lest they become uprooted by the wind, and the *wauke* plants luxuriant as the candlenut tree. Moved with delight, he leaped with joy…"

The Water of Kāne

The great spirit Kāne was the spirit of *wai,* fresh water. Hawaiians believed that all fresh water was sacred. No one was allowed to tamper with *wai.* Like sunlight, no one owned this water, not even the highest-ranking *ali'i.* The right to use fresh water depended upon the reason for its use.

The desire to be rich, as the term is used today, was mostly absent from early Hawaiian society. A rich or wealthy Hawaiian was one who had plenty of *kalo.* To have plenty of *kalo* meant that one had an ample supply of water. So valuable was *wai* that the word for wealth is *waiwai.*



A kahawai, *freshwater stream or river*

An ample supply of water for irrigation made it possible for fresh water fish to also be raised in the *loʻi kalo.* Bananas, sugar cane and *wauke,* too, would be grown nearby. As long as the *makaʻāinana* produced enough for himself and his family, his *aliʻi* and his Makahiki tributes, all was well.

The *mahiʻai* was expected to take only his fair share of water and safeguard, as well, his neighbor's water rights. This was to be done without greed or selfishness. These practices gave Hawaiians their word for law—*kānāwai,* or "the equal sharing of water."

Great care was taken not to pollute the water in the streams which flowed down from the mountain waterfalls through the valley and out to the sea. People bathed only at the end of the stream near the mouth of a stream. It was *kapu* to bathe anywhere else.

Farther up the stream was the place set aside for washing calabashes and utensils. And still further up there were dams for the *'auwai,* or ditches, carrying water to the *lo'i kalo.* The cleanest water was above the dams. This water was reserved for drinking only and was carried in gourds to the homes.

Nā Lawai'a: The Fishermen

For Hawaiians the sea was an intimate and familiar part of life. Their islands were surrounded by the sea and most lived near or within sight of the sea. Their ancestors had come to Hawai'i by way of the sea. And they traveled from island to island by way of the sea.

The sea was a great supplier of food—from within the reefs near the shore to the deep waters far out at sea. Hawaiians enjoyed a variety of fish and shellfish including clams, crabs and lobsters. Seafood provided almost all of their protein.

An Honored Profession

Lawai'a, or fishermen, lived nearest the sea of all the *maka'āinana.* They were highly skilled and greatly respected. Just as they had been taught by their fathers, *lawai'a* trained their sons and selected other boys to become fishermen. This way knowledge was passed from generation to generation.

Those in training went through many stages of learning. They learned to recognize and understand the different cloud forms, ocean currents, stars and winds and the significance of the birds they saw overhead. They learned the different fish and their names, fishing grounds and methods of fishing.

Hawaiians called all fish and other sea animals *i'a*. They also gave two more names to those fish which were useful as food or important in some other way. The first name described the general kind of fish. The second name described a special feature of the fish, like its color, form or habitat.

For example the Hawaiian name for the triggerfish genus is *humuhumu*. There are about nine kinds of *humuhumu* in Hawai'i. The second name of one of those *humuhumu* is *nukunukuāpua'a*, or "nose like a pig."

Some fish were named for stages of growth. For instance the *'ama'ama*, a mullet, is only called *'ama'ama* when it is between about eight inches and twelve inches. In its adult stage of twelve inches and larger it is known as *'anae*.

Besides skill in the arts of fishing, the *lawai'a* had to master the sailing and handling of his canoe and be an expert swimmer. They also had to learn some of the skills of ocean navigation.

Kū'ula, 'Aumākua and Omens

Each *lawai'a* had his own *kū'ula,* or stone image of his fishing spirit. The first fish caught was always offered to this *kū'ula. Lawai'a* followed the many religious ceremonies, customs and *kapu* related to fishing.

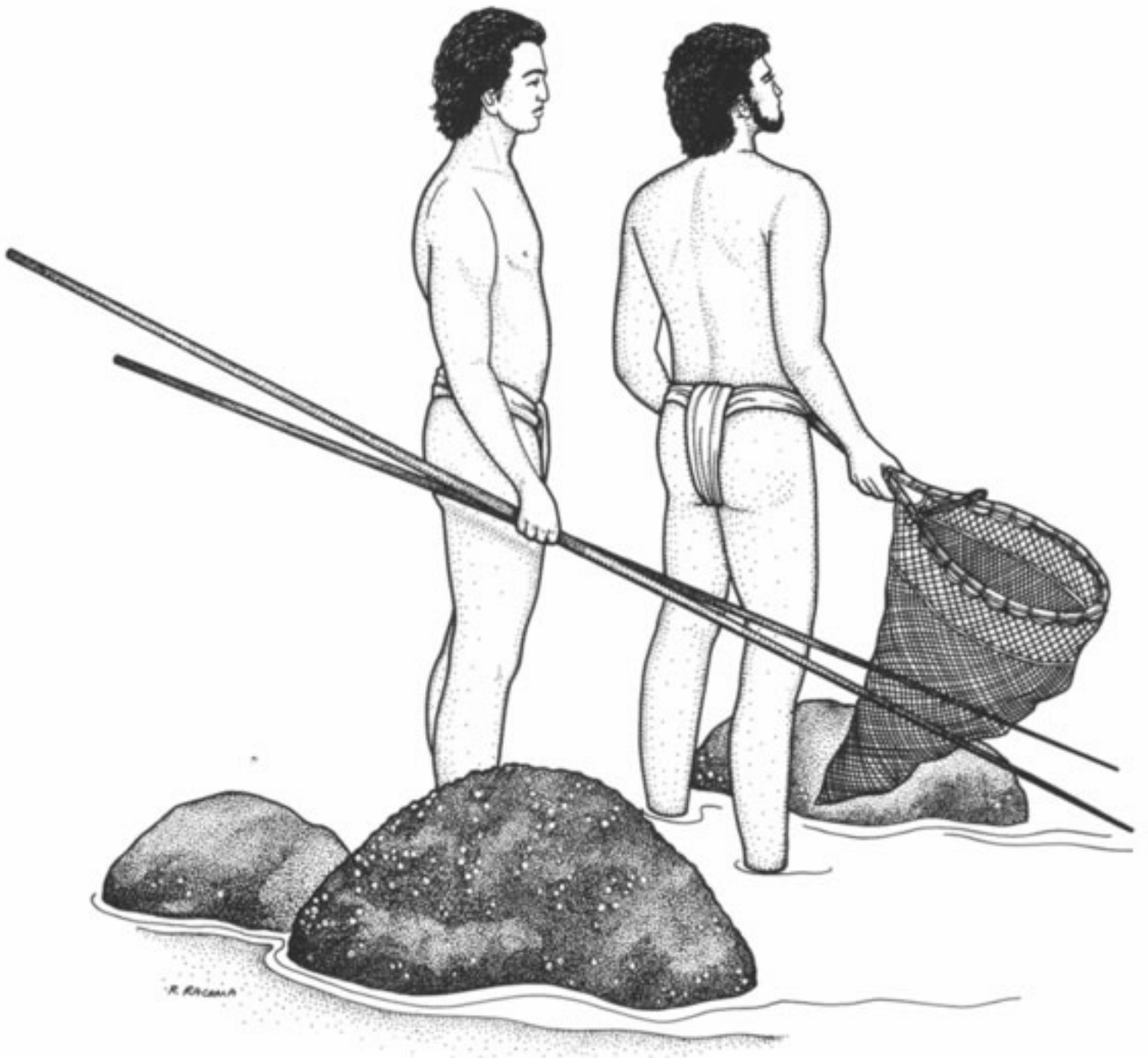
While each fisherman would honor his *kū'ula,* all who fished also depended on their own *'aumākua,* or family spirits, for assistance. Each day the *lawai'a* worshipped his personal *'aumakua* with prayers and offerings of food. *'Aumākua* were spirits the early Hawaiians believed could dwell within a physical form.

At home the day before going fishing, *lawai'a* lashed, or tied together, their fish hooks made from pieces of bone or wood.

Most *lawai'a* rose before dawn to go fishing. They gathered their equipment in silence so as not to offend the spirits and spoil their luck. While the *lawai'a* prepared for fishing it was *kapu* for others to make noise, talk with them about fishing or watch their work.

The unusual sighting of a large school of red fish, generally *ʻāweoweo,* would be taken as an omen, or a sign of a future event. The event most associated with this omen would be death, usually the death of an *aliʻi.* After the red fish left the expected but sad news would be of the death of a major *aliʻi.*

Schools of red fish were seen just before the deaths of Kaʻahumanu, Kamehameha's wife, and Nāhiʻenaʻena, his daughter. They also appeared before the death of Queen Liliʻuokalani in 1917 and before the death of Prince Kūhiō in 1921.



Nā lawai'a, *or fishermen, preparing to spear and net fish in shallow water*

Catching Fish

Most Hawaiians knew how to get food from the sea by their own efforts. Catching fish by hand was the simplest way and was practiced near the rocks in shallow waters. In deeper water around rocks wooden spears were used to take fish. Spears were also used at night along with torches which both attracted fish and lit the way of the fishermen.

When *lawai'a* took their canoes out to sea one member of a fishing group would often be left on land. He would serve as the *kilo,* or watcher. From a high place on shore he could spot schools of fish out in the water and signal their locations to the canoes far out at sea.

Lawai'a knew the use of various types of hooks for different kinds of fish and the best kind of bait for each. Much fishing was also done with nets and traps of many different kinds, shapes and sizes.

Conserving the Supply of Fish

Conservation of natural resources was a significant part of early Hawaiian culture. Plants were not taken from the forest without leaving enough in place to grow and replace those taken.

Neither were fishing grounds left without any fish. The *lawai'a* knew that, should all of the fish be taken from a special feeding spot, other fish would not move in to replenish the area.

Lawai'a caught only what was needed. Greediness or waste would have angered both the *ali'i* and the spirits. This helped to conserve the supply of fish.

Certain fish were not to be caught during certain seasons. At those times they were *kapu*. Fishing for certain fish was *kapu* during their spawning season, the time when fish produced eggs. These *kapu* helped as well to conserve the supply of fish.

The most important and well-known *kapu* was for *aku,* or ocean bonito, and *ʻōpelu,* or mackeral. Both were highly prized as food. They were not to be taken at the same time. *Aku* could be caught during the six months from January through June. During that time *ʻōpelu* was *kapu.* From July through December *ʻōpelu* could be caught and *aku* was *kapu.*

Aku and *ʻōpelu* are deep-sea fish which move in schools. To the early Hawaiians they were almost sacred. According to tradition they had saved Chief Paʻao from the storms at sea during his voyage from Tahiti to Hawaiʻi. Schools of *aku* and *ʻōpelu* had risen to the surface and calmed the waters.

Periodic *kapu* were also placed on *heʻe,* or octopus, mullet and other fish who produced their young in places not sheltered by rocks. There was no *kapu* on those fish who bore their young in sheltered areas.

Ponds were built so that *ali'i* would always have a supply of fresh fish. *Āholehole* (Hawaiian flagtail), *'ama'ama* (mullet), *awa* (milkfish) and others were raised, fattened and kept in these fishponds. There were both freshwater ponds and saltwater shore ponds.

Freshwater streams provided *'o'opu,* small fishes known for being exceptionally tasty, and *'ōpae,* or shrimp. Fishing in these streams was done by women and children. They used fish trap baskets and scoop nets made from the roots of the *'ie'ie. 'O'opu* were also caught in the waters of the *lo'i kalo.*

Fishing was a constant and necessary occupation, providing food for the families of the *ahupua'a*. But fishing was also enjoyed as a sport for recreation. Both the *ali'i* and the *maka'āinana* spent hours of leisure time fishing, as well as canoeing, surfing and swimming.

Nā Poʻe Hana Noʻeau: The Craftsmen

Hawaiians were creative and highly skilled in making clothing, household furnishings, musical instruments, tools and other useful items. Their handwork was done carefully and well.

The materials they used were those found around them, all provided by nature. Many of their products were made from wood.

The most important tool used by the early Hawaiians in felling trees and shaping wood was the *koʻi,* or adze. The head, or blade, of the *koʻi* was made from basalt, a dense volcanic rock. Some had handles made from the hard smooth wood of the *olopua* tree. Others were simply the rock blade shaped to be held in the hand.

From different trees came woods with different qualities—and Hawaiian craftsmen were expert at knowing which wood to select for a particular use and how to work each different wood.

Wood was used for *kapa* anvils and beaters, *poi*-pounding boards, food bowls, calabashes, canoes, cups, *kalo* cutters, dishes, *hula* drums and other musical instruments, homes, *heiau* images, breadfruit pickers, carrying poles, spears and other weapons and digging sticks.

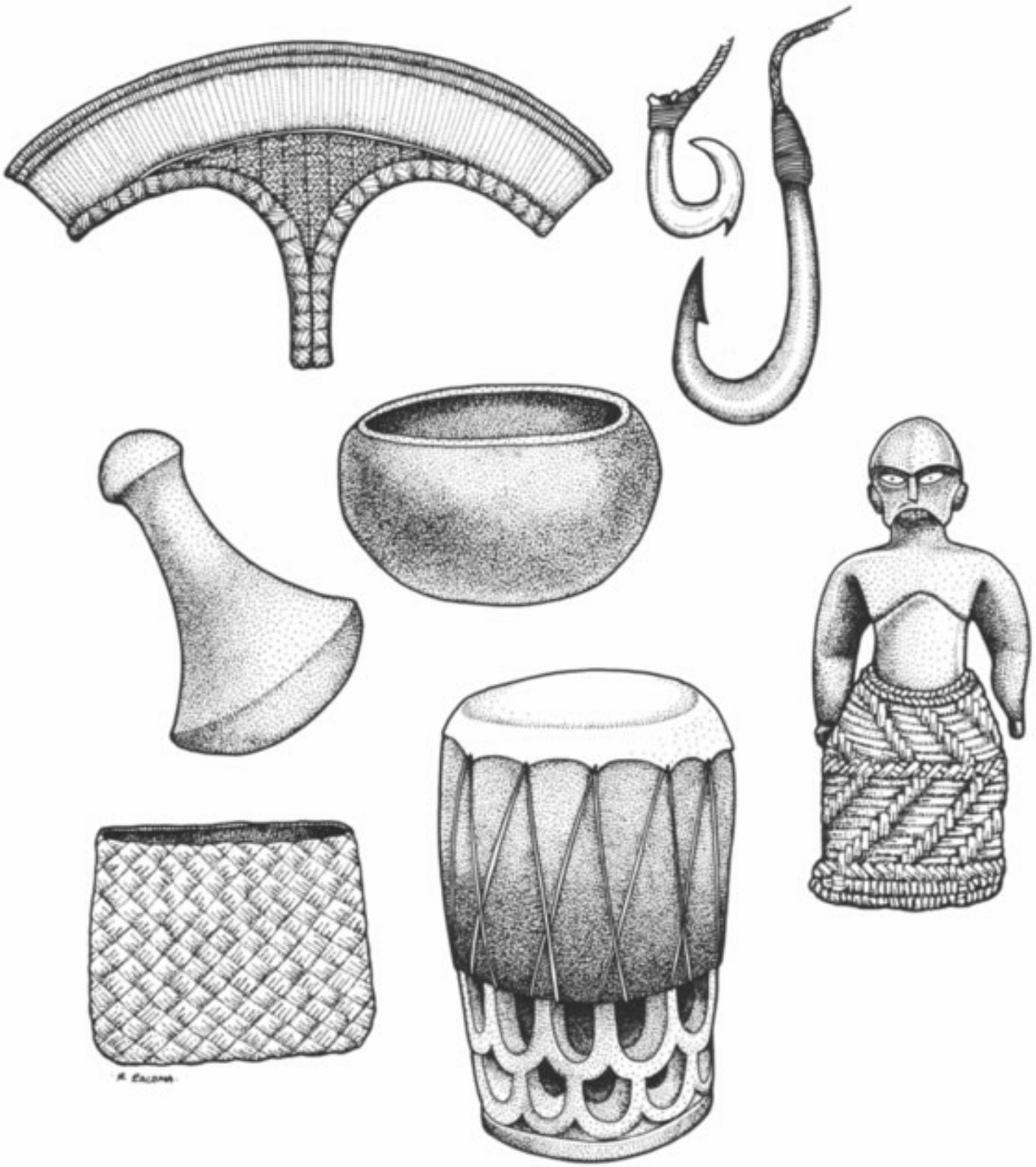
Hawaiians used other materials as well to produce objects for daily living.

They used gourds for canoe bailers, food bowls, cups, helmets, masks and musical instruments. Gourds also served as containers for fishhooks, fishing lines, food and water.

Seashells became fishhooks, scrapers and coconut shredders. Human and dog bones were used for fishhooks and woodworking tools. Bamboo and shark teeth were used to make knives. Bamboo was also used for musical instruments. Stone became adzes for woodworking, salt pans, and *poi* pounders.

The inner bark of various plants was used for cordage. Aerial roots of the *hala* tree were twined into baskets.

Some plants used by early Hawaiians produced a great variety of items. The coconut tree provided fibers from the husks surrounding the nut for sennit cordage; leaves for thatching the sides of houses; nut shells for cups, dippers and spoons and trunks for *hula* drums. Hawaiians had more uses for coconut trees than for any other plant in the *ahupua'a*. Every element of the coconut tree provided some useful item for Hawaiian life.



Hawaiians made all they needed for living from materials found in their environment

Other trees and plants might provide one part which would be used for several different items. Leaves from the *hala* tree were plaited by women into toy balls, baskets, fans, kites, mats, pillows, canoe sails and sandals. Leaves from the *kī,* or ti, plant were used for rain capes, cups and plates, medicines, sandals, thatching, food wrappings and as parts of lures to catch octopus.

Kapa-making

Using the inner bark of the *wauke* plant, Hawaiian women made the finest *kapa* found in all of Polynesia. *Kapa*-making was a lengthy process requiring knowledge, practice and skill as well as proper tools.

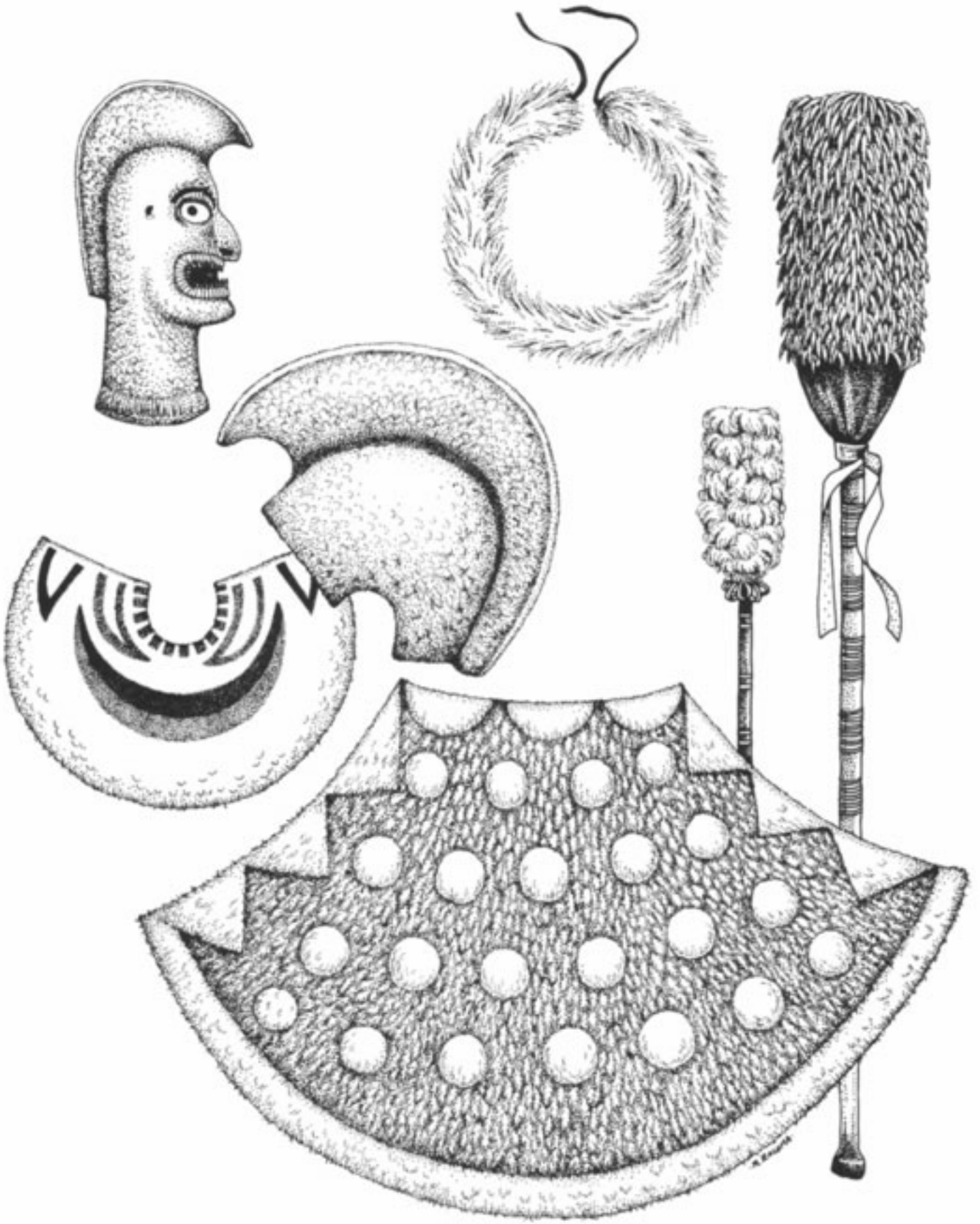
Kapa was decorated with various colors and designs. Dyes of different colors were made from different plant materials. Most kapa was used for bed coverings or clothing.

Hardwood beaters with geometrical patterns were used with wooden anvils in the finishing stage of beating kapa

Featherwork

Perhaps the most spectacular of all the crafts practiced by Hawaiians was their featherwork. Feather cloaks were the symbols of royalty and power in early Hawai'i. Capes, cloaks, helmets, images, *kāhili* and *lei* were made by highly skilled craftsmen. The work required much time and patience.

Birdcatchers trained in observing birds and learning their feeding habits gathered the beautiful feathers. They used the gum of the sticky fruit of the *pāpala kēpau* tree to snare the birds.

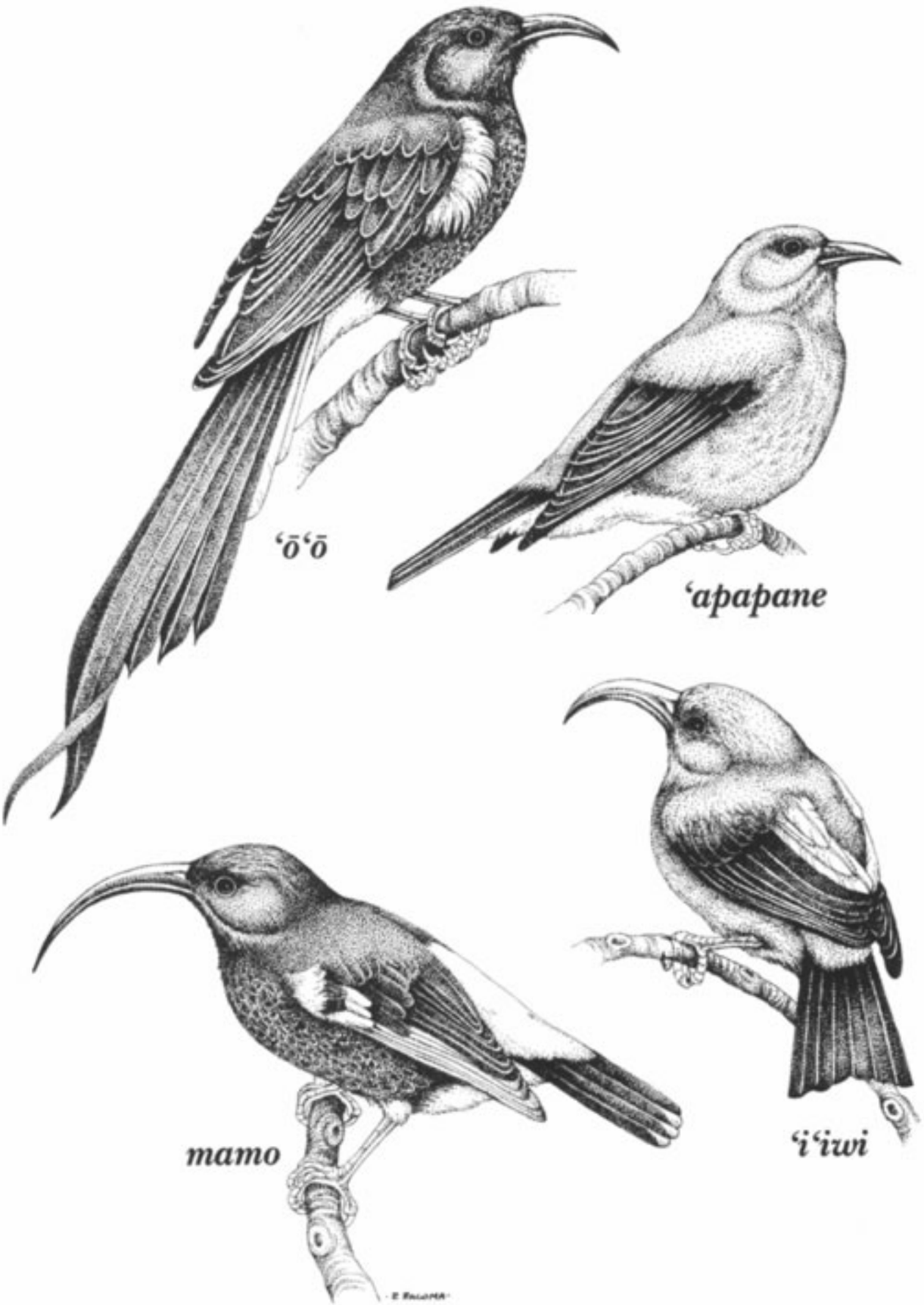


Early Hawaiian craftsmen created beautiful objects for their ali'i *from feathers gathered by the birdcatchers*

Birdcatchers spread the gum on crosspieces tied to the tips of long poles. Then they placed these crosspieces on or near branches where the birds would be likely to land.

After the poles were set the birdcatchers would imitate the birds' call. By carefully selecting the right locations and closely imitating the birds' songs, the birds were attracted to land on the crosspieces.

When the birds' feet became firmly held by the gum the birdcatcher lowered the pole and plucked from the bird the feathers he needed. In most cases the bird was then set free to regrow new feathers.



Birds prized for their feathers

If the choice feathers needed by the birdcatcher covered most of the bird's body the bird would be killed. This was true with the *ʻiʻiwi* bird who provided the brilliant red feathers favored by the feather craftsmen.

The skin of the *ʻiʻiwi* would be removed and dried and the feathers plucked and used later as needed. The body would be prepared as food. Fortunately, enough *ʻiʻiwi* survived that these birds did not become extinct. They can still be seen today in certain Hawaiian forests.

The First Object Made

It was very important to Hawaiian craftsmen that the first of any object being made—a first mat, first net or first bowl, for instance—receive the blessing of the maker's *'aumākua,* or spirit guardian. The blessing was not only for the first object itself, but for all the rest of the same which the craftsman would later produce.

The first one made was never given or traded away. It was guarded carefully because it really belonged to the craftsman's *'aumākua.* It held the *mana* for all similar future work by its maker and became the craftsman's precious possession.

ʻŌlelo a me Moʻolelo: Language and Literature

Hawaiian is a soft and melodic language. The use of frequent vowels and where they occur give spoken Hawaiian its gentle musical sound. All Hawaiian words end in vowels. Two consonants are never placed together—there is always at least one vowel between.

The alphabet of written Hawaiian was first defined by American missionaries in the year 1826. It consists of five vowels (a, e, i, o and u), seven consonants (h, k, l, m, n, p and w) and the *ʻokina* or glottal stop (ʻ).

In early Hawai'i the Hawaiian language existed only in its spoken or oral form. Chants, genealogical information, histories and stories were shared by word of mouth.

Special individuals were trained from earliest childhood to accurately remember and repeat extended genealogies, histories and stories. Messages from *ali'i* were delivered verbally to villages and districts by swift runners. Messengers followed trails circling the islands or traveled over the ocean by canoe.

People communicated with one another in other ways, too. Women sent messages over long distances by the rhythms pounded by their *kapa*-beaters on their specially prepared *kapa*-making logs.

Pū, or conch shells, were blown to announce the arrival of *ali'i* or to gather people together for other important events. Some petroglyphs, or rock drawings, recorded specific events. These may be considered as first steps toward a written Hawaiian pictorial language.

Story-telling provided hours of entertainment for both *ali'i* and *maka'āinana.* Spoken Hawaiian literature was separated into two groups of stories.

The larger group was called *mo'olelo. Mo'olelo* were the historical stories and traditions about family events, local happenings, heroes and spirits. The smaller group, *ka'ao,* were the imagined or made-up legends or tales.

Hawaiians composed poetry, proverbs and riddles about interesting things they saw in the world of nature. They made clever comparisons between nature and people. Many of these comparisons may be seen in proverbs and wise sayings, called *'ōlelo no'eau*. These were composed by the early Hawaiians and passed down until modern times.

Here are a few sample *ʻōlelo noʻeau* with both literal and explanatory translations from *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings* by Mary Kawena Pukui:

"*ʻUʻuku no ka ʻuwiki, pipī no ka ʻā ana.*"
When the wick is small it gives a tiny light.
(When one does little work, he should expect little gain.)

"*Uwē ka lani, ola ka honua.*"
When the sky weeps, the earth lives.
(When it rains, the earth revives.)

"*Ona hōkū no na kiu o ka lani.*"
The stars are the spies of heaven.
(The stars look down on everyone and everything.)

ʻŌlelo nane, or riddles, repeated by early Hawaiians were often humorous. Here are some recorded by Henry P. Judd in the book *Ancient Hawaiian Civilization.*

"*ʻEkolu pā a loaʻa ka wai.*"
Three walls and you reach water.
(A coconut)

"*Hānau mai ua poʻo hina.*"
When it is born, it has gray hair.
(Sugar cane flower)

"*He lāʻau hele i ke kaua.*"
A tree that goes to war.
(*Koa,* a word which means both the tree and a warrior.)

Mele: Music

Early Hawaiian music was in the form of chants. A chant is a type of song in which several words or syllables are sung in one tone. There were two basic chant forms, *oli* and *mele hula*. *Oli* were performed by a single person unaccompanied by any instruments. *Oli* were not composed for dancing. They were sacred prayers and genealogies of the spirits and *ali'i*.

The other form was *mele hula,* or *hula* chant. *Mele hula* were poems and songs composed for dancing. They had definite rhythms to lead the dancer and were often accompanied by instruments.

Chanted Hawaiian words and phrases could be called spoken Hawaiian poetry because of their rhythm and beauty. This poetry was often filled with *kaona,* the hidden meanings of words.

Chants were composed for many reasons. Some were chants of birth, death, genealogy, love, naming, praise, prophecy or war. A chant composed for a particular person became the property of that person.

Haku mele was the Hawaiian name for a composer of chants. He was highly respected as a master of language and chanting. He used and understood the power of *kaona.* His skills, as other Hawaiian skills, were handed down from generation to generation.

Hula

Hula is a dance honoring *ali'i,* historical happenings, spirits or some of the many forms of nature. It was taught to carefully selected men and women. The *kumu hula,* or *hula* teacher, was a dedicated and skilled man or woman.

Dancers learned *hula* in the *hālau hula.* The *hālau hula* was the large building, thatched on all sides, which served as their school room. This building was dedicated to Laka, spirit of the *hula.* Laka was also the spirit of *'ie'ie, maile* and other forest plants.

A kumu hula *instructing his student in the* hula

Inside the *hālau hula* was an altar to the spirit. On this altar would be a block of *lama* wood. The *lama* wood represented Laka.

In more recent times the phrase *hālau hula* has also come to mean the "school" as a perfomance group under a particular leadership.

Hula training was long and rigorous. Dancers were under strict *kapu* while learning the songs and dances. They lived at the *hālau hula* until they graduated with a ritual called *ʻūniki*. Only then were they were ready to leave the *hālau* and perform the dances and chants they had learned.

Musical Instruments

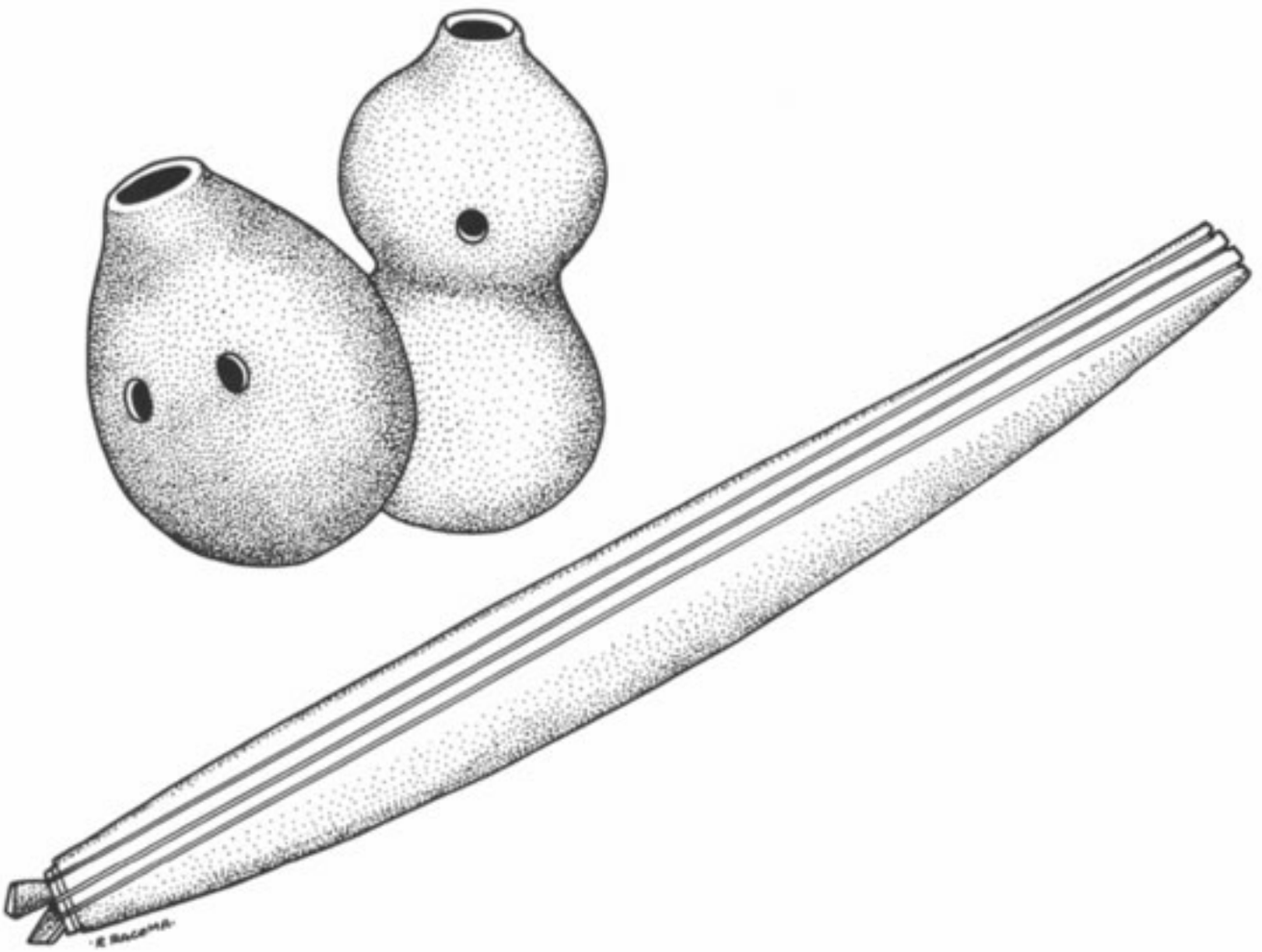
Musical instruments were used to accompany the *mele hula* but not the *oli* chants. Most instruments were made from plants. *Kā lā'au,* or beating sticks, were made from *kauila, koa* or *kou* woods. *Pū'ili,* or split rattles, were made from bamboo. *'Ulī'ulī,* or gourd rattles, were made from small gourds filled with tiny pebbles.

Drums included the *ipu heke,* or double-gourd drum; the *pahu hula,* or wooden *hula* drum; and the *pūniu,* or coconut-shell knee drum. Smooth water-worn lava pebbles clicked together were called *'ili'ili.*

The *'ūkēkē,* or musical bow, was the only stringed instrument in early Hawai'i. It was made from *kauila* or *'ūlei* wood with coconut sennit for strings.

Unlike the other instuments which were shared by many Polynesian cultures, the *hōkiokio,* or gourd nose whistle, was a special instrument known only from Hawai'i. They were made from small oval or pear-shaped gourds.

Lovers would serenade each other with musical bows, *'ohe hano ihu,* or bamboo nose flutes, and gourd whistles. Nose flutes and gourd whistles were not used to accompany the *mele hula.*



Hōkiokio *(above) were gourd nose whistles known only from Hawai'i; the* 'ūkēkē, *or musical bow (below), was the only stringed instrument in early Hawai'i*

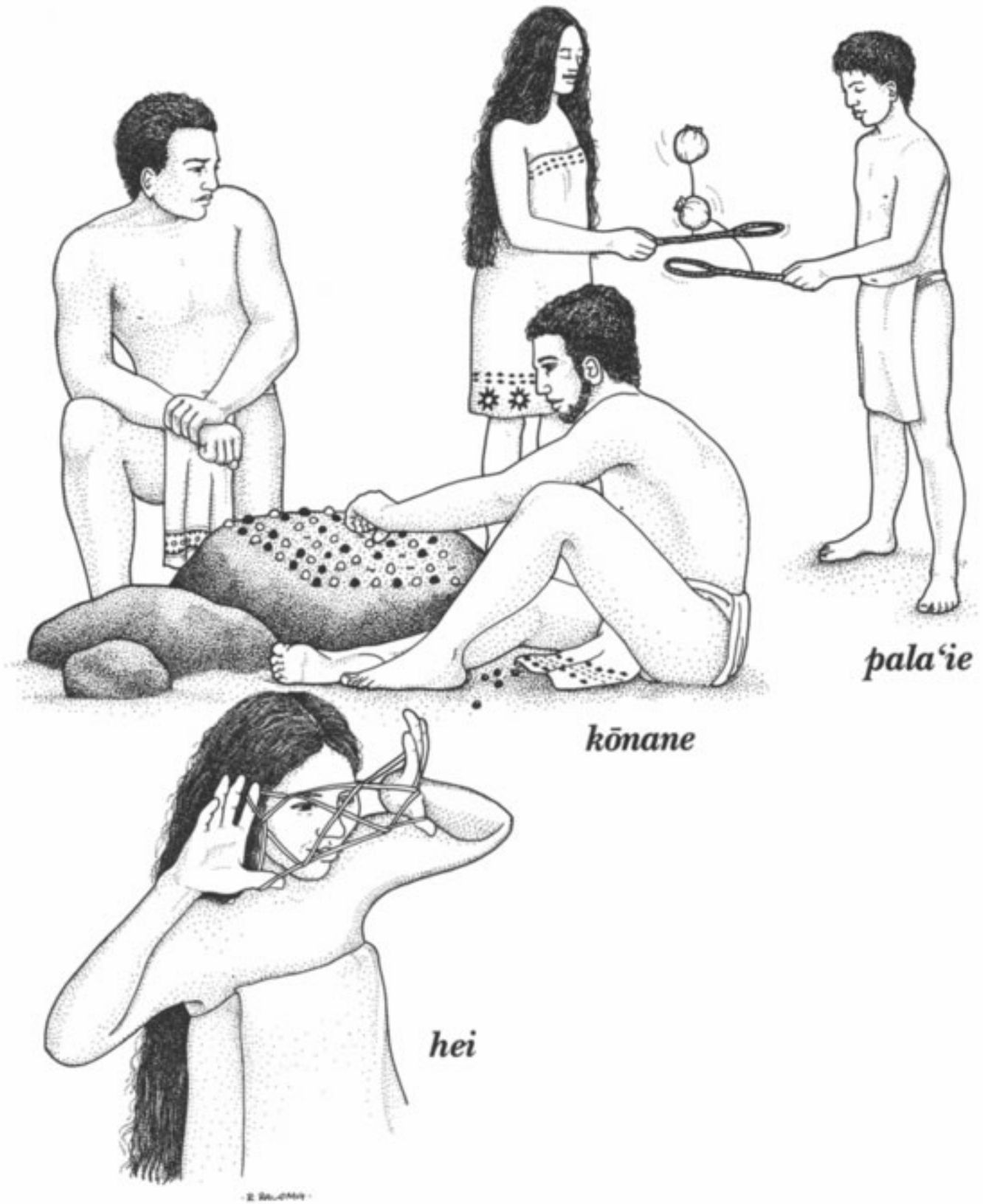
Nā Pāʻani: Games

Hawaiians were hard-working people who lived under a system of very strict laws. But they were also fun-loving people who enjoyed playing many types of games. Over a hundred different games were played in early Hawaiʻi.

Certain games were played by children as well as adults. *Hei,* or shaping images from string, was a favorite pastime. Usually at the same time as the figure was being shaped a story about the figure would be chanted.

Tops made from *kukui* nuts were twirled to see whose top spun the longest. Stalks of *kī* leaves or the butt ends of coconut leaves were used for sliding down hillsides. Children made toy canoes from coconut bloom sheaths and floated them downstream.

Kite flying was enjoyed. Kites were made as "bird" kites with wings, crescent-shaped "moon" kites, "star" kites with six points and round "sun" kites. Juggling games were played, most often by children who chanted as they tossed *lau hala* balls into the air.



Some early Hawaiian games

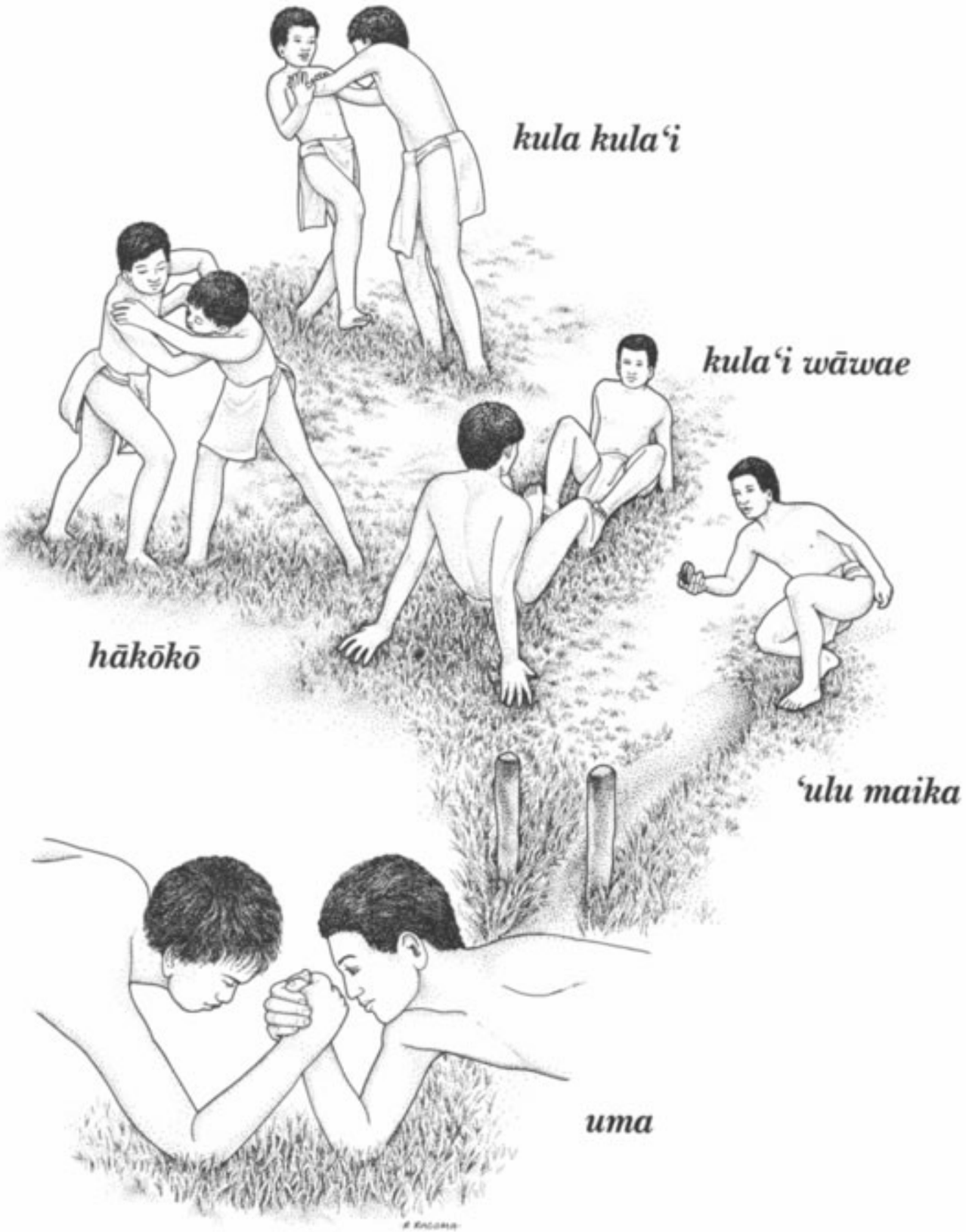
Pala'ie was a ball and loop game. The handle was moved so that the ball made a complete circle as it swung, striking the loop from both above and below.

Less-active quiet games were played in the *hale noa* in the evenings. *Kōnane* was a popular game somewhat similar to modern checkers. Markers were small black beach pebbles and white shells or pieces of coral. Games were played on wooden boards or outdoors on marked flat rocks. *No'a* and *pūhenehene* were guessing games where small objects were hidden.

During Makahiki sporting events were held and enjoyed by all. But the young men played most of the games all year round. These "games" were part of their training as warriors.

Older boys and men played games of strength such as *hākōkō,* or wrestling while standing; *hukihuki,* or tug-of-war; *kākā lā'au,* or fencing with spears; *kula kula'i,* or chest pushing; and *uma,* or hand wrestling.

Girls took part in *hākōkō noho,* or wrestling while seated; *kula'i wāwae,* or foot pushing and *loulou,* or pulling hooked fingers.



Outdoor contests of strength and physical skill played by young Hawaiian boys

In early Hawai'i only men played the bowling game called *'ulu maika.* At first bowling was done with a thick disk cut from a green *'ulu,* or breadfruit. That is how this game was named: *'ulu maika,* or breadfruit stone. Later the disks were made from stone, keeping the size and shape of the earlier *'ulu* disks.

Other games of skill for men were *ihe pahe'e,* or spear sliding; *kākā lā'au,* or fencing with spears; *moa pahe'e,* or dart sliding; and *'ō'ō ihe,* or spear throwing.

Beaches were places for fun and relaxation. People went into the ocean for diving, canoe paddling, surfing and swimming.

Some games were played only by the *aliʻi* and were *kapu* for everyone else. *Hōlua* sledding was a sport only for the young male and female *aliʻi*. Sledders raced downhill on a narrow sled twelve to fifteen feet long. The sled was fitted with a pair of hardwood runners.

The course ran down a steeply sloping hillside. It would be specially prepared by adding stones and dirt to even the path and then covering it with a thick layer of *pili* grass. Finally, *kukui* nut oil was spread over the grass to make the surface slick. The winner was the sledder who traveled the farthest.

Another game only played by *ali'i* used bows and arrows and was called *pana 'iole,* or rat shoot. It was played in a field or a small circular area enclosed by a low wall.

Maka'āinana first caught and collected many rats. At contest time these would be released into the shooting area where the low wall kept the *'iole* from escaping. *Ali'i* competed to see who could shoot the most *'iole.*

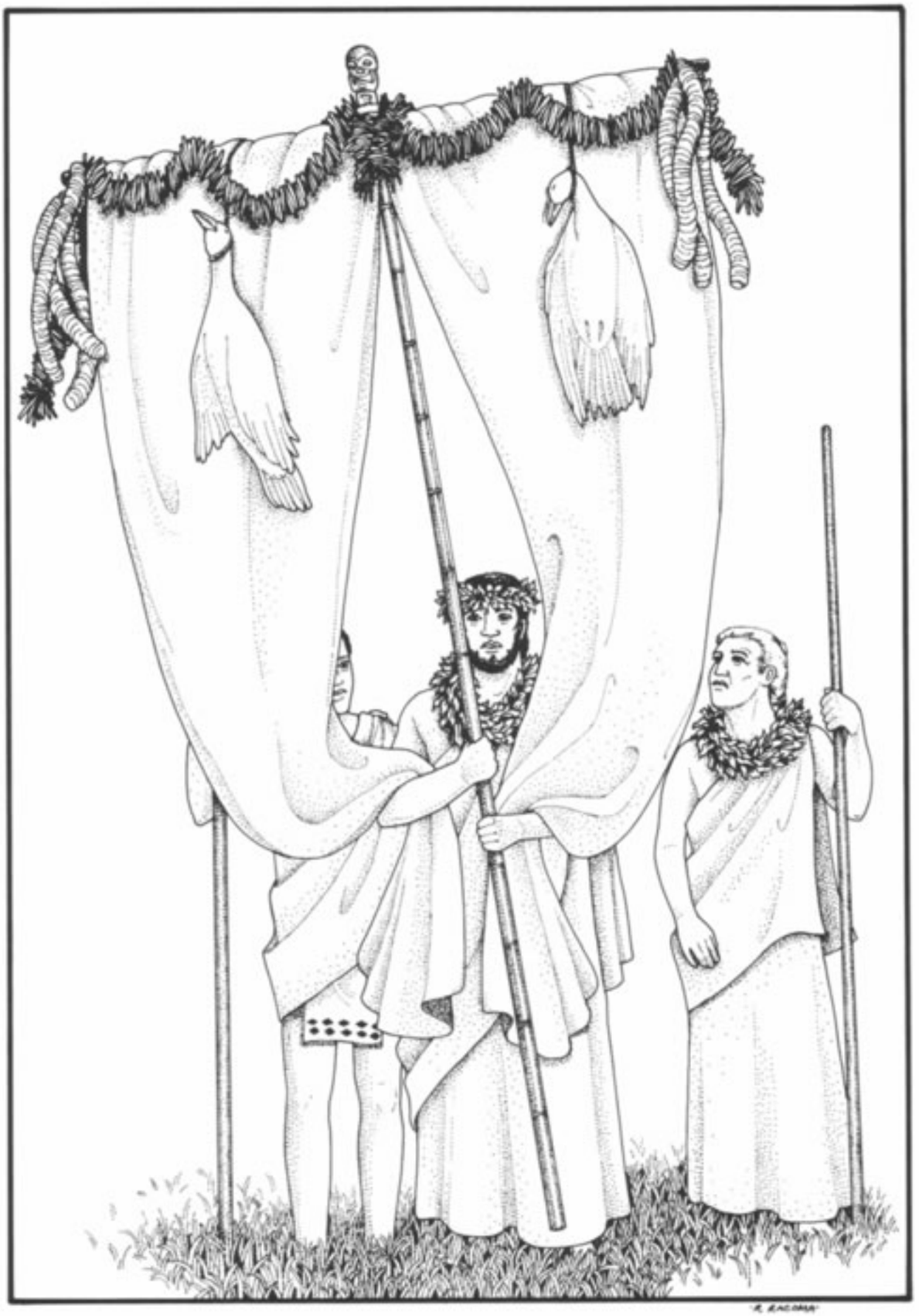
Ka Makahiki

Everyone enjoyed the season beginning about the middle of October. It was called Makahiki. Makahiki was a time of rest and sports and religious festivities for the *maka'āinana*.

All work not needed for immediate activities stopped. War was *kapu*. Only the preparation and serving of food continued.

This four-month harvest festival celebrated the traditional coming of Lono, the spirit of fertility, peace and rain. Lono made his annual visit in the form of an image carried around each island in a procession.

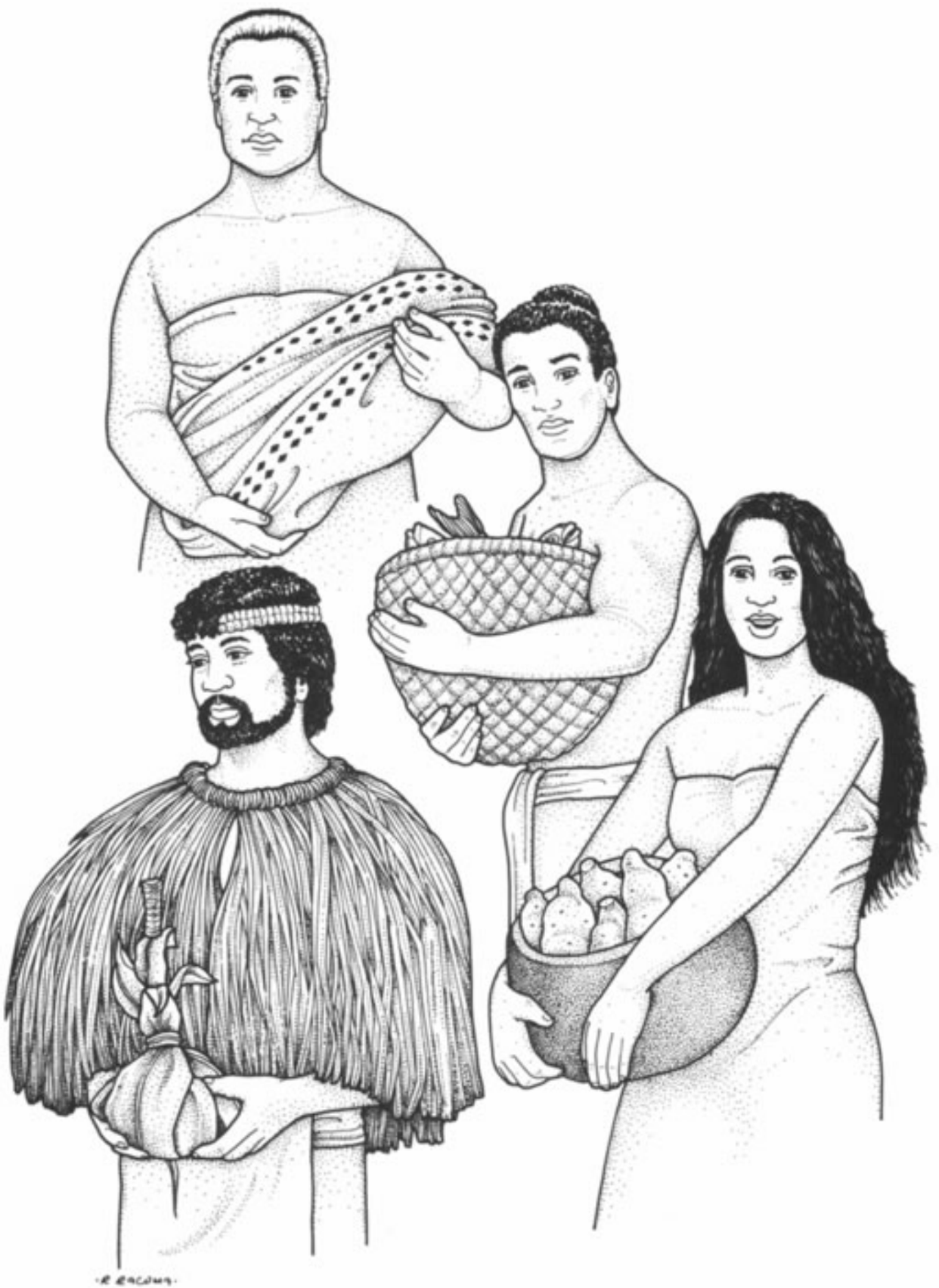
This procession circled the island with the ocean to its left and the mountains to its right.



The chief tribute collector carried an image of Lono in the annual procession around each island

The procession stopped at the *ahu,* or altar, of each *ahupua'a.* Here at the *ahu, kāhuna* dedicated to Lono received the *ho'okupu,* or tributes, from the *maka'āinana. Ho'okupu* were paid in food, bowls, *kapa,* mats, nets or other crafts products.

These *ho'okupu* were then given to *ali'i* of all levels, from *konohiki* through *ali'i nui.* Once the *ho'okupu* were accepted the Makahiki *kapu* on the *ahupua'a* were lifted, or stopped. People relaxed and the festivities began.



Maka'āinana *with their* ho'okupu, *or tribute, for the* konohiki

There was feasting. There was dancing. There were sporting events for both men and women. It was a time for all to enjoy themselves, a time for fun and laughter.

Before long four months had passed and the festivities ended. Once again people returned to their daily routines of craft-making, fishing, healing and planting within the *ahupua'a*.

Conclusion

We have visited an *ahupua'a* and traveled from the mountains to the sea. We have seen how our *kūpuna* worked diligently to provide clothing, food and shelter for their *'ohana*.

We have learned how creative and ingenious these early Hawaiians were in using the natural resources of their environment. We have been reminded of their deep love and respect for the *'āina*.

How wise were the *ali'i* of old to divide the lands of Hawai'i into nearly self-sufficient communities! Where else in the world did such a unique way of life exist?

Life was not easy for our *kūpuna.* They worked hard, they persevered, they believed in their spirits. And they survived, leaving us, their descendants, a priceless cultural legacy—a legacy which should make every Hawaiian proud to be Hawaiian.


R. RALOMA

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