



On the Cloak of Kings : Agriculture, Power, and Community in Kaupo, Maui /

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Monografía

When British explorers first arrived in Hawai'i in 1778, they inadvertently became witness to a society in the final stages of a transition from chiefdom to archaic state. This dissertation tracks the sociopolitical changes in the district of Kaupo, Maui, to understand how this region moved from a marginal hinterland to become the seat of Maui's royal power. Through analyses of archaeological remains, broad spatial surveys, rich oral tradition, and environmental conditions, Kaupo's history offers insights into the processes through which sociopolitical centralization fundamentally alters society from the largest scales of hierarchical organization and landscape modification down to the daily practices of the common people. At the threshold between chiefdoms and established state societies, archaic states provide a new framework through which to examine the rise of social complexity. Through Kaupo, this work improves understanding of archaic states by examining the sociopolitical influence on a peripheral community as surrounding structures became increasingly complex. While traditionally referred to as a marginal community, the district suddenly came to prominence in the early 18th century as Maui's sixth king, Kekaulike, chose it as his royal seat. With this single move, Kaupo became home to the island's elite, and by European contact was a dominant district featuring an intensified agriculture system, a palace, and two lines of major temples bounding the region. While Kaupo is absent from oral traditions prior to the arrival of Kekaulike, I demonstrate that many of the structures and institutions associated with the 18th century king actually had their antecedents hundreds of years prior. Extensive remote analyses, survey, excavation, and chronometric dating show that a system of ritual structures was established in the 15-17th centuries, creating a network of monumental architecture proscribing the agriculturally productive core. Combining these data with later oral traditions and historical documents from the 1800s, I argue that this region was highly organized and administered by local elites from the chiefly center at Mokulau. This area was later the home of Kekaulike, along with other notable, historical ali'i, as it had long been the center of Kaupo's sociopolitical power, and thus offered the arriving king an established base. Ultimately, multiple lines of evidence point to Kaupo as a far more important area than previously imagined, positioning it as a critical location in the development of Hawaiian statehood

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