Glossary of Hawaiian Terms

‘aha ali‘i  council of chiefs
ahu         boundary marker
ahupua‘a  basic local community land division, under
           the control of a lesser chief known as an ali‘i
           ai ahupua‘a
‘āina       land in general
ai noa ‘free eating’ – eating to deliberately break
           and challenge traditional food kapu practised
           by Kaʻahumanu and her followers in 1819
akua       a god, spirit or deity
ali‘i       chief
ali‘i ‘ai ahupua‘a chief of the basic local community
ali‘i ‘ai moku district chief
ali‘i akua  god king, term reserved for chiefs of the highest
           rank, especially pi‘o rank
ali‘i nui   great chief, paramount chief of a discrete, unified
           polity, also known as a mō‘ī
‘auhau      tax
‘aumakua   ancestral spirits and deities
‘awa        kava (Piper methysticum), the root of which was
           used to make a psychoactive beverage consumed
           by chiefs
haku‘āina  a landlord, most typically a konohiki or ali‘i ‘ai
           ahupua‘a level lesser chief
hale nauā  the house in which genealogical specialists gathered to ascertain the pedigrees of chiefs for decisions on their eligibility to join paramount chief’s households

hanai  adopted child

haole  foreigners

heiau  temple

hoʻokupu  tribute

hoʻomana  to worship, to empower through worship

hula  traditional dance in various forms

ihe  a short spear measuring from two to 2.5 metres, thrown or used to thrust

ilāmuku  officer of the paramount chief’s household responsible for maintaining the kapu associated with that household

ʻili; ʻili lele  subdivision of an ahupuaʻa

ʻili kūpono  a segment of the ʻili land division directly controlled by the paramount chief rather than the ahupuaʻa chief, the tribute from which was reserved for the paramount chief

kaʻa-kaua  sub-commanders within each retinue

kāhili  fly whisks or standards; symbols of chiefly rank

kahului  crescent formation with horns pointing towards the enemy

kahuna  person with specialist knowledge of valued skills, usually associated with favour from the gods such as canoe makers, herbal medicine specialists and priests

kahuna kuni  sorcery priests

kahuna nui  high priest

kahuna pule  priest, religious specialist

kalaimoku  war councillor, senior military adviser to rulers
kalana subdivision of a moku (district)
kalo taro (*Colocasia esculenta*)
kanaka commoners recruited by ali`i for their martial prowess
Kānaka Maoli indigenous Hawaiians
kanaka no lua kaua ali`i and maka`ainana who lived with the chief and did not desert him in battle
kapa tapa, cloth made from the bark of the wauke (paper mulberry plant, *Broussonetia papyrifera*)
kapu permanent or temporary sacred status through connection to the gods
kapu moe prostrating taboo requiring commoners and lower ranked chiefs to lie prostrate in the presence of a high-status sacred chief
kaukau ali`i collective name for lesser grades of chiefs
kāula prophet
kāuwa underclass enslaved by their enemies or descended from other kāuwa. Used for human sacrifices at luakini heiau (temples)
ko`a a fishing shrine dedicated to the god Kū`ula
kō`ele land division worked by commoners, all the produce of which was reserved for the benefit of the konohiki and ali`i
konohiki land manager for an ahupua`a land unit on behalf of the ali`i `ai ahupua`a (chief in charge of the ahupua`a)
kū`auhau genealogical specialist within the paramount chief’s retinue responsible for memorising the genealogies and mo`olelo of the ali`i
kuhina governors
kukulu straight battleline
kula dryland cultivation areas especially associated with `uala (sweet potato) cultivation
kupuna elder, ancestor
loʻi irrigated pond-field for growing taro
loko iʻa (loko, loko kuapā) fishpond on reef flat enclosed by a stone wall
luakini heiau temple where human sacrifice was offered
luakini kaua temple dedicated to the war god Kū
luakini poʻokanaka temple where human sacrifice was offered
māhele the land reform process from 1846 to 1855 which replaced traditional landholding procedures with Western-style individual tenure parcels held by the Hawaiian Crown, the government, and individuals
makaʻāinana commoner majority below the chiefly classes
makahiki four month, rainy season period of ritual, celebrations, and chiefly tax collection commencing when Pleiades became visible in November, and dedicated to Lono, the god of rain-fed agriculture
makawalu battle formation of small flexible groups for broken terrain
mālama care for, management of resources or people
malo loincloth
mana signs of the gods’ favour manifest in good fortune to people eliciting respectful treatment of individuals
moemoe night attacks
moe-pu aliʻi’s chosen companions in death
mōʻi paramount chief, see also aliʻi nui
moku polities
moʻo a land unit subdivision of an ʻili land unit
moʻokūʻahuhau genealogical heritage
moʻolelo traditional historical account
naha one of the highest chiefly ranks
nīʻauʻiʻo (Piʻo) close consanguineous marriage between high-status chiefs resulting in offspring of the most sacred rank, the aliʻi akua or aliʻi kapu

noa temporarily or permanently free of kapu (sacred status) by separation from the divine

ʻokana (also known as pokō) a subdistrict incorporating several ahupuaʻa

pahoa a hardwood dagger measuring up to 60 centimetres

pahupū literally, cut in half, name given to special group of Maui warriors in the era of Kahekili who tattooed half of their body with black dye

paʻiʻai storable form of taro produced by steaming, mashing and pressing taro corm into hard dry cakes

palaoa pae ruler’s right to whalebone washed up on shore

peleleu new larger, sturdy canoe design commissioned by Kamehameha after loss of much of his fleet between Oʻahu and Kauaʻi in 1796

pikoi used as a throwing club to bring down fleeing enemy

poi cooked and mashed corm of taro with water added

poi-po ambushes

poko (also known as ‘okana) a subdistrict incorporating several ahupuaʻa

polulu a long hardwood pike of up to six metres

puaʻa pig

pukaua commander in chief

puʻuhonua place of refuge and safety in times of conflict

puʻuku nui chief treasurer

toa warrior

ʻuala sweet potato (Ipomoea batatas)

wahine a woman, female
TRANSFORMING HAWAI'I

waiwai  literally plentiful water, applied to wealth in goods or property
wohi   high chiefly rank exempt from the prostrating tapu