

**MEMOIRS OF THE BERNICE
PAUHI BISHOP MUSEUM OF
POLYNESIAN ETHNOLOGY AND
NATURAL HISTORY. VOL. I. NO.4**

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Vol. I. No.4 by Various

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VOL. I.—No. 4.

Ancient Hawaiian Stone Implements.

BY WILLIAM T. BRIGHAM, A.M.

HONOLULU, H. I.;
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1902.




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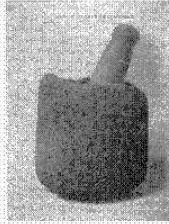
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STONE IMPLEMENTS AND STONE WORK
OF THE
ANCIENT HAWAIIANS.

BY WILLIAM T. BRIGHAM, A.M.



Memoirs of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum.

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PREFACE.

IN selecting the Stone Implements of the Ancient Hawaiians for the subject of the next chapter of what I had some years since intended should be a history of Hawaii, or rather of the Hawaiians before the advent of other and very different racial influences, it may be fair to explain to my readers, almost at the start, my method in this fragmentary edition of such information about old Hawaii and its customs as I have been able to gather during the past thirty-six years. And here I must be pardoned for thrusting a personality into what I greatly desire to make a clear and impersonal statement of facts.

When I came to these islands a young man full of enthusiasm, fresh from the teachings of Agassiz, Gray, Wyman and Cooke, eager to study nature in all her aspects, unbiased by theory, only anxious to learn, I found a land where traces of a native civilization were not all effaced. The American Mission had labored a little more than forty years and the results of their work were still vigorous: the missionary homes still existed, cases in the outlying districts, where I could talk with venerable men and women who had landed in 1820 when the young son and successor of Kamehameha had cast aside all that his ancestors had held sacred in religion, and was not yet ready to assume new responsibilities,—indeed he hardly gave much thought to the great change that was impending. One era was at an end, another was on the threshold. Hitherto intercourse with foreigners had but little modified the native ways of living. There had been no interruption of the ancient worship although it had been for years falling into mild decay. The admirable unwritten system of law regarding land tenure, water rights, fishing privileges, and the stern but generally beneficial kapu were almost unimpaired, and that little band of missionaries that went like Joshua's spies to view the land, and whose story is so charmingly told in Ellis' *Tour of Hawaii*, found people and things much the same as did the wrecked Spaniards when they knelt on the Hawaiian beach three centuries before.

I never had the pleasure of meeting William Ellis, but I have corresponded with him. I have met and lived with most of the other early missionaries, and if they were perhaps more anxious to remove those obstacles to eternal health which threatened the interesting people they had come to save, than to study the past history and work connected so intimately with what they considered a fallen state, their desires were sincere and unselfish, and they were always ready to place their journals at my disposal and to answer questions which must at times have seemed to them almost idle.

Other sources of information, now closed forever, were then open to the traveler among the Hawaiians. In the remote valleys the sound of the kapa beaters still echoed from the pali, and the ancient fabric was still worn to some extent. I have gone to rest in a grass house by the light of a stone lamp filled with kukui oil, after my native hosts and I had conversed by the light of the more primitive string of kukui nuts. I had for my guide on the island of Molokai a man who had officiated as priest in the native temple whose ruins he was explaining to me. Mateo Kekuaanoa, the father of two kings, and the most intelligent native I ever met; John II, Charles Kanaina (father of King

Lunalilo), King Kamehameha V., were all living and willing to contribute to the notebooks I was filling more with a desire of gaining and retaining information than with any view of future publication. Many humbler contributors added to the store when in mountain journeys they wrote for me the names they all then knew of bird or plant or place.

For years these notes were useless although they came back with me to these islands in 1888, but when a few years ago I expected to leave the Hawaiian group forever, I destroyed all that I could lay hand upon as useless baggage in my proposed wanderings. That any escaped was due to the change of plans before I had time to read them all through before consigning them to the fire. From this examination they are still fresh in my memory although it is quite possible that the details might have been more complete had the originals been still before me.

From these sources more than from the voyagers, I shall draw in the proposed sketches of the Hawaiians. I have left untold the tiresome accounts of battles, and I have been so unorthodox an historian as to care very little for thronal succession, if this term can be used where the kings had not even a stool to sit upon, or for the genealogies, for I have seen them falsified to satisfy ambition. I have already published an account of the curious Feather Work of the Hawaiians and I now take up the Stone Work, intending to continue the series with Wood Work, Mats and Baskets, House Building, Food and Cookery, Games and Sports, Warfare, Dress and Ornament, Religion, Kapa Making, Cord and Netting, Fisheries, Canoes and Voyages, Medicine, Chronology, Water Rights, Land Tenure and Kapu. These chapters are partly in order and will be presented as material on hand seems sufficient, and not necessarily in the above sequence.

In this chapter I have endeavored to illustrate all the genuine old Hawaiian implements, but constantly in the course of writing new examples have come to me and I cannot suppose that I have encompassed all within the limits of these few pages. It has been an object with me in all this work to present to those who cannot examine the collections in this Museum as clear an idea as possible of what they comprise, and as this must be rather in the nature of material for farther study and comparison, I have not encumbered my pages with many references to other works or parallel examples, which might exhibit the number of books on kindred subjects I may have read, but would add little to a knowledge of these Hawaiian matters. Where the material exists in this Museum, or is familiar to me in other museums, for comparison between Hawaiian and other Polynesian examples I have briefly called attention to the divergence or parallelism, but I have refrained, as far as possible, from mere conjectural relationships as proving common derivation, preferring to reserve such discussion until all the evidence at my command in all the departments of this series has been fairly presented.

STONE IMPLEMENTS OF THE ANCIENT HAWAIIANS.

A chapter treating also of the ancient Stone Work, Sculpture and such remains as are at present known either in Museums abroad or on these islands by William T. Brigham, A.M., Director of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum.

IN the Pacific Region it is not necessary to discuss the tools of primitive man: the first known inhabitants of the Pacific islands were many thousand years removed from primitive man, and the delicate questions of tertiary or early quaternary remains may be wholly eliminated. We need not, even for convenience, divide the remains of tools used here into stone, bronze or iron periods. There were no such divisions. Neither iron, copper, nor tin was accessible to the islanders, and from the time they landed on the bits of land scattered through this ocean, whether it be five or twenty centuries ago, they used wood, stone, bone or shell for the purposes where modern civilized man uses the metals or pottery, and this use was universal until little more than a century ago when iron and foreign tools were introduced here and there among the islands. Even on the Hawaiian islands metal tools were far from common in the middle of the last century.*

If in this region there was a counterpart to the fabled Atlantis of the lesser ocean, in the diluvium that removed its possible inhabitants all their work perished with them and the little islands which perchance serve as gravestones to the lost continent are unmarked by any inscription. The architectural or sculptured remains today found on Rapanui, Tonga, the Marianas and elsewhere are the work of people not remote from the present or historic inhabitants. There are tools of rude form and careless workmanship from the Pacific islands; forms that unconnected with their more modern representatives would puzzle the antiquarian, but there is nothing truly in the nature of incunabula.

If then the mystery of the birth of primitive implements is not to be approached on these islands; if the oldest of the tools cannot boast an age of more than twenty centuries, modern indeed in the history of the human race, what have we left? Simply the rude implements of an intelligent people who had arrived at a certain stage of civilization when they left their home and sought another in the Pacific. What they had formerly must have been greatly modified by the new environment, but in their

* In 1850 Rev. Mr. Forbes speaking of his district of Kealahou said, "Axes are very rare..... There is not a native carpenter who owns a set of tools, to my knowledge on this island (Hawaii), the population of which is 30,000 or more. Here and there one owns a saw and an adze; rarely any however except canoe diggers, and the tools they have usually belong to some chief for whom they work." Rev. H. T. Cheever, *The Island World of the Pacific*, p. 221. New York, 1851.