



The Lion of Keanakolu

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ABSTRACT

The archeological assemblage recovered during a partial excavation of the stone-walled cabin in Keanakolu's Stone Corral Complex (Site 50-10-15-24250) revealed a variety of nineteenth-century technomic and socio-technic artifacts. One of the most interesting and seemingly 'out-of-place' artifacts recovered was a pressed copper figure of a rampant lion. Research was done exploring the symbolism of lions; the techniques used to manufacture the figure; and seriation of lion motifs in an attempt to discover what it was used for and why it might have been left in a stone cabin on the slopes of Mauna Kea.

Introduction

On the slopes of Mauna Kea, in the North Hilo district of Hawai'i Island, there is a region called Keanakolu ("the three caves") where the remnants of a large stone corral and its associated outbuildings hint at past industry that is tangibly connected with Hawai'i's modern ranching culture. The 2005 University of Hawai'i at Hilo archaeology field school was tasked with excavating one of the complex's outbuildings — a stone-walled cabin, which included a built-in fireplace and now-collapsed chimney. The archeological assemblage recovered during the excavation was plentiful and varied. Taken together, this material culture presents a fascinating glimpse of the folk culture of Hawai'i Island's *paniolo*.

About the Site

The Stone Corral Complex of Keanakolu was first mapped in 2001 and added to the Hawai'i State Inventory (50-10-15-24250). During the 2005 field school, five contiguous 1 x 1 m units were placed inside the stone-walled cabin. The archeological assemblage recovered during the excavation revealed a variety of nineteenth-century utilitarian and socio-technic artifacts. Among the artifacts recovered were nineteenth-century ammunition, percussion caps, lead shot, and a musket ball; medicine and toiletry bottles; stoneware food-jars and other ceramic sherds;

nails; various faunal remains; and glass fragments of a brandy bottle and its foil labeled 'vieux cognac.' Another interesting artifact recovered was a pressed copper figure of a rampant lion (Figure 1). This purely decorative item is the most seemingly 'out-of-place' object recovered from the excavation. While the other artifacts have some utilitarian value—even the 'quackery' medicines, brandy, and French perfume can be looked upon as necessary when one lives and works at 6,000 feet with a herd of bovine companions—the Keanakolu lion is not currently associated with any utilitarian object.

The Facts of Keanakolu's Lion

Given the lack of specific comparative information on this decorative object, the lion figure presents a challenge in discovering what it was and why it was in a *paniolo's* cabin at 6,000 feet. The obvious place to start a query is with what *is* known. It was uncovered in the SE quad of the N16W15 unit. Other items found in the quad's screen-bag were: ceramic sherds, glass shards, nails, bone, and charcoal. The figure measures 2 cm wide by 2.8 cm in height and is made out of copper. Two 'finished' holes, most likely used for attachment, vertically bisect the figure. The back of the figure is concave (Figures 2a and 2b), in keeping with pressed sheet metal. The actual figure shows a lion in profile facing left on its hind legs with the front legs raised, like it is pawing the air. Since lions are sexually dimorphic with only male lions having manes, the lion represented by the artifact is obviously male. Overall, the emblem is very detailed for its size.

METHODS

Research was done by exploring representations and symbolism of lions; the techniques used to manufacture the figure; and a seriation of lion motifs in an effort to understand its use and place in comparison to the rest of the recovered material culture.

Historical and Present Representations

The first true lions appeared about 600,000 years ago throughout Europe, the Middle East, India, much of Africa, across Asia and into Alaska (World Book Encyclopedia 2004:340; O'Brien 1987:115). Other lion subspecies roamed North and South America during the upper Pleistocene (O'Brien 1987:115). "Although the lion achieved a terrestrial range greater than any

land mammal except man..." (O'Brien 1987:115), lions are currently found in the wild only in Africa and India. Despite their current limited range, lions have been depicted in art and architecture throughout the world. The earliest civilizations painted lions on cave walls or fashioned talismans for personal adornment. The symbol of the lion has persisted and "...been recognized throughout human civilization as a symbol of power and strength" (O'Brien 1987:114). Nicknamed the 'king of beasts,' the lion is a "well-known symbol of both beauty and power" and impresses with its "strength and royal appearance" (World Book Encyclopedia 2004:340).

Throughout history, the lion motif has been used in art and architecture, as items for personal adornment, and national symbols. Images of lions have been found in ancient Sumeria and Mesopotamia; in Coptic Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan; in India, China, Japan, and Sri Lanka; in England, Scotland, Greece, France, Germany, Italy and the Americas. Some of the motifs are ostentatious (Figure 3) and some are highly abstract (Figure 4). One of the most persistent uses is in the adornment of various modes of transportation — for example, a first-century Roman chariot fitting (Figure 5); a medieval harness pendant (Figure 6); and a contemporary automobile hood ornament (Figure 7).

A widely recognized modern use of the lion motif is in heraldry, where it was appropriated by sovereigns and leading nobles for their coats-of-arms. Though the use of various symbols emerges earlier, the science of heraldry was formalized at the beginning of the thirteenth-century and describes armorial bearings, or coat-of-arms, and their accessories in the proper terms (Grant 1976:I). The origins of heraldry lie in the European Middle Ages, resulting from the need to distinguish participants in battles or jousting tournaments, and to describe the various devices they carried or had painted on their shields (Figure 8). The earliest documented use of the lion in a royal emblem was by Henry I of England (son of William the Conqueror), who had earned the title of 'Lion of Justice' during his reign. It is said that at the wedding of his daughter, Henry I hung a shield painted with small lions around the neck of his new son-in-law (Pinches 1974:13).

The heraldic terms that apply to the Keanakolu lion are: dexter and rampant. In heraldry, dexter is used to "signify the proper right side of anything; that is, the side on the left of the spectator" (Grant 1976:76). In other words, each coat-of-arms has a right and left

side (i.e., dexter and sinister) which is determined from the perspective of the person carrying the shield. The term rampant refers to "any animal erect, having one hind paw on the ground, the other three paws and tail elevated, head looking to the dexter" (Grant 1976:117).

Symbolism

"Symbols express complex ideas succinctly and economically..." while conveying multiple levels of meaning at the same time. Symbols are multivocal, polysemic, or multivalent (Womack 2004:3). That is, symbols speak with many voices, have multiple levels of meaning, and make multiple appeals. Though both use and meaning are culturally assigned, there is still a logical association between a symbol and the thing it represents (Womack 2004:5). According to Novalis, a poet-philosopher of the late eighteenth-century Romantic movement, "the relation of a symbol to its meaning could always be reversed: the meaning could become the symbol, the content could become the symbolic form" (Rosen 1984:69). Whether the emblem of the lion was adopted by royalty because it symbolized strength, courage, and power or the qualities of that class infused the lion semantic with regality, prestige and grandeur, the result is a symbol recognized for both sets of appeals.

The placement or arrangement of the image is also important to the message being conveyed. For example, a lion passant (standing on all four paws) gives a sense of latent, harnessed power; whereas the image of a lion rampant (on its hind legs and pawing the air with its front legs) is viewed as a fighting attitude (Adeline 1966:329).

Technology

Before the industrial revolution, the technology of copper production consisted of a coppersmith hammering out objects, using an anvil to shape the creations. In 1769, John Pickering, a London toymaker, patented his machine for stamping articles out of sheet metal. Modifying Pickering's stamping press, another Englishman, Richard Ford, began to employ shaped dies which enabled pots, pans, dishes, and an unending variety of other things to be manufactured from sheets in bulk quantities (Alexander 1955:internet). The Keanakolu lion has two 'finished' holes and a resource on modern stamping press practices hint at possible past techniques: "The majority of holes in metal stampings are round...[and] may be either punched with press tools or drilled and reamed" (Strasser 1971:18). Once the stamping process was mechanized, the low overall

costs for simple manufacturing processes (Strasser 1971:3) enabled companies to mass produce wares for sale.

As for establishing a date of manufacture, Pickering's patent of the stamping press allows for a *terminus post quem* date of 1769 for the Keanakolu lion. Unfortunately, establishing a *terminus ante quem* date is not possible at this time. The item most stylistically similar to the Keanakolu lion is the contemporary automobile hood ornament and a specific date for that design has not been determined, but the company was founded in 1910 and the ornament is still sold today.

Seriation

Assembling various depictions of lions resulted in a huge array of time periods and styles. Initial seriation of the examples proved relatively straightforward. For example, the fantastical caricatures of Japan (Figure 9) and China (Figure 10) were not at all similar to Keanakolu's lion figure. Passant (on all fours) motifs, while interesting, were not comparable to the rampant lion. Most of the rampant lion images gathered are European, with one American example (Figure 11). Of these, the motifs of Scotland (Figure 12), France and America were more slender and stylized. The image that most closely resembles Keanakolu's lion is the present-day hood ornament manufactured in England (Figures 1 and 7 respectively). Both are realistic representations of a lion: a powerful body, a thick mane and an executable stance. Both lions are rampant, in profile facing dexter, have open mouths and a tail that curves into an 'S' while touching the lion's back. This stylistic trait may be attributed to the manufacturing process or the fact that without the 'support' of the body, the tail would easily break.

Tangents ... Just a Few

Economic Systems / Global Networks

In 1836, the Niles' National Register (published from 1811 to 1849) reprinted an article entitled "Trade with the Sandwich Islands" by an unidentified correspondent of the Boston Mercantile Journal. According to the article, in 1834, imports were brought into the port of Honolulu from the United States of America; Valparaiso and Lima; the coast of California; China; the Society and other south sea islands; America and England (via whaling ships); New Zealand and New South Wales; and the Columbia River and Russian settlements. For 1834, the total value of imports was \$272,000 with the United States of America accounting for \$82,000

(30.15%); the coast of California for \$62,000 (22.79%); China for \$42,000 (15.44%); and Valparaiso and Lima for \$36,000 (13.24%). The article mentions types of goods brought into the Hawaiian economy: from the United States, Chile, and Peru—American domestic cotton cloths, prints of calicoes, hardware, sheathing copper, cordage, canvas, naval stores, paints, iron, ship bread, nails, glass, salt provisions, rum, brandy, gin, wine, and furniture; from California—otter skins, bullock hides, and horses; from China—silk and cotton goods, nankins, teas, sugar, etc.; from the Society and other islands—pearl shells, turtle shells, sugar, cocoa nut oil, etc. The article also states that, in 1834, the total number of vessels to arrive at the Honolulu harbor was 159, 36 of which were merchant ships (Niles' National Register 1836: 440). While the correspondent's notations do not specifically mention an imported item decorated with a small copper lion, the information recorded establishes that by 1834 a healthy economic exchange of international goods flowed through the port of Honolulu.

In 1851, John Thomas Waterhouse established an import business in Honolulu. In 1872, an advertisement ran in the Pacific Commercial Advertiser that included an ornate crest of a rampant lion, shield and unicorn heralding John Thomas Waterhouse as an 'importer of English, French, American and German goods' (Figure 13). Unfortunately, a product with a rampant lion motif was not mentioned, but the advertisement further reinforces the presence of global trade and economic networks in nineteenth-century Hawai'i.

According to *Post Office in Paradise* and maps from Whitney's *Guide to Hawai'i* (1890 edition), native schooners were the mainstay of inter-island shipping well into the latter part of the nineteenth-century. Maps detailing early inter-island shipping and mail routes between the five main islands of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Maui and Hawai'i Island (Figure 14), in addition to over-land mail routes specific to Hawai'i Island (Figure 15), give a visual representation of how goods and correspondence moved throughout the islands. These routes of commerce and communication could well have transported goods not available for direct purchase from stores on Hawai'i Island.

Possible Associations

The 'finished' holes that bisect the figure would suggest that it was mounted onto a surface using small tacks or nails. There is no evidence that it had been attached to another metal surface. The four

main methods by which two metallic surfaces are joined are soldering, brazing, welding, and riveting (John 1953:23). Three of the mentioned techniques (i.e., soldering, brazing and welding) use molten metal to attach two separate metal pieces to each other; therefore, holes would be unnecessary. The fourth technique, riveting, is used when the join needs to support a substantial amount of weight (John 1953:30). This is not the case with the Keanakolu lion; the figure itself is lightweight and concave, seemingly for decorative purposes and not heavy use.

With all this in mind, there are limited materials to which the figure could have been attached, namely leather and wood, the most readily available materials at the time. The idea of the figure being mounted onto leather horse tack or an associated item is very appealing, possibly because of the already established use for the cabin, corral complex and area. With some objectivity, one quickly realizes that the lion figure was not made to withstand the heavy use of work-gear. However, it is possible that the figure was attached to a decorative tack item, like a ‘Sunday-best’ saddle bag or pair of chaps. As for the lion being mounted onto wood, the possibilities are almost limitless — a walking cane, furniture, and an endless number of decorative items. The lion of Keanakolu could have decorated a clock; a box used to store tobacco (Figure 16), snuff, or jewelry; or even a wood bowl. At this time, the figure’s association is only speculation.

CONCLUSION — THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF IT ALL

Midway through the nineteenth-century, international expositions (‘world fairs’) brought together the nations of the world and transformed the nature of international commerce (Francastel 2000:35). Communication and transportation also improved, exposing an ever-increasing rural population to cosmopolitan taste (Bishop and Coblenz 1982:126). Knowledge of sea routes developed parity between countries, “...causing earlier commercial motives to disappear” (Francastel 2000:35). A complete reversal of commerce resulted and “...instead of seeking light, expensive products to furnish to advanced countries, nations sought low-cost products to supply to poor countries in large quantities. Commerce was tied no longer to luxury, but to labor” (Francastel 2000:35). What does this mean to Keanakolu? The material culture excavated represents the last occupation of the stone cabin and speaks to the economic and social systems of that time. Goods produced in countries around the world were readily available, even to the

occupants of a relatively isolated stone cabin, 6,000 feet above sea level. Foreign companies could afford to produce and export items in mass quantities that had previously been available only to the wealthy. Shipping, trade and mail routes potentially allowed for the ‘mail-order’ of certain goods, while other specific faunal remains suggest a trade or social relationship with coastal dwellers. A Hawai’i Island *paniolo* had access to medicine from America; preserved food-stuffs from China; and perfume and brandy made in France. These are examples of technomic and socio-technic items that the cabin’s occupants deemed worthy of purchase to enhance their quality of life. Collectively, the recovered material culture presents an intriguing look at the folk culture of Hawai’i Island’s *paniolo*.



Figure 1

The pressed copper lion figure excavated from Keanakolu’s Stone Cabin.



Figure 2a (front) and 2b (back)

An example of convex (front) and convex (back). Lion door knocker (ca. 1900-1920s)



Figure 3

Cup in the form of a rampant lion - southern Germany or Switzerland (ca. 1625-1650 AD).



Figure 6

Medieval harness pendant - Europe



Figure 4

Solid cast bronze figurine - Mesopotamia (late second or early first millennium B.C.)



Figure 7

Contemporary hood ornament manufactured in England by Louis Lejeune, Ltd. The company was established in 1910.



Figure 5

Bronze chariot fitting - Rome (first century)



Figure 8
Stylistic depictions of some armorial bearings.



Figure 9
Lion-dog from Toji Temple - Japan



Figure 10
Ming Lion and Buddha - China (sixteenth-century)



Figure 11
The seal of the Pennsylvania National Guard



Figure 12
One Pound Silver (coin) with Scottish Lion - 1999.

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 White Marcella Bedquills, and other varieties,
 Cotton Turkish Sheets and Towels,
 White and grey Linn Huck Towels, Horse Blankets,
 White, blue, grey, scarlet and green Blankets, of various

Figure 13

Advertisement from the Pacific Commercial Advertiser
 1872



Figure 14

Map taken from Whitney's Guide to Hawai'i
 (1890 edition).

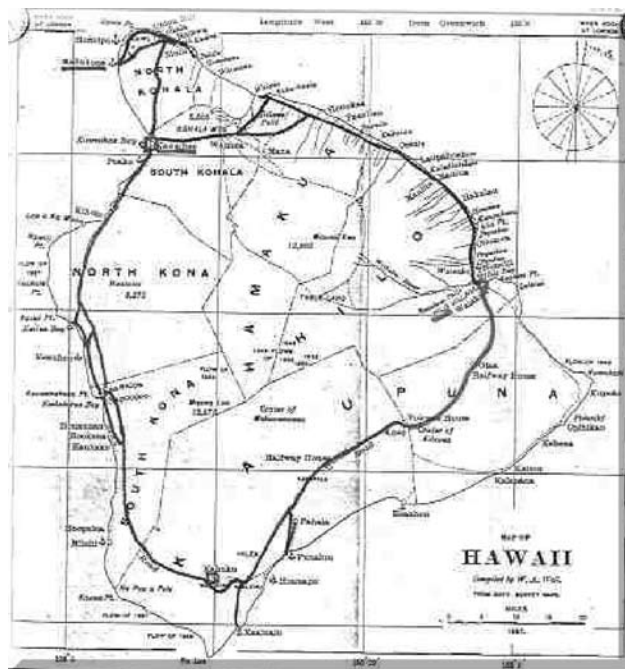


Figure 15

Map taken from Whitney's Guide to Hawai'i
 (1890 edition)



Figure 16

A wooden book-shaped snuffbox with slide-off lid and
 silver figures inset circa 1850.

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