Olo, Alaia and Paipo

The use of long (up to 18 feet), narrow *olo* surfboards (fashioned from *wiliwili* wood) was reserved for the hereditary chiefly *ali'i*, who also claimed exclusive use of certain surf spots. Violators of this *kapu* could be put to death in unpleasant ways.

Commoner people were restricted to the shorter, wider, and thinner *alaia* boards (6 to 8 feet long) or small *paipo* boards (ridden on the belly). The *alaia* were suited to maneuvering on the waves, whereas surfing on the *olo* boards was much more of a straight-line affair.

Varying descriptions of the techniques of the early surf-riding may be traced to these differences in the vehicles and the styles of surfing appropriate to each.