

Notes on the Kumulipo

The Kumulipo is a supreme work of world literature and a testament to the genius of the Hawaiian people: their combination of learning, poetry, and cosmic thinking. The Kumulipo (KL) merits and requires full commentaries drawing on a knowledge of Polynesian literature that we are only beginning to acquire today. The following is no such commentary but merely the notes I have gathered since 1974.¹

I have already published my general view of the KL and the interpretive method it demands² and will not reprint those texts here, which I recommend to the reader. I also recommend my essays on other Polynesian origin texts, to which I will refer generally below. All these writings are posted on my web site: <http://www.johncharlot.me>.

The KL is a 2102-line chant on the origin of the universe, composed around 1700 AD by an unknown author.³ The chant is not about the *creation* of the universe from nothing, a Western, Biblical view, but about the completion of the universal family tree through generations of *procreation*. To fail to see this is to interpret the chant from a false point of departure.

Like other such products of the oral tradition, the KL incorporates originally independent elements into a redactional framework. Using all the resources of the Hawaiian language – homonyms, ambiguity – and of Hawaiian literature – genres, symbolism, metaphor, references, allusions – the chanter creates a framework of extraordinary complexity. I describe it using the model of the warp and woof of a plaited *lauhala* or pandanus leaf mat. The long chant consists first of five horizontal levels of meaning that flow through the chant from beginning to end. These levels are then divided vertically, as it were, by sixteen periods or *wā*. The chanter has taken the occasion of the birth of a son into the chiefly ‘Ī family of Hilo to gather traditional knowledge into a new and compelling vision for his time. The process reveals how a great Hawaiian thinker pursued a dialogue with the many traditions at his disposal in order to create a personal and original view. Hawaiian

¹ Technical: All Hawaiian-language and non-English quotations are given as published or written. All translations in single quotation marks are by me; all those in double are from the cited source. David Malo n. d. is cited by chapter and verse from Lyon 2012. A complete scholarly edition is forthcoming from Lyon and Kale Langlas. For dictionaries, all references will be to the word discussed unless otherwise indicated. For spelling, I use the Pukui-Elbert dictionary although it conflicts with some modern practice, such as the recommendations of the ‘Ahaui ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i.

All my publications except 2005 are posted on my web site: <http://www.johncharlot.me>.

² E.g., Charlot 1983a: index; 1977: 498–501; 1983b: 65 f.

³ Lili‘uokalani’s attribution of the KL to Ke‘āulumoku is impossible because of the dates (Charlot 2003).

culture has always prized this combination of learning and creativity, which resulted in a continuous and variegated history of intellectual and artistic achievement.

The KL can be regarded as a map of Hawaiian culture, and scholars from different fields have found in it much of particular interest. For many Hawaiians, the genealogical information in the KL is of primary importance, but I say little about it myself. My notes on the KL are a minimal interpretation and can be supplemented on many subjects.

1. The Manuscript and Its Publication

The Kumulipo refers to a distinct type of genealogical text on the origin of the universe, one in which the head of the genealogy was Kumulipo and the islands originated by simply growing, *ulu wale*, not by being born or created.⁴ Thus the title of our text is *He Kumulipo* ‘A Kumulipo,’ not *Ke Kumulipo* ‘The Kumulipo.’⁵ Apparently, Malo knew of the general KL tradition, but not Kalākaua’s text. Jeffrey Lyon remarks on Malo (email January 27, 2010):

As I read Malo, when he refers to “Kumulipo” he doesn’t really seem to be referring to the specific *mele* as we see it in Beckwith, but rather to the origins tradition underlying that chant. The same appears to be true of his references to the other Hawaiian traditions of origin such as Palikū and Ōlolo. In the 1827 document, he provides the genealogies, but simply as genealogies, without any adornment.

Indeed, years later, Malo is searching for a text of the *mookuauhau o Kumuilipo* (July 1, 1847). The same impression is given by other Hawaiian writers: they knew the general tradition but not Kalākaua’s text.⁶

The KL survives complete in one manuscript collected by King David Kalākaua.⁷ Nothing is known about the manuscript or its provenance; thus a study of the handwriting and paper would be valuable. The Hawaiian language had

⁴ Malo 1:10f.; 2:7. As Lyon stresses, Malo regularly spells *Kumuulipo*, which requires study.

⁵ “Chant of the Genealogy”: 4, 13, is clear on this point and anticipates the publication of other Kumulipos. Beckwith 1972: 2f. Compare Rice 1923: 33, “the tradition known as ‘Ke Kumulipo’, ‘the Tradition that comes from the dark Ages’”; 34.

⁶ E.g., Kamakau February 15, 1868. Kamakau will collect materials widely and contribute to the development of the Kumuhonua literature, e.g., Kamakau 1991: 84 (note). Compare Poepoe 2/14/1906, who believes Malo and his contemporaries knew a Kumulipo that now has been lost; also 2/6/1906.

⁷ *He Pule Heiau* n. d. A single full copy, “O Keau i Kahuli wela ka honua,” is beautiful and, according to my spot-checking, accurate. My impression is that partial manuscripts, sometimes just lists of names, derive from this one, but a scholarly establishment of the text is needed. The manuscript has not been studied in itself. To my amateur eye, the writing looks older than the Kalākaua period; that is, I believe it was an older manuscript that the king added to his collection, as he states himself.

been reduced to writing in the 1820s, and at least until the late nineteenth century, Hawaiians wrote with careful accuracy. Nonetheless, there were variations among manuscripts in spelling, word separation, and punctuation. Spelling is especially difficult because macrons and glottal stops were not yet widely used and regularized,⁸ and Hawaiian words with the same letters can often be differentiated securely only with such aids. Apostrophes seem to have been used occasionally for glottal stops – often to distinguish between such pairs as *kau* and *ka‘u* – but their intent is not always clear. Punctuation had the characteristics of the irregular, nineteenth-century English practice, in which marks were used more often as guides for recitation than for clarifying the parts of a sentence. Word spacing and capitalization were inconsistent. Definite articles were often connected to their nouns, making them look like names (Elbert and Pukui 1979: 155), and definite articles of names were sometimes separated from their nouns, creating problems of interpretation. A fairly regular practice was to leave out one vowel when two of the same were juxtaposed. Finally, any manuscript is subject to error. Amending the text is, therefore, permissible, but only with good arguments. I have discussed these difficulties in the appendix: “The Kumulipo Manuscript.”

Kalākaua realized the importance of the work and used the title as a name for himself:

He ui, he ninau, owai ka Moi?

O Kumulipo o Kalakaua ka Moi (He Mele no Nuhou 1874)

‘A query, a question: who is the King?’

Kumulipo Kalākaua is the king.’

He inoa Lani, he inoa Haku,

O Kumulipo o Kalakaua (Kumulipo Kalakaua 1874)

‘A chiefly name, a lordly name:

Kumulipo Kalākaua.’

The manuscript was considered the most important item among those collected by the Papa no ka Hoakaka ana i ka Moolelo Kahiko Hawaii me Mele a me ka Mookuauhau o na Alii Hawaii or, its official English name, the Board for the Collection of Ancient History and Meles, and Genealogy of Hawaiian Chiefs, established in 1880 (Poomaikelani ca. 1884). The KL was listed first and described as “Oia ke Mele kahiko loa” “Very Ancient.”⁹ I quote the English:

⁸ The KL manuscript occasionally uses long dashes attached to vowels to show they are long and does contain some glottal stops, lines 256, 258, 385, 566.

⁹ Poomaikelani ca. 1884: 3. The book is bilingual with separate numbering for each language. Jeffrey Lyon translates, ‘This is the most ancient chant.’ Lu‘ukia Archer is writing a thesis on the importance of the KL for movements represented by the board and the Hale Nauā.

The Mele Kumulipo, owing to its peculiar originality is one of the richest acquisitions to the work of the Board. It is evident from this source of information, that the ancient people of these Islands had a cosmogony of their own, though differing in many respects from the regular geological order and classification of periods, still in an archaeological sense it is of exceeding interest. (15 f.)

Particular points of interest were that the KL completed the genealogies of David Malo and described a deluge (16 f.). The board also followed Malo in using the KL in a discussion of origins that included oral traditions, both Hawaiian and Biblical, and modern scientific theories. That is, Hawaiian traditions were seen as part of the world's great search for knowledge, *ka 'imi loa*.

In the last year of his 1878–1880 voyage, Adolf Bastian (1826–1905), the pioneering German ethnologist, visited Hawai'i after working in Sāmoa.¹⁰ Like other early ethnologists, Bastian had been trained in philology and was convinced that native literatures needed to be studied in order to understand native cultures. He thus devoted much of his effort in Sāmoa to learning the language and collecting and interpreting Samoan texts. Bastian did the same in Hawai'i. He stayed only about a month, but was helped by some of the most knowledgeable people in Honolulu, including W. D. Alexander, Walter Murray Gibson, and Abraham Fornander. Bastian was shown David Malo's Hawaiian-language manuscript of *Moolelo Hawaii* and a partial translation prepared under the direction of Lorin Andrews. Bastian made a partial copy with the help of a Hawaiian, who then introduced Bastian to other Hawaiians from whom he could learn from the oral tradition. Bastian fully agreed with the widespread nineteenth-century desire to preserve Hawaiian materials in a time of change (Bastian 1881: 66 f.). The materials he gathered and published are prime sources for a study of the rich intellectual life of the time.

The greatest treasury of knowledge was, fittingly, King Kalākaua himself, happy to display Hawaiian culture to a distinguished scholar. He showed Bastian artifacts (Bastian 1881: 55), and in their long conversations, the king stated that he had undergone priestly training so as to gain access to the secret teachings of Hawaiian religion. In these conversations, genealogical manuscripts, many of which could be found in Honolulu, were used as a basis.¹¹ Most of these covered only recent generations, but such genealogies formerly extended back to the beginning of the universe. To Bastian's happy surprise, he found such a complete genealogy in the king's collection: the Kumulipo, a temple chant recited at major ceremo-

¹⁰ Bastian 1881: 66–69, 103 ff. Bastian's Samoan research was published mainly in Bastian 1889, 1894; his Hawaiian mainly in Bastian 1881, 1883: for the KL, see especially 104–112, and the fold-out pages at the end of the book after 128.

¹¹ Accusations were made of the fabrication of genealogies during Kalākaua's reign (McKinzie 1986: 129).

nies.¹² At his very first audience, Bastian was shown the text, looked through it, and discussed it with the king. Kalākaua believed the chant was written down in the early nineteenth century. Although only a week remained of his visit, Bastian resolved to copy the text and was allowed to borrow it by the king.

Though he worked day and night, Bastian was unable to copy the manuscript completely, but managed to copy enough to obtain an outline of the whole.¹³ He hoped the king would make a complete copy later for the royal library in Berlin. Kalākaua would, in fact, publish the complete text.

Bastian also wanted to make a translation of the part of the text he had copied, but the language was so old that most of those to whom Bastian showed it found it unintelligible:

*blieb die Uebersetzung, und hier konnte ich, wie schon bemerkt, wenig oder keine Hülfe finden, selbst bei sonst guten Kennern der Landessprache, die der alterthümliche Stil der Verse sogleich abschreckte.*¹⁴

‘the translation remained to do, and for this, as stated earlier, I could find little or no help even from people otherwise very knowledgeable in the national language, whom the old-fashioned style of the verses immediately scared off.’

Even Andrews’ dictionary was not much help. Bastian, therefore, had to rely on his knowledge of Polynesian languages in general as well as on the dictionary and a grammar. Most especially he had the notes he had made in his discussions with the king: *nach den Andeutungen, die ich mir in den Gesprächen mit dem König notirt hatte* ‘according to the suggestions that I had noted in my conversations with the king.’ Both transcription and translation needed to be improved, especially in identifying the many names for plants and animals, but the general course of the chant was clear.

Indeed, in copying, translating, and interpreting the text, Bastian was dependent on Kalākaua’s help. His book (1881) thus provides us with the king’s own views, which I will discuss at points below. Moreover, Bastian’s report enables us to refute the accusation that Kalākaua changed the text – an accusation easily proved false by the unmodified state of the manuscript. For instance, Kalākaua in conversation connects the KL genealogies to himself,¹⁵ but has not added these later generations to the manuscript. Later, the king will add a genealogical note to

¹² *He Pule Heiau* ‘A Temple Prayer’ is written at the head of the manuscript. The notes added to Kalākaua’s publication of the text and Lili’uokalani’s translation describe the ceremonies Bastian alludes to.

¹³ Mainly, Bastian 1881: 77–99. The mistakes in transcription could have been made at the time of copying or publishing.

¹⁴ Bastian 1881: 103; see also 103 f.; 105, even such an expert in the language as Samuel Dole “*könnte beim ersten Durchlesen nur eine beschränkte Zahl unter den obsoleten Bezeichnungen feststellen*” ‘the first time he read the manuscript through, could only establish a limited number of the obsolete terms.’ Dole helped Bastian with a list of bird names (105).

¹⁵ Bastian 1881: 75. Research on this question had been done earlier, Lohelani 1877: the title of the

his publication of the text (Kalākaua Text: 67 f.). I will show below that points of his interpretation can be clearly refuted by verses in the KL, but Kalākaua made no attempt to change them.

Bastian's partial publication of the KL text was the first, preceding Kalākaua's complete publication of 1889; and his translation was the first before Lili'uokalani's in 1897. The KL thus became a subject of discussion in the important forum of German studies of the Pacific.¹⁶

Kalākaua's publication of the Hawaiian text made it available to Hawaiian scholars and to a smaller number of non-Hawaiians. The publication was part of Kalākaua's general movement to publicize Hawaiian achievements, both to bolster his own people's morale and to raise the reputation of Hawai'i in the world. For instance, he sent the book to the scholar Edward Tregear (Tregear 1900: 38). After Kalākaua's publication of the text and certainly after Lili'uokalani's translation, mentions of the Kumulipo are in all likelihood referring to that particular text.¹⁷

Lili'uokalani was immensely knowledgeable in Hawaiian literature, and her translation (1897) is an important interpretation of the text. A great poet herself, she often conveys the music of the line even if one disputes the sense (Charlot 1982: 297 f.).

Tregear recognized the difficulty of the KL and called for a Hawaiian interpreter (1900: 38 f.). An example is provided by the anonymous author of "Ke Mele Kuauhau Kumulipo."¹⁸ Using Malo, J. F. Pogue,¹⁹ Poomaikelani (ca. 1884), and the genealogical note in the Kalākaua Text, the author sketches the background of the subject. His personal contribution to this section is his successful attempt to show that the KL is older than the *Chant of Kualii* (Charlot 1985a: 32 ff.). He will use the Kalākaua Text, but does not consider it necessarily correct or the only possible text. He suggests corrections (5, 14, 16, 17) and invites others. He notes difficulties and suggests interpretations, which I will note below.

The most extensive study was Kukahi 1 and 2.²⁰ Following the Board for the Collection of Ancient History etc., Kukahi places the KL in the context of the world's search for knowledge, in which each country has a contribution to make

first section includes, "Na Hanauna, mai ia Kumulipo a hiki ia D. Kalakaua" 'The generations from Kumulipo until D. Kalākaua.'

¹⁶ Achelis 1895: 229 f., followed Bastian. Bülow 1897: 378, argued against the authenticity of the KL.

¹⁷ E.g., Kepelino: 175–182 (1904); 190 (Poepoe collection). Kekoowai February 15, 1923: 7. Ho'ou-lumāhiehie 1: 9/24/1906. Kaaō Hooniua Puuwai no Ka-Miki June 14, 1911: 14.

¹⁸ This is a partial typescript of the manuscript "Ke mele kuauhau Kumulipo, 18–." I use the original for passages omitted in the typescript. Although the manuscript is in the Poepoe Collection, it is not necessarily written by Joseph Poepoe.

¹⁹ Pogue 1858. These sections are taken from the Malo passage discussed.

²⁰ Kukahi's volumes cost 35 cents each ("Ke Kumulipo" May 16, 1902) or 25 cents ("Ke Kumulipo" May 17, 1902) and were available from the author ("Ke Kumulipo" May 16, 1902; "Kumulipo," May 23, 1902).

that mirrors its culture. Because Hawaiian traditions are transmitted orally, they display many differences. The KL is one tradition that Kukahi will help perpetuate to remind the new generations of the achievements of the old and also to make the new generations wise themselves (Kukahi 1: 2). Although concentrating on the KL, Kukahi will discuss other Hawaiian traditions, the Bible, and modern scientific theories both for the origin of land (1: 11–15) and of human beings (2: 53–58). Kukahi finds the KL superior to the Bible:

Ma ka lawe ana mai a noonoo i ka io ame ka mana o keia mau huaolelo hookumu honua, he ku maoli no i ka hohonu, i ka laula, ame ke akea, a i oi aku ke anoano ame ka ilihia mamua o na huaolelo hookumu honua o na hanauna o ka poe Iudaio. (1: 12)

‘Taking up and considering the meat and meaning of these words about the origination of the earth [in the KL], one sees that they truly achieve depth and breadth and height, and their awesomeness and fearsomeness are greater than the words about the origination of the earth of the generations of the Jewish people.’

Similarly, Kukahi feels that the KL is compatible with scientific theories:

aole no he kumu e hiki ai ke oleloia ae ua naaupo keia lahuikanaka ma ko lakou mana ana i na kumu i aina ai ma keia Paeaina. Ina no paha mai ke ahi pele i hoopuuia mai ai keia Paeaina, a ina paha i hana maoli ia e ke Akua, a na ka uhane i kailewa iho maluna o ka pilialo o na wai i puka mai ai na mea apau i piha ai ka lani ame ka honua; ua like no ia me ka Kumulipo e hoike nei ... (1: 13)

‘There is no reason that this race can be called foolish or ignorant in their opinion about the source from which this chain of islands was formed. If it was indeed volcanic fires that heaped up this archipelago or if it was really created by the God, or if it was by the spirit that hovered over the surface of the waters that all things emerged to fill the sky and the earth; this is all the same as what the Kumulipo is showing ...’

Also, Kukahi adds a lot of loosely related information (even a list of post offices!), apparently conceiving of the KL as a sort of encyclopedia of information about the old culture. Similarly, Ho’oulumāhiehie will use KL language, chants, and genealogies freely for his own purposes, as seen below.²¹

Kukahi’s work attracted favorable reviews. “Ke Kumulipo” (May 16, 1902) reviews both volumes of Kukahi, describing the vast extent of the subject and the main sections of the books. The reviewer states that these books should be obtained and cared for by all true Hawaiians, *ke kanaka Hawaii pono*. The reviewer’s words

²¹ Ho’oulumāhiehie 1, 2; e.g., 1: 9/24/1906. He regularly uses KL vocabulary; e.g., *ua kau iho la ke anoano ilihia maluna o lakou apau*, from KL lines 566, 574 (2: 12/8/1905). Two more examples will be given below. On Ho’oulumāhiehie’s publication history, see Charlot 1998: 56.

echo *Hawai'i Pono'i*, Kalākaua's anthem in which he identified true, loyal subjects who really belonged to Hawai'i (Charlot 1985a: 20–23). Accordingly, the reviewer states that the book explicates the founding and expansion of Hawaiian culture and the rightness of the unified government for which the race fought and suffered. Kukahi's books are invested with a clear political relevance. The reviewer hopes that two or three more volumes will provide even more information.

The short notice of Kukahi's volume 2, "Ke Kumulipo" (May 17, 1902), states that it is valuable for all Hawaiian homes because it shows how the people of old lived. The book can be bought at the office of the newspaper for 25 cents.

"Kumulipo" (May 23, 1902) emphasizes the religious aspect of Kukahi's second volume. He states that the people of old were truly religious. They prayed to the gods night and day in all they did, and the god, singular, really loved them and fulfilled their desires. Nowadays, the old religion is called idolatry and paganism, but the reader should consider the matter carefully and judge for himself. The Hawaiian of old spoke with his god the way the Israelites did in the Bible. The reviewer compares the Bible to the story of Makuaka'umana, a story used by others at the time to defend Hawaiian religion against the attacks of Christianity. The reviewer reprints a prayer published in volume 2 and concludes that this is a good book and *hoonaauao* 'makes [the reader] wise.'

The most extensive response to Kukahi's volumes was the newspaper series by Joseph M. Poepoe, *Ka Moolelo Hawaii Kahiko* (2/1/1906–9/29/1906). Like Kukahi, Poepoe intends to use the KL to show that Hawaiian culture had a respectable intellectual tradition and was not, as some people think, *he mau hana pouli, hupo, hoomanamana a Pegana hoi* 'a bunch of benighted activities, stupid, idolatrous and even pagan' (2/1/1906). Poepoe follows Kukahi in his understanding of the overall scheme of the KL and even in his speculations that the islands were once joined.²² Poepoe himself wants to join the Kumulipo, which he considers the oldest available tradition, and the Kumuhonua literature:

*Nolaila, i ka hoohui ana i na mahele moolelo kahiko Kumulipo a me Kumuhonua, ma ka hoonohonoho ana o keia moolelo, ua kapaia keia: Ka Moolelo Kumulipo–Kumuhonua o Hawaii, oia hoi, KA MOOLELO HAWAII KAHIKO.*²³

'Therefore, in the joining together of the ancient history divisions Kumulipo and Kumuhonua and the arranging of this history, this is called: The Kumulipo–Kumuhonua History of Hawai'i, that is, THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF HAWAII.'

²² Overall: Poepoe 2/13/1906. Joined: Kukahi 1: 13; Poepoe 2/5/1906, 2/17/1906, 2/22/1906, 2/23/1906, 2/24/1906, 2/26/1906. Compare Judd 1923: 33; on joining the Kumulipo with the Kumuhonua legends, see 33–46.

²³ Poepoe 2/17/1906. See also 2/1/1906, 2/8/1906, 2/15/1906, 2/16/1906. Poepoe is against a literal interpretation of the KL, 2/13/1906. Oldest: 2/7/1906.

The study of the KL continues today. In the 1920s and 1930s, Theodore Kelsey gathered interpretations from Hawaiian experts and formulated a mysticizing interpretation (e.g., Perkins 1991a, 1991b). Martha Beckwith's book is now the standard study (1972; first edition 1951). Rubellite Kawena Johnson is publishing a lifetime's work on the chant (1981, 2000, 2001). In recent years, interest in the KL has become keen in the Hawaiian community, and we can hope for an established text and a thorough commentary in the years ahead.

2. The Published Text

Kalākaua's Text is not academically established and even introduces changes without argument. Two changes are major. First, Kalākaua switches the places of the second and the third *wā*: the ocean/fish *wā* is, therefore, placed before the sky/birds *wā*. Since he followed the manuscript order in his discussions with Bastian (1881: 71 f., 120 f.), he must have made this change between the German's visit and his own publication of the text in 1889. Kalākaua has been followed in this by Lili'uokalani, Beckwith, and others.

I will refer to the manuscript's sky/birds *wā* as "II [MB III]" and to the manuscript's ocean/fish *wā* as "III [MB II]." I will, however, keep Beckwith's line numbers for convenience.

No reason was given for this switch, and I have found no discussion of it before Beckwith's. A possible reason might be found in Bastian's idea that the point of the fifth line of the fill-in-the-blanks stanza, discussed below, is that "das Frühere dem Spätern zur Speise dienend" 'the earlier [is] serving as food for the later.'²⁴ Bastian is using the example of Samoan war models in such texts: a genealogical series of matings and children is replaced by a series of victors and vanquished; big rocks are conquered by medium rocks, which are conquered in turn by small rocks, and so on.²⁵ Thus fish would come before birds because birds eat fish. The KL, however, is strongly genealogical, and the war model is not used for cosmic development.

Other arguments can be formulated against the switch. The normal Hawaiian form of organization is from high to low. This can be seen in the main organizing pairs: *luna/lalo*, *lani/honua*, *uka/kai*. Indeed, *luna* precedes *lalo* even when those words are not used explicitly.²⁶ The chanter follows this order often as seen below. Birds would thus be normally expected before fish. Moreover, the stanza empha-

²⁴ Bastian 1881: 70; also 107. Compare "Chant of the Genealogy": 15 f.

²⁵ Charlot 1987b: 100; 1991: 136, 141.

²⁶ N. B. Emerson 1909: 258, last two stanzas. Explicit *luna* regularly precedes *lalo* in older texts (Pukui-Korn 1973: 14) and modern (Charlot 1983a: 73).

sizes that birds belong to *both* sky and earth, making them a good transition from the previous cosmic sections.

The overall Polynesian (and even world) sequence followed by the KL is elements → plants → animals → human beings. The first *wā* treats the elements section in the prologue and the plants section in the epilogue. II [MB III] expresses this sequence better than III [MB II] because it places a greater emphasis on plants. Indeed, the prologue treats exclusively of plants, so the plant section of the KL is constituted of the epilogue of the first *wā* and the prologue of the second. Plants appear again in the epilogue along with birds. In contrast, plants do not appear in the prologue and epilogue of III [MB II].²⁷ Finally, in the variable fifth line of the ancient stanza, discussed below, the connection is clearly made between the plant section and the animal section: the plants provide the *hua* ‘fruit’ for the birds to eat.

The first line of II [MB III] connects its *wā* closely to the first *wā* and emphasizes the themes of male and female and sexuality that the poet is establishing at the beginning of the long chant. Moreover, the first three lines of II [MB III], lines 273–275, provide a sort of explanation for the device of parent pairs, which will be used in the first four *wā*. The corresponding section in III [MB II], lines 123 f., assumes that the device is familiar. Finally, on the level of human development, the sitting bird is less mobile than the *hilu* fish.

I will discuss some of these points in more detail below. I conclude here that no compelling reason can be found to switch the places of the *wā*, and the KL must be interpreted from the manuscript.

The second great change in Kalākaua’s published text is that the manuscript’s *He pou hee i ka wawa* is changed to *He po uhee i ka wawa*. Since the line is repeated often in the manuscript, the change is not correcting a single fault but is disagreeing with the clear intention of the writer of the manuscript. No reason is given for this change, and many strong ones would be needed for its acceptance. Moreover, arguments can be raised against the change. The phrase *he pō* is singular, whereas *uhe’e* is the plural of *he’e*. Also, *he pō* is unidiomatic, at least in modern Hawaiian, and is not found in the KL outside of this edited line. The manuscript, therefore, must be followed.

The difference in meaning is major. The relevant meaning of *pou* is “Post, pole, pillar, shaft” (Pukui-Elbert). A post is, therefore, slipping or sliding, *he’e*, into the

²⁷ To the contrary, one could argue that the emphasis on the ocean in both the first *wā* and II [MB III] is expressing a period prior to plants. But plants are already prominent in the first *wā*. “The Chant of the Genealogy”: 15, takes line 35 as the beginning point: *O ka hoomaka ana keia o na mea ulu o loko o ka “wai” ame ka aina nohoi* ‘This is the beginning of the growing things inside the “water” and also the land.’

One could also argue that the variable fifth line of the stanza of the first *wā* – *he wai ka ‘ai a ka lā’au* – is followed more neatly by that of III [MB II]: *he kai ka ‘ai a ka i’a*. *Wai* ‘fresh water’ and *kai* ‘salt water’ make a traditional pair – *A he kai a he wai ke ola* (Ho’oulumāhiehie 2: 1/8/1906) – whereas the line in II [MB III] – *He hua, he ‘i’o ka ‘ai a ka manu* – seems to break the pattern.

manuscript's *wawa*. *Wawa* is written without modern diacritical marks, and so its meaning is unclear. The only entry in Pukui-Elbert is *wawā*, a reduplicative of *wā*, in the sense of making noise. An example of the word in this sense being used with *he'e* can be found in Kamakau:

Wawa i ka lanakila uwa! Uwa!

Wawa i ke 'auhe'e, he'e, he'e

“Shout aloud of victory! Shout!

Shout to those who must flee, ‘Flee! Flee!’”²⁸

Although Beckwith reprints and follows Kalākau's text, she herself believes the manuscript is correct and a sexual interpretation is required (Beckwith 1972: 53 f.). This verse will be discussed below.

3. The Literary Form

The KL's survival as the lone example of a widely practiced genre gives it a quasi-Biblical status today. But texts on the origin of the universe were numerous in Hawai'i as elsewhere in Polynesia and could be based on different thought models.²⁹ Around 1840, discussing Hawaiian traditions of the origin of the islands, David Malo distinguishes between the models of birth (*hānau*), creation (*hana lima*), and simple growth (*ulu wale*).³⁰ Malo's scheme applies to all Polynesia, was used by Hawaiian authors, and has been rediscovered and accepted by modern scholars.

The birth model was the most common in Hawai'i, especially in the versions of the story of Wākea (sky) and Papa (earth).³¹ Birth models could be used in other ways as well: *Hanau ia ka aina hanau na Alii, hanau na kanaka, mai ka po mai wahi a ka moolelo* “Born was the land, born were the chiefs, born were the men from darkness according to tradition” (McKinzie 1986: 88). The vocabulary of birth is widely and frequently used along with the birth model: e.g., *hānau, ho'okauhua, piko, ēwe, ēweewe* (Fornander IV: 12–15).

²⁸ Kamakau 1976: 138. See also the chant for Keawenuia'umi, Fornander VI: 463, line 78, *wawa no i kuwa*; 465, line 144, *He wawa ko hope nei*.

²⁹ Beckwith 1972: 160–180. Charlot 1985b, 1991. Consult those articles for my references to Samoan and Tahitian texts.

³⁰ Malo 2. Charlot 1991: 132 f. Malo is often used by Hawai'i authors: Fornander V: 541; VI: 322 f.; Kukahi 2: 11–15; Poepoe 2/6/1906. Beckwith 1972: 153–159.

³¹ Bastian 1881: 157, Papa and Wākea are the usual view, “*Doch bietet sich noch sonst eine Mannichfaltigkeit der Auffassungen*” ‘Nonetheless, a multitude of other views are available.’ Kukahi 1: 14 f. Poepoe 2/2/1906, 2/3/1906. Fornander IV: 3, 13 seqq. (modern versions). For the birth or genealogical model in Polynesia, see, e.g., Charlot 1985b: 172 f.; 1991: 133–137.

The creational model was used in Hawai'i for singular geographic features, but no clear text exists for its use for the origin of islands or the universe as found elsewhere in Polynesia.³² Even the story of Maui fishing up islands is ignored in the KL Maui chant. The story of Kāne or sometimes Wākea creating the sky and earth from a split gourd whose seeds are used for stars is often mentioned in the secondary literature, but I have not found a primary Hawaiian text.³³ Poepoe (2/8/1906) describes a version – probably from the Kumuhonua literature – that uses a bowl and its cover, respectively, for earth and sky. The same description is found in an undoubtedly ancient prayer, but without an explicit reference to creative action.³⁴ Creationalism appears to be taken up first in Hawaiian-Christian literature, such as the hymn of Kekupuohi.³⁵

The model of growth for the islands, which has a deep Polynesian background, can be found outside the KL.³⁶ The model was based mainly on observation and natural scientific study, emphasizing impersonal, natural forces rather than personal gods. The model was based also on the general Polynesian conviction that things themselves – rocks, bones, words, people – have intrinsic power. Growth is recognized as a defining characteristic of the KL and the KL tradition.³⁷ The KL poet emphasizes the distinction of his model by carefully placing his Papa and Wākea tradition in the *ao* section, the eleventh to the fourteenth *wā*. Papa and Wākea are thereby excluded from any cosmogonic function, even as personifications of earth and sky. Their story is told as a court intrigue.³⁸ The KL author is emphasizing non-personal cosmic forces over personal or personified ones.

Another characteristic of the KL – and perhaps of the *ulu wale* model – is its lack of local references. Except for the appropriated Maui chant (lines 1983–2048), no KL passage is clearly attached to a real place. This is a strong contrast to the Wākea-Papa tradition, which recounts the birth of the named Hawaiian islands. Kukahi for one missed these local connections, to which he was accustomed, and interpreted the first human beings in the eighth *wā* as the first *Hawaiians* (Kukahi

³² See my sections on the Tagaloa, Ta'aroa literature in Charlot 1985b, 1991. Poepoe 2/6/1906 remarks on the difficulty of finding creational texts in Hawai'i. The one he discusses seems a late Kumuhonua text, 2/7/1906 and below.

³³ Kamakau 1991: 125, describes such a tradition. Seminar participant Ku'ualoha Ho'omanawanui-Meyer wrote a paper on these origin models.

³⁴ Malo 24:9. I thank Lyon for this reference.

³⁵ Charlot 2010: 35–44. See also Pukui 1983: number 1671, Christian propaganda against Hawaiian religion.

³⁶ Fornander IV: 3, 7, *ea, puka*. Charlot 1985b: 171 f.

³⁷ See the discussion of Malo above. Also Kepelino: 179. Poepoe 2/6/1906, *ka hoea ana mai o ke kumu honua*; 2/7/1906, *ulu mai*.

³⁸ Compare Tregear 1900: 43. For another ruse to have sex, see Fornander IV: 504 f. Similarly, myths were humanized into love stories in late Greek literature, e.g., Wheeler 1934: 124.

2: 53). The KL is attached to a family, the 'Ī family of Hilo, but not to a place. The KL thus gives the impression of thinking on a universal plane. The first human beings of the KL are the first anywhere, not the first in Hawai'i. This universality may be connected to the KL's comparatively rationalizing, non-mythical presentation of the development of the cosmos.

The above main models can be used together, for instance, birth and creation. In *Hanau ka Moku*, the island is born but then is described as a growing plant.³⁹

Accounts – marginal in Hawai'i but major elsewhere – are found that the islands were fished up (variants of the Maui story)⁴⁰ or laid as an egg:

among the many traditionary accounts of the origin of the island and its inhabitants, one was, that in former times, when there was nothing but sea, an immense bird settled on the water, and laid an egg, which, soon bursting, produced the island of Hawaii.⁴¹

All these traditions could be used with great creativity, for example in the *Birth Chant for Kau-i-ke-ao-uli*.⁴²

Finally, a number of modern origin stories are influenced by Christianity and modern thinking, most prominently, the Kumuhonua legends.⁴³ Indeed, many of the examples referred to above might be more modern than claimed.

Hawaiian literature has thus a wide variety of traditions and of variety within traditions, and many of these contradict each other or those with which the modern reader is most familiar. The interpreter of the KL must attempt to define as accurately as possible the particular tradition the chanter is using. Indeed, he may be innovating in ways that surprised even his original listeners. In general terms, the chanter is using the cosmic genealogy as his highest redactional level but often articulating it in terms of the *ulu wale* tradition.

4. The Language

The KL is essentially Hawaiian in that its expression depends on the characteristics of the language. Hawaiian has an extremely rich vocabulary, which was and is used by speakers. Not all Hawaiian words have been collected, and Pukui-Elbert, excellent as it is, needs to be supplemented by wider reading. Hawaiian was a very

³⁹ Fornander VI: 363. The chant is an extract from the *Birth Chant for Kau-i-ke-ao-uli* (Pukui and Korn 1973: 12–28, 198–204: 16). See also Fornander IV: 13.

⁴⁰ Fornander IV: 253; 21 ff., modern. Compare Fornander IV: 3, the islands after being born are found by a fisherman.

⁴¹ Ellis 1984: 430; also 1969: 115 f. Charlot 1991: 139.

⁴² Pukui and Korn 1973: 12–28, 198–204. Charlot 1983a: 109–112.

⁴³ Barrère 1969. E.g., Kepelino: 178–182, 190 ff. Fornander VI: 322 f.

productive language, and reduplicatives, for instance, were easy to create. The chanter of the KL seems particularly fond of reduplicatives. The reader should not be surprised to find forms that are not in the dictionary or that are there but with different glosses (Elbert and Pukui 1979: 66f.).

Moreover, dictionary glosses are the products of interpretation, and the tendency has been to include as many glosses as possible to cover all possibilities. Not every gloss is relevant. Not every meaning of a word is intended to be felt in every use. As with ambiguity, symbols, and allusions, we cannot assume without argument that glosses are present in our text.

Hawaiians spoke and composed and later wrote with many delicate shades of meaning. Some of these are difficult to recover today when we lack the possibility of long conversations with literary elders. As seen below, Bastian was told that the names of the parent pairs progressed from deepest darkness to the light, but with today's resources, we find it difficult to perceive the exact nuances.

As Hawaiian developed from Proto-Polynesian, it lost or changed several sounds. For instance, Tongan *hake* became Hawaiian *a'e*. This process resulted in a large number of homonyms – words with many meanings.

Poets used this feature to create density of meaning and different levels of meaning. The word *au*, used at the beginning of lines 1–3, 5, has fourteen definitions in Pukui-Elbert, the first three of which are relevant: “1. Period of time ... the passing of time ... 2. Current; to flow as a current ... 3. Movement, eddy, tide motion ...” The word is also used as a verb in these senses. The poet uses the word to place the listener at the first moment of the process of origin and to describe that time as a moving current, carrying the listener from the very beginning along one of the horizontal lines of his chant.

Similarly, the chanter plays with two meanings of the word *pi'o*: “Arch, arc; bent, arched, curved; to arch, of a rainbow ... Marriage of full brother and sister ... presumably the highest possible rank” (Pukui-Elbert). The chanter is also using two meanings of *lani*: sky and chief:

line 708: *'O ia wahine noho lani ā pi'o lani nō*

This woman lived on the firmament as a chiefess and had a chiefly, *pi'o* marriage

line 710: *Noho nō i luna ā iho pi'o iā Ki'i*

She lived indeed above until she descended bending to Ki'i (a human being).

By using the word *pi'o* in its two meanings, the chanter expresses the uncanny similarity and difference of the two couplings (Charlot 1983a: 42f.).

The practice of wordplay comes from deep inside the Polynesian tradition. Many of the pairings of land and sea plants are based on similarities of names (Beckwith 1919: 317). Those similarities are in turn often based on observation of similarity of form. These pairs are named in fill-in-the-blank lines, for instance:

35. *Hānau ka 'Ēkaha noho i kai*

36. *Kia'i 'ia e ka 'Ēkahakaha noho i uka*

Born was the seaweed [name] living in the sea

Guarded by the plant [name] living on land.

Such lines can be found elsewhere in Polynesia, even in literature on the origin of the universe.⁴⁴ Such fill-in-the-blank lines are a regular form in classical Hawaiian education, emphasizing the habitat or niche of the object named.

Besides the sound system, Hawaiian syntax was also reduced and, therefore, simplified. The regular first line of the ancient stanza, to be discussed below – ‘*O Kāne iā Wai'ololī, 'o ka wahine iā Wai'ololā* – uses *iā* to connect *Kāne* to *Wai'ololī* and *wahine* to *Wai'ololā*. But what is the nature of the connection? Hawaiian *i* or *iā* could mean ‘to, belonging to, connected to, by,’ and so on. The poet uses a word that can be understood in many ways and is happy with the density of meaning.

Hawaiian poetry can indeed content itself with placing one word next to another without explanatory connections, for instance, line 566: ‘*O kau ke anoano ia'u kualono*. A bare translation shows the difficulty: ‘The great fear settles on me mountaintop.’ *Kualono*, the word for the slopes just below the ridgeline, *kuahiwi*, is placed without explicit connection to any other word in the line. Does it go with *anoano* ‘great fear’? Does it go with *ia'u* ‘me’? Either is possible, and there is even a third possibility: the word could modify the whole previous section of the line, setting the scene. The same device is found in line 535, ‘*O mele ke amo a Oma kini*. *Kini* is found at the end of the line without clear connection. If it were to be connected to *Oma*, the expression would have been *kini Oma*. Rather, the word modifies the whole previous section of the line: the word corrects the possible misunderstanding that the work is being done by only one person, the *oma* ‘chief’s officer.’ See the discussion below at line 535.

The KL is the earliest datable chant in Hawaiian literature and contains even older memorized materials. Although Hawaiian seems to be an unusually stable language – perhaps due to the constant memorizing of older texts – some differences can be found in the KL from the usage of the nineteenth century. These are important for an eventual and much needed history of the language.

I have noted above the difficulties nineteenth-century experts in the language encountered in the KL. The author of “Ke Mele Kuauhau Kumulipo” writes on the words *Moha*, *-Moli*:

He poe manu kahiko loa paha keia o Hawaii nei? Ua nalowele [sic: nalowale] nae. O kekahi mea hoike keia o ke ano kahiko loa o keia mele. (17)

⁴⁴ Charlot 1985b: 171; 2005: 12, 207, 239f., 309ff., 458ff., 805. For a fill-in-the-blank saying, see Pukui 1983: number 1411.

‘Maybe a very old type of Hawaiian bird? It has disappeared. This is another thing that shows the very ancient character of this chant.’

Unknown words or words with unknown meanings are a common problem. In the Maui chant connected to the central genealogy (KL lines 1984–2048), the word *ua* is used in the numbered list of Maui’s deeds (lines 2000, 2002–2006, 2018, 2027, 2032, 2034). From the context, the word seems to be used in the sense of ‘deed, exploit, or action,’ but without an example from another text, Samuel H. Elbert did not want to put it in the dictionary. He thought it might be an example of *ua* 2 (Pukui-Elbert). Fortunately, a parallel has now been found in a ritual setting, a well-known context for traditional words and expressions that are no longer common currency: *hiki a ola ia ua* ‘this [ritual] action has reached life [been successful].’⁴⁵

Similarly, *manu* ‘bird’ in line 580 refers to an animal to be sacrificed, but all the animals mentioned are dogs. *Manu* in Samoan has the more general meaning of ‘animal,’ but this meaning has not been found in Hawaiian. However, a ritual term provides an old use of *manu*: *pou a manu* ‘post of the *manu*.’⁴⁶ The human sacrifice is either tied to the post or placed by or in its hole. The *manu* in line 580 is not a man, but it is also not a bird. *Manu* is a ritual term with an old meaning: the sacrificial animal.

The KL uses a shortened form that I have not found elsewhere and that is not recorded.⁴⁷ In line 488, the *-na* at the end of *ho‘opalipali* is a shortening, probably from pronunciation, of the *ana* of the *e...ana* construction. It is not *-na*: “Nominalizing suffix, with shortening of a previous long vowel” (Pukui-Elbert). That is, it is not ‘*ana* as in *ne‘ena* line 467, *ki‘ona* line 470, ‘*aina* lines 473 f.

The KL displays many old uses found in older texts, like Malo. A frequent example is the use of the singular where English would use the plural (Charlot 2005: 166, 245, 744). However, some differences of KL usage became obsolete earlier and parallels are harder to find.

A frequent KL difference is the use in the manuscript of *o* or ‘*o* in place of modern *e* or *e...ana*. That is, ‘*o* is followed by a verb rather than a noun. ‘*O* is used in these cases as a verb marker instead of in one of its functions with nouns.⁴⁸ I cite one passage among many:

⁴⁵ Fornander VI: 13. The phrase is repeated but with the misprint *ui*. A good example of the use of *ua* 2 in a chant displays the difference in use from *ua* as ‘deed or exploit’: Fornander VI: 418, line 14.

⁴⁶ FS: 205. Hale‘ole in Fornander VI: 154. A different view is found in Green and Pukui 1936: 58, 60, Pouomanu is a god name. Andrews: Pouomanu. Pukui-Elbert: *pouomanu*, their entry seems to be based on Andrews. *Pouamanu* is listed as a variant. These definitions do not help with line 580.

⁴⁷ Neither Andrews nor Pukui-Elbert records this shortening. See Elbert and Pukui 1979: 80–83. Schütz, Kanada, and Cook 2005: 129.

⁴⁸ Schütz, Kanada, and Cook 2005: 143 ff. Seminar participant Kamo‘a’e Walk remarked on this construction.

116. 'O he'e au loloa ka pō
 117. 'O piha, 'o pihapiha
 118. 'O piha'ū, 'o piha'ā
 119. 'O piha'ē, 'o piha'ō

I have already discussed line 566: 'O kau ke anoano ia'u kualono. Other examples in the KL will be noted later.

Examples of this use can be found in old texts, like sayings (Pukui 1983: number 2376), and occasionally even in modern ones. Indeed, modern editors seem to have changed some *o* to *e*. For instance, in *Na Mele Aimoku* (1886: 262), a line from Nī'au reads: *olono i ka uweke*. In Fornander (VI: 417, line 34), it reads *e lono i ka uweke*. *O maika'i Waipi'o* (Williamson 1976: 41) is often reduced to *Maika'i Waipi'o*. Even Bastian could misread *e mehe lau* for *o mehe lau* in line 598 (1881: 108). Indeed, Bastian's erroneous interpretation of *he'e* as octopus, discussed below, may result from his (and Kalākaua's?) misunderstanding of 'o as a noun marker rather than a verb marker (1881: 116). This mistake reveals that Kalākaua pronounced the marker with a glottal stop.

This old Hawaiian use might be comparable to the Samoan imperfective or incomplete action marker 'olo'o, which can be shortened to 'o as in *E lē 'o 'ī* 'He is not here.'⁴⁹ The modern Hawaiian constructions for imperfective or incomplete action are *e...ana* and *e...nei* or *ke...nei*. In fact, 'o...ana is found in the KL line 134, but the KL 'o is imperfective by itself like the Samoan word. Interestingly, *e* suffices for the imperfective in Samoan, whereas modern Hawaiian requires *e...analnei*. However, in line 378, *e* is used without *ana* or *nei* to mark an imperfective verb, just as if it were Samoan 'o or *e*. The use may be found in line 487 as well.

The KL uses the modern Hawaiian construction:

- Line 477. *Ke newa nei ka hele*
 Line 488. *E hoopali na ke kua* (see discussion above)
 Line 533. *E ku'u mai ana i ka ipu makemake*
 Line 1926. *E halakau nei i ka lewa*

I conclude that the particle 'o is being used in the KL as a verb marker in the aspect of incompletion (or imperfective).⁵⁰

The KL Hawaiian seems, therefore, to be in the process of change. By far the most frequent is the use of 'o by itself. However, 'o can be supplemented by *ana*

⁴⁹ Lyon argues that 'o is the cognate of the Māori *ka*: "It shows that the following content word(s) is being used as a verb without providing any more detail regarding time or aspect" (personal communication).

⁵⁰ Lyon disagrees with my analysis and is writing an article identifying this use of 'o with Māori *ka*.

and replaced by *e*. That is, the language is changing towards modern Hawaiian. Modern forms themselves are also used.

This may have been part of a general change from *o* to *e*. \bar{O} is recognized as an “Imperative marker, perhaps less emphatic than the more common *e*.”⁵¹ In a chant for Keawenuia‘umi, *ou* is used as an imperative marker for *e* (Fornander VI: 469, line 276) as is *oi* (500, line 44). In the chant for Kahahana, the old form *oi* is used instead of *ai* (Fornander VI: 305 note 16). *I hea* would now be used instead of *e hele ana oe o hea?* (Fornander V: 219). The problem remains of the possible presence of typographical errors.

Another non-modern use is that of *mehe*.⁵² In line 610, *Ho‘ola‘ila‘i mehe ka pō he‘enalu mamao*, the word *mehe* cannot be understood in the modern way described in Pukui-Elbert: *me* + *he*. *Me* is “Like, as” (*me* 2), and *he* is the indefinite article. *Mehe* is thus a preposition “Like, as though, as if.” *Me he wa‘a* means ‘like a boat.’ But the definite article *ka* could not be placed after the indefinite article *he* as it is in line 610. Therefore, *mehe* is a different word for the KL chanter, a verb that means ‘to be like.’

Mehe can thus easily be used with the verb marker ‘*o*. In line 551, ‘*O mehe ka ‘aki‘aki a nei hā‘ula*, ‘*o* is a verb marker. The difficulty of applying the modern use of *mehe* is that the word would be a preposition “Like, as though, as if” (Pukui-Elbert). Modern constructions with *mehe* are sometimes odd or complicated, but none correspond to the one here. Nonetheless, the construction of initial ‘*o* as a verb marker is so common in the KL that no other use is possible here. ‘*O* then indicates that *mehe* is being treated as a verb ‘to be like.’ Lines 549f. and line 551 are said to be describing something similar: the nibbling of the rats is like a tax on the produce. ‘*O mehe* is found also in line 598.

The above discussion bears on the meaning of *e* in several lines of the KL. *E* can be purposive, as it clearly is in line 4. In line 378, it is imperfective or an incomplete action marker and cannot be purposive because it begins the sentence. Arguments could be made for *e* being either purposive or imperfective in lines 257, 487.

Similarly, *i* appears in the KL and in other texts to mark purpose.⁵³ This is a recognized use, but is more common in older texts. Again, problems arise in lines like 593 when it is not clear whether the *i* marks purpose or past tense.

Some of the KL problems of use and definition can be solved by studying the cognates in Polynesian texts on the origin of the universe. Indeed, vocabulary and themes are tenacious within Polynesian genres, and Kepelino, a Hawaiian intel-

⁵¹ Pukui-Elbert: \bar{o} 6. For further examples see Fornander V: 101, 127, 135. The following example is hortative, showing that *o* could replace *e* for several purposes; Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 3/5/1906, *O lele ka pule*. The use of *o* could be examined also in Fornander VI: 500, line 58; 534 (*o* inst of *i*?).

⁵² Elbert and Pukui 1979: 156. Compare Schütz, Kanada, and Cook 2005: 73, 123 (like Schütz, I disagree with one theory mentioned that *he* is being used as a verb).

⁵³ E.g., KL line 113. Elbert and Pukui 1979: 62, 133 ff.

lectual imbued with the nineteenth-century Kumuhonua literature, uses a traditional vocabulary.

Similarly, when the chanter of the KL treats a certain subject, he takes the vocabulary and literary devices from the literature that traditionally handled it, thus enriching his concise verses with associations and providing direction for their interpretation. When he describes volcanic activity in line 1, he uses *kahuli*, a word found in Pele chants. When he describes the emergence of the pig, he draws on Kamapua‘a terms and a story of that pig god. In the same way, as discussed below, he draws on the literature of birds, rats, and fish (but not dogs). In the seventh *wā*, he uses traditional descriptions of ghosts. This practice enables us to understand the KL chanter more precisely. Moreover, he provides an overview of Hawaiian literature that establishes those literatures as older than his own work. This is valuable evidence for an eventual history of Hawaiian literature.

Finally, Hawaiians had a view of language as power that informs all their arts. The word is like a name that calls its referent. The listener feels the presence of the thing called. Referents begin to interact as their names do. Ultimately, the listener experiences the chanter’s verbal world as almost indistinguishable from the one in which it is being chanted. The power of language can even call something into being. At the point that the Hāhā, Pōpanoano, or La‘ila‘i should emerge, the chanter repeats the right words like an incantation. Language has a power for cosmic as well as mental organization.

Besides language, the KL chanter uses a full array of literary devices, such as symbolism, historical allusion, and reference to literature, practices, and cultural items. The listeners, as educated Hawaiians, would have recognized the chanter’s knowledge and expertise. What seems obscure to us would have been familiar to them. Indeed, part of the chanter’s virtuosity is displayed to stimulate his listeners’ own powers of recall and perception. They must bring up their intellectual heritage for the chanter to reformulate it. They must walk with him on his great search.

5. Originally Independent Materials

The normal Polynesian method of composition for a chant about the origin of the universe was to organize originally independent, memorized materials into a redactional framework. This method has long been recognized in the KL. For instance, Tregear writes, “it is (like all Polynesian semi-religious chants) merely a mosaic of antique fragments of ancestral learning” (1900: 39). The framework could, however, be original and creative. The interpreter must, therefore, identify the originally independent materials and show how they are used by the redactor. At the least, this method frees the interpreter from false problems. For instance, the god Kāne is mentioned in line 326 but is born only in line 614. Line 326

belongs to an independent passage, and line 614 to a redactional one. They do not conflict.

Easiest to recognize are materials that are used elsewhere in the same or a similar form. KL lines 1740–1749 are a variant of the genealogy of the rocks, one of the earliest traditions found in Sāmoa.⁵⁴

Some such materials are easily recognized because they are well-known examples of genres and appear to be quoted complete, for instance:

genealogies

a Maui chant: lines 1983–2048

a Papa chant: lines 1792–1812/1813

a Haumea chant: lines 1771 (?)–1791

a possible star list: lines 1850–1900

The chanter uses memorized materials employed in classical Hawaiian education, like the lists of stereotyped fill-in-the-blank lines in the first five *wā*.⁵⁵ An especially regular example is lines 18 f.:

18. *Hānau ka Pe‘a, ka Pe‘ape‘a kāna keiki puka*

19. *Hānau ka Weli, he Weliweli kāna keiki, puka*

Such lines were used in educational round-robin games: the person who could not supply a pair fell out.

Besides the form, the content of these lines also identifies them as traditional: using the *ukalkai* pair – a Hawaiian organizing device – land plants are paired with sea plants (e.g., “Ke Mele Kuauhau Kumulipo”: 15 f.). The pairings are traditional and are used in the medical closure ceremony, the *pani*: if a patient has taken one plant as medicine for five days, the treatment closes with his ingestion of its pair, thus restoring balance.⁵⁶ The same pairs are used also in sorcery (Kamakau 1964: 139). These pairs are further defined by the male-female pair, another high-level organizing device: land plants are male and sea plants female.⁵⁷

These memorized materials are themselves complex and subject to manipulation. They can sometimes be difficult to identify. As to their sources, the great

⁵⁴ Charlot 1985b: 172 f., 175; 1991: 135 ff. Ho‘oulumāhiehie 1: 9/12/1906; 9/22/1906, uses the Kapapa genealogy and other KL materials to make a genealogy.

⁵⁵ KL 15–33, 138–166, 285–322, 396–412 (variant), 502–529 (variant). For the use of *puka*, see Kamakau 1991: 114; Pukui 1983: numbers 2852, 2464. Compare Gutmanis 1983: 15, *Akahi ka mano, puka mai ka mano*.

⁵⁶ Charlot 2005: 457. Abbott 1992: 103. Handy, Pukui, and Livermore 1934: 25. “Ke Mele Kuauhau Kumulipo”: 16, refers to the general medical use of the pairs.

⁵⁷ The same pairing applies to stones, Barrère, Pukui, and Kelly 1980: 99 (Kelly). Compare Green and Pukui 1936: 127, note 1, plants are divided into male and female: the upright are male, the low-lying are female. The pairing is Polynesian, Moyle 1981: 21.

‘Ī family of Hilo, for whom the KL was composed, would have had an enormous collection of memorized materials of all sorts, prominently genealogies. But the Maui chant of the fifteenth *wā* can be localized to the O‘ahu priestly establishment between Kualoa and Waiāhole, lines 2043–2045. So the KL chanter could reach far for other traditions.

5.1 The Ancient Fill-in-the-blanks Stanza

A more complicated fill-in-the-blanks form is found in the stanzas of the first four *wā*.⁵⁸ I take as a basic example lines 106–111:

Line 1: 106. *‘O kāne iā Wai‘ōlolī, ‘o ka wahine iā Wai‘ōlolā*

Line 2: 107. *Hānau ka Huluwaena noho i kai*

Line 3: 108. *Kia‘i ‘ia e ka Huluhulu‘ie‘ie noho i uka*

Line 4: 109. *He pou he‘e i ka wawā*

Line 5: 110. *He nuku, he wai ka ‘ai a ka lā‘au*

Line 6: 111. *‘O ke akua ke komo, ‘a‘oe komo kanaka*

The first, fourth, fifth, and sixth lines are the same within each *wā*. The sole exception is that the first line of the first stanza in each *wā* starts with *Hānau* (the expected line is missing before line 167, doubtless a copying error). The second and third lines vary *within* each *wā*, depending on the members of the pair inserted into the blanks. The fifth line varies *between wā*, depending on its general subject:

wā 1: He nuku, he wai ka ‘ai a ka lā‘au

wā 2 (MB III): He hua, he ‘i‘o ka ‘ai a ka manu

wā 3 (MB II): He nuku, he kai ka ‘ai a ka i‘a

wā 4: He nuku, he la‘ī ka ‘ai a kolo

The fifth line thus varies horizontally, as it were, connecting the vertical divisions of the first four *wā*.

The stanza appears ancient (Beckwith 1972: 9). The style is solemn and massive with an emphatic middle caesura, very different from the supple, fluid style of the redactor, as will be seen below. The words are ambiguous and the lines are concise to the point of being cryptic, at least for the modern student. The stanza was probably accompanied by explanations when taught and was being chanted to and understood by an educated audience.

Because the stanza is an originally independent unit in a redactional framework, it must be interpreted on those two levels: what it means in itself and what it means

⁵⁸ KL 34–105, 167–255, 329–364, 413–466. Other examples of stanzas with both fixed and variable lines can be found, Fornander VI: 499 f. On the stanza, see Charlot 1983a: 49 ff.

in its new context. Most interpretations deal exclusively with the latter and fail to see the need to address the former.

Line 1: ‘O kāne iā Wai‘ōlōlī, ‘o ka wahine iā Wai‘ōlōlā

Dropping the k-article before *kāne* or words beginning with *k* is idiomatic, not significant as seen from numerous examples:

o kane, o ka wahine, o keiki, for a large crowd (Nākuina 1902b: 31, paragraph 6)

o ka wahine, o kane o keiki (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 12/4/1905)

O kane, ka wahine a me kamalii (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 12/12/1905)

kane, ka wahine ame na kamalii (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 1/24/1906)

O kane, o ka wahine, o ka poe nunui ame ka poe lūlūi (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 4/23/1906)

O kane, o ka wahine ame na keiki (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 6/12/1906)

o kane ame ka wahine (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 6/23/1906)

O kane, o ka wahine, ame kamalii (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 9/13/1906)

o kane ame ka wahine (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 10/8/1906)

O Kaneokawahine, a place name (Green 1923: 6)

The modern style follows English:

na kane, na wahine, ame na keiki (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 4/5/1906)

o na kane ame na wahine (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 4/16/1906)

na kane ame na wahine ame na keiki (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 9/21/1906)

na kane ame na wahine (Ho‘oulumāhiehie 2: 11/16/1906)

The preposition *iā*, as explained above, connects the words without defining the connection. As normal with Hawaiian poetry, the listener is invited to explore the multiplicity of the possibilities.

Kāne and *wahine* are ‘male’ and ‘female’ here, not ‘man’ and ‘woman.’ Male and female apply to the whole universe, even the elements. The sky is male and the earth female. Even the rocks can be male or female. The context must be used to determine what kinds of male and female are being referred to.

Wai is water. A typical Hawaiian pairing is formed by ‘*olōlī* ‘narrow’ and ‘*olōlā* ‘broad.’ The male is related to the narrow water, and the female to the broad. The criterion is the size of the genital openings:

Waiolōlī–Waiolōlā: *O na inoa keia o na “Wai”, i lawe hoohalikeia ae ma ke ano kane a wahine* (“Ke Mele Kuauhau Kumulipo”: 15).

‘*Wai‘olōlī* and *Wai‘olōlā*: these are the names of the “Waters,” taken by comparison with the male and female type.’

The pair uses traditional devices of Hawaiian expression. The use of *-i* and *-ā* for narrow and broad is found in traditions about the origin of taro (e.g., Pukui

1983: number 1953). Daryl Lupenui, the hula master, told me the name of a drum – Kīpāalaea – in which *kī* referred to the high note when the rim of the drum was tapped, and *pā* to the low note when the center of the drum was beaten. Also *wai* can be used elsewhere to form pairs, e.g., *O ka wai-ula la ame ka wai-kea* (Poepoe 8/5/10). In *Hauī ka Lanī* (Fornander VI: 387 f. lines 299 f.), *waikanaka* is distinguished from *waiakua*.

The *wai*-pair has much resonance in Hawaiian culture (Charlot 1983a: 46–51), and *Wai‘ololī* and *Wai‘ololā* are in fact being used as proper names, as seen by the use of *iā* before them. They also refer to a narrow and a broad stream found in each valley, famously in Waikāne, O‘ahu:

*A he mau wahi wai kaulana loa kekahi o onei, oia o Waiololi ame Waiolola. He kane a he wahine keia. O Waiololi ke kane, a o Waiolola, ka wahine.*⁵⁹

‘And some of the local waters are very famous, that is, Wai‘ololī and Wai‘ololā. The former is a male and the latter a female. Wai‘ololī is the male, and Wai‘ololā, the female.’

“Ke Mele Kuauhau Kumulipo” understands the pair from a saying about the water gourd:

ua hooliloia ka Wai i punana hoohanau a hoohua ae i na mea o loko o ka opu hohonu o ka lipolipo, a pana ia ai ka “Wai” ma keia Mele, o “Waiololi” me Waiololā”. O ka pololei paha o keia mau inoa, oia o Wai-Ulī ame Wai-Olā, elike me ka olelo ana, “Ke u-lī mai nei, ke o-lā mai nei ka wai o ka hue.”

“The water was made to be the nest which gave birth and bore all things out of the womb of the deep. The water was called in this chant Wai-ololi and Wai-olola. Perhaps the right names are Wai-uli and Wai-ola, as in the saying “Ke-u-lī mai nei, ke o-lā mai nei ka wai o ka hue,” “The water in the gourd goes gurgle, gurgle.”⁶⁰

From the wide cultural resonance of the *wai*-pair, we can distinguish particular foci of the KL chanter. The first line of the stanza establishes and emphasizes the theme of the two sexes.⁶¹ Indeed in Hawaiian literature, one need only say, ‘the

⁵⁹ Ho‘oulumāhiechie 2: 1/26/1906. Charlot 2005: 270–273. Bastian 1881: 268.

⁶⁰ “Ke Mele Kuauhau Kumulipo”: 14; English 5. Judd 1930: 19, proverb 157. Compare Pukui 1983: number 2374.

⁶¹ Compare Bastian 1881: 72, “*beginnt das Wasser ... weiter zu zeugen*” ‘the water begins to propagate further.’ However, Bastian 1881: 115, argues that the simplest life forms emerged through spontaneous generation and sexuality emerged only with the more complicated. He is arguing from the difference in form between the list (lines 15–33) and the stanza. However, they are separate, originally independent pieces, each with its own form. They cannot, therefore, be used to establish a non-sexual and a sexual stage. Moreover, with lines 12–14, the redactor designates the list as sexual. Bastian may have been influenced by Samoan traditions of spontaneous generation: wood grubs emerge from the rotting vine (Charlot 1991: 147).

two went off, *he kāne a he wahine,*’ to state that they had sex. The author of “Ke Mele Kuauhau Kumulipo” states: *aia he kane a he wahine, loaa ia mea he hanau* ‘when there is a male and a female, you get a birth’ (15). Moreover, the line clearly expresses the Hawaiian view that sexuality is not limited to plants and animals, but extends into the elements. For the redactor of the KL, the emphasis on water accords with the stage of cosmic development he is discussing: the elements.

Finally, at the beginning of his long genealogical chant, the poet is moved to contemplate the power that animates all family trees: sexuality. In the first *wā*, he fills the last fill-in-the-blank of the last stanza with the Huluhulu‘ie‘ie, the hairy pandanus vine, a representation of male power (line 108). He will then take up the subject of sexuality in his epilogue and list it in the eighth *wā* as one of the main themes of the *pō*.⁶² In the same way at the beginning of his Theogony (lines 120–122), Hesiod promoted the minor god Eros in recognition of his power over gods and men.

The chanter of the KL clearly recognizes the theme of sexuality in the stanza. That theme must be the criterion of interpretation of the stanza as a whole.

Line 2: *Hānau ka [name] noho i kai*

Line 3: *Kia‘i ‘ia e ka [name] noho i uka*

As seen above, the female member of the pair lives in the sea and the male on land. This explains the word *kia‘i*: the male guards the female.⁶³ In a story, Pōhaku o Kāne ‘Stone of Kāne’ on the mountain guards his sister in the sea (Barrère, Pukui, and Kelly 1980: 99 [Kelly]). Similarly, stars can *kia‘i* the land, because being higher they assume the male position (Kepelino: 79).

The theme of protection is not found on the redactional level of the KL, but this is merely another piece of evidence that the stanza is an originally independent unit.

Line 4: *He pou he‘e i ka wawā*

I have discussed above Kalākaua’s change of the line to *He po uhe‘e i ka wawa*. The first two words must be *He pou* ‘A post’ that is slipping, *he‘e*, into the manuscript’s *wawa*. The word *wawa* has been interpreted variously, sometimes depending on using *po* instead of *pou* earlier in the line:

Wawa could be *wawā* ‘tumult, noise,’ a reduplicative of *wā* with a well-attested sense.⁶⁴ The word would refer to the surf on the beach. The chant would be mov-

⁶² Lines 599f. Compare Beckwith 1972: 56.

⁶³ Bastian 1881: 107, “*zwar geschieht die Schöpfung durchweg in Paaren, eins auf dem Lande and sein Gegenbild im Meere ... unter gegenseitigem Vigiliren oder Beobachten (Bewachung, wie gesagt wird).*” ‘indeed the creation takes place all the way through in pairs, one on the land and its counterpart in the sea ... with mutual vigilating or watching (guarding, as it is said).’ Chun 1986: 45, note 15, switches the subject in his translation; the *kukui iuka* is guarding *kiai*, not being guarded.

⁶⁴ Pukui-Elbert: *wā* 3, *wawā*. E.g., Fornander VI: 379, lines 165 f., 173. Charlot 1983a: 40f.

ing from the deepest ocean, designated by *lipo*, towards the beach and the *uka*. This interpretation is based on the redactional framework of the KL rather than on the originally independent stanza itself. Also, what would the post be doing? Drifting from the ocean towards the shore? “Ke Mele Kuauhau Kumulipo” avoids that question by using *po* (15). The noise is being made by Wai‘ololī and Wai‘ololā as they slip, *he‘e*, on the round earth; the sea is also beating on the land.

Wawa could be a misspelling for *waka* ‘light.’ But there is no evidence for this, and the misspelling would have had to be committed many times without exception in the manuscript. Again, the interpretation seems to depend on the redactional framework – *po* instead of *pou* – but that framework uses *ao* for light, never *waka*.

Wawa could be an odd form of *wa‘awa‘a* ‘a desolate place, uninhabited, without people.’ Such a form is not reported in the dictionaries, and a point is hard to discern with this definition.

Beckwith (1972: 54) suggests that *wawa* is “an elision for *wa(oei)wa*, defined like *wao* as ‘a place of the gods.’” This elision is extreme and unexampled. Moreover, the problem is not yet solved. Pukui-Elbert define *wao‘eīwa* as “An inland region.” A further step would be necessary to the *wao akua*, the uplands inhabited by the gods. This interpretation does not seem proximate.

In terms of form alone, the easiest solution is to leave *wawa* as is and merely add the necessary macron, which did not exist at the time of the writing of the manuscript. The above interpretation with *wawā* is such a solution. *Wawā* can, however, be the reduplicative also of *wā* 4, a period of time.⁶⁵ *Wā* is an important word in the KL, referring to the sixteen vertical divisions of the redactional framework. In this sense, it refers to a period of time; in the reduplicative, either a very long one or a very short one. It can thus connect with an important theme of the KL, the immense time span of the development of the universe: line 116, ‘*O he‘e au loloa ka pō*. However, this sense of *wā* fits *pō* better than *pou*.

Another sense of *wā* is “Space, interval, as between objects; channel” (Pukui-Elbert). This gives a good physical sense for *pou* ‘post’: the post slips into a space or channel. This is the only explanation that fits the overall sexual theme of the stanza, which continues through the next two lines. Indeed, *pou* clearly represents a penis in line 674. Kale Langlas translates: “A shaft slips into the channel” (personal communication).

Bastian (1881: 116) argued for a very different interpretation of the line: “*Als Pfeiler der Kraken im Gebrause*” ‘As columns of the octopus in the noise.’ That is, he accepted the reading *pou*. He took *he‘e* as octopus and *wawa* as *wawā* ‘tumult,

⁶⁵ Pukui-Elbert. In Kamakau 1964: 68, the word is translated ‘recurrent.’