

## REBIRTH OF AN ARCHIPELAGO: SUSTAINING A HAWAIIAN CULTURAL IDENTITY FOR PEOPLE AND HOMELAND

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Can Hawaiians achieve well-being without sustaining their cultural identity? This research examines the very foundations of Hawaiian existence and the underlying basis and principles that shape Hawaiian identity. In particular, it looks at the historical roots of aloha ‘āina (love for the land) and the genesis of Hawaiians’ spiritual and emotional attachment to the land revealed in a genre of accounts dealing with the “birthing of the archipelago.” This article seeks to reintroduce the original island names of the distantly remembered region called the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Through the examination of relatively unexplored traditional sources of information, the unique meanings of these island names—and their genealogical relevance to our ancestral past—begin to emerge.

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## PREFACE

As Native Hawaiians, each of us has the ability to tap into a preconscious reservoir of past experiences and to access all that exists in a storehouse of knowledge called ancestral memories.<sup>1</sup> Our lives are filled with opportunities and choices that can either allow or inhibit us from embarking on a path of *remembering*. Our ancestors left us these ancient traditions as a legacy, a prescribed map of reference points, to help us navigate our lives and steer us through the uncharted waters that lie ahead in our future. Stories and traditions about our islands give us a sense of place and belonging, reminding us that this is a lasting home, one that we will remain rooted in forever. It gives us perspective and orientation that help to frame our travels and explorations into new directions. It is this journey of constant movement, growth, and transformation that maintains the cultural vibrancy of our people—all through *remembering*. If we choose this path, the past will become alive in us again, and we will begin to undergo a transformation, a rebirth.

In 2002, I had the chance to undertake this journey when I first traveled to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. We had just completed a 1,091-mile open ocean voyage, stopping at each landfall to reach this final destination. As I stood on the westernmost, narrow sandy strip of land at Kure Atoll, ocean currents swelled and waves broke on both sides of the point. As I looked out to the setting sun that lay on the distant horizon, I thought of how that very spot marked the boundary of our homeland, our native birthright, and what lay behind me was a responsibility to bring about a consciousness in our people that another half of our archipelago exists (Kikiloi, 2002a–2002g). In the next 7 years, I would take a total of eight more expeditions into the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Sometimes these journeys were on large scientific research vessels, other times on a traditional voyaging canoe, sailing long distances to reach these remote places. On these trips I was left to live and survive on these islands with barely any contact with the outside world. Through this process, I began to see through our ancestors' eyes. The past became alive in me. It was a transformative experience that fundamentally changed my life.

Presented to you in this article is a story of our genesis. I offer this to you today, dear reader, with the intention to inspire a return to a unified cultural identity based once again in the land. Remembering is a process of recovery and renewal that allows us to find out who we once were, and all that we can be again. It is the potential of generations of lifetimes and experiences awakened in each of us, if we only seek to remember.

## INTRODUCTION

*‘O na inoa o kēia mau moku-puni he ‘umikumamālua i hō‘ike ‘ia a‘ela, ‘oia ‘o Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaho‘olawe, Lāna‘i, Molokini, Moloka‘i, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, Ni‘ihau, Lehua, Ka‘ula, a me Nihoa. Ua ‘ōlelo ‘ia, ‘o kēia po‘e inoa apau i hō‘ike ‘ia a‘ela, he mau inoa wale nō lākou i ‘ike ‘ia ma nā mele, nā mo‘olelo a me nā kū‘auhau kahiko o Hawai‘i nei.*

The names of these islands numbered twelve that were revealed, these are Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaho‘olawe, Lāna‘i, Molokini, Moloka‘i, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, Ni‘ihau, Lehua, Ka‘ula, and Nihoa. It is said all of these name groups shown above, they are only names seen in the songs, stories, and ancient genealogies of Hawai‘i.

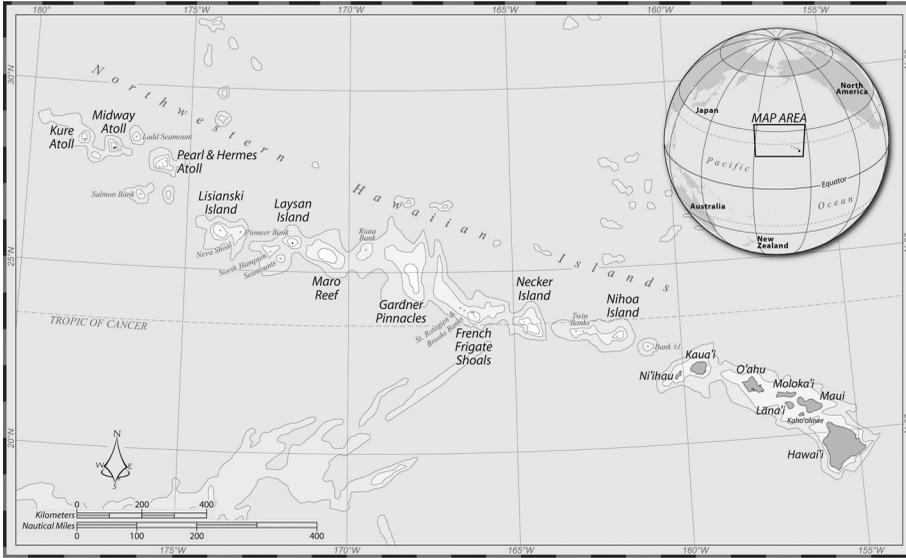
—Poepoe (1906)

Hawaiian well-being is tied first and foremost to a strong sense of cultural identity that links people to their homeland. At the core of this profound connection is the deep and enduring sentiment of aloha ‘āina, or love for the land. Aloha ‘āina represents our most basic and fundamental expression of the Hawaiian experience. The ‘āina sustains our identity, continuity, and well-being as a people. It embodies the tangible and intangible values of our culture that have developed and evolved over generations of experiences of our ancestors. Elbert (1976, p. 121) stated that “place names are the most reflective part of aloha ‘āina—it reinforces love for the land, relationship to the land, also family ties to place, and in many ways are a vital link to the glorious past.” These place names are important cultural signatures etched into the Hawaiian landscape and are embedded with traditional histories and stories that document how our ancestors felt about a particular area, its features, or phenomena. They help to transform once-empty geographic spaces into cultural places enriched with meaning and significance. It is the ongoing reciprocal relationship with the ‘āina that solidifies both the emotional and spiritual attachment between people and place (Andrade, 2008; Handy & Pukui, 1998; G. H. S. Kanahale, 1986; P. Kanahale, 2005; McGregor, 2007). This relationship is a vital element for our ongoing survival.

The concept of aloha ‘āina is one of great antiquity that originates from the ancient traditions concerning the genealogy and formation of the Hawaiian Archipelago. Papa-hānau-moku<sup>2</sup> (an epithet that literally means Papa-who-gives-birth-to-islands) and Wākea (literally the vast expanse of sky) are the two most prominent ancestors of our people from which all genealogies in Hawai‘i descend (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV; Handy & Handy, 1972; Kamakau, 1865b, 1991; Kame‘eleihiwa, 1992; Kepelino, in Beckwith, 1932; Malo, 1951, 1987). Their story takes place during a pivotal point in our native cosmology, when a remarkable shift is made toward the establishment of a progressive social order that would define our collective values and way of life here in these islands for generations. The union of this couple results in not just the “birthing” of the archipelago but also the “birthing” of a unified Hawaiian consciousness—a common ancestral lineage that forges links between the genealogies of both land and people. Since that point on in our history, this archipelago and its people became inseparable, as the well-being of one becomes invariably connected to the well-being of the other.

In 1906, a series of writings called “Ka Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i Kahiko” (The Ancient History of Hawai‘i) was published by a noted authority on Hawaiian oral traditions named Joseph Poepoe. He identified 12 islands in the Hawaiian Archipelago that comprised the extent of our homeland known through oral traditions, which included Hawai‘i, Maui, Kaho‘olawe, Lāna‘i, Molokini, Moloka‘i, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, Ni‘ihau, Lehua, Ka‘ula, and Nihoa (Poepoe, 1906). Today, however, we know that there is a series of smaller coral islands, seamounts, banks, and shoals that stretch well beyond our “main Hawaiian chain.” While these landforms are often characterized as small and remote, they comprise a total of 3,328 acres, and their submerged coral reefs, landforms, and open waters cover an expansive area of over 3.5 million acres. These remote land areas are collectively known today as the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, and they are referred to mostly by their contemporary names (from east to west) of Nihoa Island, Necker Island, French Frigate Shoals, Gardner Pinnacles, Maro Reef, Laysan Island, Lisianski Island, Pearl and Hermes Atoll, Midway Atoll, and Kure Atoll (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1** Map of the Hawaiian Archipelago and contemporary names of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM RESERVE,  
PAPAĀNAUMOKUĀKEA MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Presented here is an ongoing research effort to recover the original Hawaiian island names for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.<sup>3</sup> It investigates Hawaiian traditional geographical knowledge by utilizing a research methodology that first examines Hawaiian oral traditions through careful historical evaluation; then it assesses and validates this information through intimate sensory perception and first-hand observation of the environment. This research endeavor marks an incredible journey of exploration in my life into the farthest reaches of our archipelago, personally connecting, relating, and interpreting these islands of our ancestors. It is my hope that this research reawakens or “rebirths” a sense of consciousness in our communities about what constitutes a Hawaiian cultural identity and fundamentally expands our notion of homeland.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Hawaiian oral traditions are defined as verbal testimonies or reported statements concerning the past. They consist of a rich pool of collective memories, one that encompasses the whole of an inherited culture.<sup>4</sup> These memories act as faithful repositories that contribute to the continuity and reproduction of traditional society from one generation to the next (Vansina, 1985). In Hawai'i as well as the larger Polynesia, oral traditions are a form of 'ike kūpuna (ancestral knowledge; Young, 1998) communicated in a variety of ways, including genealogies, mythologies, place names, chants (and songs), narratives, proverbs, riddles, and other verbally transmitted customs. The passing of this information is done with amazing accuracy utilizing recital, repetition, and mnemonic devices. It required specialists who were essentially living libraries of knowledge who cataloged, stored, and kept sacred information available for retrieval upon request (Andrade, 2008; G. H. S. Kanahele, 1986). Ingrained in these accounts are the social blueprints that exist in the minds of its members concerning the natural order and interdependent relationships in their world. In this context, the landscape plays a critical role as a fixed and lasting point of reference for each generation in the processing of remembering the past.

There are important methodologies that are used to ensure accuracy in interpretation of these testimonies. To ensure historical accuracy of interpretations of the testimonies, one must understand the nature of how these accounts are transmitted and recorded. Verbal testimonies are the sum of statements made by any one informant about a referent or event. An observer starts the first proto-testimony, and it gets passed on through a chain of transmission, forming a series of links between the primary observer and the final informant. The recorder then documents these statements as the earliest written account. Native people strive to keep the integrity of the testimony, as the transmission of these ideas is rooted in collectivity as each person is aware of the degree to which they are immersed in a flow of tradition (Vansina, 1985). Each person is an important link in the chain of transmission and a conscious actor in verifying, interpreting, and rationalizing these memories through his or her own sensory-emotional-mental experiences (Handy & Pukui, 1998).

There are two main types of testimonies: (a) fixed texts, which are reproduced following strict protocol; and (b) free texts, which are flexible narratives (Vansina, 1965). Chants (*oli*), songs (*mele*), and proverbs (*‘ōlelo no‘eau*) are examples of fixed texts, whereas narratives and histories (*mo‘olelo* and *ka‘ao*) are considered free texts. Fixed texts are often rigidly set and unchanging because they are often shorter, easier to commit to memory, and transmit from one person to the next (because often they are a part of sacred learning or a tradition). Free texts are usually flexible and interpretive because they are much longer and have fewer controls that govern their learning and transmission. These narratives often use a number of literary devices such as hyperbole (embellished description and exaggeration), metaphor and simile (rich figurative language), symbolism and poetic allusion (expressions from nature), and humor (often in the form of punning; Elbert, 1951, n.d.). Also nonsemantic elements of style such as antithesis (e.g., dualism: *nui* [big]/*iki* [small], *ma uka* [toward the mountain]/*ma kai* [toward the sea]), repetition (*helu*), and catalogues of prominent features (e.g., enumeration of rains and winds) are used (Elbert, 1951). The layered meanings within these texts make it critical that the researcher have a background in language to understand the intricacies, many of which are difficult or impossible to translate. These intricacies are called *kaona* or “hidden meaning,” but they can also be referred to as veiled expressions.

Hawaiian texts (both fixed and free) are replete with place names that link us to our cultural landscape, and they bear witness both to the veracity of these traditional histories and stories and to the accuracy of information passed from one generation to the next. Place names can be divided into two categories: (a) those that pertain to migrations and ancestral places that are unknown to the informant, and (b) those that are known to the informant. Place names can also incorporate words that give clear indication of spatiotemporal relationships called deictic categories (Greek word meaning “to point”). It can be applied through personal pronouns, demonstrative tenses, sometimes honorifics, but most elaborately through directional particles (e.g., *mai* [toward the speaker], *iho* [down], *a‘e* [up], *aku* [away from the speaker]; Elbert, 1976). Semantic analyses can be conducted on place names to understand meaning through the etymology (identifying historical cognates), and multiple meanings through homonyms in noun and verb phrase compounds (Pukui, Elbert, & Mo‘okini, 1974). These insights on meaning can help to define orientation, position, and actual geographic locations. Place names therefore are important reference points, which can prompt dormant memories to be remembered.

In past studies of Hawaiian oral traditions, a comparative approach based on the historical method was used to evaluate reliability and authenticity of testimonies (Barrère, 1961, 1967, 1969; Beckwith, 1931, 1944; Luomala, 1965). Fixed texts have been examined for word-for-word inconsistencies, whereas versions of free texts have been compared in terms of broader concepts, such as episode, plot, motif, setting, and theme (Vansina, 1965). Implicit in this method was the notion that variation in accounts represented inconsistencies, contradictions, and ultimately historical falsehoods within each testimony. The approach adopted here, however, recognizes that all traditional accounts stem from the vast pool of memories handed down and verified by our ancestors. Rather than discredit or position one source or tradition versus another, this research compares texts in an effort to find consistency in words and similarities in spirit and theme. Variations therefore only add and build upon the established core tradition and demonstrate how widely preserved the range of memories are within a community—all of which are the sum parts, or renderings of this tapestry called historic truth.

There are some important conditions that should be considered when investigating and interpreting Hawaiian oral traditions. The researcher should have (a) an emic (insider) understanding of cultural context, meaning, and metaphor; (b) a level of fluency in the native language, or ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian language)<sup>5</sup>; and (c) a familiarity with ‘āina (environment) as critical point of reference to orient and position oneself to have legitimacy in interpretation. Also, to keep the integrity of accounts, preference should be given whenever possible to testimonies in the ethno-historic record that were (a) recorded first in the Hawaiian language, and (b) written by native Hawaiian people or recorded first hand from their testimony. The end result is a corpus of reliable accounts from a Hawaiian perspective and worldview as the basis of understanding the traditions of our own ancestors.

## THE FORMATION OF THE HAWAIIAN ARCHIPELAGO

*Eia Hawai‘i, he moku, he kanaka...*  
Here is Hawai‘i, an island, a man...

—Fornander (1916–1920, Vol. II, p. 10)<sup>6</sup>

This research focuses on one particular body of accounts that tells of the formation (and subsequent naming) of the Hawaiian Archipelago. This tradition centers on the genealogies and procreation of two important ancestors of the Hawaiian people—Papahānaumoku (w) (who is personified in the earth) and Wākea (k) (who is personified in the expansive sky)<sup>7</sup>—and in some versions, the various partners with whom they mated. Wākea was born at Waolani in Nu‘uanu, O‘ahu, of Kupu-lana-kēhau (w) and Kahiko-lua-mea (k). Papa was born in the uplands of Hālawā, O‘ahu, of Ka-haka-ua-koko (w) and Kū-ka-lani-‘ehu (k) the brother of Kupulanakēhau (w). Their story documents an important period and shift in Hawaiian history when the sovereignty, as well as control over the islands, is lost by the descendants of the oppressive senior line of the Kumu-honua genealogy (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV; Kamakau, 1865b, 1991; Malo, 1987; Poepoe, 1906). Papa and Wākea rise to prominence, and their offspring survive to later become the people and royal dynasties of the Hawaiian Islands. It is during this time that the island names are reconstituted and a new archipelago is “birthed.” Prior to this period there was an earlier set of island names that were used in the archipelago. Only some of the earlier names for each of the main Hawaiian Islands have been historically documented, including Lono-nui-ākea for Hawai‘i; ‘Ihi-kapu-lau-māewa for Maui; Kanaloa for Kaho‘olawe; Olōlo-i-mehani for O‘ahu; Ka-māwae-lua-lani for Kaua‘i (Kamakau, 1991; Malo, 1951, 1987; Poepoe, n.d.); and Ka-unu for Ni‘ihau (Tava & Keale, 1989). Wākea plays an important guiding role in this transformation by symbolically helping to fasten these trembling islands with his own hands during their emergence as a new archipelago:

Ua hānau ka moku  
*Born was the island—*

A kupu a lau, a loa, a ‘ao, a mu‘o  
*It budded, it leafed, it grew, it was green*

Ka moku i luna o Hawai‘i  
*The island blossomed on tip, was Hawai‘i*

‘O Hawai‘i nei nō ka moku  
*This Hawai‘i was an island*

He pūlewa ka ‘āina, he naka Hawai‘i  
*Unstable was the land, tremulous was Hawai‘i*

E lewa wale ana nō i ka lani,  
*Waving freely in the air*

Lewa honua  
*Waved the earth*

Mai i Ākea ua pāhono ‘ia  
*From Ākea it was fastened together*

Mālie i ke a‘a o ka moku me ka honua  
*Quiet by the roots was the island and the land*

Pa‘a ‘ia ka lawa ealani i ka lima ‘ākau o Ākea  
*It was fast in the air by the right hand of Ākea*

Pa‘a Hawai‘i lā a la‘a,  
*Fast was Hawai‘i, by itself—*

Hawai‘i lā ‘ikea he moku.  
*Hawai‘i appeared an island.*

(Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, p. 363)

Papahānaumoku plays the essential female role of “giving birth” to the Hawaiian Archipelago. Here, islands are conceived as living entities and afforded the same value and distinction as human life, capable of being siblings to people (Appendix A). This particular union of Papa and Wākea represents the highest marriage relationship possible between a marital couple, that of brother and sister in a high-chief family, called moe pi‘o (arch mating). A moe pi‘o is the only type of mating that can raise (or figuratively “arch”) the genealogy of offspring above that of either parent, giving them divine status (Kamakau, 1870; Kepelino, in Beckwith, 1932).

Ho‘o-hōkū-ka-lani (w) (the starring of the heaven) is also born of Papa and Wākea and also participates in a moe pi‘o mating upward with her father and giving birth first to Hāloa-naka-lau-kapalili (the long breath in the quivering leaf), a premature child who is planted and emerges as the first kalo plant (*Colocasia esculata*). The second son, named Hāloa (the long breath) survives and becomes the direct ancestor for all Hawaiian people. In a lesser-known chapter of this story, Papa (who is the incarnation of the goddess Haumea) exacts her revenge by being reborn into the next six generations of female offspring that mate with her grandson, Hāloa, and his descendants, taking the form of Hina-mano-ulu-a‘e (w), Huhune (w), Hau-nu‘u (w), Hau-lani (w), Hikā-wao-‘ōpua-i-ānea (w), and Ka-mole (w). Incredibly, this moe pi‘o continues to bend the family genealogy upward, elevating their descendants to a level of divine chiefly status.

There are five major accounts that provide the basis from which all interpretations originate concerning the formation or birth of the archipelago from Papahānaumoku. This body of chants includes:

- *Eia Hawai‘i, he moku, he kanaka* (Mele a Kamahualele, in Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, pp. 20–21);
- *Ua Hānau ka Moku* (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, p. 363);
- *‘O Wākea noho iā Papahānaumoku* (Malo, 1951, p. 243);
- *Kupu‘eu hou nā moku* (Gutmanis, 1983, p. 10; Haumea ka lani, n.d.);
- *‘O Wākea, Kahiko-lua-mea* (He Hanau no ka Moi Kalakaua, n.d., pp. 47–50; He Mele Hanau Moku, n.d., pp. 171–174; Mele a Pāku‘i, in Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, pp. 12–22).

A general review of these chants demonstrates some important commonalities that are consistently threaded between many of the accounts. First, all of these fixed texts focus explicitly on the relationship of the islands to Papa and Wākea. Many of the accounts provide a sequencing of names from east to west starting at Hawai‘i and moving progressively to the last main Hawaiian islands, the Ni‘ihau group, and in some cases Nihoa Island, the first Northwestern Hawaiian Island.

The first chant of Kamahualele states that “Hawai‘i is an island, and a man,” making it clear that there is an implicit cultural correlation between the islands and man from a Hawaiian worldview. They can both be born from the same metaphoric source (mother) and also have similar characteristics and behavioral patterns throughout their life stages, as will be discussed later. It also states that the Hawaiian Islands originate from Kahiki (a distant ancestral homeland, or rather a figurative pathway of origin), and the archipelago consists of “fragments of land grouped together in a row, placed evenly from east to west, arranged uniformly in sequence, and adjoined on to Hōlani.” The place names Kahiki and Hōlani become reoccurring place names throughout many of the genealogical accounts of the islands. The association of this northwest region to Kahiki<sup>8</sup> identifies this area as routes leading to and from our place of spiritual origin, where souls are thought to return after death.

The second chant called “Ua Hānau ka moku” comes from the first eight sections of a well-known birthing chant for the chief Kauikeaouli, Kamehameha III. It also acknowledges that Hawai‘i emerges as a trembling newborn and is fastened tightly by the right hand of Wākea. The mention of Wākea’s right hand is a reference to a particular time when Wākea, Papa, and their entourage got swept out to sea by a large tidal wave (Poepoe, 1906). In their greatest moment of despair, they turn to their ancestral gods for help. While drifting toward the northwest, Wākea is instructed to build the first heiau (temple) to offer a sacrifice. He does so by forming his fingers and palm in a cuplike fashion to create a representational heiau. Wākea’s priest Komoawa helps to fetch an appropriate sacrifice, a pua‘a kai (sea hog<sup>9</sup>), and they successfully conduct an ‘aha ceremony while floating silently in the ocean currents. This single act helps Wākea win the favor of the ancestral gods and they drift safely to Kapapa islet in He‘eia, O‘ahu. This marks a major turning point, as they survive to continue their fight against Kāne-iā-kumuhonua, eventually defeating him and unifying the archipelago under one rule (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV; Poepoe, 1906).

The third and fourth chants take a closer look at the birthing sequence from Papa and Wākea. ‘O Wākea noho iā Papahānaumoku is a shortened version of the account that recognizes all of the main islands as being descended from these progenitors. Haumea ka lani focuses on the role that Haumea (patron of childbirth and fertility) plays in the creation of the archipelago focusing on the islands and their most famous descendants (from Papa and Wākea): Hawai‘i (of Keawe), Maui (of Kama), Moloka‘i (of Hina), O‘ahu (of Kakūhihewa), Kaua‘i (of Manōkalanipō),

Ni‘ihau is the endmost island, while Ka‘ula “is the land of Kūhaimoana (a famous shark deity)” and is the boundary of the Hawaiian group. The chant mentions only one of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, Nihoa, as “the seer of building sites, until consecrated and occupied, until made fast and forever Hawai‘i” (Malo, 1951, p. 243; also in Gutmanis, 1983, p. 10; Haumea ka lani, n.d.).

In the fifth chant of Pāku‘i,<sup>10</sup> the first-born forms are horizons called Kahiki-kū, Kahiki-moe, (Kahiki-i-) ke‘āpapa-nui, and (Kahiki-i-) ke‘āpapa-lani. Hawai‘i is the firstborn island, and then comes Maui (or Maui-loa). Next, Kaho‘olawe is born (as the god Kanaloa, in the form of a porpoise). After the birth of these children, Papa goes back to Kahiki, and Wākea lives wifeless until he takes another wife named Ka‘ula-wahine and conceives Lāna‘i (known as Lāna‘i-ka‘ula), and then takes Hina as his wife and Moloka‘i is born (Moloka‘i a Hina). The kōlea (plover) named Laukaula tells Papa on her return of this unfaithfulness, and she gets revenge by sleeping with Lua and they beget the child O‘ahu (O‘ahu a Lua). Finally, Papahānaumoku returns to Wākea and bears Kaua‘i or “Ka-māwae-lua-lani-moku” and its neighboring islands. Ni‘ihau is said to be the afterbirth, Lehua is a border, and Ka‘ula is the closing one: “he ēweewe Ni‘ihau, he palena ‘o Lehua, he panina Ka‘ula.” The chant goes on to briefly mention Mokupapapa and “the low white-marked flats of Lono” that extend beyond into the location of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (He Hanau no ka Moi Kalakaua, n.d., pp. 47–50; He Mele Hanau Moku, n.d., pp. 171–174; Mele a Pāku‘i, in Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, pp. 12–22).

## ANCIENT NAMES LOST AND NOW RECOVERED

*Mai kahiko mai, ua ho‘opa‘a ‘ia nā inoa moku no kēia pae  
‘āina ma ka mo‘olelo a me nā mele ko‘ihonua, a ‘o kekahi o nā  
moku, ua pa‘a ka inoa, a ua poina kona wahi i kānaka.*

From ancient times, the island names of this archipelago were remembered in the stories and creation chants, and for some of the islands, their names were remembered, but their locations were forgotten by man.

—Nogelmeier (1995)

It was not until about a decade ago that the most detailed version of the Papahānaumoku tradition resurfaced in the form of a document published in the Hawaiian language newsletter *Ka 'Āha 'i 'Ōlelo* (Kaiaikawaha, in Nogelmeier, 1995).<sup>11</sup> The composition, titled “The History of Our Ancestors From Creation, and the Islands That Were Born,” was originally recorded in 1835 (see Appendix B for the full text) by a Lahaina-luna student named Ka-i‘a-i-ka-waha (fish in the mouth<sup>12</sup>). Here, the Kai‘aikawaha “genealogy of island names” establishes itself as an important historical document because it verifies that the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are indeed part of the genealogical offspring of Papahānaumoku and Wākea. This genealogical account generally aligns with a number of commonalities discussed previously; however, this version extends past the main Hawaiian Islands to provide a series of additional names for the northwestern islands. More importantly, it was recorded in the form of a sequence that provides the necessary geographical orientation and framework to begin discussions about ordering and placement of these Hawaiian place names and possible correlations to present-day islands and landforms.

The Kai‘aikawaha genealogy of island names begins with Kahiko (k) and Kupunakēhau<sup>13</sup> (w) mentioned previously to be the father and mother of Wākea (k). This composition differs from other birthing accounts in that it adds five additional generations of different types of pō (procreative sources) before the generation of Papahānaumoku (w) and Wākea (k). Similar to other accounts, Papahānaumoku (w) gives birth first to Kahiki-kū (who is described here to be a stone or foundation), then Kahiki-moe, then Kahiki-i-ke-‘āpapa-nu‘u, and Kahiki-i-ke-‘āpapa-lani. These four celestial Kahiki are also known to be parallels of declination that coincide with daily east–west trajectories of the stars, or “nā alanui o nā hōkū ho‘okele,” or “the great star routes for navigation” often associated with gods and origins (Kamakau, 1865a; Makemson, 1938; Valeri, 1985, p. 9). Then comes different types of pu‘u (hills), wai (waters), and ‘ale (channels). The account notes that these initial landforms and features are premature births (mumuku) that echo only ghostly murmurs (hahane). It goes on to acknowledge various star names familiar in ancient chants and stories that guided navigators to Hawai‘i, such as Ulunui, Melemele, Hakalaua‘i, and Polapola (Makemson, 1938).

The highlight of this genealogy details a birthing account of the entire archipelago, beginning with honorific names for Hawai‘i (Hawai‘i-kū, Hawai‘i-moe, Hawai‘i-ala, Hawai‘i-kapa-kū-ke-hoa, Hawai‘i-li‘i-li‘a-kānaka), then Maui, Kanaloa (the ancient name of Kaho‘olawe), Nāna‘i (Lāna‘i in an older dialect), Moloka‘i,

O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, Ni‘ihau, Ka‘ula, and Mokupapapa. Following the main Hawaiian Islands are 20 additional place names enumerated going into the northwest direction of the main Hawaiian Archipelago. These traditional island names for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands include: Hā‘ena, Hā‘ena-kū, Hā(‘e)na-moe, Hā‘ena-ala, Hā‘ena-a‘e, Hā‘ena-mau-hoa-lālā-iā-(Ka)hiki, Lalo-iho, Lalo-a‘e, Lalo-hele, Lalo-kona, Lalo-ho‘āniani, Ka-mole, Ka-pou, Pou-he‘e-ua, Pou-he‘e-lani, Mana-wai-nui, Mana-wai-lani, Mana-wai-hiki, Kua-i-he-lani, and Hōlani-kū (Kaiaikawaha, 1835; see Table 1).

A closer examination of these additional 20 names shows a grouping pattern of replicated names that vary only by their directional particles. In creation chants, the patterning and enumeration of names fall within an oratory category called *helu*, demonstrating either *kūlana* (honorific status) or spatial boundaries by charting out the relative extent and spatial parameters of the place name grouping. Often times, *helu* draws upon antithetical references (e.g., opposites such as *kai* [seaside], *uka* [upland], *lalo* [upward], *a‘e* [downward]). An example that exists in the beginning of genealogical chants references *nā kūkulu o Kahiki*, as well as *Kahiki-kū* and *Kahiki-moe*, which highlight geographical boundaries that stretch to both east and west horizons. Other examples are island names like *Hawai‘i* (e.g., *Hawai‘i-kū*, *Hawai‘i-moe*, *Hawai‘i-ala*, etc.) that are often enumerated utilizing this method of recital to help the chanter remember a sequence and to serve the dual purpose of allowing for more recall time in the performance. Based on this understanding, these repeated names in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands sequence can be conflated to form eight smaller subgroupings, including *Nihoa*, *Hā‘ena*, *Lalo*, *Kamole*, *Kapou*, *Manawai*, *Kuaihelani*, and *Hōlani-kū*.

The Kai‘aikawaha genealogy of island names demonstrates overall consistency in theme and spirit with all of the other accounts concerning the “birthing of the archipelago.” The additional sequence he provides builds upon this already established tradition. This sequential listing of island names, past the “main” Hawaiian Islands and toward the northwest, suggests that they could be names for the eight prominent and emergent islands in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. This proposition is examined and tested here, through (a) semantic analyses as a form of understanding terminology and meaning of words to draw correlations to the islands’ characteristics and attributes (Pukui et al., 1974); (b) utilizing independent references of these island names that point to an agreement in location; and (c) utilizing personal observations and experiences of actually being on these islands, to validate or invalidate these correlations.

TABLE 1 Kai'aikawaha (1835) genealogy of island names for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

Island Names	Dictionary Definitions
<b>Nihoa</b>	<b>Nihoa.</b> pas/imp of niho. n. Toothed, serrated, notched, jagged, sharp; firmly imbedded and interlocked (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 266).
<b>Hā'ena</b>	<b>Hā'ena.</b> nvs. Red-hot, burning red. A common place name on Hawai'i, O'ahu, and Kaua'i (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 46).
<b>Hā'ena-kū</b>	<b>Hā'ena-kū.</b> East (or standing) Hā'ena
<b>Hā('e)na-moe</b>	<b>Hā'ena-moe.</b> West (or prostrating) Hā'ena
<b>Hā'ena-ala</b>	<b>Hā'ena-ala.</b> Rising Hā'ena
<b>Hā'ena-a'e</b>	<b>Hā'ena-a'e.</b> Upward (or nearby) Hā'ena
<b>Hā'ena-mau-hoa-lālā-ia-(Ka)hiki</b>	<b>Hā'ena-mau-hoa-lālā-ia-(Ka)hiki.</b> Hā'ena that secures the diverging branches to Kahiki
	<b>Lalo.</b> n. Leeward, lee southernly (PPN: Raro) (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 192); the direction of being westward, southernly (Handy, 1927, p. 70).
<b>Lalo-iho</b>	<b>Lalo-iho.</b> Lower Lalo
<b>Lalo-a'e</b>	<b>Lalo-a'e.</b> Upper Lalo
<b>Lalo-hele</b>	<b>Lalo-hele.</b> Continuous Lalo
<b>Lalo-kona</b>	<b>Lalo-kona.</b> Leeward (or Southern) Lalo
<b>Lalo-ho'āniani</b>	<b>Lalo-ho'āniani.</b> Reflective Lalo
<b>Ka-mole</b>	<b>Ka-mole.</b> n. The taproot, main root; ancestral root, or foundation, source, or cause (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 252).
<b>Ka-pou</b>	<b>Ka-pou.</b> n. The pillar, or post (PPN: Pou) (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 343).
<b>Pou-he'e-ua</b>	<b>Pou-he'e-ua.</b> Rain washed Kapou
<b>Pou-he'e-lani</b>	<b>Pou-he'e-lani.</b> Heaven washed Kapou
<b>Mana-wai-nui</b>	<b>Mana-wai.</b> n. Branching water (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 238); nvs. Warped, depressed, bent in (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 237).
<b>Mana-wai-lani</b>	<b>Mana-wai-nui.</b> Greater Manawai
<b>Mana-wai-hiki</b>	<b>Mana-wai-lani.</b> Chiefly Manawai <b>Mana-wai-hiki.</b> Appearing Manawai
<b>Kua-i-he-lani</b>	<b>Kua-i-he-lani.</b> n. Backbone of heaven. It is said to be a mythical place (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 169).
	<b>Hōlani.</b> Bring forth heaven. It is said to be a mythical place, also a star name (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 77); Hōlani is a variant pronunciation of Helani (Johnson & Mahelona, 1975, p. 5).
<b>Hōlani-kū</b>	<b>Hōlani-kū.</b> East Hōlani

## CORRELATING ANCIENT NAMES WITH PLACE

The Kai‘aikawaha genealogy of island names provides an important sequence that helps to frame a Hawaiian system of orientation as it relates to the cultural arrangement of space, order, and movement from one end of the archipelago to the other. In general, east–west orientations are important cultural reference points as they represent the trajectory and path that the life-giving sun was believed to have traveled each day. The rising of the sun in the east symbolically represents the opening stages, birth, and a new beginning of life. The setting of the sun in the west symbolically represents the closing stages, death, and the path that souls take into the afterlife.<sup>14</sup> The sun travels in this cyclical pattern throughout the year, rising and setting at different declinations on the horizon, as it travels from the southern hemisphere to the northern hemisphere and returns south again across the equator. In the northern hemisphere, where the Hawaiian Archipelago is situated, is an important lineal demarcation called “ke ala nui polohiwa a Kāne,” or the “great shining dark path of Kāne” (also known as the Tropic of Cancer; Hooulumahie, 2006; Johnson & Mahelona, 1975; Kamakau, 1865a; Pukui & Elbert, 1986). This latitudinal pathway essentially separates the Hawaiian Archipelago into two spatial halves consisting of (a) the main Hawaiian Islands up to Nihoa (“ao,” or light, where the sun reaches a zenith point overhead), and (b) the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands from Necker to Kure (“pō,” or darkness, where the sun does not reach a zenith overhead; Kikiloi, in Leone, 2005).

The island names that are presented in detail below demonstrate a number of convergent themes that show that the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands<sup>15</sup> were considered ‘āina akua, or ancestral islands where the souls of the deceased would travel to and lived in afterlife (also known as pō—darkness or creation). Pō or darkness represented a “vastness of time, and here our ancestors dwelled, transfigured into gods and deified spirits” (Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1972, p. 35). The pattern of island names that is described at each stage in the sequence will give the impression of islands undergoing stages of spiritual transformation. Basic words such as wai (water), lani (sky), and ua (rain) describe intrinsic and indispensable spiritual properties of an island. This represents a shift in naming patterns toward elemental words that give the allusion of a transitional process of islands losing their earthly form as they evolve toward an ethereal existence. This process of aging, death, and deification for islands runs parallel to the lifecycle of their human siblings, as both spiritually descend into the ocean, transforming into godly ancestors on their journey to the source (pō). It is for these reasons

that these islands are often described as having supernatural characteristics of moving position upon their own volition, having the ability to appear or disappear at the will of the gods or, in some cases, stay suspended in the sky and heavens (Johnson & Mahelona, 1975; Tava & Keale, 1989).

Presented below is the Kai'aikawaha genealogy of Hawaiian island names for the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and propositions for their contemporary locations (moving east to west).

**MOKU-PAPAPA** is a noun that literally means “low flat island, as a reef” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 318; Pukui et al., 1974, p. 156). It is a single place name for a peripheral main Hawaiian Island off Ka‘ula islet. It is proposed here that Mokupapapa refers to a small submerged seamount located less than 3 miles southwest of Ka‘ula called Five Fathom Pinnacle. This is an important reference point in the sequence because there are a number of independent references that support this position, including (a) a native of Kaua‘i’s account in 1835 stating that “he honua na‘e o Mokupapapa no Ka‘ula,” or “Mokupapapa is joined at the foundation of Ka‘ula” (Keo, 1835); (b) the chant of Paku‘i that states that Mokupapapa comes after Ka‘ula, the closing border of the main archipelago; and (c) in Ka Mo‘olelo Ka‘ao o Hi‘iaka-i-ka-poli-o-Pele (Poepoe, 1908–1911), Pele-honua-mea travels to Mokupapa first, then backtracks to Nihoa, then back to Ka‘ula and leaves Kū-hai-moana in a pit that she digs for him. In September 2003, this low, flat submerged island was relocated by the voyaging canoe Hōkūle‘a on a return voyage from Nihoa in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

**NIHOA** is a passive imperative term of the word niho, or tooth. It is defined in the dictionary as “toothed, serrated, notched, jagged, sharp, or firmly imbedded and interlocked as stones in a fence” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 266). It is a single place name that stands alone in the sequence and has remained preserved in our collective understanding of the location of this place since ancient times (Kamakau, 1996). There are a number of independent references that confirm the contemporary location of Nihoa Island. These references include the following: (a) In the ancient chant Ka-haku-i-ka-moana, Nihoa is said to be born the third triplet following Ni‘ihau and Ka‘ula (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV); (b) the chant “Mele a ka wai ola a Kāne” (chant of the living waters of Kāne) states, “ea mai ana ma Nihoa ma ka mole mai o Lehua” (“Arising from Nihoa, in the pathway from Lehua islet [going northwest]”); (c) a similar line is found in the Pele Huluhia chants concerning the migration of Pele to the main Hawaiian Islands (Kapihenui, 1861; Manu, 1899); and (d) in Moke Manu’s (1899) version of the Pele story, she left

her brother Ke-ao-lele (a shark) to reside in a very deep crater Pele dug on the northwest side of Nihoa. In addition, three ancient proverbs describe the topographic nature of the landscape and the type of bird resources present on the island: the first proverb, “kū pākū ka pali o Nihoa i ka makani” (“the cliff of Nihoa stands with resistance against the wind”), acknowledges the sheer 900-foot cliff that characterizes the north side of the island (Pukui, 1983, p. 206); the second proverb, “Nihoa he ‘āina pu‘u kolo” (“Nihoa land of hunched crawling”), refers to the steep slope of the island that forces people to hunch over to traverse the land (Tava & Keale, 1989, p. 103); and finally, the last proverb, “Nihoa i ka moku manu” (“Nihoa land of birds”), describes the numerous seabirds that nest and call this island home (Pukui, 1983, p. 252).

**FIGURE 2** Nihoa Island, located 150 miles from the last main Hawaiian Island; Nihoa means “toothed or serrated.”



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**HĀ'ENA** is a noun-verb stative defined as “red-hot burning heat,” referring to intensity (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 46) that could imply a specific type of kapu (restriction) of royalty or sacredness of the island. If the word is separated into its components, it

literally means “burning breath.” It is qualified by directional particles, such as kū (east or standing), moe (west or prostrating), ala (rising), and a’e (coming). The final name in the subgroup sequence is Hā’ena-mau-hoa-lālā-iā-(Ka)hiki, which means “Hā’ena-which-secures-the-diverging-branches-to-(Ka)hiki.” “(Ka)hiki” represents an ellipsis, or an omission of a portion of the word that is implicitly understood but that must be supplied to make construction grammatically complete (Pukui et al., 1974). It is proposed here that Hā’ena corresponds to Necker, also known earlier as Ka-moku-manamana (B. K. H., 1862) or commonly known today as another ellipsis, Moku-manamana (Pukui et al., 1974; defined as branching island<sup>16</sup>). This island has numerous ceremonial sites located by archaeological studies (Cleghorn, 1988; Emory, 1928) and is positioned on the cusp of the northernmost celestial path of the sun. As mentioned earlier, this demarcation was known since ancient times as “ke ala nui pōlohiwa a Kāne” (Johnson & Mahelona, 1975; Kamakau, 1865a), the path souls of the deceased take into the afterlife and a passage in which souls can be brought back to life through sorcery (Hooulumahiehie, 2006; Pukui & Elbert, 1986).

**FIGURE 3** Necker Island (also known as Mokumanamana or Kamokumanamana) is the possible location of the island named Hā’ena (Kai’aikawaha, 1835). It represents an important point of division between the realm of gods (‘āina akua) and the realm of man (‘āina kānaka).



ANDY COLLINS

**LALO** is a locative noun that is defined as “down, downward, low, lower, under, below, depth, west, or leeward” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 192). The word is derived from the proto-Polynesian cognate “raro,” which means leeward, or descending. In the sequence of names, Lalo is qualified by directional particles, such as iho (lower or descending), a’e (upper or rising), hele (continuous), and kona (leeward or southern). Lalo has a layered meaning of being closely associated with the direction of pō (darkness and obscurity) or ancestral lands “where dwelt the souls of gods” (Handy, 1927, p. 709). Lalo provides us with the imagery of low-lying islands that are partially submerged or descending below the surface of the ocean. It also implies a shift from a vertical to horizontal view plane. It is proposed here that Lalo corresponds to the contemporary location of French Frigate Shoals. This island demarcates an important geological transition point in the archipelago, where high volcanic islands shift in composition and stature to become low diminished coral atolls. It also marks the first island that is “leeward” from Necker previously mentioned as an important spiritual transition point into the afterlife. The term Lalo-ho’ānini is qualified by a causative term giving the allusion of a mirroring effect of an island’s image captured in an ocean reflection. A review of independent oral tradition accounts shows that Lalo-kona (k) and Lalo-ho’āni’ani (w) are names of two ancestors located 12 generations before Papa and Wākea (Kūali’i genealogy in Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, Part I).

**KA-MOLE** is a noun phrase defined as a “tap root, main root, ancestral root, foundation, source, or cause” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 252). The word provides us with the allusion of something that is anchored, rooted, and stable. It also contains a veiled expression meaning a long route, as the main root runs through the earth and traces one’s ancestry back to a source.<sup>17</sup> It is a single place name that stands alone in the genealogical sequence following French Frigate Shoals. It is proposed here that Kamole corresponds to the location of Laysan Island. Laysan is the first major landfall following French Frigate Shoals moving toward the northwest (passing Gardner Pinnacles, which consists only of two relatively large protruding rocks, and Maro Reef, which is totally submerged under the ocean). Laysan Island also has the greatest biodiversity of all the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. There is only one identified independent reference to the name Kamole (w), as being the descendant located six generations after Papa and Wākea (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV).

**KA-POU** is a noun phrase defined as a “post, pole, pillar, or shaft” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 343). In the sequence, the root word Pou is qualified by the verb phrases he’e-ua (rain washed) and he’e-lani (heaven washed). The term he’e can have a number of other meanings, including “to slide, put to flight, and rout.” It can also have the layered meaning to hang down, as in bearing a fruit. The names Pou-he’e-ua and Pou-he’e-lani give the imagery of a post that is holding up the sky and bringing forth the rain clouds to sweep across the land from the northwest direction. It is proposed here that Kapou corresponds to the location of Lisianski Island. Lisianski is the next major island consisting of a single landmass following Laysan. It is an important reference point within the sequence based on two independent references: (a) the genealogy and story of Ōpū-ka-honua (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV), and (b) a reference in Mele a Pāku’i (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV). In the genealogy of Ōpūkahonua, “Kap(o)uhe’euanui fishes up Hawai’i from Kapa’ahu, and brings up one piece of coral after another, and, offering sacrifices and prayers to each, throws it back into the ocean, so creating in succession Hawai’i, Maui, and the rest of the islands in the group” (Beckwith, in Hale’ole, 1997, p. 635; Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, pp. 22–28). In the chant of Pāku’i, there are references of Kap(o)u-he’e-ua and Kap(o)u-he’e-ua-nui as ellipses associated with another island name in this sequence, Hōlani, which is described as a symbolic conch shell that dispels rain (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV).

**FIGURE 4** Lisianski Island is the possible location of the island named Kapou (Kai’aikawaha, 1835).



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**MANA-WAI** is a stative verb that means “warped, depressed, or bent in” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 238). It is also a noun phrase that can be separated into components and defined as “branching water.” The term wai can also refer to “wai-lua” or “spirit.” This interpretation focuses on the transitional nature of water as a natural element. The root word Mana-wai is qualified by honorific forms such as nui (greater), lani (chiefly), and hiki (appearing). It is proposed here that Manawai corresponds with the location of Pearl and Hermes Reef. The name provides us with the imagery of the spiritual process of bending introspectively inward to reveal the inherent and unchanging nature of one’s true undying spirit.

**KUA-I-HE-LANI** is a noun phrase that is defined as “backbone of heaven” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 169) and has been described in other accounts as a mythical floating island in the sky (Tava & Keale, 1989). This reference could derive from the fact that large atoll lagoons often reflect their image into the sky, giving the appearance of a floating island. It is a single name that stands alone and is located second to the end of the island sequence. It is proposed here that Kuaihelani corresponds with the location of Midway Atoll. There are numerous independent references to Kuaihelani being located in the northwest section of the Hawaiian Archipelago. These references include it being the homeland of gods that migrated to the “main Hawaiian Islands,” such as ‘Au-kele-nui-‘aikū, Mo‘o-i-nānea, Pele, Kamapua‘a’s grandparents, Kea-nini-‘ula-ka-lani, and Ke-ao-melemele (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, Part I and Vol. VI; Manu, 2002). It is also a place where Kāne and Kanaloa drink ‘awa (kava) in the presence of spirits (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. V), and in the story of Kepa-ka-‘ili-‘ula, he falls asleep on his canoe off Ni‘ihau and drifts to this island in the northwest to find it occupied with spirits (Kaulainamoku, 1865). In the story of Moku-lehua, his keeper Kū-a-lanakila goes off to the northwest to Kuaihelani on his way to find him a suitable partner (B. K. H., 1862). Also, in the dirge of O‘ahu chief Kahahana, it is the land of the deified dead (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. VI). Finally, a testimony in the historic period by David Malo Kupihea stated that back in 1879 and 1880 fishermen from Kahaka‘aulana (Sand Island, O‘ahu) made trips to Kuaihelani, which included going to “Nihoa, Necker, and the islets beyond” (Kelsey, in Johnson & Mahelona, 1975, p. 142).

**HŌLANI-KŪ** is a verb phrase that is defined as “bringing forth heaven” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 77). It is a variant of the word helani (heaven) and also the name of a zenith star observed by priests (Johnson & Mahelona, 1975). It is a single name that stands alone and is located at the very end of the island sequence. It is proposed here that Hōlanikū corresponds with the location of Kure Atoll. This

island name has been described in a number of independent references in the context of (a) being a homeland of gods such as Kāne and Kanaloa, Nā-maka-o-kaha‘i, and Wali-nu‘u (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, Part I); and (b) an island associated with ‘Aukelenui‘aikū’s nephew Kau-mau-i-luna-Hōlanikū, to which he traveled that is located directly west of Kuaihelani (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, Part I; Kaunamano, 1862). In the Ōpūkahonua genealogy, Hōlani (w) is the wife of Ka-pua-ulu-lana (k), an ancestor 12 generations prior to the time of Papa and Wākea (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV, Part I). The chant of Kamahualele states that Hōlani is an area attached to the Hawaiian Archipelago, perhaps alluding to the fact that it is the open horizon that meets the sky and stretches west past Hawai‘i. As stated before, this area is considered a symbolic conch that dispels rain from the northwest toward the Hawaiian chain (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV).

**FIGURE 5** Kure Atoll is the possible location of the island named Hōlani-kū (Kai‘aikawaha, 1835).



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## ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR PLACE NAMES

There are a number of additional sources that identify traditional place names associated with the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.<sup>18</sup> These references come from three independent sources: (a) *He Wahi Ka'ao no Mokulehua* (B. K. H., 1862; also mentioned in Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. VI); (b) *Ni'ihau, the Traditions of a Hawaiian Island* (Tava & Keale, 1989); and (c) *Place Names of Hawai'i* (Pukui et al., 1974). In the story of Mokulehua, four of the place names also show up in the Kai'aikawaha genealogy, including Nihoa, Kamokumanamana, Kuaihelani, (Hō)lani-kū, (and [Hō]lani-moe). Other names that are mentioned included: Lau-pala, Hāna-ka-'ie-'ie, Ōnū-'iki, Ōnū-nui, Ka-pu'u-one-iki, Kumu-mahane, and Ka-moku-o-Kamohoali'i (B. K. H., 1862). Another source by Tava and Keale (1989, p. 103) states that “these are some of the names of the islands beyond Nihoa, but it is not remembered which island was which: (Ka)-moku-a-Kamohoali'i, Hana-ka-'ie-'ie, Hana-ke-au-moe, and Unu-nui (or Ōnū-nui).” *Place Names of Hawai'i* also supports this by providing the names Hana-ka-'ie-'ie and Hana-ke-au-moe as names in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (Pukui et al., 1974).<sup>19</sup> The only two Hawaiian names that have been recorded for the channels between each island are (a) Ka-hio-waho, or “the outer sweeping gust” (Tava & Keale, 1989, p. 93), for the channel between the Ni'ihau group and Nihoa; and (b) Hawai'i-loa, or the “long Hawai'i” (Tava & Keale, 1989, p. 94), for the channel located between Nihoa and Necker islands. Hawai'i-loa was a legendary navigator who voyaged from the west to Hawai'i. His family settles each of the islands up until Nihoa (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV).

From these lists of place names, it is proposed that the following five names correspond to obvious geographic features in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

**HANA-KA-'IE-'IE** is a noun phrase that means “bay (with) rise & fall (of sea)” (Pukui et al., 1974, p. 40; Tava & Keale, 1989, p. 103). It states that it is an island beyond Nihoa that is mentioned in old chants. The term “hana” however, literally means a “bay” and not an “island.” It is proposed here that Hanaka'ie'ie corresponds to the Adam's Bay of Nihoa Island. This is the only major bay in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands that has waves that wrap around the island and weave together to magnify each other as they rise and fall in the bay. All other bays northwest of location are protected by shallow reef networks.

**HANA-KE-AU-MOE** is a noun phrase that is defined as “late night bay” (Pukui et al., 1974, p. 40). Again the definition states that it is an island beyond Nihoa that is mentioned in old chants. It is also referenced anecdotally as an island in the northwest (Kelsey, n.d.). The term “hana” in this case also means “bay” and not “island.” If broken into word components, the term “au” implies a type of movement from one period of time and space to another, while the term “moe” implies “to put to rest” or to pass on into the afterlife. It is proposed here that Hanakeaumoe corresponds to Shark’s Bay in Necker Island. The terminology and meaning of the name help to link it to this geographic location, as it is consistent with the general function of the island.

**ŌNŪ-NUI** is a noun that is defined as “large protuberance” (Pukui et al., 1974, p. 171). It is also a variant of the name Unu-nui. Ununui means large altar, perhaps alluding to the role it plays in petitioning for northwest rains. It is proposed here that Ōnūnui corresponds to the larger rock that makes up Gardner Pinnacles. It is the only obvious landform that consists of one large and one small rock “protuberance” in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands chain.

**ŌNŪ-IKI** is a noun that is defined as “small protuberance” (Pukui et al., 1974, p. 171). Again it is a variant of Unu-iki. Unuiki means small altar, again alluding to the role both landforms play as altars in bringing forth northwest rains. It is proposed here that Ōnūiki corresponds to the smaller rock that makes up Gardner Pinnacles. As mentioned above, it is the only obvious landform that consists of one large and one small rock “protuberance” in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands chain.

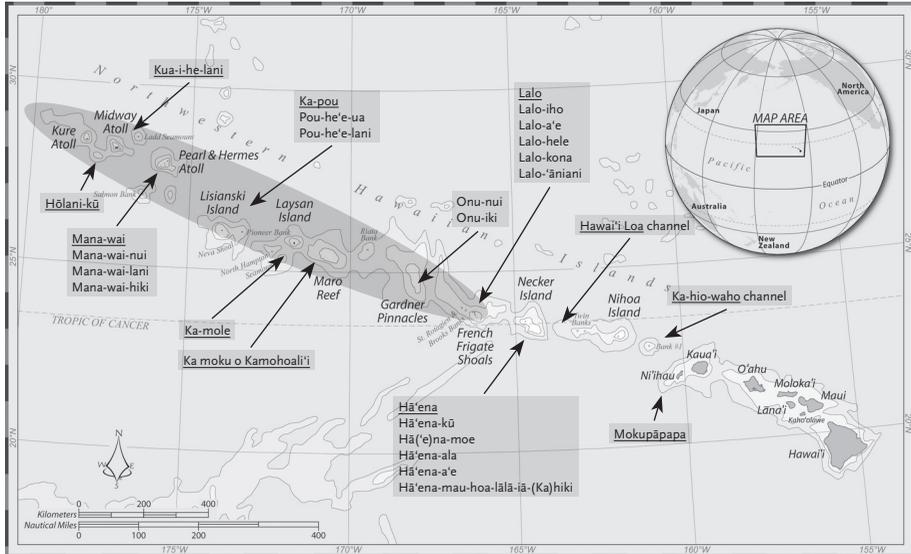
**FIGURE 6** Gardner Pinnacles is the possible location of island names Ōnū-nui and Ōnū-iki, two jutting rock features.



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM RESERVE,  
PAPAHĀNAUMOKUĀKEA MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT

**KA-MOKU-O-KAMOHOALI'I** is a noun phrase defined as “island of Kamohoali'i” (B. K. H., 1862; Tava & Keale, 1989, p. 109). Kamohoali'i is known to be a major shark deity and brother of Pele. It is proposed here that Kamokuokamohoali'i corresponds to Maro Reef. Maro Reef is a submerged coral reef that is known to have an extremely high number of sharks, more than any other location in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

**FIGURE 7** Map of the Hawaiian Archipelago with proposed correlations of ancient island names and place names with contemporary Northwestern Hawaiian Islands locations. The dark shaded area represents a region of ‘āina akua (deified islands of gods) where Hawaiian souls return after death to reunite with ancestors.



ADAPTED FROM NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM RESERVE, PAPA HĀNAUMOKUĀKEA MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT

## THE NAMING OF PAPA-HĀNAU-MOKU-ĀKEA

In 2006, the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands were afforded the highest designation of marine conservation protection in the United States and became (at the time) the largest marine protected area in the world. The responsibility for naming of the monument and this management region fell upon the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Native Hawaiian Cultural Working Group, which is comprised of members with long-standing interest and involvement in the region. Members come from relevant backgrounds and include academic scholars, teachers, cultural practitioners, community activists, and resource managers who have experience working directly with the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Hawaiian Relations, State of Hawai'i Department of Land and

Natural Resources, Kaho’olawe Island Reserve Commission, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Polynesian Voyaging Society, and the University of Hawai’i–Mānoa’s Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies were involved in the meetings and discussion that led up to the final decision.

Papahānaumokuākea emerged as the name selected by the cultural working group through an extensive community consultation process. The name itself was provided by noted authority on Hawaiian cultural traditions, Dr. Pualani Kanaha, who drew upon the Kai’aikawaha genealogy of island names as a source document for her inspiration. The union of the names (Papahānaumoku and [W]ākea) is a contemporary reintroduction that acknowledges the critical role these two ancestors played in the birthing of the entire archipelago, further emphasizing the importance of having continuity between the past and the present. “Papa,” which means “foundational earth,” provides the imagery of the numerous low, flat islands that stretch across into the northwest. “Ākea” provides the imagery of the “expanse of space.” The preservation of these two names together, as Papahānaumokuākea, reinforces Hawai’i’s cultural foundation and solidifies the islands as part of the genealogy of our archipelago.

## CONCLUSION

Hawaiian well-being is primarily dependent on our ability to viably sustain a Hawaiian cultural identity for both people and homeland. The accounts presented here concerning the birthing of the islands represent statements of profound significance. Collectively, they represent a model of prescribed ancestral values that describe, preserve, and validate Native Hawaiians’ ongoing existence and relationship to place. Through this research we have come to understand that the union and mating of Papahānaumoku and Wākea forever transformed the nature of our relationship with these islands by forging our genealogies together into one common lineage. This binding act gave rise to the first collective sense of a Hawaiian consciousness, linking together people and homeland in a perpetual, interdependent relationship. Today, we return to these stories and incorporate these lost islands in the northwest portion of our homeland. The recovery of each one of these island names helps to reconstitute our identity and essentially rediscover a greater sense of ourselves.

Hawaiian Island names, like all place names, are a vital force for the continuity and renewal of a cultural identity as it relates to the land. In the shifting currents of today's world, these islands are a timeless point of reference that links each one of us to an integral part of our past. The 'āina sustains our identity and health by centering our attitudes, instincts, perceptions, values, and character within the context of our sacred environment. We, in turn, sustain our 'āina and love them with generations of memories and experiences of enduring compassion. As we nurture and restore all aspects of identity and well-being of 'āina, we will in turn begin to recover and thrive as a people. Now more than ever, we must remember who we are as native people of Hawai'i, reaffirming these ancient truths and renewing this holistic worldview on people and 'āina. This is our rebirth.

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Kekuewa Kikiloi is a doctoral student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Hawai'i–Mānoa. For the past three years he also served as the cultural assets manager for the Kamehameha Schools, managing the sacred sites and cultural resources entrusted to Ke Ali'i Bernice Pauahi. His interest, passion, and commitment lie in the protection and stewardship of wahi kūpuna, the revitalization of loina kahiko, and the empowerment of ka lāhui Hawai'i. As a Hawaiian cultural researcher and traditionalist, he is exploring native ways of knowing about the Hawaiian historical past and helping to establish renewed connections between communities and cultural resources across the archipelago, including the remote Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

#### NOTES

1 The idea of Hawaiian ancestral memory can be traced back originally to the early 1980s in discussions between Dr. Pualani Kanahahele, her husband Edward Kanahahele, and her brother, Parley Kanaka'ole. Through the years, this idea has been furthered in presentations by Dr. Pualani Kanahahele and can be linked to reports, such as *Ka Honua Ola* (Kanahahele & Wise, 1992) and *E Mau Ana 'o Kanaloa, Ho'i Hou* (P. K. Kanahahele, 1992).

2 Throughout this article, Hawaiian names appear in several written forms for the purpose of guiding the reader toward my interpretations of their layered meanings. For all citations and direct quotations, names replicate the authors' spelling in original publication (e.g., Kaiakawaha). In some cases, I insert hyphens and diacriticals into the first use of the name to suggest possible word divisions and components (e.g., Ka-i'a-i-ka-waha). In my own writing, I generally take a modern orthographic approach to Hawaiian spelling with diacriticals (e.g., Kai'aikawaha) based on my own understanding of the meaning. Occasionally, I leave diacriticals out if I cannot discern the probable meaning of a name.

3 This research on the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands is part of a larger dissertation project that will be presented later to fulfill the requirements of a Doctorate of Philosophy in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Hawai'i–Mānoa.

4 Hawaiian oral traditions are based on a type of historical truth that is culture specific. These accounts cannot be disregarded as being false or fabricated, because their intent is to communicate statements and cultural beliefs about a higher and more important truth that explains the how and why of present-day conditions (G. H. S. Kanahele, 1986).

5 Language competency is critical to understanding deeper cultural metaphor and symbolism, and it provides access to a larger body of information in testimonies that were written by native writers and/or recorded in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (post European contact). English-translated materials, referred to as the widely used “cannon of Hawaiian reference material” (i.e., Fornander, 1916–1920; Īī, 1959; Kamakau, 1964, 1991; Malo, 1951), have been demonstrated to have altered the ideas of the original authors and have been shown to recast original testimonies into modern Western framework and understanding (Nogelmeier, 2003). Competency in language enables the researcher to circumvent translation problems and reinterpretations of any traditional information by going directly to the original body of testimonies that were written, recorded, and collected.

6 Fornander is cited extensively throughout this study as an appropriate source of Hawaiian oral traditions. The recording of the mo‘olelo for his publications were conducted by Native Hawaiian scholars, including Samuel M. Kamakau, S. N. Hale‘ole, and Kepelino Keauokalani (Elbert, 1956). In this study, I used the Hawaiian language versions collected and recorded by these scholars, as opposed to the English translations.

7 Kame‘eleihiwa (1992) and others use a culturally centered approach to gender identification that is adopted throughout the article: (w) indicates “wahine” (female) and (k) indicates “kāne” (male).

8 The word “Ka-hiki can be broken down to mean ‘the arrival’ or ‘the coming’” (Pukui & Elbert, 1986, p. 69) and interpreted as any source or pathway of origin. At various points in Hawaiian history, this place name could have correlated to Tahiti in the South Pacific. This research will demonstrate, however, that there are clear linkages with this region being located to the west of the Hawaiian Archipelago as a spiritual pathway or origin for life. These views are not mutually exclusive.

9 Pua‘a kai or “sea hogs” fall into a category of fish that embody attributes of the deity Lono. These fish include, but are not limited to, ‘aholehole (silver perch), ‘anae (mullet), moano (goatfish), pāulu (surgeon fish), pāwalu, humuhumunukunukuapua‘a (trigger fish), and ‘ōhua pālemo (young parrot fish).

10 There is another creation chant called *Mele a Kalaikuaohulu* (or *Wākea Creation Chant* in Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. VI; *Kalaikuaohulu Chant* in Kamakau, 1865b, 1991) that testifies to the formation of the islands from Papa and Wākea. This account was not used in this study as it only exists in Hawaiian language text as fragments (Kamakau, 1865b, 1991) and in English translation (Fornander, 1916–1920, Vol. IV).

11 In 2001, I discovered the *Kaiaikawaha* account independently in the Bishop Museum Archives only to find out later that Dr. Puakea Nogelmeier had discovered it 7 years earlier and published it in the *‘Āha‘i ‘Ōlelo*. Proper acknowledgment and citation is given to Dr. Nogelmeier and the *‘Āha‘i ‘Ōlelo* in this publication titled “He Mau Inoa Kahiko Paha i Nalo a Hoes Hou Mai?” [Ancient Names That Have Disappeared and Been Recovered?].

12 This interpretation of the name originates from discussions with a friend and colleague, Keoni Kuoha.

13 *Kupunanakēhau* is a variation of the name *Kupulanakēhau*.

14 A proverb that exemplifies these symbolic orientations goes: “*mai ka hikina a ka lā i Kumukahi, a ka welona a ka lā i Lehua*,” or “from the sunrise at Kumukahi (at Puna) to the fading sunlight at Lehua (near Ni‘ihau)”; this represents the life span from birth to death (Pukui, 1983, p. 223). The islands in the northwest, however, did not fall within these metaphorical boundaries. Rather, it is implied that their importance lies in the second half of this overall journey, en route to reunite with ancestors in the afterlife.

15 This applies to islands in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands past *Mokumanamana* (also known as *Hā‘ena*; Necker Island), as explained below.

16 Which I interpret as “island of exponential power.”

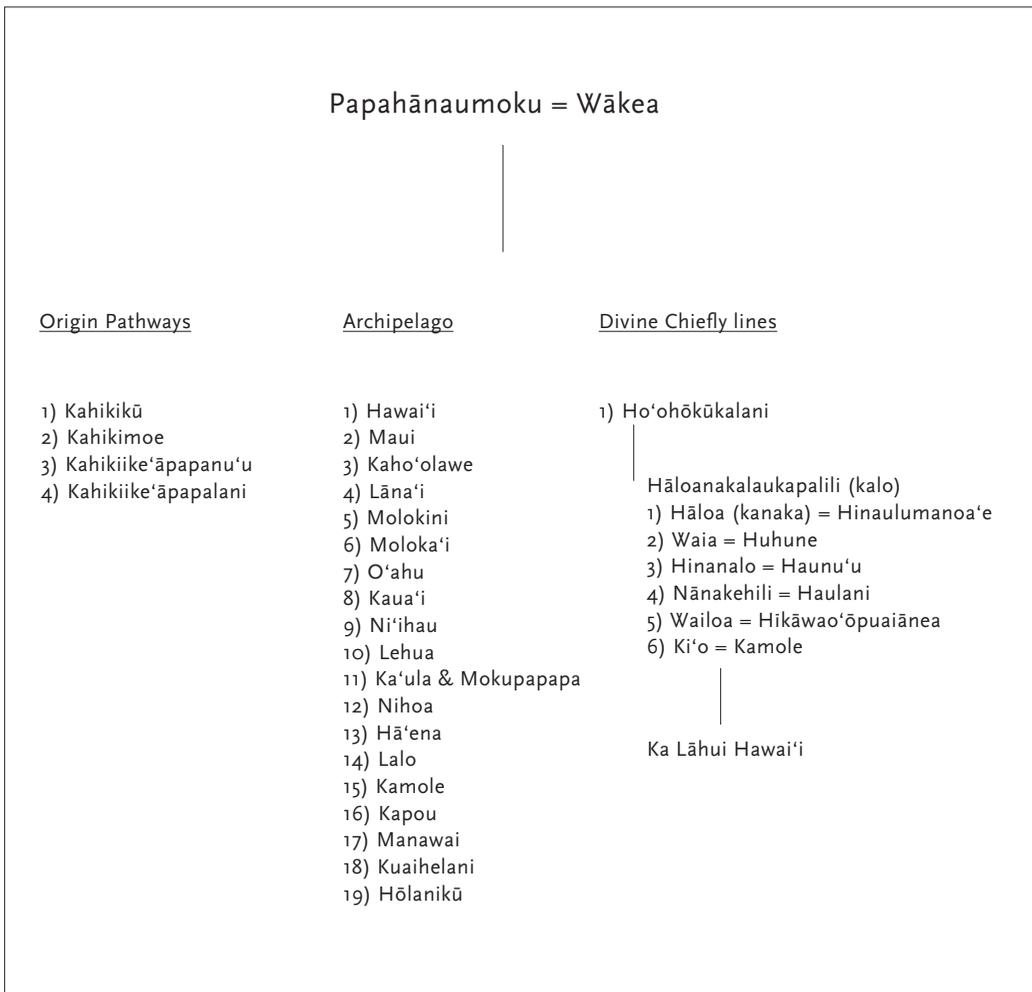
17 The term “mole” is often used in *mele* and *oli* as a referent to *Lehua islet*. According to Pukui (1983, p. 7), “*Aia ma ka mole o Lehua*” is translated as “at the taproot of Lehua.” It means being “out of sight for a long time, neither seen nor heard from,” implying that the figurative pathway or journey is one of extreme distance.

18 For discussion on Northwestern Hawaiian Island names recorded in contemporary times through ethnographic interviews see Maly & Maly, 2003a & 2003b. Also, newer contemporary names that have been recently appropriated to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands can be found in two fairly common reference books: *Māmaka Kaiāo: A Modern Hawaiian Vocabulary* (Hale Kuamo‘o & ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, 2003) and *Atlas of Hawai‘i* (Juvik & Juvik, 1998).

19 *Place Names of Hawai‘i* also provides additional names of Pau-ke-aho, Pua-ka-‘ilima, and Ulu-kou. All of these place names are not associated with the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and are confirmed through research in Hawaiian language newspapers to correspond to the Equatorial Line Islands. They can easily be found through searches on [www.ulukau.org](http://www.ulukau.org).

## APPENDIX A A GENEALOGY OF HAWAIIAN ANCESTRAL ORIGINS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

This cosmogonic pedigree reflects a composite genealogy drawn from the various Papahānaumoku and Wākea “birthing of the islands” accounts. It illustrates ancestral lineages and ties between pathways, islands, chiefs, and people.



## APPENDIX B

**Kaiaikawaha.** 1835. Moolelo no na kanaka kahiko mai ka po mai, a me ka pae moku i hanau mai ai [The History of our Ancestors from Creation, and the Islands that were Born]. Lahainaluna Student Compositions. In the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum Archives #HI.H.107, folder 2.

MOOLELO NO NA KANAKA KAHIKO MAI KA PO MAI,  
A ME KA PAE MOKU I HANAU MAI AI

Lahainaluna, Mei 22, 1835  
[transcribed from original]

Kane	Wahine
Kahiko	Kupunanakehau,
Uenelekahau,	Kapokinikini,
Kapomanomano,	Kapoheeu,
Kapoheelani,	Luluukapo,
Makuakapo,	Kapukaipo,
Kaponui,	
Kahanauakea	Kalanikaekaea, a me Papahanaumoku.

O keia poe, he poe kahiko loa mai ka po mai.

Eia na aina i hanau mai ai maloko mai o ke kanaka i puka mai ai. O Papahanau moku ka wahine o ka Hanau—Akea ke kane, moe laua, ko ka laua keiki, a hanau mai ka laua hiapo he pohaku o Kahikiku, oia ka mua, hanau mai kona hope o Kahikimoe, o kona hope o Kahikiikeapaapanuu, o kona hope o Kahikiikeapaapalani, o kona hope o Puula, o kona hope o Puukanukanu, o kona hope o Waiauau, o kona hope o Waiakaka, o kona hope o Waialea, o kona hope o Aleauli, o kona hope o Aleakea, o kona hope o Kahaula, o kona hope o Kapili, o kona hope o Kamuku, o kona hope o Kamukuikahahane, o kona hope o Ulunui, o kona hope o Melemele, o kona hope o Hakulauai, o kona hope o Polapola, o kona hope o Hawaiiiku, o kona hope o Hawaiiimoe, o kona hope o Hawaiiiala, o kona hope o Hawaiiikapakukehoa, o kona hope o Hawaiiiliikanaka, o kona hope o Hawaii, o kona hope o Maui, o kona

hope o Kanaloa, o kona hope o Nanai, o kona hope o Molokai, o kona hope o Oahu, o kona hope o Kauai, o kona hope o Niihau, o kona hope o Kaula, o kona hope o Mokupapapa, o kona hope o Nihoa, o kona hope o Haena, o kona hope o Haenaku, o kona hope o Hanamoe, o kona hope o Haenaala, o kona hope o Haenaae, o kona hope o Haenamauhoalalaihiki, o kona hope o Laloiho, o kona hope o Laloae, o kona hope o Lalohele, o kona hope o Lalokona, o kona hope o Lalohoaniani, o kona hope o Kamole, o kona hope o Kapou, o kona hope o Kapouheeu, o kona hope o Kapouheelani, o kona hope o Manawainui, o kona hope o Manawailani, o kona hope o Manawaihiki, o kona hope o Kuaihelani, o kona hope o Holaniku.

Oia na keiki moku i hanau mai ai. Aole i pau. O keia mau mea a pau, he mau mea hoakaka wale no, i lohe kakou i keia mau mea kahiko: mai ka poele mai. Wahi a kanaka kahiko. Ua pono paha, aole paha? Na Kaiaikawaha.

## THE HISTORY OF OUR ANCESTORS FROM CREATION, AND THE ISLANDS THAT WERE BORN

Lahainaluna, May 22, 1835

[translated by Kekuewa Kikilo]

### Male

### Female

Kahiko . . . . .	Kupunanakēhau,
Uēnelekahau, . . . . .	Kapōkinikini,
Kapōmanomano, . . . . .	Kapōhe‘eua,
Kapōhe‘elani, . . . . .	Lulu‘ukapō,
Makuakapō, . . . . .	Kapukaipō,
Kapōnui, . . . . .	
Kahānauākea . . . . .	Kalanikaekaea, and Papahānaumoku

These people are ancient people from the very beginnings of time.

Here are the lands that were born from which the people emerged. Papahānaumoku the mother of birthing—Wākea the husband, they mated, and their children were begotten, and born was their first child a rock named Kahikikū, he was the first,

born next was Kahikimoe, born next was Kahikiike'āpapanu'u, born next was Kahikiike'āpapalani, born next was Pu'ulā, born next was Pu'ukanukanu, born next was Wai'au'au, born next was Waiakāka, born next was Waiale'a, born next was Ale'āuli, born next was Aleākea, born next was Kaha'ula, born next was Kapili, born next was Kamuku, born next was Kamukuikahahane, born next was Ulunui, born next was Melemele, born next was Hakulaua'i, born next was Polapola, born next was Hawai'ikū, born next was Hawai'imoe, born next was Hawai'iala, born next was Hawai'ikapakūkehoa, born next was Hawai'ili'ili'akānaka, born next was Hawai'i, born next was Maui, born next was Kanaloa, born next was Nāna'i, born next was Moloka'i, born next was O'ahu, born next was Kaua'i, born next was Ni'ihau, born next was Ka'ula, born next was Mokupapapa, born next was Nihoa, born next was Hā'ena, born next was Hā'enakū, born next was Hā('e)namoe, born next was Hā'enaala, born next was Hā'ena'e, born next was Hā'enamauhoalālāia(ka)hiki, born next was Laloiho, born next was Laloa'e, born next was Lalohele, born next was Lalokona, born next was Lalo'āniani, born next was Kamole, born next was Kapou, born next was Kapouhe'eua, born next was Kapouhe'elani, born next was Manawainui, born next was Manawailani, born next was Manawaihiki, born next was Kuaihelani, born next was Hōlanikū.

These are the islands that were born. All of these things, they are only to clarify. We heard these ancient things: from early creation. The ancestors said them. Is it correct? Not correct? By Kai'aikawaha.