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COMPARISON OF POLYNESIAN GENEALOGIES IN THE BISHOP MUSEUM

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The Polynesian genealogies housed at the Bishop Museum have been gathered from many parts of Polynesia. They have been collected and studied especially for what they could reveal of history and social organization. Among the most extensive collections at the Museum are those from Hawaii, the Society Islands, and the Tuamotu Archipelago. It is with these that I have worked in the attempt to judge their reliability in reconstructing the prehistory of their possessors, and it is with these that I will deal in this present essay aimed at understanding their nature.

Genealogies which reach back any great length of time in Polynesia are those of the chiefs, whose claim to power derives from being descended from mythical beings or gods. These genealogies can only be properly understood against a background of Polynesian mythology, a knowledge of Polynesian intrarelations and of the origin and spread of the Polynesians throughout the islands of Polynesia.

Aboriginal Polynesia is divided culturally into East Polynesia and West Polynesia. East Polynesia comprises Hawaii, New Zealand, the Society Islands (including Tahiti), the Marquesas Islands, Easter Island, the Tuamotus, Mangareva, the Cook Islands, and the Austral Islands. West Polynesia comprises Samoa (and adjacent islands) and Tonga (and adjacent islands). The language of these groups is such that the Polynesians are able to understand each others' speech after only a short contact. The comparative ease with which all Polynesians understand each other is due to the Polynesian-speaking people having moved through the area comparatively recently and rapidly without encountering another language. Had this not been the case there would have been irregularities in the otherwise very close linguistic relationships among the islands. Further, it has been demonstrated that the language

moved from West Polynesia to East Polynesia¹ as did the culture, along with their carriers, the Polynesian people.²

Using the new tool of radiocarbon dating, recent archaeological investigations make it possible for us to judge the time when islands of Polynesia first became occupied, and clearly indicate that this first occupation was by people bearing a typical Oceanic culture. No convincing evidence of an earlier substratum of non-Polynesian culture has been uncovered in any of the islands. This does not exclude influence from South America, from where the sweet potato was somehow introduced early in Polynesian history.

Recent research indicates that the Polynesians had their immediate origin in the islands of adjacent Melanesia to the west, where it has been discovered that Fijian and the Polynesian languages have a common origin.³ Present radiocarbon dates allow for Fiji being inhabited as far back as 1,500 B.C., Tonga 1,000 B.C., Samoa 500 B.C., the Marquesas Islands A.D. 100, the Society Islands A.D. 400, Easter Island A.D. 600, New Zealand and Hawaii A.D. 750, with Hawaii receiving new arrivals from the Society Islands about A.D. 1250. The above reinforces quite well a conclusion I had reached a decade ago:

It seems, therefore, erroneous to consider that there ever was a migration to Polynesia of a people physically identical with the Polynesians as we know them, and as already possessing the distinctive features of Polynesian language and culture. What now appears most likely is that people of somewhat diverse origins came together in a western archipelago in the Polynesian area about B.C. 1500 [1000 B.C. is the present estimate], and, in comparative isolation, their descendants, their language, and their culture took on the features which the Polynesians now share in common and which give them their distinctive characteristics.⁴

Hawaiian Genealogies

At the start it was most important for us at the Bishop Museum to learn the basis on which the *ali'i*, or those of chiefly rank, and more especially, the ruling chiefs, derived their hereditary positions. The geneal-

¹ Bruce Biggs, "The Past Twenty Years in Polynesian Linguistics," in G. H. Highland and others, *Polynesian Culture History: Essays in Honor of Kenneth P. Emory* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1967), pp. 303-318.

² Roger C. Green, "The Immediate Origins of the Polynesians," see Highland, pp. 215-240.

³ G. W. Grace, *The Position of the Polynesian Languages within the Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) Language Family* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1959), p. 65.

⁴ K. P. Emory, "Origin of the Hawaiians," *JPS*, 68, No. 1 (1959), 34.

ogies of many of the ruling chiefs of the eighteenth century have been preserved and recorded. In Hawaii all go back to the primal pair Wakea and Papa, in whom we can recognize the personifications Sky Father and Earth Mother of East Polynesia--and from whom their chiefs also trace descent.

The publication of the Kumulipo genealogical creation chant by Queen Liliuokalani in 1897⁵ provided the genealogical ancestors of Wakea and Papa back to their earliest beginning in the PO, or the formless period of darkness. David Malo, who completed his manuscript about 1840, presented a genealogy from Wakea down to chief Liloa who lived sixteen generations before 1900.⁶ He also names the parents of Wakea, Kahiko and Kupulanakehau, and refers to important names such as: Paliku, Ololo (Lolo), Puanue, Lailai, through whom the genealogy can be traced back to Kumulipo⁷ born in the Po. When Samuel Kamakau published the genealogy of Keopuolani, wife of Kamehameha I, in 1868, he extended the genealogy back in time before Wakea and Papa to Kumuhonua, a descendant of Ololo, and to Hulihonua, a descendant of Paliku. Ololo and Paliku were brothers in the Kumulipo chant.⁸

With the Kumulipo chant and Kamakau's Keopuolani genealogy, it is possible to construct a genealogical framework of Hawaiian chiefs leading from Kumulipo down to the descendants of the ruling dynasties on Kauai, Oahu, Maui and Hawaii, as I have done in Chart I: Genealogical Framework of Hawaiian Chiefs. From Kumulipo, Source of Deep Darkness, to Wakea and Papa, the important names are given in Chart I, Part I. These fall into what we now recognize as the Cosmogonic Period. Although the Hawaiians came to regard Wakea and Papa simply as superhuman people, a study of concepts of creation in East Polynesia and of the beginnings of many of their genealogies makes it very plain that Papa (Foundation) and Wakea (Space) and those who preceded them were mythical beings, many of them poetic personifications.⁹

Depending on which of the chiefly lines the counting is based, it is possible to obtain a count of sixty generations before 1900 to Wakea and seventy-three generations to Papa. Ki'i stands at sixty-one gener-

⁵ Martha Warren Beckwith, *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

⁶ Beckwith, p. 238.

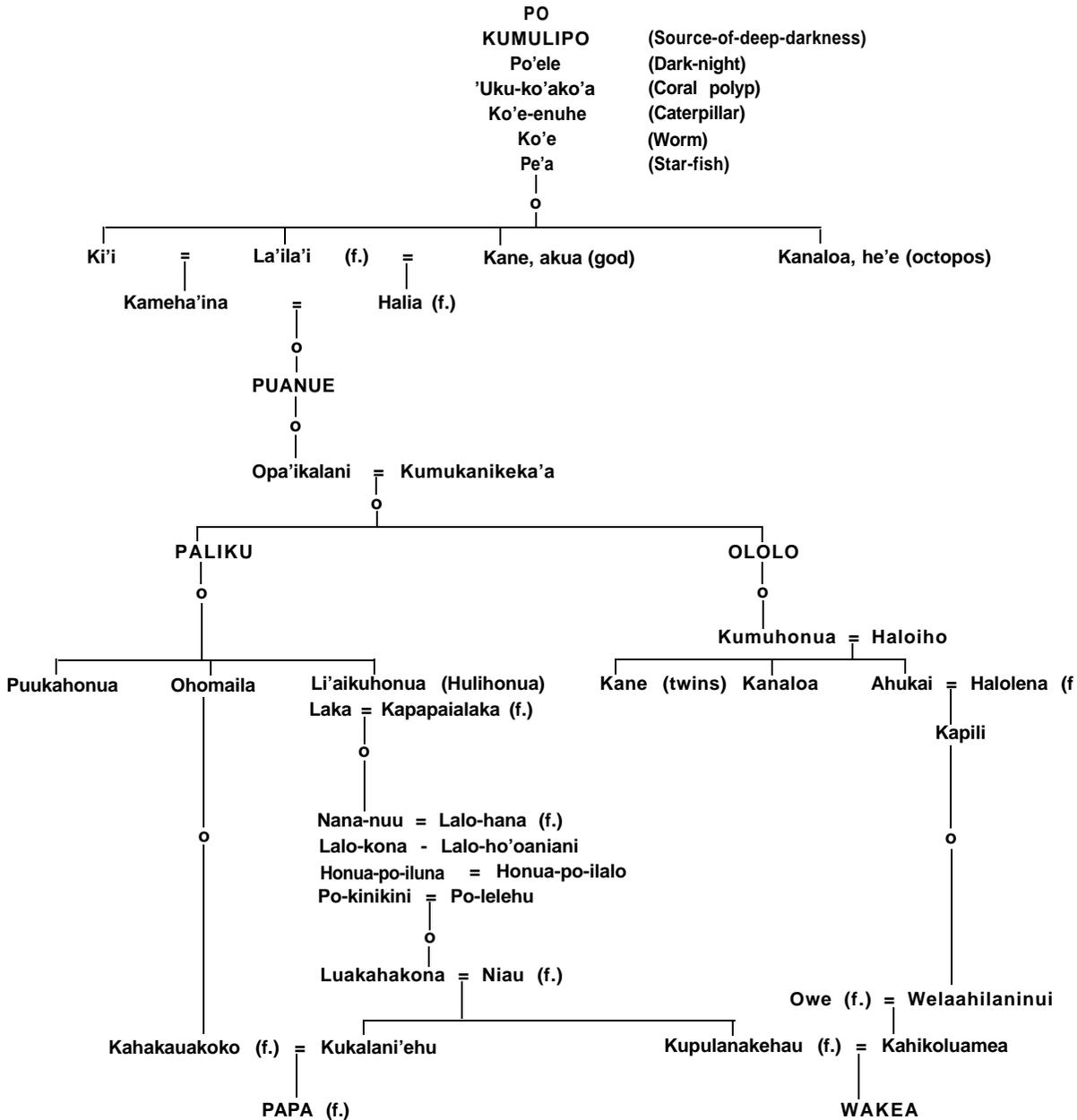
⁷ Beckwith, pp. 2, 4, and 238.

⁸ Samuel M. Kamakau, *The Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Kamehameha School Press, 1961), p. 433.

⁹ K. P. Emory, "Tuamotuan Concepts of Creation," *JPS*, 49 (1940). See also Dorothy B. Barrère, "Revisions and Adulterations in Polynesian Creation Myths," in Highland, pp. 103-119.

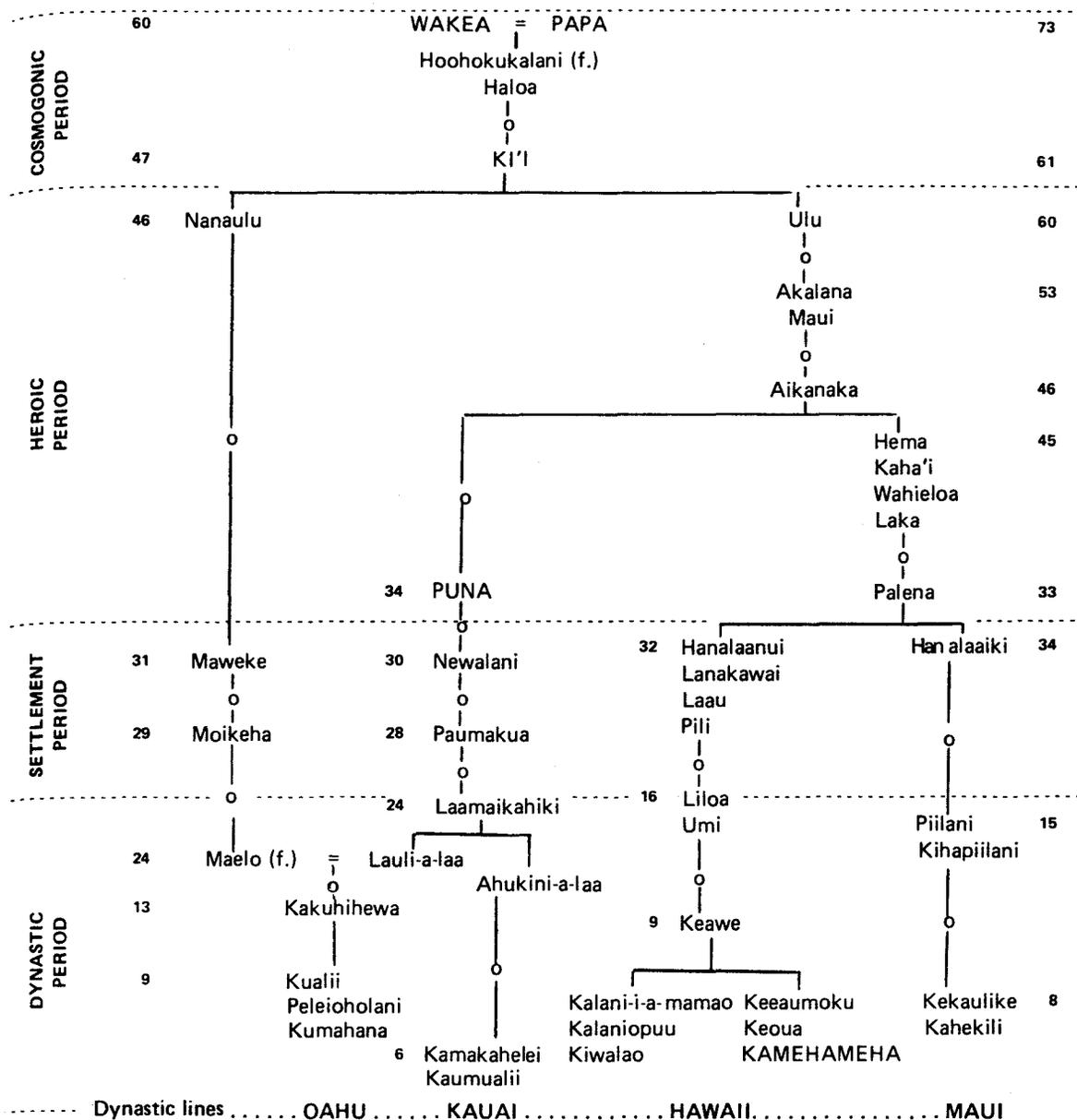
CHART I - Genealogical Framework of Hawaiian Chiefs

Part I : Cosmogonic Period



Important names are capitalized. The symbol "o" represents the omission of more than one generation and "f." indicates female. The above chart was compiled from *The Kumulipo, a Hawaiian Creation Chant* by Martha Beckwith, 1951 (lines 13-1726, 1732-1734), and from *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* by Samuel Kamakau, 1961:433 (*Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, February 22, 1868), and *Polynesian Race* by Abraham Fornander, 1878, 1:184-185. The names occur in *The Kumulipo*, except for Hulihonua who is Li'aiukuhonua. The following names occur in the lines given: Kumulipo (13), Pe'a (18), La'ila'i (612), Kameha'ina (712), Halia (684), Puanue (1566), Opa'ikalani (1633), Paliku (1710, 1735), Ololo (1711), Li'aiukuhonua (1754, 1814), Kumuhonua (1713), Kapili (1716), Nananuu (1820), Luakahakona (1840), Owe (1732), Haumea or PAPA (1794), and WAKEA (1795, 1847).

CHART I - Genealogical Framework of Hawaiian Chiefs
Part 2: Heroic, Settlement, and Dynastic Periods



Important names are capitalized. The symbol "o" represents the omission of more than one generation and "f." indicates female. Numbers refer to the number of generations before 1900. The generation count to Papa is through Ulu and Hema. The count to Wakea is through Nanaulu. Compiled from *Polynesian Race* by Abraham Fornander, 1878, 1:188-196.

ations through the line of one son, Ulu, and forty-seven generations through the line of his other son, Nanaulu.

The Cosmogonic Period in the genealogical framework reflects the concept of creation of the Hawaiians at the end of the eighteenth century. This authentic Hawaiian cosmogonic genealogy has long been obscured by what Judge Abraham Fornander called the Kumuhonua genealogy, and which he published to support the Hawaiian stories of creation and origin contained in his Kumuhonua "legends".¹⁰ It is most unfortunate that Fornander's Kumuhonua genealogy has been widely accepted as authentically ancient by Hawaiians and foreigners alike, because this has led to untenable views as to ancient Polynesian beliefs concerning their creation and early history.

Dorothy Barrère, associate in Hawaiian culture at the Bishop Museum, was the first to point out that Fornander's genealogy from Kumuhonua to Papa and Wakea was a revision of the one his informant, Kamakau, published in 1868.¹¹ The revision consisted of omissions and interpolations made in an attempt to reconcile Hawaiian mythology and genealogy with Old Testament teachings. His revised genealogy also has been used to establish that the first Polynesians were called Menehune, after the interpolated ancestor Kalani-Menehune, and that his descendant, Hawaii-Loa, discovered and settled Hawaii eighty generations before 1900--that is, before the time of Wakea and Papa. The Bishop Museum has just published Barrère's more detailed study of the background and development of the Kumuhonua "legends" and accompanying genealogy, under the title, *The Kumuhonua Legends: Late Nineteenth Century Hawaiian Stories of Creation and Origin*.¹²

The names appearing after Ki'i and before Newalani, Hanalaanui, and Maweke, are in a period which we have termed the Heroic Period. It contains the names of such cultural heroes of Polynesia as Maui and Kaha'i and their parents. We still do not have a real genealogy. We cannot say on the basis of this genealogy that Maui lived fifty-two generations ago and Kaha'i forty-four generations ago. But, commencing with the names of Maweke at thirty-one generations and Newalani at thirty generations, we are encountering traditional names of chiefs who, it is claimed, migrated to Hawaii. From Liloa of Hawaii at sixteen generations before 1900 and Pi'ilani of Maui at fifteen generations, we are

¹⁰ Abraham Fornander, *The Polynesian Race* (London: Trubner & Co., 1878), I, 181-183.

¹¹ Dorothy B. Barrère, "Cosmogonic Genealogies of Hawaii," *JPS*, 70 (1961), 423-425.

¹² Dorothy B. Barrère, *The Kumuhonua Legends: Late Nineteenth Century Hawaiian Stories of Creation and Origin* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1969), see especially Appendix II which compares the genealogies.

meeting with historic characters, the founders of dynasties in the Hawaiian Islands.

Society Islands' Genealogies

In the Society Islands, as in Hawaii, the lengthy genealogies handed down from the past and recorded in family books are those of the ruling chiefs. The Bishop Museum is fortunate to have copies of probably all those kept in the hands of the last of the Pomare dynasty, and also those of Tati Salmon, the last of the principal rival chiefly family. They embrace ruling chiefs of all the islands: Tahiti and Moorea in the windward group, and Huahine, Raiatea, Tahaa, and Borabora in the leeward group. A good number were published by Teuira Henry in *Ancient Tahiti*.¹³ I assembled all the separate genealogies we collected in a manuscript entitled *The Traditional History of Maraes in the Society Islands*.¹⁴ In many of the manuscript books of the Tahitians, the place of origin and name of the *marae* (temple) of individuals is noted. The remains of these *marae* exist except when destroyed by developments subsequent to the conversion to Christianity. It was with the aim of determining the antiquity of certain of the *marae* that I brought together this unpublished data. Since I compiled it in 1932, the whole work needs now to be revised, particularly the interpretations of the genealogical records.

In comparing these genealogies one finds gaps, inconsistencies, and examples of padding in the early introductory form of the genealogies, but they are genuinely traditional genealogies. How far back they are true genetic genealogies is a matter of judgment after study. Branches and cross matings provide some control.

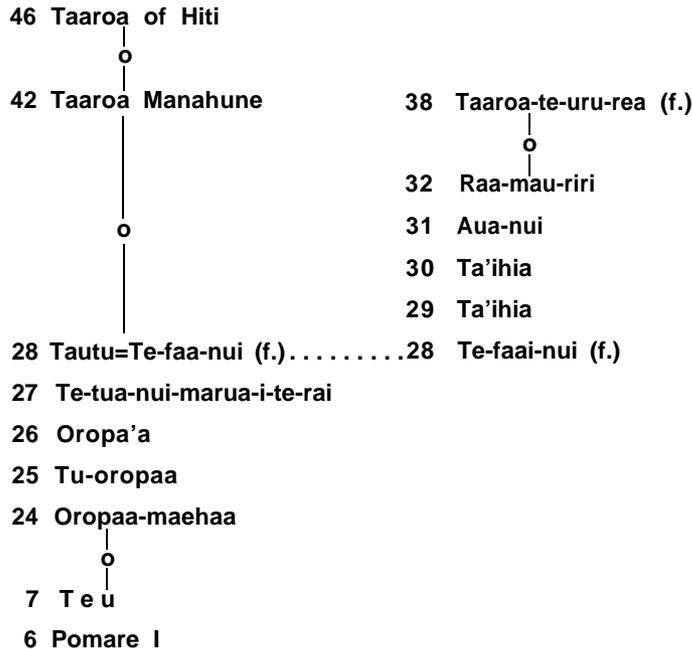
One Windward Island genealogy and one Leeward Island genealogy stand out among all the others, and, as generations went on, they unite at many points so that in the end all the ruling chiefs were closely related and formed a cooperation known as the hui *ari'i* which lasted until the French Government took over the rule of the islands in the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century.

a. Windward Society Island Genealogies

The genealogical chart of the Windward Islands starts with Ta'aroa of Hiti (means an ancestral land) forty-six generations before 1900, comes down to an Oropa'a at twenty-six generations, and then down to Pomare I, through his father Teu as shown on Chart II.

¹³ Teuira Henry, *Ancient Tahiti* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1928), pp. 247-272.

¹⁴ K. P. Emory, "The Traditional History of *Maraes* in the Society Islands," an unpublished paper in the Bishop Museum.

*Polynesian Genealogies Compared***CHART I I - Pomare's Genealogy, Tahiti****Salmon's Version**

Henry gives a version of the genealogy in chant form, the spouses being omitted.¹⁵ The Bishop Museum has the full genealogy with all its ramifications. One collateral line which comes down to the grandmother of Oropa'a, identifies her as the daughter of Ta'ihia, son of 'Aua-nui. It begins with Taaroa-te-uru-rea at thirty-eight generations. There is a famous Tangihia-ariki of Rarotonga, whose father is Kaua, who happens to stand, by one count, at thirty-one generations before 1900,¹⁶ and I thought that here we had a cross between the Society Islands and Rarotonga genealogies, but the antecedents of father and son proved not to be the same. I have concluded, therefore, that this is an example of interpolating a famous chief and his father into one or the other of these genealogies. The name Oropa'a at twenty-six generations before 1900 is equivalent in Hawaii to the name Olopana, a chief who accompanied Maweke in his traditional voyage to Tahiti twenty-nine generations ago. (See Chart I, Part 2). I thought, perhaps, here we had a Hawaiian cross with a Tahitian genealogy through the names Oropa'a and Olopana, but now I am convinced we have simply a sharing of a traditional name.

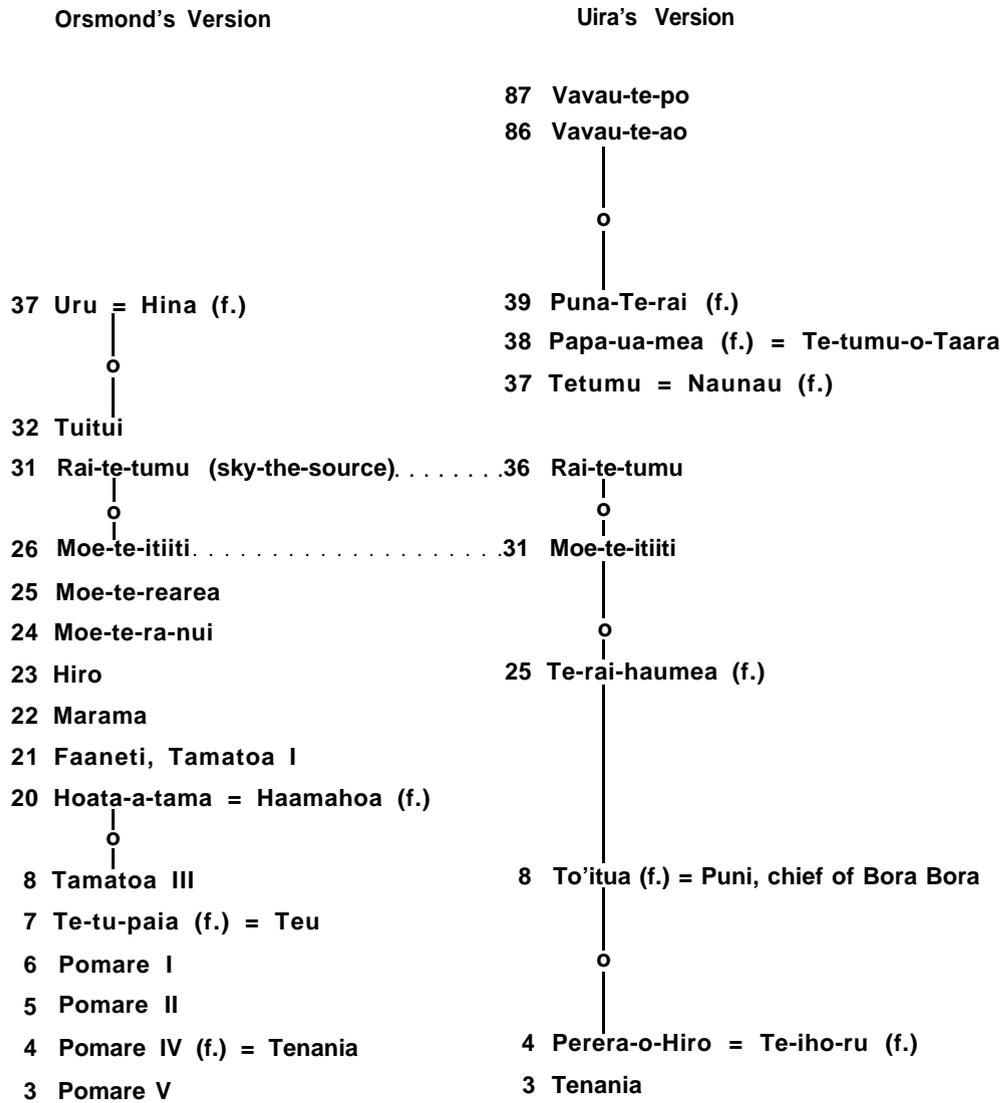
¹⁵ Henry, p. 265.

¹⁶ S. Percy Smith, *Hawaiki: The Original Home of the Maoris* (London: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1921), Appendix.

b. Leeward Society Island Genealogies

The Leeward Island genealogies (See Chart III) go back to Ra'i-te-tumu (Sky-the-Source).

CHART III - Tamatoa's Genealogy, Raiatea



In Henry's genealogy,¹⁷ this name stands at thirty-one generations; on the Uira manuscript genealogy in the Bishop Museum, it appears as the thirty-sixth generation. All these genealogies come down to Moe-te-raruri, father of Hiro of great renown in Tahiti and the Tuamotus as a navigator and adventurer. Hiro's grandson Faaneti, starts the Tamatoa dynasty as Tamatoa I, whose son Hoata-a-tama, by several wives, established the chiefly blood of Raiatea on Moorea in the Windward Islands

¹⁷ Henry, p. 247.

and on Borabora in the Leeward Islands. The line goes down to Te-tupaia, the eldest offspring and daughter of Tamatoa III, and the mother of Pomare I. This genealogical connection gave to Pomare the prerogative of wearing the sacred red-feather loin girdle, the *maro 'ura*, at his *marae* on Tahiti, a symbol that he stood above all the others in the Windward Islands, and could enter the famous ancestral *marae* of Taputapuatea at Opo'a, Raiatea, where the Tamatoas were invested with the *maro 'ura* at the time the ruling chieftainship was conferred upon them.

It is the appearance of the name Hiro in the Rarotongan and Maori genealogies with three or four immediate ancestors all of whose names begin with Mo or Moe¹⁸ that has been taken as a link between these three groups in presettlement times. But again, the ancestors beyond the Moes are not the same, except for those in the genealogies of New Zealand and Rarotonga, and here we are dealing with a cultural hero of fabulous deeds who was carried in story form to these other groups where he now appears as an ancestor on the legendary part of their genealogies.

The Raiatea genealogy beginning with and extending beyond Ra'i-te-tumu enters the Cosmogonic Period. It continues back for six generations, to Uru and his wife Hina in Henry's rendering of the genealogy.¹⁹ In the Uira manuscript, the parents of Ra'i-te-tumu are given as Te-tumu and Naunau. Te-tumu's parents are Papa-ua-mea-o-ruea, female, and Te-tumu-o-Taaroa, male. Beyond them the ancestors are Puna and Te-ra'i. The genealogy then continues in chant form, which gives a succession of fifty names until it arrives at the name Vavau-te-po. Vavau is another mythical homeland of the Tahitians. This addition is obviously a composition to lend mystery and sanctity to the genealogy.

Tuamotuan Genealogies

In the western Tuamotu archipelago some cosmogonic genealogies begin with the pair Tumu-po (Source-of-night) and Tumu-ao (Source-of-day) and end with Fakahotufenua (Fruitfulness-of-the-earth, representing the Earth Mother) and Atea (Space, representing the Sky Father), as the tenth pair.²⁰ (See Chart IV)

¹⁸ W. A. Cole and E. W. Jensen, *Israel in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society, 1961), p. 402.

¹⁹ Henry, p. 247.

²⁰ Emory, "Tuamotuan Concepts," pp. 72, 73, and 78.

CHART IV - Tuamotuan Genealogies

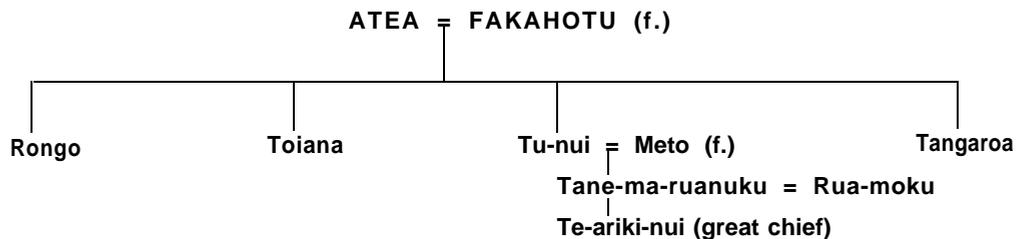
32	Tumu-po	=	Tumu-ao
	Tumu-haruru	=	Tumu-ngatata
	Tapatapaiaha	=	Te-fatu-moana
	Te Pou-henua	=	Rangi-take
	Matau-heti	=	Te Kohu-ariki
	Orovaru	=	Turi-hono
	Kororupo	=	Te-tumu-Kuporu
	Tuaraki	=	Tu-rikiriki
	Havaiki	=	Peaka
	Fakahotu-henua	=	Atea

This genealogy of the Sky Father and Earth Mother which begins with Tumu-po was delivered in chant form.²¹ There are similar cosmogonic chants in the Tuamotus which reach down to Atea, such as the one from Fangatau which begins:

*E moe ana Tumu-po i raro i te
Tumu-po sleeps below in the non-existence
kore o te henua, te vare o te henua. . .
of the earth, in the slime of the earth. . .
Putu ranga o A tea. . .*²² Atea Emerges. . .

From Father Sky and Mother Earth the major gods are born and from them the chiefs descend, as illustrated in the beginning of the genealogy of the high chiefs of Hao atoll in the central Tuamotus. This genealogy was written in many of the genealogy books we copied.²³ In these genealogies Atea stood somewhere between twenty-eight to thirty-four generations before 1900.

CHART V - Hao Atoll Genealogy, Tuamotus



In the above we see the major gods Tane, Tu, Tangaroa, and Rongo, of the East Polynesians.

²¹ Emory, "Tuamotuan Concepts," p. 76.

²² Emory, "Tuamotuan Concepts," p. 76.

²³ Emory, "Tuamotuan Concepts," pp. 85-86.

Many of the presently preserved Tuamotuan genealogies start with a first settler from whom descent is traced. A typical example is a genealogy from Takapoto atoll in the northwest Tuamotus (Chart VI).

CHART VI - Takapoto Atoll Genealogy

		Tumu-nui = Tumu-iti	22
		Vahitu-ma-tagata = Tumu-o-vahitu (f.)	21
20	Honga-piri-take (f.)	Te-papa-o-vahitu (f.)	20
19	MATAPO	TAKAARO of Takaroa	19
		5 Sons	

In their traditional history the first person to dwell on Takapoto were Honga, his wife Piri Take and their son Matapo. Honga stands at twenty generations before 1900 or about A.D. 1400. Their son Matapo married Takaaro of the neighboring atoll of Takaroa. They had five sons, between whom the land was divided.²⁴

The sons had to take as wives, daughters from other neighboring islands. With the many intermarriages on the island of Takapoto itself the genealogies carry on, providing cross-checks which prove these genealogies to be true genealogies. But if we go beyond the twenty generations, as we can with the parents of Honga's wife, Takaaro who was from the neighboring island of Takaroa, we immediately enter the genealogy of mythical individuals. The mother of Takaaro is Te-papa-o-Vahitu (The-rock-foundation-of-the-Vahitu-clan) who is daughter of Tumu-o-Vahitu (Source-of-Vahitu), wife of Vahitu-ma-Tagata, said to be a *tuputupua*, or mythical person. Further than that Vahitu-ma-Tagata is represented as the son of Tumu-nui (Great-foundation) and Tumu-iti (Little-foundation) dwelling in the Nether World (Po).

From genealogies, chants and notes collected in the Tuamotus, I have already written up sketches of the traditional history of Anaa atoll²⁵ and of Takaroa, Takapoto, Faite, Fakarava, Hao, and Vahitahi atolls, presenting genealogies of the leading 'ati or *ngati*, or named localized descent groups.²⁶ Paul Ottino, in his penetrating essay on "Early 'ati of the Western Tuamotus" gives the genealogies of the original 'ati of Rangiroa atoll.²⁷

²⁴ K. P. Emory, *Tuamotuan Stone Structures* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1934), p. 36 and fig. 22.

²⁵ K. P. Emory and Paul Ottino, "Anaa: Histoire Traditionnelle d'un Atoll," *J. Soc. Océanistes*, 23 (1967), pp. 29-57.

²⁶ Emory, "Traditional History."

²⁷ Paul Ottino, "Early 'Ati of the Western Tuamotus," in *Highland*, pp. 451-481.

Maori and Hawaiian Genealogies Compared

Agreement between Hawaiian and Maori genealogies as shown in Chart VII is striking in the names shared and in the same order of the primal Hawaiian pair, Wakea and Papa; Ki'i (in New Zealand mythology the first human being); Ulu; Nanaulu; the cultural hero Maui and his parent Akalana; the cultural hero Kaha'i, his father, grandfather, son, and grandson.

CHART VII - Shared Names in Hawaiian and Maori Genealogies

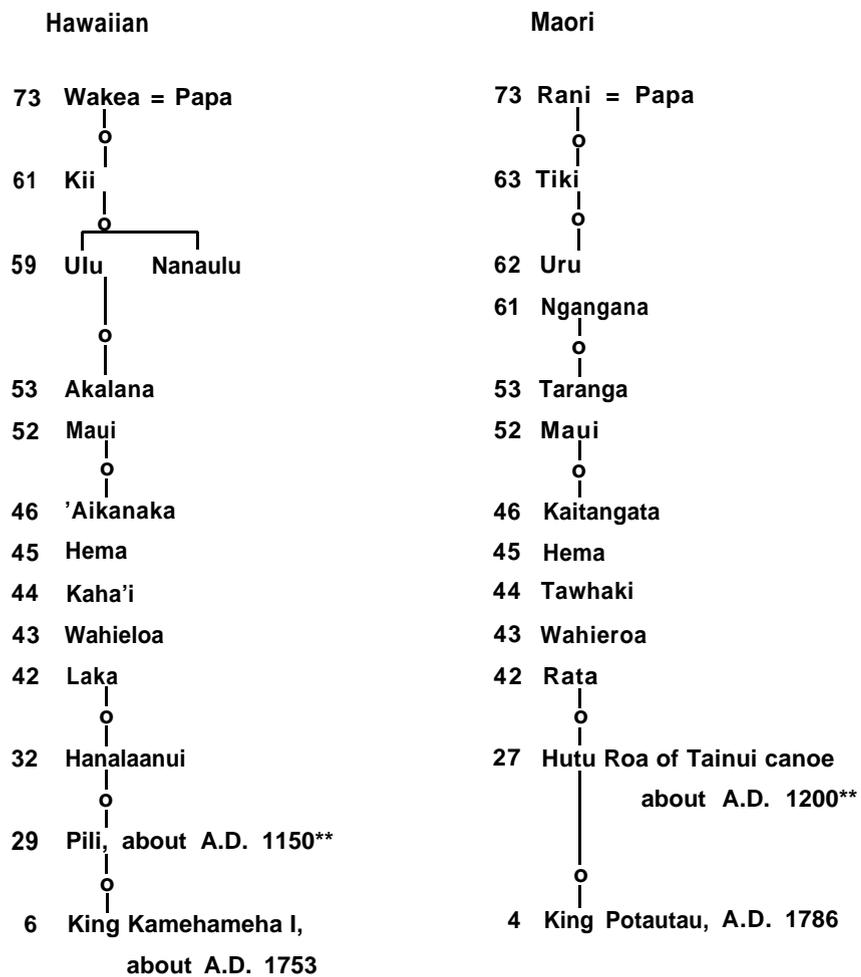


Chart compiled from Cole and Jensen, 1961, Chart 1, p. 397, and 2, pp. 398-399. The Hawaiian is based on Fornander, 1878, pp. 190-191.

**Dates allow 25 years to a generation.

But the names in between are not the same. This is because we are dealing with a mythical genealogy. The fact that both the Hawaiians and the Maoris share these same names in the same order is proof that, to this extent, this mythical genealogy existed in their Tahitian homeland before dispersal. It is not surprising that the genealogy after the mystical names evidences no agreement, because it covers the period after the ancestors of the Hawaiians and Maoris had separated. Since we have not found this genealogical agreement among those in Tahiti, but only the myths of the primal pair Tumu-nui and Papa, Ti'i (= Kaha'i) family,²⁸ we must assume that it has been lost in Tahiti.

The Maori genealogy enters their period of authentic traditional history with the name of Hotu Roa of the migrating Tainui canoe at twenty-eight generations before 1900 or about A.D. 1200. The Hawaiian genealogy enters their traditional history with Hanalanui, a contemporary of Moekeha, who was from Tahiti, at thirty-two generations, or about A.D. 1100. In addition, Hawaiian tradition states that Pili (at twenty-nine generations, about A.D. 1175) was brought to Hawaii by priest Paa'o from Tahiti.²⁹ The period of settlement indicated by this genealogy is in accord with radiocarbon dates obtained from archaeological investigations in New Zealand and Hawaii.

The above comparison between Hawaiian and Maori genealogies illustrates how it is possible to determine a genuinely traditional genealogy, and the usefulness that can be derived from Polynesian genealogies in the reconstruction of prehistory. It shows that they do reach a point beyond which the names cannot be accepted as those of actual ancestors, but which names do indicate a sharing of common traditions. They are names to link the mystical past to the present and transmit its power and glory.

Bishop Museum

²⁸ Henry, pp. 338, 402, 476, and 552-565.

²⁹ J. F. G. Stokes, "Whence Paa'o?" *Pap. Hawaiian Historical Society*, 15 (1928), pp. 40-42 and 45.