

King David Kalakaua's Last Diplomatic Dinner: A Discussion of the Rhetoric of the Menu

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Gastronomic (or Gastro) diplomacy uses food as a political tool to foster cultural understanding among people from diverse cultures and political points of view. Morgan (2012 p.148) explains, 'Diplomatic gastronomy focuses on diplomatic dining in which individuals representing sovereign political interests share a meal under the auspices of certain protocol, cognizant of all communication, especially that emitted by the semiotics of the event'. Through a diplomatic dinner, the status and authority of the political host is emphasized. As Reynolds (2012 p. 3) points out 'the power of prestige utilizes food (and the act of dining) as a medium in which interactions can communicate and display power'. Diplomatic meals juxtapose elements of prestige, wealth and privilege, evoking the past, present and future.

This essay discusses the ways Ke Ali'i David La'amea Kamanakapu'u Mahinulani Nalaiaehuokalani Lumialani Kalākaua, the constitutional monarch of the Kingdom of Hawai'i from 1874 to 1891, utilized gastro or culinary diplomacy in his last formal dinner to honour of Rear-Admiral George Brown, of the United States Navy. Brown, a veteran of the Civil War, was commander of the *Charleston*, a warship – 'one of the first ships of the steel-hulled 'New Navy' built to finally modernize the fleet after the Civil War. Over 300 feet long, the ship steamed up to 19 knots and carried over 300 officers and men. Painted a dramatic white above the water line and bristling with guns, the warships were a powerful contrast to the wooden sailing ships' (Crawford 2010 p. 1). In 1890, moored in Honolulu harbour, no doubt the *Charleston's* 300-foot long steel hulled presence was intimidating. Through the invitation to Brown, Kalākaua sought to demonstrate his political authority through a food spectacle of excess and luxury, typical of sovereigns of foreign nations.

While there are a few historical menus available at Bishop Museum and the State Archives from this period, this menu is often referred to in historical documents as the meal that sealed the fate and future of the Kingdom of Hawai'i – an overthrow of the monarchy in 1893 and the island's annexation to the United States in 1898. Because of a concentrated effort by annexationists and historians to diminish Kalākaua's achievements as a monarch, this menu is most often used to indicate his decadence and poor decision making and leadership. Yet, the text of the menu reflects a sensory aesthetics – performative and self-reflexive. In fact, put in another context, that of gastro-diplomacy, I believe it shows Kalākaua's creativity, intelligence, hard work and understanding of the culture of others, as well as of the

impending revolution. Many of the annexationist conspirators were invited to partake of the feast.

The menu, dated August 6, 1890, revealed a French theme, popular in 19th century diplomatic dinners (Laudan 2015, 290) (Fig. 1). The hors d'oeuvres, soupiéres, poissons, entrees, rôtis, punch, curries, salad and entremets evoked Kalākaua's familiarity with international and diplomatic cuisine. While the dishes reflect traditional European cultural themes and techniques, the ingredients were primarily grown, fished, or raised in Hawai'i.

It is often incorrectly assumed that in the 19th century Hawai'i's agriculture and animal husbandry was minimal. In fact by the late 18th century a variety of fruit and vegetables grew on Oahu. A friend and confidant to Kamehameha I, Don Francisco de Paula Marin brought lemons, oranges, strawberries, coffee beans and roses to the

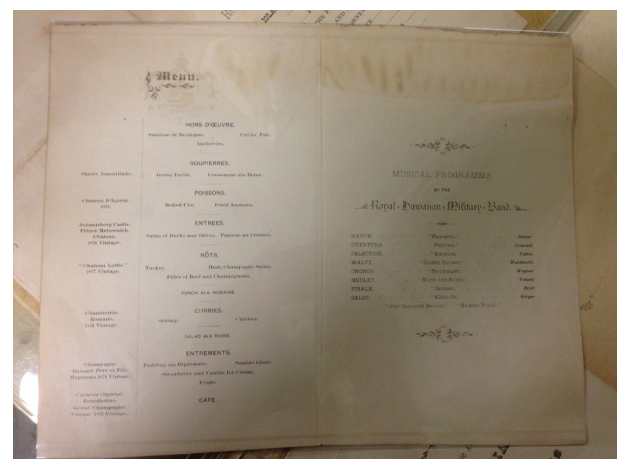
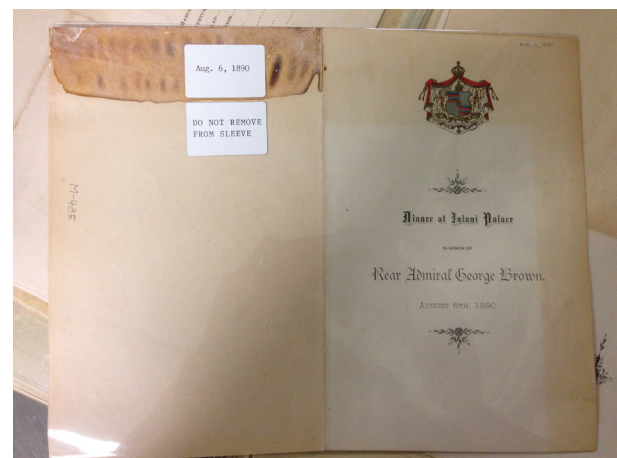


Fig. 1. Menu from the King David Kalakaua's last diplomatic dinner.

island (Nagata 1985, pp. 35-61), in addition to numerous other edible plants. Kalakaua (1888) says, 'most of the useful and ornamental growths of the tropics now flourish on the islands. The indigenous plants, however, are confined to the banana, plantain, cocoanut, breadfruit, ohia, sugar-cane, arrow-root, yam, sweet potato, taro, strawberry, raspberry and ohelo. The lime, orange, mango, tamarind, papaia, guava, and every other edible product, aside from those named as indigenous, are importations from the past century' (p.18). On Oahu, the first cattle and sheep ranch was started in 1840 and the first dairy in 1860. While certain ingredients had to be imported such as for the 'Pudding ala Diplomate' (Diplomat Cake) everything else for the desserts such as the 'Sambio Glace' (Sabayon Sauce) and the 'Strawberry and Vanilla Ice Cream' as well as the 'Fruits' were available to Kalākaua's chef. In addition, the turtle, fish, ducks, pigeon, turkey, chicken, shrimp, beef and ham were all obtainable locally. The varied assortment of wines, cognac and champagnes was prodigious, gifted to the monarchy by numerous European sovereigns, ship captains and merchants. The food and wine reflected Kalākaua's purpose – to perform a feast that might break down the inhibitions of his guests. And if the food and wine didn't work, perhaps Kalākaua thought that music might transform the minds of most of his audience from the treachery that would ensue three years later. Conducted by Henry Berger, leader of the Royal Hawaiian Military Band, nine songs, seven of which were musical adaptations, entertained the forty-nine guests.

When I interviewed Zita Cup Choy (July 2015), a Hawai'i State archivist, she reported that because of Kalākaua's education and previous governmental appointments, he was well versed in diplomatic courtesy and hospitality. Ms. Cup Choy said Kalākaua was an expert at inviting guests who would have things in common with one another (Interview). The dinner allowed Kalākaua to demonstrate, in the tradition of other sovereigns, his long diplomatic reach and expertise with European royal excess. To explain Kalākaua's status in terms of Hawaiian culture, he was Ali'i Nui and Mō'i or 'paramount chief' (Osorio 2002, p. 3). The title was used for all kings of the Hawaiian Islands and the Hawaiian monarchs. The setting, menu and the music represented an international performance requiring the etiquette and formality of royal courts but the dinner also reflected a Hawaiian cultural lens as well.

In order to understand Kalākaua's complex cultural identity as ali'i nui or Mō'i of the Hawaiian people and as international sovereign of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, it is necessary explain the political situation in the late 1880s – a historical moment that reverberated with the possibility of revolution. As stated above, Kalākaua was well acquainted with the rituals and protocol required of leaders of sovereign nations. In 1874, he was the first foreign dignitary to be hosted at the White House for a State Dinner with Ulysses S. Grant. In fact, the 'National Republican declared the

evening 'royal and generous to the last degree', (Kreiser 2013 p. 19). Kalākaua addressed a joint session of Congress – also, the first foreign dignitary to do so. On this excursion, the King was taking measures to strengthen the visibility of his own people and to support their rich heritage. Schweizer (1991) says 'he established the policy of *ho'oulu i ka lahui* – to make the nation grow' (p. 108). Kalākaua also initiated the revival of hula, a sacred form of Hawaiian cultural expression, 'the life-blood of his people', that had been banned by missionaries for its decadence (Schweizer 1991 p.108). During the visit to Washington D.C., Kalākaua's main concerns were on economic pressures in Hawai'i, and the perpetuation of the Native Hawaiians. According to Osorio (2002), Kalākaua knew that economic cooperation with a powerful government inherently carried the risk of political domination. He set out to pursue a foreign policy designed to emphasize the status of Hawai'i as a fully independent nation (p. 172). The deaths and low birth rates of the Native Hawaiians were of great concern. When Kalākaua was elected in 1874, Hawaiians had died by the hundreds of thousands from diseases such as cholera, small pox, typhoid, syphilis, gonorrhoea, flu and leprosy introduced by visitors to the islands beginning with Captain James Cook in the late 18th century. In 1778, the population was approximately 800,000. By 1850 the population was less than 85,000. By 1890 it was down to 40,000. And, in 1900 – in the immediate aftermath of the United States seizure and annexation of the sovereign Hawaiian nation – it reached an all-time low of just over 37,000, an overall population collapse of at least 90 percent (Hope 2003 pp. 1-9).

Kalākaua's international reputation grew immensely in 1881. He was the first king of a sovereign nation to circumnavigate the globe. Kalākaua traveled to Japan, China, Siam and India. In Alexandria, Egypt Kalākaua addressed the Masonic Fraternity, astonishing members with his knowledge of their ancient order and Egyptian history. In Italy, Kalākaua met King Umberto and had an audience with Pope Leo XIII. He visited France, Germany and England and met with Queen Victoria. He was the first sovereign of an independent nation to circumnavigate the globe. This unique royal journey added greatly to the prestige of the small mid-Pacific nation. Kalākaua's knowledge, his excellent command of English, French, Italian and German in addition to his intelligence and charm left a lasting impression on the diplomats and royalty he met along the way. By 1892, the Hawaiian kingdom maintained no fewer than 93 consulates, a network that spanned the globe. Many of these consulates were established before Kalakaua's death in 1891 (Schweitzer 1991 pp. 110-111).

To international and Native Hawaiian audiences, Kalākaua was often referred to as the Renaissance King. In addition to reading, writing and speaking Hawaiian, 'he readily acquired a proficiency in French, Spanish, German and English. The acquirement of these languages necessarily bred in his mind a desire for extended study and

that desire an ambition to figure among the royals authors of the century' (Allen 1994, p. 225). Kalākaua was a lawyer and Postmaster General. He served on the Privy Council and had a clerkship with the land office. He was also the Chamberlain to Kamehameha V, Lota Kapuāiwa (Zambuka 1983, pp. 8-9). Kalākaua was an inventor, poet, songwriter, and author of many works, including *The Legends and Myths of Hawai'i: The Fables and Folklore of a Strange People* published in 1888.

Despite international accolades as to his leadership and charisma, there was a concerted effort on the part of American settlers in Hawaii to discredit Kalākaua – by questioning his cultural and international authority. In order to solidify the credibility of his genealogy as an ali'i nui or Mō'i, Kalākaua created the Board of Genealogists of the Hawaiian Chiefs and the Royal Genealogical Society 'which was limited to members who could prove their noble ancestry by producing authenticated, written genealogies and name chants' (Zambuka, p. 4). The *Kumulipo*, the Hawaiian Chant of Creation, was recorded in Hawaiian. Kalākaua claimed descent from the 'genealogies of 800 generations of Hawaiian Chiefs, stretching back to the time of Umi-a-Liloa (1450-1480 AD)' (Zambuka 1983, p. 4). The Hawaiian people considered the *Kumulipo* one of Kalākaua's strongest hereditary claims to the throne of Hawaii' (Zambuka 1983, p. 5). But white settlers reviled the *Kumulipo* and called Kalākaua's association with it 'vile, obscene and irreligious.' There were more settler enemies who were dedicated to 'wipe out all things Polynesian' (Zambuka 1984, pp. 4-5). Zambuka argues, 'The King's enemies accused him of 'hitching his wagon to a star' or 'trying to establish his divine origins' (p. 5).

A small group of revolutionaries plotted to overthrow the kingdom, which resulted in annexation to the United States in 1898. Headed by an executive committee of lawyers and businessmen mostly of non-aboriginal, non-indigenous naturalized United States citizens, the Annexation Club (or the Hawaiian League as they came to be called) of thirteen men was composed of mostly Americans and descendants of missionaries (Kuykendall 1961, pp. 347-350). The Hawaiian League controlled the Honolulu Rifles made of about 200-armed local (non-native) men (Kuykendall 1961, pp. 352-353). In June 1887, the Hawaiian League used the Rifles to force Kalākaua to enact a new constitution, now referred as the Bayonet Constitution. In addition to threatening the life of the queen, a gun was held to Kalākaua's head, forcing him to sign a constitution that further disempowered the Hawaiian king and the Native Hawaiians.

Native Hawaiians were unhappy with the 1887 Constitution that took away the power of the Mō'i and further disenfranchised them from their land. In 1889, a mini-revolution took place in response the Bayonet Constitution. Robert Wilcox, a protégée of Kalākaua's, tried to take over 'Iolani palace in an effort to reinstitute

the 1864 constitution and to restore the prerogative the Mō'i. Wilcox attempted to provoke open warfare between the Native people and the colonists who controlled so much of the government and land. Kalākaua took no part in this conflict. Osorio suggests, 'perhaps he, like his sister in 1893, had no stomach for war. Instead he urged the kānāka to take the oath to support the new constitution and qualify themselves to vote' (2002, p.243). Perhaps Kalākaua was discouraged from this tactic because of the hundreds-of-thousands of Native Hawaiians who had died as a result of diseases introduced by visitors to Hawai'i.

Kuykendall (1961) reports that 'Kalākaua naturally resented his loss of authority and prestige ... The majority of the native Hawaiians greatly disliked the subordinate position in which the Constitution of 1887 placed them and were aggrieved that their highest alii, the king, had been stripped of so much of his power' (p. 172). Kuykendall continues, 'Despite the limitation of Kalākaua's powers and an overwhelming pressure to annex the kingdom to the United States, Kalākaua still acted and ruled as if he still had agency to control and command (p. 172). In the August 6, 1890 dinner to honor Rear Admiral George Brown, he sought to demonstrate that he was the center of all executive authority in a European sense and that he had also held power as the Mō'i of Hawai'i.

The honored guest, Rear Admiral George Brown was the Commander in Chief of the United States naval force on the Pacific Station. Even though, Brown appeared to be King's friend, his duty was to protect United States interests in Hawai'i. On July 29, 1890, a little over a week before the dinner, Brown wrote to the United States Department of State, reporting on the possibility of a revolution in Hawai'i because of attempts to organize a constitutional convention to return power to Kalākaua and voting rights to the Hawaiian people. Brown says (1890), 'the power of the force under my command has a marked influence on the would-be revolutionists, as, while they are well aware I that I am here to protect the persons and property of citizens of the United States the general belief among them [revolutionists] is that I will, in the event of a revolution, take a more decided stand in the interests of those opposed to them than I might be warranted in doing' (p. 23).

The Setting: 'Iolani Palace

State dinners were held at 'Iolani Palace which began serving as Kalākaua's royal headquarters in 1882. Described as American Florentine, American Composite and French Rococo in style (Kanehiro 2006), Kalākaua worked closely with the architects to construct the palace that was located on the site of a former palace built by Kamehameha V, Lota Kapuāiwa. The structure was in close proximity to an ancient heiau, or a traditional Hawaiian religious site – an important factor for Native Hawaiians to give the space cultural authority. By building the palace with references to chiefly origins, Kalākaua sought to

instill a sense of cultural and national pride among the Hawaiian population. Kanehiro (2006) says, that 'Kalākaua's vision of nationhood did not picture Hawai'i as enduring as a separate or secluded island state, but instead was premised on Hawai'i's right to join the international of nations (p. 6). Kalākaua played an active role in planning and furnishing the palace, from selecting furniture to dish cloths (Cup Choy 2015). He incorporated technical innovations and modern inventions such as using concrete blocks, sheet glass, a telephone system (the first in Honolulu), modern indoor plumbing and electricity. 'Iolani Palace had electricity before the White House. To indicate the power of the Mō'i, 'Iolani palace had rows of kapu markers (pulo'ulo'u sticks or spears) that were covered in a bark cloth ball warning passersby against trespass and marked the building as a sacred space intended for more formal and official uses such as state dinners and receptions. Clusters of taro leaf motifs flanked the central image of the transoms. Taro (kalo) was a Hawaiian staple, deemed 'the staff of life' and was designated the national dish. The taro's mythology linked humans and plants. The taro leaf motif referenced the chief as the source of life. To be invited to eat in the palace was a great honor (Kanehiro 2006, 17). While some of the guests would have understood the significance of being invited into a royal palace, many of Kalākaua's invitees disparaged his efforts.

In addition to George Brown and some of the Charleston crew, the guests were American and British foreign ministers, consuls from Japan, Portugal and France, captains and plantation magnates and as well as other businessmen. The guest list included John L. Stevens, who three years later would orchestrate the overthrow of the monarchy. A vocal critic of Kalākaua, Stevens often referred to him as a drunkard, adulterer, and wastrel. According to Lili'uokalani, the sister of Kalākaua, Stevens 'as a [U.S.] diplomat was to foster a friendly, trusting relationship [between the United States and] with the Hawaiian government. Instead, he often criticized the monarchy in public' (Mitchell 125). In total 49 guests, dressed in heavy uniforms and gowns sat down for dinner in the palace dining room. It was a hot August evening. The table setting, the menu and prepared dishes, wines and the music demonstrated how Kalākaua and Kapiolani, his Queen, understood the requirements of international protocol and etiquette.

The *Daily Pacific Commercial Advertiser* reported: 'the interior of the palace was brilliant, illuminated with the electric lights. One table ran the entire length of the dining hall, and the decorations were exquisite. A center piece shaped like an anchor was covered in roses shaded from a deep red to white. A yellow surah silk runner extended from end to end down the center of the table. On either side of the rose anchor were silver candelabras and a beautiful array of fairy lights. Handsome bouquets of flowers of all colors ornamented the table, the whole being very unique. The menu was an excellent one and one

feature of the dinner was the wines, specially imported for His Majesty's use. All the arrangements were as perfect as they could be. The Chamberlain proposed the health of Rear Admiral Brown wishing him bon voyage and a speedy return. Admiral proposed the health of Her Majesty, the Queen and the Royal Family. These were the only toasts during the evening' (August 7, 1890). In addition to the festive rose arrangement, the table was set with French and English silverware (mostly given as gifts but also acquired by Kalākaua on his 1881 world tour), blue china, Limoges porcelain and koa calabashes. Some of the dishes were served in silver hollowware (Cup Choy 2015).

The Food

Visser (1991) says that the food served at a feast is usually 'traditional, inherited from the past and intended to be experienced as an ancient custom, the recipes and the lore associated with it to be handed on by us for use again in ritual celebrations' (p. 29). She also states the 'feast, by means of structure and ritual, deliberately uses power connotations of food to recall origins and earlier times . . . we are eating cultural history and value (pp. 29-30). The dishes presented at Kalākaua's gastrodipomatic feast evoked traditional European royal fare while using mostly ingredients grown in Hawai'i. In addition, some of the foods evoked Native Hawaiian mythological connections that alluded to the motivations of the small audience of annexationists.

As Judith Goode (1992) points out 'particular dishes (transformed food items) are imbued with meaning and signify group membership' (p. 243). She argues, 'the activities related to organizing meals for special occasions and the actual performance of these occasions are even more explicitly related to communication' (p. 233). In order to understand the menu on a deeper level, it's important to be aware of a basic component of Hawaiian language and cultural ideology, especially concepts of kauna or deeply hidden meanings. Bryan (1958) says 'many Polynesian peoples [use an] abundance of subtle hidden meanings. As the contemporary Irish poet, Padraic Colum, has put it, 'Every Hawaiian poem has at least four meanings: (1) the ostensible meaning of the words; (2) a vulgar double meaning; (3) a mythological-historical-topographical import; and (4) the Kauna or deeply hidden meaning. In olden days there were persons skilled in the art of reading these hidden meanings' (p. 53). As the cultural and mythological connection for the Native Hawaiians, Kalākaua would have been an expert at coding and decoding.

When I researched the dishes served on the menu, I found connections between the past and the present – as well as power and privilege evoking subtle and subversive messages to the diplomats consuming and digesting the food. Goode says, 'Rules exist for the appropriate composition of a meal. Dishes must be organized in time sequences or spatial

arrangements to comprise a meal appropriate for the occasion' meal was artfully arranged (p. 237).

Representing the excess of the aristocracy as well as traditional feast food was 'Caviar Pate.' According to Davidson (1999), 'As long ago as the mid-15th century caviar was mentioned by Rabelais as the finest item for what would now be called Hors D'oeuvres. It has always enjoyed a reputation as a luxury food . . . but it was only in the 19th century that its adoption by the most prominent restaurants and hotels of W. Europe sealed this reputation' (p.148). Whether or not the caviar was canned or fresh, its place at the beginning of a meal signaled extravagance.

Under the 'Soupierres' and 'Poissons', the turtle in the 'Green Turtle Soup' and the two fish served that night evoked significant mythological symbolism that may have reflected Kalākaua's knowledge and power. During the 19th century, turtles were commonly eaten in Hawai'i. The honu, a Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle, functioned as a powerful metaphor of the connection between people, land and ocean. In Hawaiian legend, Ai`ai (a hero in Hawaiian mythology) created honu by drawing marks upon a rock near the water. The rock transformed into a honu. In myth the honu is a messenger, a monster sent to attack enemies . . . and even as the foundation of some of the islands. Kalākaua would have been well-acquainted this myth that would speak to his power as a leader and a foundation of culture. He also knew the tales of the uhu and ama ama that were also on the menu whose stories crossed the realm of human and nature (see Kalakaua 1888).

The 'Poissons' served were 'Boiled Uhu' and 'Fried Aamaama' ['ama`ama]. Uhu or parrot-fish is common to Hawai'i and is also representative of the supernatural world. In ancient times, the uhu was the storyteller of all the fish. Uhu could reveal what sort of behavior was going on inside the fisherman's house or in this context Kalākaua's palace and dining room. The ama`ama was also supernatural as it could hear and understand human beings, as it was born from a human being. I believe the honu, uhu and `ama`ama suggest the power of Kalākaua to discover and expose the truth regarding the plotting from the guests at his table. Whether or not the guests were cognizant of these connections is unclear. But I am quite certain that Kalākaua did nothing without purpose and reason (see Beckwith 1970).

Under 'Entrees', 'Salmi of Ducks aux Olives' originally stumped me. I wasn't sure that Native Hawaiians whether or not the Polynesians brought ducks to Hawai'i, or whether or not they are indigenous. They are indigenous to the Island chain – although quite decimated from disease and overhunting. Kalākaua (1888) says, 'Wild geese, including a species peculiar to the islands, ducks, snipe and plover were abundant in their seasons, but seem to have been sparsely eaten' (p. 18) and Bryan (1953) reports, 'Although both the gallinule and the coot were eaten by the Hawaiians, they were not so highly esteemed as was the Hawaiian duck, a small species that formerly was plentiful'

(p. 328). I found a Salmis recipe that claims heritage from classical French cooking. Herbst (2013) explains that salmis is a highly seasoned wine based ragout made with minced, partially roasted game birds (p. 660). The preparation sounds quite delicious.

In addition, wine pairings accompanied each course. The Schloss Johannisberger or Johannisberg Castle Prince Metternich Chateau 1876 Vintage is a late harvest wine, produced for over 800 years (Wikipedia Schloss Johannisberger, Accessed 5/16). In *the Seattle Post Intelligencer* August 26, 1890, Admiral George Brown reported on his travels through the Pacific and the dinner Kalākaua hosted in his honor: 'During the courses some rare Johannisherger wine was served, which had been sent to the island on condition that it should never be drunk except at the royal table.' The 'Punch ala Romaine' or roman punch had an interesting history. I found a 19th century recipe of Lemonade, orange juice, champagne, rum, egg whites and confectioner's sugar. The roman punch was an obligatory item on any dinner of any importance during the 19th century and secrecy was part of the narrative of this particular dish. The recipe was stolen by Napoleon from the pope, and passed on to British royalty. Copies of the recipe were only given to a select few. Served midway through the meal – sometimes semi-frozen (The Old Foodie 2009). This intercourse was used to cleanse the palate for what is to follow, the dessert or Pudding ala Diplomate – a molded cakelike pudding.

In a sweep of the Internet, I discovered the Diplomat Cake had many forms and a long history dating back to the 15th century. From an 1893 American cookbook of *French Cooking for Every Home, adapted to American Requirements* by Francois Tanty, the chef of Emperor Napoleon III and of the Imperial Family of Russia, clearly had some cache and diplomatic authority. The ingredients for the cake varied. Most recipes included raisins, lemon/orange peel, ladyfingers, eggs, cornstarch, milk, rum and sugar (Old Foodie 2006). The Sauce Sabayon has many permutations as well but usually contains egg yolks, cornstarch, sugar rum, cream and would have been served with the cake. Champagne Ruinart Pere et Fils Magnum 1874 vintage Rose, popular with the French Royal court, was served with the dessert.

The Music

The Royal Hawaiian Military Band played on the verandah of `Iolani Palace before and after each course. They began with a March. By the middle of the food service, the band played North and South to honor Rear Admiral George Brown, who had served the Union (or North) during the Civil War but had been captured and imprisoned by the Confederates (South) during the war. At the end of the dinner, three songs were played, Aloha Oe (written by Princess Liliuokalani in 1878), the Star Spangled Banner (the American anthem) and Hawaii Ponoī (the anthem of

the Kingdom of Hawai'i written by Kalākaua and Henry Berger, the leader of the Royal Hawaiian Military band. According to John Charlot (Ing 2003), Hawai'i Pono'i bridged Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian understanding' (p. 7). The anthem suggests a unified nation and a reverence/respect for the environment and Native Hawaiian culture. The song is still the State of Hawai'i's anthem sung in public schools, in halau's (hula schools) and at most sporting evenings in Hawai'i.

As Margaret Visser (1991) states in 'a formal dinner shows us how fundamental to a meal is a sense that it evolves and progresses in an orderly fashion, tells a tale, symbolizes life, society and the cosmos (p. 197). But according to Rachel Laudan, 'the price of adopting the French themed menu was thus declaring modernity as a progressive, civilized nation' and could result in unforeseen consequences (p. 289). The menu seems to indicate that Kalākaua knew where his kingdom was headed. According to Tiffany Ing (2003), 'the king adopted a variety of strategies to stop the colonization and loss of his kingdom. Many of these strategies involved legal, political, and personal negotiations, intrigues and initiatives. For my purposes, however, the most significant were his spectacles of display, designed to convince those inside and outside of Hawai'i that he possessed the intelligence and ability to lead, to revive Hawaiian culture, and to make other peoples and nations recognize Hawai'i as an independent nation. First, he displayed himself, his people, and their culture to the world through events like the World Exhibitions. Second, he made a traveling spectacle of himself through public appearances and journeys. Third he made a variety of visual reproductions of himself that his people – Hawaiians and haole alike – would see as assertions of his kingship. And finally, Kalākaua proclaims the beauty and dignity of his kingdom, and its forms of self-government through music (p. 5). As hard as he worked diplomatically to create a safe and healthy environment for Native Hawaiians, as well as to maintain an independent sovereign nation, in historical documents, Kalākaua is remembered for what were considered overindulgences. And often, references to this menu are evoked to demonstrate this claim. While this notion has changed tremendously in the last ten years, historians have often presented Kalākaua as unpredictable, a spendthrift who drank and partied excessively. He became known as the Merrie Monarch. A good part of this criticism is the legacy of Kalākaua's enemies who undermined his accomplishments. The negative and perverse narrative thread has informed a hundred years of historical discussions of Kalākaua and his reign.

The August 6, 1890 dinner was a revolutionary act on the part of Kalākaua to demonstrate, in the tradition of other sovereigns, his long diplomatic reach and expertise with European royal excess. When one looks at the menu on its face it reads of excess but it is necessary to look beneath the surface of the text to understand the kauna, the underlying meaning of a word or image. A performance of traditional recipes, incorporating locally sourced ingredients and wines

from around the world suggests, that Kalākaua says, I am Kalākaua still – Mō'i of the Kingdom of Hawai'i.

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