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Queen Kapi'olani's Lei Chants

THE PHENOMENAL RESURGENCE of hula performance in and since the 1970s has stimulated widespread interest in historical research on hula repertoire in archival resources. Much of that research has been aimed at reviving dormant repertoire. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of poetic texts—*mele*—that date from the nineteenth century, but only a fraction have been transmitted to the present generation of performers through continuous performance. A vast majority of nineteenth-century repertoire was no longer extant in performance at the inception of the cultural renaissance of the 1970s. Archival collections, as repositories of poetic texts, have provided significant resources for teachers who wish to augment the repertoire received from their teachers and to expand the repertoire offered to their students.

One focus of interest for researchers is the subject matter within the poetic texts—*mele hula*. At what locale is the subject situated? What sites, landmarks, and natural phenomena (e.g., rains, winds) are named? What kinds of plants, trees, and flowers are named? On another level, an understanding of the circumstances surrounding the composition of the *mele* is the goal of research. To whom is the *mele* dedicated? What event or episode occasioned the composition of the *mele*? An even deeper level of appreciation derives from interpreting hidden or veiled meanings—*kaona*—within the *mele* by bringing knowledge of the circumstances of composition to bear on

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FIG. 1. Coronation portrait of Queen Kapi'olani. (Hawai'i State Archives.)

choices of images and poetic expression used in the *mele*. What named objects actually refer to people? What double meanings might be concealed in specific terms or phrases?

Beyond the study of individual *mele* lies historical study of corpuses of *mele*. Research along these lines involves discovering and explaining patterns of practice that are present in, or can be teased out of, the evidence. The fun starts when multiple sources of information for a given *mele* or set of *mele* do not completely agree.

This article focuses on the set of lei chants composed in honor of Queen Kapi'olani, wife of King David Kalākaua,¹ who ruled from 1874 to 1891. This set of *mele* is fairly well known in the hula world. Since the advent of the annual Merrie Monarch hula competition in 1973, at least two of the *mele*, "Aia i Haili kou lei nani" and "Aia i ka 'ōpua kō lei nani," have served as the competition chant in 1980 and 1985, respectively, for women's groups in the competition, where all entering groups are given the poetic text and must create an appropriate choreography and accompaniment.² Other *mele* from this set have also been presented over the years by various groups and in various events as well.³ Earlier in the century, performances of several of the *mele* were preserved in sound recordings: one chanter recorded one of the *mele* in 1923; another chanter recorded five of the *mele* in 1933. The poetic texts of the *mele* have also been preserved in several different manuscript sources from the late 1800s.

Tradition has it that these name chants—*mele inoa*—were composed by members of Kapi'olani's retinue on the occasion of the coronation of the king and queen, celebrated on February 12, 1883. In this context, the lei has been understood to represent Kapi'olani's crown. Each of the *mele* is said to represent a different island; thus the set manifests widespread expressions of homage and affection of the Hawaiian people. The *mele* were evidently performed at the *lū'au* (feast) staged on February 24, 1883. This is verified in *Papa Kuhikuhi O Na Hula Poni Moi* (Program of Hula for the Coronation of the King), the printed program of hula titles performed at that event: the title "Aia i Haili ko lei nani" (There at Haili is your beautiful wreath) is included among the dances presented by hula master S. Ua.⁴

A comparison of available archival evidence for this set of lei chants, however, reveals a perplexing puzzle: just which *mele* belong to this set of chants? A quick glance at the information on primary

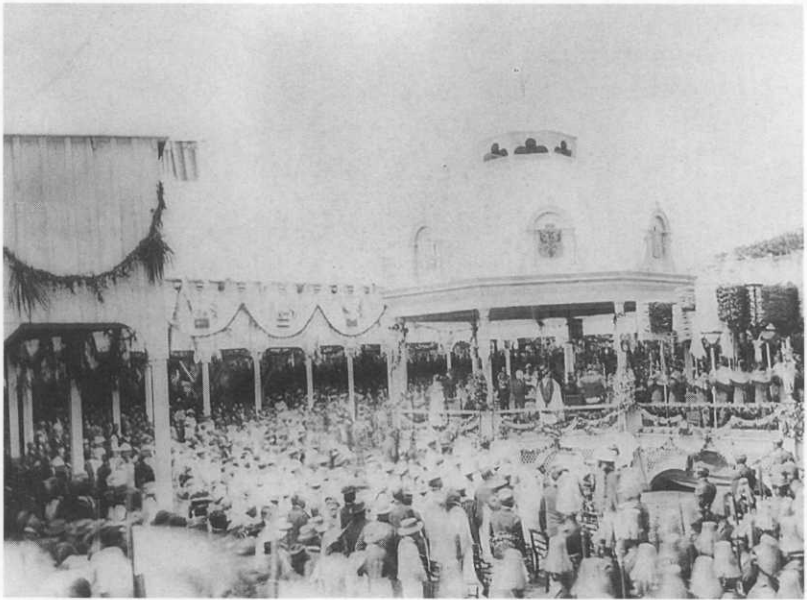


FIG. 2. The coronation of King Kalākaua and Queen Kapi'olani at 'Iolani Palace, February 12, 1883. (Hawai'i State Archives.)

sources presented in Table 1 reveals various groupings of various *mele* in this set. On one level, addressing the seemingly simple question of membership is, in itself, of intrinsic interest. On another level, it becomes apparent that doing so involves fundamental issues of historical interpretation, for each of the archival manuscript sources must be assessed, not only in terms of its own internal integrity, but also in comparison with one another. Furthermore, a broader backdrop illuminates limitations in the sources themselves. Studying Kapi'olani's lei chants reveals, for example, how twentieth-century field collections actually represent traditions as remembered; the extent to which those remembered traditions are fragmented becomes apparent only upon comparison with late nineteenth-century manuscript sources.

Kapi'olani's lei chants also demonstrate a particular approach to the general practice of composing chants called *haku mele*. In the late nineteenth century, numerous chants were composed by groups of

Table 1
Primary Sources for Kapi'olani's Lei Chants in Bishop Museum Archives

Mele	M.82	M.10	K.12	Roberts 2.1 (Book 1)	Roberts 3.9 (Book 14)	Roberts 5.3 (Book 26)	Kuluwaimaka M.51	Kuluwaimaka Audio 2.10	Pukui translations
[Kamaile]									
				(removed to Ms SC Pukui 17.5)	p. 1	p. 72; audio at Roberts 1.5a, 19; musical transcription in Roberts 1926; 260–61, no. 119	I: 81	2.10.5, 2.10.8, 2.10.14	Roberts 3.9; also Ms SC Pukui 17.5 (removed from Roberts 2.1)
1. Haāli	p. 28	p. 68	p. 100	p. 17 with musical transcription	pp. 3, 114		I: 79	2.8.15, 2.10.4	Roberts 2.1
2. Lihau	pp. 28–29	p. 70	p. 101	p. 14 with musical transcription	p. 5		I: 83	2.10.6, 2.10.12	Roberts 2.1
3. Nu'uānu	pp. 29–30	pp. 69, 110	p. 110	p. 22 with musical transcription	p. 24		II: 64	2.8.2	Roberts 2.1
4. Mānā	p. 30	pp. 67–68	p. 111	p. 26 with musical transcription	p. 7	p. 62; musical transcriptions in Roberts 1926; 249–50, no. 113, 114			Roberts 2.1
5. Europa	p. 31		p. 112		pp. 9–10, 15b–17				Roberts 3.9
6. ka 'opua	pp. 31–32		p. 89	(removed to Ms SC Pukui 17.5)	pp. 11–12, 17–18		I: 70	2.10.7, 2.10.13	Roberts 3.9; also Ms SC Pukui 17.5 (removed from Roberts 2.1)
7. Italia (I)	pp. 32–33	p. 111	p. 113		(removed to Ms SC Pukui 17.5)				Ms SC Pukui 17.5 (removed from Roberts 3.9)
8. [blank]	p. 33								
Italia (II)					(removed to Ms SC Pukui 17.5)				Ms SC Pukui 17.5 (removed from Roberts 3.9)

associates in sets, in a way that augments published descriptions of *mele* composition processes. The remarkable clarity of the circumstances in this instance contributes to a refined understanding of this process. Moreover, documenting the circumstances in this case reveals inherent perils in accepting orally transmitted lore about this set at face value.

A comprehensive study of this set of lei chants is one that accepts the greater challenge of engaging with questions of performance practice. Although textual poetic concerns are a fundamental dimension of *mele*, and one that has predominated much scholarship to date, the reality is that *mele* are composed to be performed. More specifically, *mele hula* are composed to be performed as hula. Historical studies of *mele* that continue to neglect dimensions of performance will continue to abrogate a responsibility to the Hawaiian hula community to consider all dimensions of *mele*, not just what is most accessible in archival sources—in other words, text alone.

In the case of Kapi'olani's lei chants, there is abundant evidence that suggests great latitude for exercising individual creativity in melodic and choreographic settings. Exploring the extent of such latitude, moreover, contributes to a more nuanced perspective on how hula traditions flourished at the court in the late nineteenth century, specifically in the complementary performance streams of *hula ku'i* and *hula 'ōlapa* (to be discussed below).

ON THE MELE IN THE SET

The primary sources cited in Table 1, all from Bishop Museum Archives, cluster into three groups.⁵ The first group of primary sources consists of three commonplace books in the Kapiolani-Kalani-anaole Collection, numbered M.82, M.10, and K.12. The second group of primary sources consists of documentation generated by Helen Roberts during her fieldwork commissioned by the Hawaiian Legend and Folklore Commission in 1923–24; there are poetic texts Roberts collected into books of typescripts, an audio recording by Mohā of one *mele* and a corresponding musical transcription in Roberts's published monograph, two additional musical transcriptions in the published monograph dictated directly to Roberts by Nahaleuli Nahialua of Kekaha, Kaua'i, and four additional unpub-



FIG. 3. Princess Virginia Kapo'oloku Poomaikelani. (Hawai'i State Archives.)

lished musical transcriptions dictated directly to Roberts by Mrs. Kaa-haaina Naihe of Honolulu. The third group of primary sources consists of documentation on audio recordings by James Pālea Kapihenui Kuluwaimaka made at Bishop Museum in 1933.

Of all the primary sources, the commonplace book numbered M.82 preserves the set in what is apparently its most intact form. The book belonged to Princess Virginia Kapo'oloku Poomaikelani, Kapi'olani's younger sister (Fig. 3). On the title page is written *He Buke Mele Inoa no Ka Moi ame Ka Moi Wahine na H. R. H. Princess Poomaikelani* [,] *Kope ia e Jno. K. Nahaku* (A Book of Name Chants for the King and the Queen of H[er] R[oyal] H[ighness] Princess Poomaikelani copied by J. K. Nahaku). In it are sets of *mele hula* meticulously copied in beautiful penmanship. The set of lei *mele* for Kapi'olani are grouped together on pages 28–33. Each *mele* is numbered successively, and a name, presumably that of the poet/composer, is written vertically in the outer margin (Fig. 4). The set, titled “He lei no ka Moi Wahine Kapiolani” (A Wreath for Queen Kapiolani), consists of the following *mele*:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Aia i Haili ko lei nani | There at Haili is your beautiful wreath |
| 2. Aia i Lihau ko lei nani | There at Lihau is your beautiful wreath |
| 3. Aia i Nuuanu ko lei nani | There at Nuuanu is your beautiful wreath |
| 4. Aia i Mana ko lei nani | There at Mana is your beautiful wreath |
| 5. Aia i Europa ko lei nani | There at Europe is your beautiful wreath |
| 6. Aia i Kaopua ko lei nani | There in the clouds is your beautiful wreath |
| 7. Ma Italia ko lei nani | There at Italy is your beautiful wreath |
| 8. [blank] | |

From this presentation of the set of lei chants in M.82, there are two possibilities for defining which *mele* belong to this set. The first possibility is that the set consists of seven *mele*, and the number “8” was written in M.82 in error. The second possibility is that the set consists of eight *mele*, the eighth of which was not copied into M.82.

There are two pieces of strong evidence for the first possibility. First, all seven *mele* preserved in M.82 are also transmitted in the manuscript numbered K.12, a source associated with Kapi'olani's

secretary, Edward Lilikalani. A dilemma stems from the fact that in K.12, the seven *mele* are out of sequence and also separated: the first two *mele* are together in one location; the third, fourth, fifth, and seventh *mele* in another location; the third *mele* is isolated in yet another location (see Table 1). However, the fact that two sources, both related to close associates of Kapi'olani, transmit the same seven *mele* presents a strong case for those seven *mele* constituting one set and supports a reading of M.82, Princess Poomaikelani's *mele* book, as an authority for the contents and ordering of *mele* in this set of lei chants.

Second, as listed in the *Papa Kuhikuhī o Na Hula Poni Moi*, the printed program of hula titles performed during the coronation *lū'au*, the classification of "Aia i Haili ko lei nani" performed by S. Ua is given as "Hula Paipu (7 pauku) (Elua Aihaa)." The first term, *hula pā ipu*, indicates hula performed to the rhythmic accompaniment of the *ipu* gourd. The parenthetical specifications, however, are of particular interest. The term *paukū* refers to a section of poetry. The ramifications of its use in this instance derive from customary practice in performance of concluding a *paukū* with a specific choreographic sequence that combines several different movement motifs with associated accompanying *ipu* rhythmic patterns (this is where the dancers call out "ea lā" at the end of the poetic text, and the chanter chants "ea lā, 'ea lā, 'ea, a e i e"). Concluding a *paukū* in this manner is a practice associated with the older style hula called *hula 'āla'apapa*, in which a single *mele* could contain multiple *paukū*, each of which was consistently concluded with this choreographic sequence. In the newer poetic format that emerged in the 1860s (discussed below), a newer style of dividing text internally within the *mele* came into vogue; but the concluding choreographic sequence from *hula 'āla'apapa* was attached to the very end of a *mele*. This practice, moreover, has been maintained to the present. Thus to perform "Aia i Haili ko lei nani" as "7 pauku" could be interpreted as each of seven *mele* presented as one *paukū*, and each *paukū* was concluded with the extended choreographic sequence.

The direction "Elua Aihaa" is more elusive: it would suggest that the *mele* were grouped into two divisions. There is no indication in the manuscript sources of specifically how a bipartite division might have been accomplished, although two possibilities can be imagined: (1) that one division consisted of the first four *mele*, which are specifically

situated in Hawai'i, while the other division consisted of the two *mele* that invoked European locations (*Europa, Italia*) together with the one *mele* of unspecified location (*ka 'ōpua*);⁶ or (2) that one division consisted of the six *mele* that begin with identical text, "Aia i [place name] ko lei nani," while the other division consisted of the *mele* that begins differently: "Ma Italia ko lei nani." Perhaps, too, a bipartite division may have been entirely idiosyncratic to S. Ua's presentation on that particular occasion. This may well be an instance where we have no choice but to imagine how it might have been done.

There is also strong evidence for the second possibility, of there being an eighth *mele* in the set of lei chants that was not copied into M.82. There are, moreover, two candidates for what an eighth *mele* might have been: one, the *mele* "Aia i Kamaile ko lei nani," has become associated with Kapi'olani's lei chants in the Roberts and Kuluwaimaka collections; and two, there exist two *mele* that begin "Mai Italia ko lei nani."

The evidence surrounding the *mele* "Aia i Kamaile ko lei nani" is considerable that this *mele* was not originally part of the set of Kapi'olani's lei chants. This conclusion is derived from a close reading of the state of the manuscript documentation, which also illuminates how this *mele* had come to be associated with the set. As shown in Table 1, this *mele* is not associated with any of the nineteenth-century manuscript sources that transmit the set; it is associated mainly with early twentieth-century collections, which are some forty to fifty years removed from the time of Kalākaua's coronation in 1883. Within the Roberts Collection made in 1923–24, this *mele* appears three times. In the case of Roberts's typescript Book 26 (Roberts 5.3), this *mele* is isolated; it does not occur in proximity to any of the other lei *mele* for Kapi'olani. In another case, in Roberts's typescript Book 1 (Roberts 2.1), it was determined by Bishop Museum Archives staff that Mary Kawena Pukui added this *mele* to Roberts's material, and the added leaves were removed to Mrs. Pukui's collection in the early 1990s.⁷ In the third case, in Roberts's typescript Book 14 (Roberts 3.9), "Aia i Kamaile ko lei nani" is the first *mele* in the book and is immediately followed by five Kapi'olani lei chants (nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6); a sixth *mele* from the set (no. 3) appears after several other intervening *mele* that are unrelated to the set. Under these circumstances, it is easy to see how "Aia i Kamaile ko lei nani" became associated with the set of lei

chants by virtue of proximity in the Roberts manuscript material, especially in the absence of comparative examination of other earlier sources.

Association by proximity also arises from placement of the “Kamaile” *mele* in the Kuluwaimaka Collection.⁸ In the sound recordings, the performance of the “Kamaile” *mele* in one sequence (2.10.4–7) is preceded by the “Haili” *mele* and followed by the *mele* placed at “Lihau” and “ka ‘ōpua”; in another sequence (2.10.12–15), the “Kamaile” *mele* is preceded by the *mele* placed at “Lihau” and “ka ‘ōpua” and followed by the *mele* placed at “Haili.” And the *mele* placed at “Nu‘uanu” is isolated in both typescript and sound recording sources. Clearly Kuluwaimaka’s material is an unreliable source for determining the membership of the set of lei chants for Kapi‘olani, because items in the set as transmitted in earlier sources are omitted; those that are included are out of order in all instances.

Furthermore, it appears that Kuluwaimaka gave the first line as “Aia i Kamaile ko lei ahi,” *ahi* referring to firebrands that were tossed about. In the typescript of Kuluwaimaka’s material, *ahi* is struck through and *nani* is written in the margin alongside in what is clearly Mrs. Pukui’s handwriting. Significantly, *ahi* is the term used in isolated—and unaltered—appearances of this *mele* in other manuscript sources. Of the first two lines,

<i>Aia i Kaimaile ko lei [ahi]</i>	There at Kamaile is your [lei of fire]
<i>Ke ahi papala welo i Makua</i>	The pāpala firebrand soaring over Mākua

Mrs. Pukui records the following explanation in notes accompanying her translation (originally located in the Roberts collection, but later moved to the Pukui collection) of this *mele*:

The first verse of this *mele* refer[s] to the firebrand of papala wood, a wood that burned while still green. On occasions when notables were entertained the firebrand was hurled from cliff to cliff. When a firebrand drops to the ground, lovers pick it up and burn the arm or leg of their sweethearts. The resultant scars were reminders that their owners had seen the firebrands of Makua.⁹

Such an interpretation would argue for *ahi* rather than *nani* at the end of the first line. Moreover, *ahi* reappears near the beginning of

the second line, thereby linking the two lines by aural assonance, a practice widespread in late nineteenth-century poetry.¹⁰ Given the focus on “lei nani” throughout the set of lei chants for Kapi'olani, it is unlikely that an unaltered “lei ahi” would have been part of the original set.

On the other possibility for an eighth *mele* in the set of lei chants for Kapi'olani, it turns out that there are two *mele* with the first line “Mai Italia ko lei nani.” A major challenge to fashioning a historically informed interpretation of the two “Italia” *mele*, however, is the fact that Mrs. Pukui is the only source for the second of the two *mele*. Only one “Italia” *mele* occurs in the nineteenth-century manuscript sources at all.

The texts of two “Italia” *mele* were written out in Mrs. Pukui's handwriting on a separate leaf and inserted into Roberts's Book 14 (Roberts 3.9) with the group of *mele* belonging to the set of lei chants for Kapi'olani. The leaf was removed to Mrs. Pukui's collection in the early 1990s by Bishop Museum Archives staff when it was determined that the “Italia” chants did not belong among Roberts's material because Roberts did not collect them.¹¹ Nor is the provenance of the two “Italia” *mele* especially clear. Interestingly, Mrs. Pukui's informant for these lei chants was one of her teachers, a man named Kapua whose father, also named Kapua, she described as “the hula master who always entertained Queen Kapiolani when she went to Kawa'i”¹²—implying that Mrs. Pukui's material on name chants for Kapi'olani, including the set of lei chants, derives from the repertoire of Kapua (the father). Yet if Kapua (the son) was the source of either or both of the “Italia” *mele*, neither was associated with the other lei chants, for Mrs. Pukui relates, following her translation of “Aia i Kamaile ko lei nani”:

As Kapiolani was directly descended from Kaumualii, last ruler of Kauai, the composers of that island was given the privilege of composing two lei chants for the Queen—“Aia i Mana ko lei nani” and “Aia i Kamaile ko lei nani.” . . .

There were a set of six lei chants composed for Queen Kapiolani, one from Hawaii entitled “Aia i Haili ko lei nani,”—one from Maui, “Aia i Lihau ko lei nani”—one from Oahu, “Aia i Nuuanu ko lei nani,” two from Kauai, “Aia i Mana ko lei nani,” and “Aia i Kamaile ko lei nani,” and one from her court, “Aia i ka opua ko lei nani.”¹³

These remarks suggest that an orally derived understanding of the makeup of the set by the 1930s when Mrs. Pukui compiled these notes does not include the “Italia” chants. It may well be, however, that this is an instance in which hula practitioners had maintained a *mele* that, for whatever reason, failed to be included in M.82 and that its association with the other members of the set had been severed in remembered lore. It does seem to be the case that Mrs. Pukui was unfamiliar with M.82, Princess Poomaikelani’s commonplace book, the source that transmits seven lei chants in numbered sequence. A peripheral factor is the high number (no. 82) of Princess Poomaikelani’s book within the Bishop Museum Archives series of *mele* books, far from other items associated with the Kapiolani-Kalanianaʻole collection (numbered in the 20s), suggesting a fairly recent accessioning (perhaps in the 1980s?) of M.82. In light of this compilation of evidence, I am inclined to believe that if, in fact, the set of lei chants for Kapiʻolani consists of eight *mele*, then the second “Italia” *mele* would be the most probable candidate to fill in the numbered but blank space in M.82.

ON HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

This exploration of one case study—the lei chants for Kapiʻolani—brings focus to a substantial methodological consideration in working with historical sources of poetic texts: such sources cannot be taken at face value. Historical sources must be interrogated by other sources, and meanings must be drawn not only from detail itself, but from broader contexts in which detail exists.

For research on poetry, music, and dance in the late nineteenth century, contents in the Roberts and Kuluwaimaka collections in Bishop Museum Archives cannot be considered in isolation, but must be examined in the context of nineteenth-century manuscript and published sources. The Roberts and Kuluwaimaka collections transmit material that is also preserved in earlier manuscript sources, but do so decades later. What these collections represent is traditions as *remembered from practice* as opposed to preserved in commonplace books as souvenirs and keepsakes. Roberts went out to rural areas in search of *mele*, she collected *mele* from people who were far removed in circumstances from court circles and the compilation of *mele*

books by court poets as well as honorees. And while Kuluwaimaka was a chanter in the court in the 1880s, his performances, too, were recorded as remembered.

These admonitions are even more critical when interpreting older poetic material that predates the 1860s. The circumstances of composition for earlier material are removed from the time of their documentation in late nineteenth-century manuscript sources *in the same way that* the circumstances of composition for late nineteenth-century material are removed from the time of their documentation in the Roberts and Kuluwaimaka collections.

Manuscript sources from the mid- and late-nineteenth century generally preserve fuller versions of *mele* traditions than those compiled in the early twentieth century. Late nineteenth-century manuscript *mele* books and Hawaiian-language newspapers are far more reliable sources, for they represent those traditions at the time, and therefore in the form, of their origins. *Mele* for hula were often composed in sets. It happened that some members of sets have been more frequently performed and taught than others. Those members of sets that were not so widely maintained in practice fell into disuse and obscurity, and links among members of sets were lost over time. Thus sets have come to be fragmented. Putting them back together again requires getting as close as possible to their inception. Without doing so, a reader would have little or no way of realizing how fragmented a set had become. Likewise, no one source can or should ever be considered in isolation, for doing so will stand in the way of ever understanding how contingent or incomplete the contents of a single source may be.

ON CIRCUMSTANCES OF COMPOSITION

Within the poetic texts, direct association of the set of lei chants with coronation festivities lies in the seventh *mele*, “Ma Italia ko lei nani.” The first six lines read:

<i>Ma Italia ko lei nani</i>	There at Italy is your beautiful necklace
<i>O ka opuu liko o ke kalaunu</i>	The glistening pendant of the crown ¹⁴
<i>I hana noi au ia e Palani</i>	They were skillfully assembled in
	France

<i>Kinohinohi lua ke ike aku</i>	With twice as much ornamentation seen.
<i>Ka onohi o ka Hoku Kaimana</i>	The diamond in its setting
<i>Ma ka puuwai o Perusia</i>	Was from the heart of Persia.

It is commonly believed among contemporary directors of hula troupes that the lei in the set of lei chants refers to Kapi'olani's crown (Fig. 5). The two "Italia" *mele* in Mrs. Pukui's handwriting, for example, are titled "Queen Kapiolani's Crown Meles." In the lines cited above from the "Italia" *mele* in M.82, the crown is specifically referred to in the second line as "*kalaumu*." In a lengthy account of the coronation ceremony on February 12, 1883, the new crowns for Kalākaua and Kapi'olani, specially commissioned for the occasion, were described in great detail in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*.¹⁵ Kapi'olani's crown contained some 265 diamonds, twenty opals, eight emeralds, eight rubies, and an unspecified number of pearls. However, while the gemstones may have originated in Italy, France, and Persia, as named in the lines cited above, both crowns were ordered from London.

The lei in the first line of the "Italia" *mele* has also been interpreted as a jeweled pendant worn by Kapi'olani in coronation portraits. This was mentioned, for example, in a newspaper citing *kumu hula* (hula master) Nani Lim Yap, whose women's troupe performed this *mele* in the 1992 Merrie Monarch hula competition.¹⁶ Indeed, the term '*ōpu'u* is defined as "a whale-tooth pendant, not tongue-shaped like the *lei palaoa*";¹⁷ the description is certainly appropriate for the striking design of the necklace worn in the portraits (see Fig. 6).¹⁸ This interpretation, moreover, suggests that perhaps the entire set of *mele*, by members of Kapi'olani's retinue, actually celebrates the queen's acquisition of the necklace—a topic appropriate for detailed commentary by relatives and associates closest to the queen.

ON THE PRACTICE OF HAKU MELE

The set of lei chants in M.82 is extremely significant in one respect: names of the composers are written in the margins. A close relationship can be assumed among all three nineteenth-century common-



FIG. 5. Queen Kapi'olani's crown. (Bishop Museum.)

place books, for composers' names are also given in M.10 and K.12, as shown in Table 2. The fullest forms of the names, including titles, are given in M.82. It is interesting that the Hawaiianized spelling of "Malaea" for Maria Boyd, composer of "Aia i Nu'uauu ko lei nani" is used in both M.10 and K.12.

The term "composer" is used here in its Hawaiian rather than English sense: a Hawaiian composer is one who composes the poetic text of a *mele*. Whether these composers also created the melodic setting used to deliver the poetic text in performance will be discussed at greater length below.

The group of women who composed these *mele* were, indeed, members of Kapi'olani's retinue. Virginia Kapo'oloku Po'omaikelani and Kinoiki Kekaulike were sisters of Kapi'olani; Nahinu was their



FIG. 6. Queen Kapi'olani with a detailed view of her coronation necklace. (Hawai'i State Archives.)

cousin. Maria Boyd, *nee* Maria Hi'o Adams, was also a second cousin to Kapi'olani.¹⁹ Hanah Lilikalani was the wife of Edward Lilikalani, a judge from Kōloa, Kaua'i, who became Kapi'olani's secretary.²⁰ Mrs. Lilua and Mrs. Paupau must also have been close acquaintances if not kin as well.

The identification of composers in this set of *mele*, as well as in other sets of *mele* honoring Kapi'olani's contemporaries, casts light on a prevalent poetic practice of that time. It has been called *haku mele*—the process of composing a *mele* by plaiting it together—*haku*.

Table 2
Composers of Kapi'olani's Lei Chants

Mele	M.82	M.10	K.12
1. Haili	H.R.H. Princess Poomaikelani	Kapooloku	Pooloku
2. Lihau	Mrs. Paupau	Paupau	Paupau
3. Nu'uanu	Mrs. Maria Boyd	Malaea Boyd	Malaea Boyd
4. Mānā	H.R.H. Kekaulike	Kekaulike	Kekaulike
5. Europa	Mrs. Lilua		Lilua
6. ka 'ōpua	Mrs. Nahinu		Nahinu
7. Italia	Mrs. Hanah Lilikalani	[No name given]	Hana

This process has been widely understood as one of collaboration among poets, in which each participated in contributing lines and phrases and criticizing the contributions of others in order to produce a finished poetic text. A classic description of the process was published by Nathaniel Emerson in 1904; this particular description is related in the context of honorific name chants anticipating the birth of a high-ranking chief.

The *po'e haku mele*, poets, bards and singers, were assembled and set to the task of composing a poem of eulogy—*mele inoa*—in honor of the chief to be born. Each verse and phrase was a matter for the most careful deliberation. To have allowed any word or expression that was capable of sinister interpretation to remain and reach the point of public recitation would have been a criminal negligence, not only calamitous to the person eulogized, but by a just retribution liable to be visited with death on the head of him who uttered it, as well as upon those who allowed it to pass uncorrected. . . .²¹

This method offers a safeguard for a fundamental concern in Hawaiian poetry, of exercising appropriate caution for *kaona*—hidden meanings and double entendres. Because Emerson's description relates to a specific situation (i.e., the pending birth of a high-ranking chief), however, the model described should not automatically be taken to be universal to all poetic composition. Other models of poetic composition existed, as related by Lorrin Andrews in one of a series of articles published in 1875 (I have numbered the methods for reading convenience):

A few words respecting the different methods of composing meles. [1] Some of the Haku meles, male or female would retire by themselves and think out the ideas and words of their meles and afterwards repeat or cantillate them in public. Such meles, however, were never very long from the difficulty of retaining them in their memory. [2] Another method was the opposite extreme. A chief would select his most able warriors [chiefs] and his principal men, and propose the subject of the mele and appoint each one to furnish what we would call a line or verse and the others to act as critics or correctors, and so on till the whole was furnished. [3] Another method was for the Poet to collect a few only of his poetical friends and after explaining to them his subject, would commence by reciting the first line or thought, and then ask the opinion of all the others as to its merits. They would approve, reject or amend till it was approved by all; then would suggest another line or thought which must undergo the same process of revision, but at the same time adjusting the sense and the words to what went before, and so, from time to time they composed till the mele was finished.²²

Andrews's second and third methods are essentially similar, in that a group of people engaged in a line-by-line critique.

The set of Kapi'olani's lei chants exemplifies yet another procedure for collaborative poetic composition, that is, that each poet contributed a complete *mele*, all of which were then combined into a set. The entire set would be likened to a lei, in which individual *mele*, like individual blossoms, were strung together, and the lei was presented as a gift to the honored recipient. This procedure is common among late nineteenth-century repertoire, especially for members of the court and their close relatives. Numerous examples of these sets have been located in the manuscript *mele* books and in Hawaiian-language newspapers in the 1880s and 1890s.

Moreover, unifying components were incorporated into the composition process. Within a set, each member *mele* begins similarly: either the first line or couplet is identical or the first line is similar, but with one or two items substituted in the different *mele*. Each member *mele* ends identically, with the same final couplet, and a uniform form of the name of the dedicatee. Frequently there is a kind of parallelism in the poetic construction among the different *mele* of a set. This suggests that a basic template was worked out among the poets

prior to composition, then each poet filled in the template with specific names of flowers, place names, location-specific epithets and sayings, memories, and so forth. Thus within a set, there is a kind of commonality among the sentiments expressed, but in each *mele*, those sentiments are set in specific locales; the *mele* are then appropriately differentiated by citing features specific or even unique to a particular locale.

Thus, in Kapi‘olani’s lei chants, six begin with the situating statement “Aia i [place name] ko lei nani” (There at [place name] is your beautiful lei). The seventh, “Ma Italia ko lei nani,” alters the template by replacing *Aia* (There at) with the locative marker *Ma* (At). Among the sources, M.82 and K.12 both render the beginning as “Ma Italia”; other, more recent sources render that beginning as “Mai Italia” (from), changing the locative emphasis to one of origin—“From Italy is your beautiful wreath.” As an aside, it is probable that “Ma Italia” as given in two nineteenth-century sources is, in fact, the original form of the phrase and that “Mai Italia” evolved in practice, from an elision in pronunciation. Either way, it represents a notable departure from the otherwise consistent use of *Aia* in the other *mele*, but one, I surmise, that would appropriately aid a chanter’s pronunciation by avoiding the tongue-twisting phrase “Aia i Italia.”

The second line is also parallel among the *mele*. It names a blossom specifically associated with the place named in the first line, for example, the *lehua* of Mokaulele near Haili in the first *mele*, the ‘*āhihi lehua* of Nu‘uanu in the third *mele*, and the ‘*ohai* of Papiohuli near Mānā in the fourth *mele*.

On the matter of uniformity within the final couplet and the form of the dedicatee’s name, the lei chants for Kapi‘olani provide clear evidence. In late nineteenth-century poetic texts for hula in the *hula ku‘i* and *hula ‘ōlapa* performance streams (about which more immediately below), the final couplet begins with a statement that announces the conclusion of a *mele*. In its fullest form, the most commonly used statement is “Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana,” which translates as “the story is told.” Within sets of *mele*, especially those *mele inoa*—name songs—honoring members of the nobility, the final statement is an identical form of the dedicatee’s name.

Among the sources for Kapi‘olani’s lei chants, there is minor vari-

ation in the forms of both lines. In M.82, all seven *mele* conclude with the following couplet:

<i>Haina ka wahine nona ka lei</i>	Told, the woman for whom [is] the lei
<i>O Kapiolani i ka iu o ka moku</i>	O Kapiolani at the summit of the island.

The term *wahine* (woman) is replaced by *ali'i* (chief) in the opening line of the final couplet in the performances by Kaahaaina Naihe and by P. K. Kuhi: "Haina ke ali'i nona ka lei" (Told, the chief for whom [is] the lei) (Roberts 2.1, 3.9). This form of the concluding statement was also used by Mrs. Pukui in the "Kamaile" and "*ka 'ōpua*" texts she inserted into Roberts 2.1; this form of the concluding statement was also used in the typescripts of performances recorded by Kuluwaimaka. But in the two "Italia" *mele* written down by Mrs. Pukui, the general line "Haina ia mai ana ka puana" is used.

Of the form of Kapi'olani's name in the second line of the final couplet, there are two variants. The first is as cited above, used in M.82, M.10, and in performances by Kuluwaimaka. The other form of the dedication, used in K.12, the Roberts Collection, and Mrs. Pukui's material, is "O Kapiolani i ka iu o luna" (O Kapi'olani at the summit above). The use of this form of the dedication does not correspond completely with the substitution of *Haina ke alii* in place of *Haina ka wahine*, for Kuluwaimaka combines the form with the concluding statement "Haina ke alii nona ka lei" that is not used in M.82 with the form of the dedication "O Kapiolani i ka iu o ka moku" that is used in M.82. The operating principle is that all *mele* within a source use the same form of the concluding statement that opens the final couplet and the same form of Kapi'olani's name in the final line. In other words, whatever form of both concluding statement and dedication is used in a given source, that form is used consistently within that source for all members of a set of *mele*.

ON PERFORMANCE

How do we know that these *mele* are for presentation as hula? Because they are in the couplet poetic format that distinguishes *mele* for *hula ku'i* and *hula 'ōlapa* that came into vogue around the mid-1860s. Texts are organized into stanzas of couplets (or less frequently qua-

trains); each couplet is separated by a brief instrumental pattern. The musical framework is also conventionally patterned: all lines contain either eight or sixteen basic pulses marked by the rhythmic instrumental accompaniment. The distinction between *hula ku‘i* and for *hula ‘ōlapa* lies in presentation style. In the *hula ku‘i* (which makes up much of what is called “modern hula” or *hula ‘auana* in the present), Western melodies are sung to the harmonic accompaniment of Western instruments such as guitar, ‘ukulele, and piano. In the other performance stream, which came to be called *hula ‘ōlapa* apparently in the early twentieth century, melodies are chanted rather than sung, and the rhythmic accompaniment consists entirely of indigenous percussive instruments, chief among them the double-gourd *ipu*, played by a chanter (separate from dancers) for standing dances, and an array of implements, including slit bamboo *pū‘ili* rattle, feather-decorated *‘uli‘uli* rattle, water-worn *‘ili‘ili* pebbles, and tapered *kāla‘au* sticks, manipulated by dancers (mostly) in seated dances. Although the term *hula ‘ōlapa* does not appear in late nineteenth-century sources, the performance style with indigenous instrumental accompaniment was practiced in the 1870s and 1880s, for it was considered “ancient” when documented in the 1920s and 1930s.

How do we know that the lei *mele* for Kapi‘olani are chants and not songs—*hula ‘ōlapa* and not *hula ku‘i*? When presented in hula competitions in the past two decades, these *mele* have been presented in the *hula kahiko* division of competitions that mandate performance as ancient chants,²³ with accompaniment by indigenous instruments rather than guitars and ‘ukulele. The basis for the lei *mele* for Kapi‘olani remaining in the ancient *hula ‘ōlapa* stream apparently lies in their having been documented as *hula ‘ōlapa*. The melodies published by Roberts in her monograph, as well as those that remain unpublished, are all indeed melodies performed for her as ancient *hula ‘ōlapa*. Likewise the melodies recorded by Kuluwaimaka have also been understood to be for ancient *hula ‘ōlapa*.

What do we know about melodic settings of this set of poetic texts? All three chanters from the early 1900s who performed melodies—Nahaleuli Nahialua and Kaahaaina Naihe for Helen Roberts and Kuluwaimaka—performed multiple texts in this set with at least three different melodies. In the case of Kuluwaimaka, he uses one melody to perform all of the lei *mele* for Kapi‘olani. While there appear to be

no known settings of any of these particular texts as modern *hula ku'i*, the melody Kuluwaimaka performs is shared by at least two songs that are widely performed and have been recorded as *hula ku'i*—"Nānea kou maka i ka le'ale'a"²⁴ and "Hanohano Mānā i ka 'Uhiwai."²⁵ Moreover, it is the same melody that has been recorded in settings of the *mele* "Iā 'oe e ka lā" as both chanted *hula 'ōlapa* by Ka'upena Wong²⁶ and as sung *hula ku'i* by Palani Vaughan.²⁷ This case of crossover—of performing one text as either ancient or modern—is not isolated and suggests that crossover may have been common in the late nineteenth century. It is known, too, that Helen Roberts actively sought older material, and her informants, in their eagerness to please, could well have been claiming an antiquity for their material that did not necessarily correspond with practices at the time.

How can we interpret the existence of multiple melodies for Kapi'olani's lei chants? There are multiple melodies for the texts; at the same time, multiple texts can be sung using just one melody. And the melodies for the lei chants have been used to perform other texts as well. This suggests that there was considerable latitude in combining text and melody for performance. That different melodies could be used is born out by the fact that different melodies were used by different performers.

What about the composition of the melodic setting(s) of the set of lei chants? Did the poets/composers also create the melodic setting for presenting these *mele* in performance? Or was the setting of melody the prerogative of the *kumu hula* who choreographed the hula (and in all probability served as *ho'opa'a* well)? Nathaniel Emerson wrote, "Not until the finished work had been stamped with the approval of the highest critical authority was it given out to be stereotyped in the memory of the men and women of the hula, that it might be cantillated by them."²⁸ This clearly suggests that melodic settings were more the prerogative of hula people rather than poets—which would explain the existence of different melodies for Kapi'olani's lei chants among the documentary evidence. These bits of information do not conclusively answer the question of whether Kapi'olani's associates may have composed melodic settings themselves, for melodic composition was a skill not uncommon among members of the court.²⁹ But these bits do illuminate a vital dimension in the performance of *hula 'ōlapa* and *hula ku'i*, of a vitality in

musical and choreographic settings and presentation, that balances uniformity in delivering poetic texts as composed.

Such vitality carries over into the choreographic realm as well. Referring specifically to the set of Kapi'olani's lei chants, Mrs. Pukui related the following story:

At one time, while she [Kapi'olani] was on Kauai, a troupe of musicians and dancers were selected from each of the islands to dance to their individual lei mele and then to have a contest in which each dancer was to dance to every one of these, whether to the ipu beats of his own island musicians or to those from the other islands.³⁰

It must be said that in the practice of *hula 'ōlapa*, rhythmic instrumental accompaniment is a function of choreography, not of melody per se. Changes in rhythmic patterns normally correspond with changes in named lower-body movement motifs that are among the “nuts and bolts” components used by choreographers. Thus varying *ipu* beats, as reported by Mrs. Pukui, signal varying choreographies.

The performance of *mele* as hula involves rendering poetic texts into ephemeral aural and visual entities. The practices involved in setting a melody and a choreography to a poetic text are a crucial dimension of understanding *mele* as being more than simply text. Herein lies the significant historical value of the Roberts and Kuluwaimaka collections: they document information on the presentation and performance of *mele*—of practices that are largely absent in manuscript sources that are written but not aural. Sound recordings capture the vocalized performance of poetic texts that are otherwise mute as preserved in written form. Even transcriptions in musical notation without corresponding sound recordings are significant evidence of performance practice, for they represent melodies as actually performed by chanters and singers.³¹ Broader meaning about individual melodies can then be derived from the *wealth* of melodies—from understanding that different melodies could be set to a given text by different performers without compromising the identity of that *mele*, which lay in the poetic text. And those broader meanings of such practices go a long way toward illuminating more fully not only what the nineteenth-century poetic materials are, but why and how they came to be.

ON TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE LEI CHANTS

The texts of seven lei chants for Kapiolani as transmitted in M.82, and the second “Italia” chant from Mrs. Pukui’s collection, are included at the end of this article. They are reproduced here as they appear in the original sources, unedited and unaltered. My decision to privilege the texts from M.82 reflects my understanding of the integrity of the set as transmitted in that source and the need to make them available for comparison with texts in other possibly less reliable sources. The texts are accompanied by Mrs. Pukui’s translations, the elegance of which alone merit wider appreciation among a broader readership.³² The translations do not always concur with the form of the texts transmitted in M.82, because Mrs. Pukui worked from typescripts in the Roberts Collection, specifically with the texts reported by Kaahaaina Naihe (Roberts 2.1) and P. K. Kuhi (Roberts 3.9).³³ Many spelling variants can be cited between the texts in M.82 and their counterparts in the Roberts Collection. In many instances these variants stem from different practices in separating grammatical particles from nouns, but the spelling changes are sufficient to cause changes in meaning. These discrepancies will be apparent to readers who understand the Hawaiian texts.

The discrepancies do not invalidate Mrs. Pukui’s translations. Instead, they serve as a powerful illustration of a fundamental challenge in using *mele* texts from historical sources. Any attempt to edit spellings, whether by adding diacritical marks to clarify pronunciation or by changing word separations in order to conform to contemporary spelling conventions, can and occasionally does result in different meanings. There will also be instances in which textual ambiguity may, in fact, be intentional manifestations of *kaona*—hidden or double meanings—that are skillfully crafted. Under these circumstances, the crucial issue of establishing a basis for privileging any one source over others becomes paramount. In this light, Mrs. Pukui’s translations reflect the state of knowledge about the lei chants that prevailed at the time she worked with them.³⁴ To what extent they represent what might be gleaned about the poets’ intentions, readers are invited to decide.

He inoa no Kapi'olani.

A name for Kapi'olani.

HE LEI NO KA MOI WAHINE KAPIOLANI

From the commonplace book of Princess Virginia Kapo'oloku Poomaikelani (Bishop Museum Archives H.I.M.82) with translations by Mary Kawena Pukui

1

<i>Aia i Haili ko lei nani</i>	In Haili is your beautiful lei,
<i>O ka nua lehua i Mokaulele</i>	Made of many lehua from Mokaulele.
<i>O ka papahi lei o ka aina</i>	The thickly woven lei of the land,
<i>Ke kuia mai la e Kapuulena</i>	Is being braided together by the Puulena breeze.
<i>Ka makani hali ala o ka lua</i>	The wind that bears the fragrance from the volcano,
<i>Puia i kai o Hilo Hanakahi</i>	Filling with sweetness the shore of Hilo—Hanakahi.
<i>Hookahi hoi oe hookahi au</i>	You and I were by ourselves
<i>Ka nahele aloha o Paieie</i>	In the beloved forest of Pa'ie'ie.
<i>Noho mai hano o Uwekahuna</i>	There over the proud height of Uwekahuna
<i>Ka uahi noe a Kilauea</i>	[One sees] the gray smoke of Kilauea
<i>Kupu mai ka manao lia i ka nani</i>	The thought is held spell bound by the beauty,
<i>I ka papa lohi lua o Maukele</i>	Of the glistening lava bed of Maukele,
<i>O ka lohi mai kau e Wahinekapu</i>	Your shiness, O Wahinekapu.
<i>Ei ae ka makani o Kaulumano</i>	Here is the wind called the [Kaulumano]
<i>Nana i kui lima mai ka nahele</i>	That pounds the forest with its "fists,"
<i>Like aku ai me ka nuku o ka manu</i>	Till it is made like Nukuokamanu.
<i>O wai hoi kai ike ia Maunakea</i>	Who has seen Mauna Kea?
<i>Aohe ona lua e like ai</i>	There is no other to compare with it.
<i>Haina ka wahine nona ka lei</i>	This is in praise of the chiefess whose lei chant this is,
<i>O Kapiolani i ka iu o ka moku</i>	Kapi'olani, so high above.

—H.R.H. Princess Poomaikelani

2

<i>Aia i Lihau ko lei nani</i>	At Lihau is your beautiful lei,
<i>O ka ao lehua i poe i ka manu</i>	Made of the full blown lehua loved by birds.
<i>Ke haku a mai la e ka lau makani</i>	It is braided together by the wind's deft fingers

Na hono o Lele ua lai lua

*Luana i Hauola kahi manao
I ka lai huli lua o ka Maaa
Hanohano ka opua i ka malie
I ke kau a ke ao i Maunalei
He lei hoi no ua lai nei
No ka nalu haihai maka a Uo
Ke noho nei no au i ka lulu
Me na lai elua a ka manu
Alia oe la e Haleakala
E alai nei ia Kawiiki
Ua maikai ke alo o Piihola
I ka noho a ka ua ulalena*

Haina ka wahine nona ka lei

O Kapiolani i ka iu o ka moku

—Mrs. Paupau

On the calm and peaceful realm
of Pi'ilani.

Two thoughts enter the mind
With the conflicting blowing of the Maaa.
Proudly appear the clouds in the calm
As they gather on Maunalei.
The lei is to be worn by you on a calm day
On the rolling surf of Uo.
The sea dwells there before the calm
Beside the pleasant haunts of birds.
Wait there, Haleakala,
Before you hide Ka'uiki from view.
Beautiful is the face of Pi'ihola
For there dwells the 'ulalena rain.

This is in praise of the chiefess whose lei
chant this is,

Kapi'olani, so high above.

3

*Aia Nuuanu ko lei nani
O ka Ahihi popohe i ka nahele
Ka haku a mai la e ke Kiowai
Hoolawa i ka pua kamakahala*

*Heaha ka hana a Waipuhia
E hoomao u nei i ke oho palai
Wehiwehi Lanihuli i ke kawelu*

*Ipu loku [I pu loku ?] i ke alo
ana pali
Pau ole ke onaona o Kekele
O ka Ahui polo o ka hinano*

Hanohano Mololani i ke ehua kai

*I ka hana a ka ua Apuakea
Akea ka ohu ina kuahiwi
Ma ke kakai pali o Maunawili
Moha ia wai anu i ka ili*

At Nuuanu is your beautiful lei,
Made of the full-blown ahihi of the forest.
It is braided together by the Kiowao wind,
And to it was added the makahala
blossoms.

What is Waipuhia doing
As it soaks the leaves of the palai fern?
Beautiful is Lanihuli with the kawelu
grass

Where the rain pours over the faces of
the cliffs.
Endless is the fragrance of Kekele
With the clusters of hala and the white
blossoms.

Proudly Mololani [appears, surrounded
by] sea spray.

That home of the Apuakea rain.
The mists sweep down on the mountain
Along the cliffs of Maunawili.
One loves the water that chills the skin

Kaualo a ka leo o ke kahuli And the singing of many land shells.
Haina ka wahine nona ka lei This is in praise of the chiefess whose
 lei chant this is,
O Kapiolani i ka iu o ka moku Kapiolani, so high above.

—Mrs. Maria Boyd

4

Aia i Mana ko lei nani At Mana is your beautiful lei,
I ka ohai o Papiohuli Made of the ohai blossoms of Papiohuli.
I pili koolua me ke kaunoa Its companion [lei], the dodder vine,
Nonono ula i ka wailiula [Growing] golden hued in [the land of]
 mirages.

Ina paha oe e ike ana Oh, if you can only see
I ka holu a ka niu o Kaunalewa The swaying coco palms of Kaunalewa.
Ike la paha oe i ka mea nani Then shall you see another beauty,
I ka punohu ula la i ka moana The dark smoke spread over the sea.
He alele waha ole ka i hiki mai A voiceless messenger has come
Na ka iwi ai lehua o ka nahele Brought by honey sucking iwi birds of
 the forest.

I ka ike ana iho lana ka manao Upon reading it, hope arises,
I ka hea a ka leo o Kawaikini For it is the urgent voice of Kawaikini.
Aole ka heluna no Waimea Waimea is not so very different,
Ua like laua me Makaweli It looks very much like Makaweli.
Kau aku ka manao no Wailua A desire comes to go to Wailua
No ka wai hooipo me ka pua hau To see the water that reflects the hau
 blossoms.

Haina ka wahine nona ka lei This is in praise of the chiefess whose
 lei chant this is,
O Kapiolani i ka iu o luna Kapi'olani, so high above.

—H.R.H. Kekaulike

5

Aia i Europa ko lei nani [At Europe is your beautiful lei,
O ka pua Kalavnu o Lakana Made of the crown blossom of London.]
Ke lohia mai la e Inia It flashes in India,
Ka ana pa ka Rusia e ike And its gleam seen by Russia.
Ka hulali a ka momi me ke daimana The sparkle of pearls and diamonds
Me e i ka nana ke ike aku Are wonderful to behold.
Kohu me he wai la e ale mai ana Like rippling waters

*Ka Alohi i ke alo o Mesiko
Me he A wa ka hoku welowelo
I ka ili kai o ka Pakifikā
Ke lawe a mai la e ke kiakolu*

*E ka laina moku ahi o ka Hema
Kuna mai ka nani i pau pono
I lai ka helena a ka wahine*

*I ike mai ai na mukupuni
O ko la nui hao a paihi
Haina ka wahine nona ka lei
O Kapiolani i ka iu o ka moku*

—Mrs. Lilua

It shines in the presence of Mexico.
It is like a comet
Over the surface of the Pacific Ocean.
It is brought hither by a three-masted
ship
By a liner from the west.
Let your beauty be seen in its fullness,
So that peace follows the woman
everywhere.
Let all the islands see you,
Beautifully adorned on your holiday.
This ends our praise
For Kapi'olani, so high above.

6

*Aia i Kaopua ko lei nani
I ke anuenue pipio i luna
Haaheo i ka mea ua lili
Aweawe ula i ka maka o ke ao
Ua like a like me ka onohi
Me ka punohu ula i ka malie
Ke lawe a mai la e Kanoelani
Me he ala koi ula koi aweawe
Ulu mahiehe i ka ua noe
I ke ehū wai o Kulanihako'i
A he kahiko ia no ia nei*

*No ka pua kapu i ka iu o Lono
I kukupu a pua ma ka hikina
I ewe i Hawaii moku o Keawe
Ua kau ae la i Makanoni
I kahi a ka la i puka mai ai
Ka eha ka hana a Hanakaulua
I ka oliko pua i ka malie
Haina ka wahine nona ka lei
O Kapiolani i ka iu o ka moku*

—Mrs. Nahinu

In the horizon cloud is your beautiful lei,
The rainbow arching so high.
Majestic in the light shower,
Streaking with red the face of the cloud.
It is very much like the circular rainbow
And the red rainbow in the calm.
It is borne hither by the mist of heaven
And the columns of rainbow hued rain.
Attractive is the misty rain,
The sprays of Kulanihako'i
This is an adornment for her
[Kapiolani],
For Lono's blossom on high,
It sprouted and grew in the East
To flourish on Hawaii island of Keawe.
This is in praise of the chiefess whose
lei chant this is,
Kapiolani so high above.

7

<i>Ma Italia ko lei nani</i>	From Italy comes your beautiful necklace
<i>O ka opu'u liko o ke kalaunu</i>	And the fine gems of your crown.
<i>I hana noi au ia e Palani</i>	They were skillfully assembled in France
<i>Kinohinohi lua ke ike aku</i>	With twice as much ornamentation seen.
<i>Ka onohi o ka Hoku Kaimana</i>	The diamond in its setting
<i>Ma ka puuwai o Perusia</i>	Was from the heart of Persia.
<i>Ua like me ka wai o Niagala</i>	It is like Niagara Falls
<i>Ka pipio i ke alo o Nuioka</i>	That fall in an arc before New York.
<i>Ke hii ia mai la e ka uwila</i>	News comes borne in the arms of electricity
<i>E ke kelekalapa hai manao</i>	By the telegraph that tells one's thoughts.
<i>Aia i laila ko'u iini</i>	My joy is there
<i>Ka lono au i hauoli ai</i>	With the news that makes me happy.
<i>Lawe au la lilo i anei</i>	I will take it all over here
<i>Paa pono ka heluna me Hawaii</i>	To fill the quota for Hawaii.
<i>Ilaila oukou la e ike ai</i>	Then you shall see
<i>O Hilo nei la ka hoaka</i>	That after Hilo, comes Hoaka.
<i>Haina ka wahine nona ka lei</i>	This ends our praise of the name
<i>O Kapiolani i ka iu o ka moku</i>	O Kapiolani, so high above.

—Mrs. Hanah Lilikalani

8

[blank]

“Mai Italia ko lei nani”

This text is the first of two *mele* that share this first line in Mrs. Pukui's collection (Ms SC Pukui, 17.5). The second of the two *mele* is the same text as no. 7 in M.82.

<i>Mai Italia ko lei nani</i>	From Italy comes your beautiful necklace
<i>O ka opu'u liko o ke kalaunu.</i>	And the fine gems of your crown.
<i>Ua hana no'eau ia e Palani</i>	They were skillfully assembled in France
<i>Kinohinohi lua ke ike aku,</i>	With twice as much ornamentation seen.
<i>Ka alohi o ka nani o ke kaimana,</i>	The diamond sparkles in all its beauty,
<i>Mea e o ka nani ka'u ike.</i>	So marvelously beautiful to me.
<i>Me he ala o ka hoku welowelo</i>	It is like a shining comet,
<i>Ma ka ili kai o ka Pakipika</i>	Over the surface of the Pacific Ocean.

<i>Ke lawe ia la e ke kiakolu,</i>	It was brought hither by a three-masted ship
<i>E ka laina moku ahi o ka hema.</i>	By a liner of the west.
<i>Kuu ia la i pau pono ko nani</i>	Let your beauty be seen in its fulness,
<i>A i la'i ka nohona a o ka wahine.</i>	And may peace follow the woman everywhere.
<i>A i ike mai ai ko lahui,</i>	Let your people see you,
<i>A i ko la nui, hao a pa'ihi.</i>	Beautifully adorned on your great day (Coronation day)
<i>Haina ia mai ana ka puana</i>	This ends my song of praise
<i>O Kapiolani i ka 'iu o luna.</i>	For Kapiolani, so high above.

NOTES

- ¹ A note on orthography: all quoted material retains original spellings. Only Hawaiian-language terms in the body of the essay follow Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, rev. and enlarged ed. (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1986), and Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel H. Elbert, and Esther T. Mookini, *Place Names of Hawaii* (Honolulu: UP of Hawai'i, 1974), with respect to including the 'okina (a reversed apostrophe) to represent the glottal stop and the *kahakō* (a macron) to represent phonemic vowel length.
- ² The *mele* "Aia i Kamaile kou lei nani" was the women's competition chant in Merrie Monarch 1979. While this *mele* is often associated with the Kapi'olani lei chants, I will argue below that this *mele* is not, in fact, part of the set. The spellings cited here follow the texts given in program books from the Merrie Monarch Hula Competition for the respective years.
- ³ Other of Kapi'olani's lei *mele* presented in hula competitions include "Aia i Lihau ko lei nani" performed by Keali'ika'apunihonua Ke'ena A'o Hula in Merrie Monarch 1985; "Aia i Nu'uuanu ko lei nani" by Hula Hālau o Kaho'onei in Merrie Monarch 1986 and Ka Pā Hula Hawai'i in King Kamehameha 1988; and "Mai Italia ko lei nani" by Nā Lei o Kaholokū in Merrie Monarch 1992. The *mele* "Aia i Haili kou lei nani" has also been presented since 1980 by the following groups: Puka'ikapuaokalani in Merrie Monarch 1984, Hui Ho'oulu Aloha in the Merrie Monarch and King Kamehameha competitions in 1989, and Hālau Nā Mamo o Pu'uuanahulu in Merrie Monarch 1996. "Aia i Nu'uuanu ko lei nani" was choreographed by Manu Boyd and presented in the *Hō'ike* (the hula exhibition section) of the 74th Annual Kamehameha Schools Song Contest, held March 22, 1996.
- ⁴ Dorothy B. Barrère et al., *Hula: Historical Perspectives*, Pacific Anthropological Records No. 30 (Honolulu: Dept. of Anthropology, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1980) 138.

- ⁵ Individual *mele* in this set are also scattered in other sources; the primary sources selected for scrutiny here are the main sources that, for the most part, transmit these *mele* as associated with each other.
- ⁶ "Aia i ka 'ōpua ko lei nani," situated in the clouds—*ka 'ōpua*—contains three place names. In line 10, according to Mrs. Pukui, "Kulanihakoi was believed to be a pond high above the clouds. When it overflowed rain fell" (Ms SC Pukui 17.5, 29h). In line 15, the place name Makanoni at the east end of the island of Hawai'i is referenced simply as the point at which the sun appeared.
- ⁷ Luella H. Kurkjian, personal communication, 6 Oct. 1995.
- ⁸ The text of this *mele* from the Kuluwaimaka Collection, along with a translation by Theodore Kelsey, can be found in Maili Yardley and Miriam Rogers, *Queen Kapiolani* (Honolulu: Topgallant, 1985) 41–42.
- ⁹ Ms SC Pukui 17.5, 29e.
- ¹⁰ See Samuel H. Elbert, "Poetry," in George S. Kanahale, ed., *Hawaiian Music and Musicians: An Illustrated History* (Honolulu: UP of Hawai'i, 1979) 300–02.
- ¹¹ Luella H. Kurkjian, personal correspondence, 29 June 1995.
- ¹² Ms SC Pukui 17.5, 29d; see also Barrère et al., *Hula* 77.
- ¹³ Ms SC Pukui 17.5, 29d–f.
- ¹⁴ The first two lines are my translation.
- ¹⁵ Cited in Roger G. Rose, *Hawai'i: The Royal Isles*, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Special Publication 67 (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1980) 207.
- ¹⁶ *HSB* 27 Apr. 1992, D-1. The troupe, Nā Lei 'o Kaholokū, won first place that year.
- ¹⁷ Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary* 293.
- ¹⁸ The subsequent whereabouts of this particular necklace are unknown, according to Jim Bartels, curator at 'Iolani Palace (correspondence, 8 Mar. 1996).
- ¹⁹ Manu Boyd, personal communication, 16 Apr. 1996.
- ²⁰ Helena G. Allen, *Kalakaua: Renaissance Man* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1994) 64, 210.
- ²¹ Nathaniel B. Emerson, "The Poetry of Hawaii," *11th Annual Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society* (Honolulu, 1904) 18.
- ²² Lorrin Andrews, "Remarks on Hawaiian Poetry," *The Islander* 1.9 (30 Apr. 1875): 35.
- ²³ The term *hula kahiko* as a designation for a category of "ancient" hula appears to have been coined in the early 1970s; it has been widely adopted in many competitive events and teaching contexts.
- ²⁴ Representative vocal performances have been recorded by Sonny Chillingworth, *Ka Aina o Hawaii* (Lehua SL 2040, n.d.), A.4, and Tony Conjugacion, *Hawaiian Hope* (Kahanu KHR-1011, 1986), B.4, reissued on *The Collection* (Aloha ARCD 003, 1994), track 9.
- ²⁵ Recorded by Kimo Alama Keaulana in an interview on 25 Aug. 1993; for text, translation, and commentary, see Kimo Alama, *Puke Mele Volume I* (Honolulu: Kimo Alama, 1988) 30–31, 100.

- ²⁶ *Mele Inoa* (Poki SP 9003, 1973), A.5.
- ²⁷ *Iā 'Oe E Ka Lā* (Nakahiki Productions NP-100, 1973), B.1.
- ²⁸ Emerson, "The Poetry of Hawaii" 18.
- ²⁹ For example, in addition to her voluminous composition of secular songs modeled on the verse-chorus alternation of *himeni* (gospel hymns), Lili'uokalani composed and notated *hula ku'i* melodies for poetic texts honoring her niece Ka'iulani and nephew Kalandana'ole and also commemorating her visit to London for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887; see Liliuokalani, *He Buke Mele Hawaii* (Wakinekona, Mokuaina o Kolumepia [Washington, D.C.], 1897), 63–76, 122, 127–30.
- ³⁰ Mary Kawena Pukui, "Hulas of Kauai," typescript, Bishop Museum Archives HI.M.72, 31–2.
- ³¹ For an interpretation of modern *hula ku'i* melodies in published songbooks as transcriptions derived from performance practice, see Amy K. Stillman, "Of What Use Are Published Hawaiian Songbooks? Interpreting the notated presentation of modern Hawaiian songs," *Perfect Beat* 2.2 (1995): 64–82.
- ³² I have deliberately chosen not to analyze the use of specific poetic themes and devices in this study. John Charlot has ably demonstrated how themes of "heights, rank, shining, fame in distant lands, and the chief as flower" permeate much of the literature of the Kalākaua era in *The Hawaiian Poetry of Religion and Politics* (Lā'ie, HI: The Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1985) 9–14.
- ³³ Sources for the translations are specifically identified in Table 1.
- ³⁴ The texts and Mrs. Pukui's translations are included here with the kind permission of Bishop Museum Archives.