

**THE BETRAYAL OF ELIA HELEKŪNIHI**  
**The Politics of Tradition and Colonisation by Stealth in Nineteenth**  
**Century Hawai‘i**

**by**

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## ABSTRACT

The life of Elia Helekūnihi, an Hawaiian traditionalist of the chiefly class, challenges assumptions about the United States' intervention in Hawai'i rooted in either the trope of Euro-American "uplift" or of simple-hearted people victimised by colonialism. Helekūnihi's career in the church, education, law and politics reveals a dynamic, nuanced and independent agency that contradicts expectations of how an Hawaiian patriot might act. His life also demonstrates the vital role of pre-contact tradition in determining the essential Hawaianness of the Calvinist Christian order that the early nineteenth-century chiefs adopted and established as a national church. Helekūnihi's fidelity to that order informed his decision to support the annexation of Hawai'i by the United States, which occurred in 1898, two years after his death. The dissertation reveals the persistence of a dynamic Hawaiian culture across the long nineteenth century by exploring the role of tradition behind Helekūnihi's enigmatic choice. What constituted the rationale of a man of the elite class, devoted to both his nation and its ancient traditions, to support the processes that ultimately led to the overthrow of indigenous governance and the subversion of those same traditions? The final betrayal of Elia Helekūnihi illustrates the tragic dimension of empire, whereby even Native people complicit in the imperial project were seldom given a place in the colonial order.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the people of the land of *Ka Ua Pe'e Pōhaku o Kaupō*, “the rain of Kaupō that makes one hide behind a rock.” Your lives, past and present, have enriched me beyond all measure through your beauty, wisdom, faith, grit and humour. *Mahalo nui loa, e Elia Helekūnihi*, for speaking to me over so many years and inviting me to learn from you and to tell your story.



Elia Kamalalawalu Kekahawalu Helekūnihi



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work began with a research project, at the request of Scott Fisher of the Hawaiian Islands Land Trust, on the coastal Nu‘u portion of the starkly beautiful remote Maui district of Kaupō. I was intrigued by that arid and silent landscape of ‘a ‘ā lava fields, twisting *kiawe* trees and crashing waves covered in countless remnants of a once thriving Hawaiian community. Numerous house sites, *heiau* (temples), petroglyphs, fishing shrines, agricultural terraces, schoolhouses and churches testify to the fact that up until the mid-19th century this was one of Maui’s most populous districts. My research led me up many paths and down numerous rabbit holes as I attempted to comprehend the reasons for Kaupō’s precipitous decline from one of Hawai‘i’s most productive agricultural lands and an important chiefly power centre to a desolate ranchland. In the process, of course, I realised that this was a consequence of colonialism and I was intrigued to learn how U.S. imperial desires played out in this one corner of Maui.

In seeking answers, I had multiple conversations with a variety of specialists: archaeologists, historians, naturalists and, most importantly, members of some of the few remaining Kaupō families and *paniolo*, cowboys on the Ranch. I spent many hours in multiple archives and libraries and studied hundreds of Hawaiian language newspapers printed in the nineteenth century. In the process, one name seemed to dominate my research, that of Elia Helekūnihi, sometimes “E. Helekūnihi,” or “E.H. Paulo,” or just “E. Paulo.” As I pieced together Elia’s life and read his personal testimony, it became clear to me that he was speaking directly to me and requesting that I tell his story. This one man’s life spanned much of the nineteenth century and touched upon most of the events that led to Hawai‘i’s annexation by the U.S. in 1898. As such, it occurred to me that to examine carefully the forces that defined and informed

his agency, particularly the role of Hawaiian chiefly traditions and their persistence, would shed light on the process of colonisation from the prospect of the colonised. The study of the life of Elia Helekūnihi reveals much about the complexity and nuance involved in human agency, wherein men and women often make choices that may perplex us, but which suggest historical processes that are infinitely more refined than for which we are inclined to give credit.

First of all, I would like to thank Scott Fisher of the Hawaiian Islands Land Trust, my friend and accomplice on multiple “mad dogs and Englishman” hikes in the hot sun and powerful trade winds of Kaupō. His wisdom and *mana* ‘o on all things Hawaiian (language, history, natural history) is awesome and immeasurable. Who else could one turn to for advice on identifying extinct land crab claws in Maui sand dunes? Thank you, Scott, for believing that this English Anglican priest with a background in Byzantine History could ever have anything to say at all about old Hawai‘i! I thank Patrick Kirch, the world’s authority on Pacific archaeology, for his teaching, friendship and willingness to listen to me spend hours lost in a forest of details on the fine points of Kaupō archaeology and the life of Elia Helekūnihi. I also thank his doctoral student, Alex Baer, for taking me on long and informative hikes over vine covered temple ruins and enabling my students and me to participate in archaeological digs of house sites at Nu‘u. Still in that magical land of Kaupō, I am greatly indebted to my friends, Alikea and Alohalani Smith, whose roots run very deep in the ‘āina of Kaupō, at whose table I’ve sat for many hours “talking story” and eating *loko*. Alikea, that “billy goat of Kaupō,” walked the land with me, showed me the ancient sites of his ancestors near Elia’s birthplace in Nu‘u and shared stories of the old times when sweet potato was planted and the music of ‘*Ōlelo Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian language) still filled the air. I thank Alohalani, descendant of Elia Helekūnihi, chair of the Kaupō

*Moku* council, for her genuine *aloha* spirit and open heart, always ready to welcome this *malihini* with humour and old-fashioned Hawaiian hospitality. I am greatly indebted to her for her fierce advocacy on behalf of preserving the heritage of Kaupō, one of the last Hawaiian places unspoiled by commercialism. Without the kind hospitality of Jimmy and Kimo Haynes and Jack and Susan Kean, owners of Kaupō Ranch, and Bobby Ferreira, ranch manager, I would not have been able to have access to the more wild and otherwise inaccessible portions of Kaupō. They allowed me to stay several times in the old ranch house and introduced me to two of the last old Hawaiian speaking *paniolo* (cowboys), Frank Po‘ouahi and Charley Aki. These two gentlemen have since passed, but I feel grateful to have met them to “talk story” about the old days of Kaupō and hear and record the last speakers of the Kaupō dialect of Hawaiian. Bobby Ferreira has always been patient and welcoming whenever I’ve requested permission to roam the ranchlands. I also offer thanks to old *paniolo* and former ranch manager, Soot Bredhof, whose many gracious hours of story-telling about the old days at Kaupō greatly enriched my knowledge of and love for *Ka ‘āina o Ka Ua Pe‘e Pōhaku o Kaupō*.

In the academic community, I would like to thank Davianna McGregor of U.H. Mānoa for kindly taking the time in the early days of my research to help set me on the right path. I thank Ron Johnson of the Hawai‘i State Archives for many hours of helpful conversation and direction in the area of nineteenth century Hawaiian Christianity and colonialism. There are few who do more for correcting the narrative on Native Hawaiian agency in Church and resistance to U.S. imperial desires than Ron. I am particularly indebted to my friend and *kumu* Kapali Lyon, also of UH, who has spent many hours “talking story” on the broad themes of nineteenth century Hawaiian religion and whose knowledge of *Ōlelo Hawai‘i* is breathtaking. His classes have been

exceedingly helpful, but his willingness to drop everything to help me translate a tricky passage of Hawaiian has been immeasurably kind. Puakea Nogelmeier, brilliant interpreter of the Hawaiian language, advocate for its survival as a living language and one who has done more than any to recover and publish old Hawaiian texts, has been remarkably welcoming and patient in taking the time to spend with me to leave no stone unturned in the search for a legible text of Helekūnihi's *Mo 'olelo Hawai'i*. His guidance in accessing and interpreting Hawaiian newspapers was immensely helpful. Finally, I am indebted to my friend and fellow academic traveller, Joshua Larosa, for his many hours of patience, encouragement, advice and criticism. Such friendship in "the trenches" of scholarship makes the challenges so much sweeter.

A scholar of Hawaiian history is blessed with a rich assortment of archives and libraries containing a treasure trove of largely unaccessed documents. I am indebted to Tia Reber and De Soto Brown of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum for their help in retrieving important documents related to Elia Helekūnihi and the Catholic mission, as well as Mary Kawena Pukui's recordings of Kaupō elders in the early 1960s. John Barker, former archivist at the Hawaiian Mission Childrens' Library, was helpful in locating early missionary letters and church reports, and Jennifer Higa at the adjacent Hawaiian Historical Society Archives has similarly been helpful in my search for documents and photos related to Kaupō and Helekūnihi's life. There is no richer trove for Hawaiian documents than the State Archives, where the staff: Adam Jansen, State Archivist, Ron Johnson, Dianne Okudara, Troy Kimura and Melissa Shimonishi have been tireless in their kind and patient assistance in retrieving hundreds of documents for this voracious reader of obscure nineteenth century school reports, bureaucratic letters, and tax ledgers. Stuart Ching, Provincial Archivist of both the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and

the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai‘i, has been an enthusiastic and cheerful colleague in seeking out documents on the Catholic mission, as well those relating to the conversion of many of the *ali‘i* in the 1860s to Anglicanism. Rev. Paul Lejeune and his assistant, Luana Tarsi, at the Archivio Generale of the SSCC (Sacred Hearts Fathers) in Rome, were tireless in tracking down and digitising for me the journal of Fr. Modeste Favens. Jody Mattos at the Hamilton Library at U.H., Sissy Lake-Farmer and Kekai Robinson of the Maui Historical Society Archives at the Hale Hō‘ike in the Bailey House Museum and the staff of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. have all been too kind and accommodating to an academic wayfarer seeking what must surely have been to them very obscure knowledge.

I would like to thank my supervisors at Birmingham University: Nathan Cardon, Michell Chresfield and Simon Laqua O‘Donnell. They have guided me magnificently on this journey of discovery, teaching me so much about extrapolating universal meaning from a mass of raw research data. I have so much wanted simply to tell the story of Kaupō and then, under their guidance, the story of Elia Helekūnihi, but they challenged me to seek the “why?” in this enterprise. I am immensely grateful for their intellectual integrity, their willingness to call me to a higher standard of scholarship and their ability to enable me to mine the depths of meaning in the life of this man who has become my friend and companion.

Finally, I thank my family, my husband Jonathan, my daughter Mary and my son Luke. They have not only been indulgent with my long absences darkening the halls of archives in Hawai‘i or traipsing across hot lava fields in Kaupō, they have patiently endured many hours of me “talking story” about Elia Helekūnihi and Kaupō. Jonathan has even read my manuscript and

has had, as a Harvard English graduate, many comments on how to improve my style or argument. To him I am especially grateful.

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Petroglyphs at Nu‘u.

## GLOSSARY OF HAWAIIAN WORDS

*‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian Language) is a Polynesian language of the Austronesian family of languages, closely related to Marquesan, Tahitian and Maori. The language utilises only twelve letters of the Latin alphabet in addition to the *‘okina* (‘), a glottal stop that functions as a consonant. There is another diacritical mark, the *kahakō* (macron), which lengthens vowels. These two diacritical marks have largely been employed only since the mid-twentieth century, with the corpus of nineteenth century literature in Hawaiian largely devoid of them, rendering translation difficult at times. A word with or without the marks can have dramatically different meanings and there are numerous homonyms, providing the language with a useful poetic device.

I use Hawaiian words liberally, with the understanding that the fulness of meaning can only be appreciated when the original is employed. One can see this necessity when confronted

by the multiple meanings of words like *aloha* or *pono*, which convey such richness that they must stand on their own. In the text of my dissertation, I have chosen to leave a passage as I find it in the sources. If the diacritical marks are not present, I do not add them unless I reuse a word in the context of a translation: for example, *alii* in the original Hawaiian becomes *ali‘i* if the Hawaiian is used in an English text. It has become common in contemporary Hawaiian historiography not to italicise Hawaiian words, with the understanding that in Hawai‘i the language is not “foreign.” I have chosen to retain the convention of putting Hawaiian in italics because I am writing in English on the U.S. Mainland. Perhaps if I were writing in Hawai‘i I would do otherwise. When secondary sources choose to employ Hawaiian texts without the italics, I honour that usage. All translations are my own unless I cite and acknowledge the assistance of another scholar. I offer special thanks to Jeffrey (“Kapali”) Lyon, my *kumu* (teacher) and *hoaloha* (friend), for his kindness, patience and assistance with difficult Hawaiian passages. I have consulted Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert’s standard *Hawaiian Dictionary, Revised and Enlarged Edition* (University of Hawai‘i Press, Honolulu, 1986) for most translations. On occasion, to seek a more nuanced understanding of an obscure word, I use the 1865 work of missionary Lorrin Andrews, *A Dictionary of the Hawaiian Language* (Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc, Rutland VT, 1974). Though compiled by a missionary, its advantage lies in the fact that it was published when Hawaiian was still the primary language of the Islands.

*ahupua‘a*

“pig altar,” land division extending from uplands to the sea, usually pie-shaped

*aikane*,

favourite of a chief, male lover, friend

*‘ai kapu* or *‘aikapu*

eating tabu

*‘ai noa or ‘ainoa*  
eating freely without observing food tabus

*akua*  
god, goddess, spirit, ghost, idol

*ali ‘i*  
chief, ruler, monarch, noble

*ali ‘i nui*  
high chief

*ali ‘i po ‘e kauā*  
lesser chiefs who served other chiefs

*aloha*  
love, affection, loved one, compassion, mercy, sympathy, grace, greeting, salutation

*aloha ‘āina*  
love of the land or of one’s country

*‘apu la ‘au*  
medicinal potion

*haku mele*  
poet, composer

*hale*  
house

*hānai*  
adopted child

*haole*  
white person (generally Anglo), foreign, of foreign origin

*hapa haole*  
half-white, though generally Hawaiian-white

*haunaele*  
panic, riot, brawl

*heiau*  
pre-Christian temple or shrine

<i>hoahānau</i>	cousin, brother or sister, church member
<i>holomua</i>	improvement, progress
<i>ho 'okahuli</i>	overthrow (as a government)
<i>ho 'okupu</i>	tribute, tax, ceremonial gift-giving as a sign of honour and respect, church offering
<i>ho 'omalamalama</i>	illuminate, enlighten, civilise
<i>Ho 'omana Palani</i> or <i>Ho 'omanapope</i>	Catholicism ( <i>Palani</i> = French)
<i>ho 'opolau</i>	betrothal
<i>hua 'ōlelo</i>	broken promise
<i>hula</i>	dance
<i>hulikanaka</i>	moral philosophy
<i>'imihaku</i>	to seek a chief, as of a lesser chief or priest wishing a new master
<i>'imiloa</i>	Seek far, explore, seeking knowledge
<i>kahiki</i>	any foreign country, abroad, foreign, Tahiti
<i>kahili</i>	feather standard signifying a high chief
<i>kahu</i>	honored attendant, guardian, pastor, minister

*kahu kula*  
school master, school supervisor

*kahuna (kāhuna)*  
priest, sorcerer, magician, expert in any profession

*kahuna nui*  
high priest

*kākāʻōlelo*  
orator, person skilled in use of language, storyteller, counselor, advisor

*Kakōlika*  
Catholic

*kālaiʻāina*  
politics, political

*Kalawina*  
Calvinist, Congregationalist

*ʻkalo*  
taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), traditional staple of Hawaiian diet

*kamaʻaina*  
native-born, native of a district, acquainted, familiar

*kanaka (kānaka)*  
human being, person, Hawaiian (19th century)

*kanawai*  
law

*kanikau*  
dirge, lamentation, poem of mourning

*kaona*  
hidden meaning as in Hawaiian poetry

*kapa*  
traditional bark cloth made from pounding *wauke* or *māmaki* bark, clothes of any kind

*kapu*  
tabu, prohibition, sacredness, consecrated



*kauhale*

group of various houses making up a Hawaiian homestead, settlement

*kaukauali 'i*

class of chiefs of lesser rank than high chief

*kīpē*

bribe

*Kō Hawai'i Pae 'Āina*

Hawaiian Islands

*konohiki*

headman of an *ahupua'a* land division under the chief

*kuamo 'o*

backbone, spine, custom, way

*kū 'ē*

resist, protest, oppose

*kuleana*

right, privilege, responsibility, concern, authority, interest, claim, reason, cause

*kū 'oko 'a*

independence, liberty, freedom

*lāhui*

nation, tribe, nationality

*lapuwale*

worthless, foolish, vain, scoundrel

*lei*

garland, wreath, a beloved child or sweetheart

*loko*

pond

*loko i 'a*

fish pond

*la 'au lapa 'au*

medicine

*lapa‘au*  
medical practice, heal

*le‘ale‘a*  
amusement, fun, have a good time

*lo‘i kalo*  
taro patch

*luakini*  
large *heiau* (temple) of *ali‘i nui* of human sacrifice, church or cathedral

*lū‘au*  
Hawaiian feast (not an ancient word, dates from roughly 1856)

*luna*  
overseer, foreman, boss

*mā*  
a particle following names, meaning associates of that person or in their retinue

*māhele*  
portion, division, section, zone, the land division of 1848

*mahi‘ai*  
farmer, planter

*ma‘i*  
sickness, illness, disease

*ma‘i ho‘oka‘awale*  
separating sickness, Hansen’s disease

*maka‘āinana*  
common people, populace, citizen, subject

*makahiki*  
year, age

*Makahiki*  
Ancient festival from roughly mid-October to February

*mākaia‘ia*  
betrayed

*māla*  
garden, cultivated field, patch

<i>mālama</i>	take care of, tend, protect
<i>mana</i>	supernatural or divine power, authority, political power
<i>mauka</i>	upcountry, away from the sea
<i>mele</i>	song, anthem, chant, poem
<i>moe kolohe</i>	sleep mischievously, adultery, fornication
<i>mō ‘ī</i>	king, sovereign, monarch, majesty, ruler (possibly not of ancient usage)
<i>mō ‘ī wahine</i>	queen
<i>moku</i>	district (such as Kaupō or Hāna), island, ship (European style)
<i>Molemona</i>	Mormon
<i>mo ‘o</i>	lizard, reptile, dragon, water spirit
<i>mo ‘okū ‘auhau</i>	genealogical succession, pedigree
<i>mo ‘olelo Hawai ‘i</i>	Hawaiian history
<i>na ‘auao</i>	learned, enlightened, intelligent, wise, civilised, educated
<i>nei</i>	after noun or pronoun can signify “beloved”
<i>nī ‘aupi ‘o</i>	offspring of marriage of high-born brother and sister

<i>noa</i>	free of tabu, profane, released from restrictions
<i>nūhou</i>	news
<i>nūpepa</i>	newspaper
<i>‘ōhua</i>	retainers, dependents, servants
<i>‘okana</i>	district composed of several <i>ahupua</i> ‘ <i>a</i> , but smaller than a <i>moku</i>
<i>‘ōlelo</i>	language, speech, word, term
<i>‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i</i>	Hawaiian Language
<i>one hānau</i>	“birth sands,” birthplace, homeland
<i>pa ‘i ‘ai</i>	hard, pounded, but undiluted <i>poi</i>
<i>palapala</i>	document, literacy, writing of any kind, literature, learning, the Scriptures
<i>pali</i>	cliffs
<i>peleleu</i>	large canoe type, sometime double-hulled
<i>pili</i>	native grass used in thatching of houses
<i>pilikia</i>	trouble, distress

*poi*

pounded taro root, thinned with water and eaten as a paste, Hawaiian staple

*pono*

goodness, uprightness, balance, harmony, true condition of nature

*pulupulu*

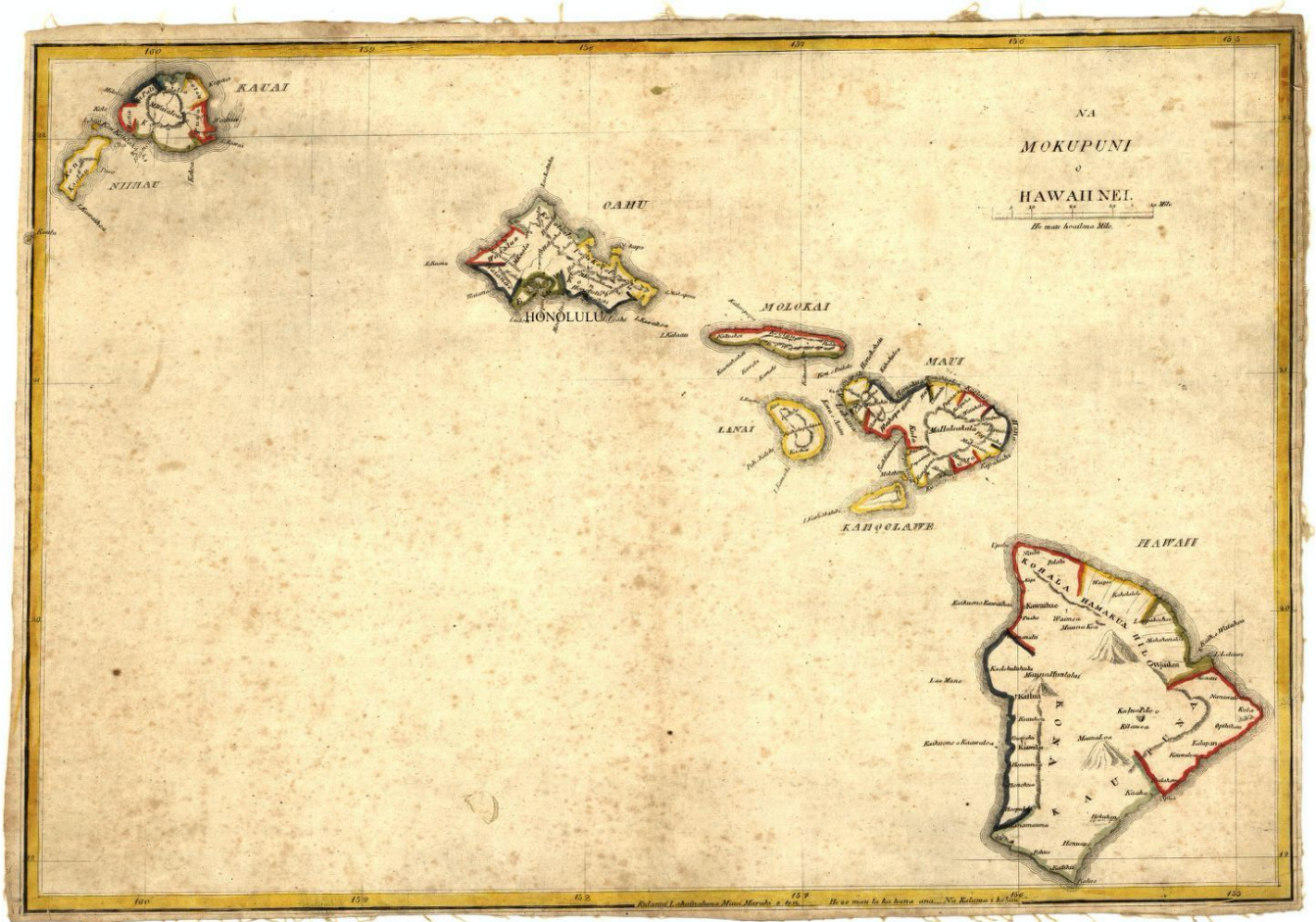
cotton

*‘uala*

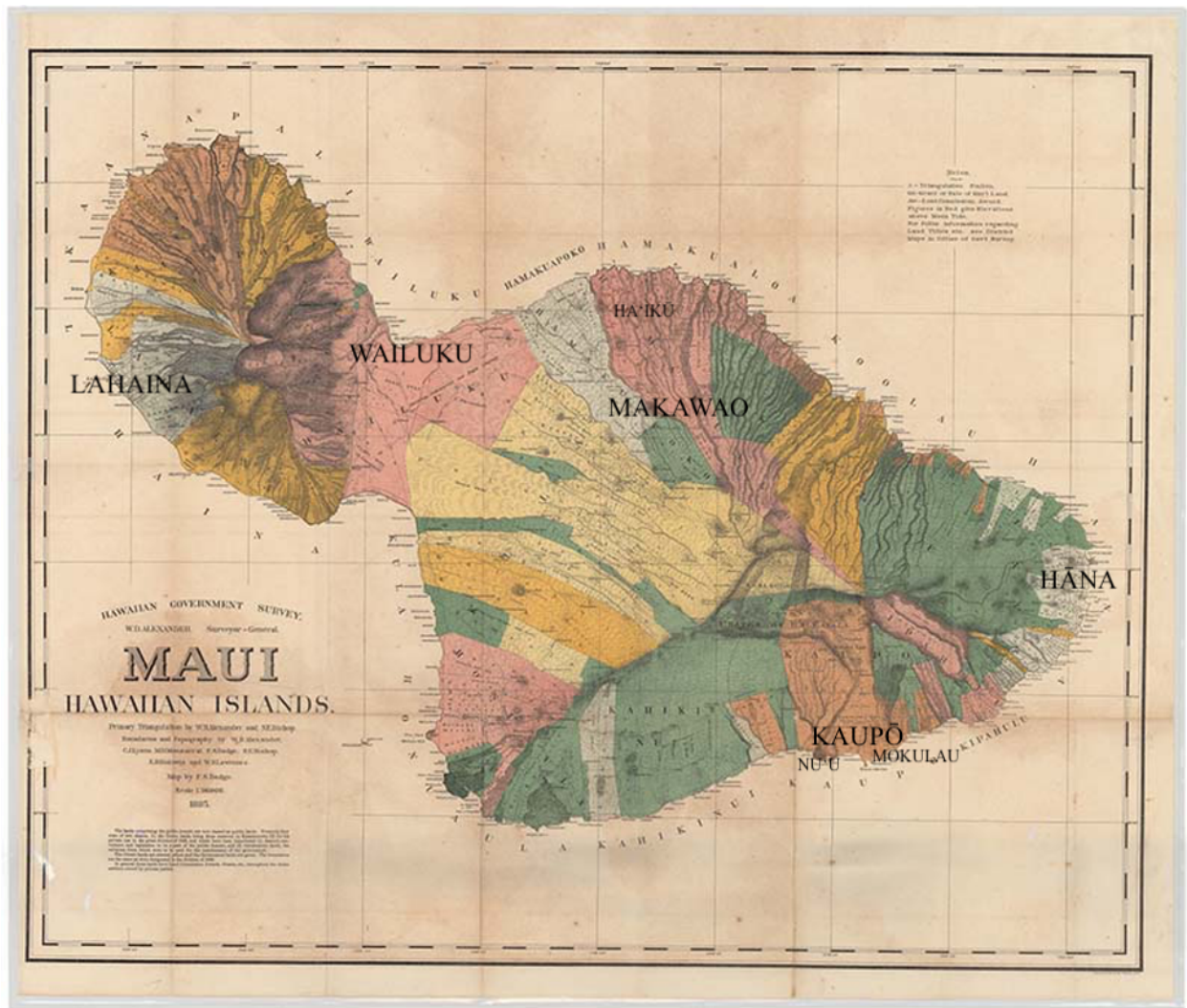
sweet potato, staple crop of dryer districts such as Kaupō

*wa‘a*

canoe

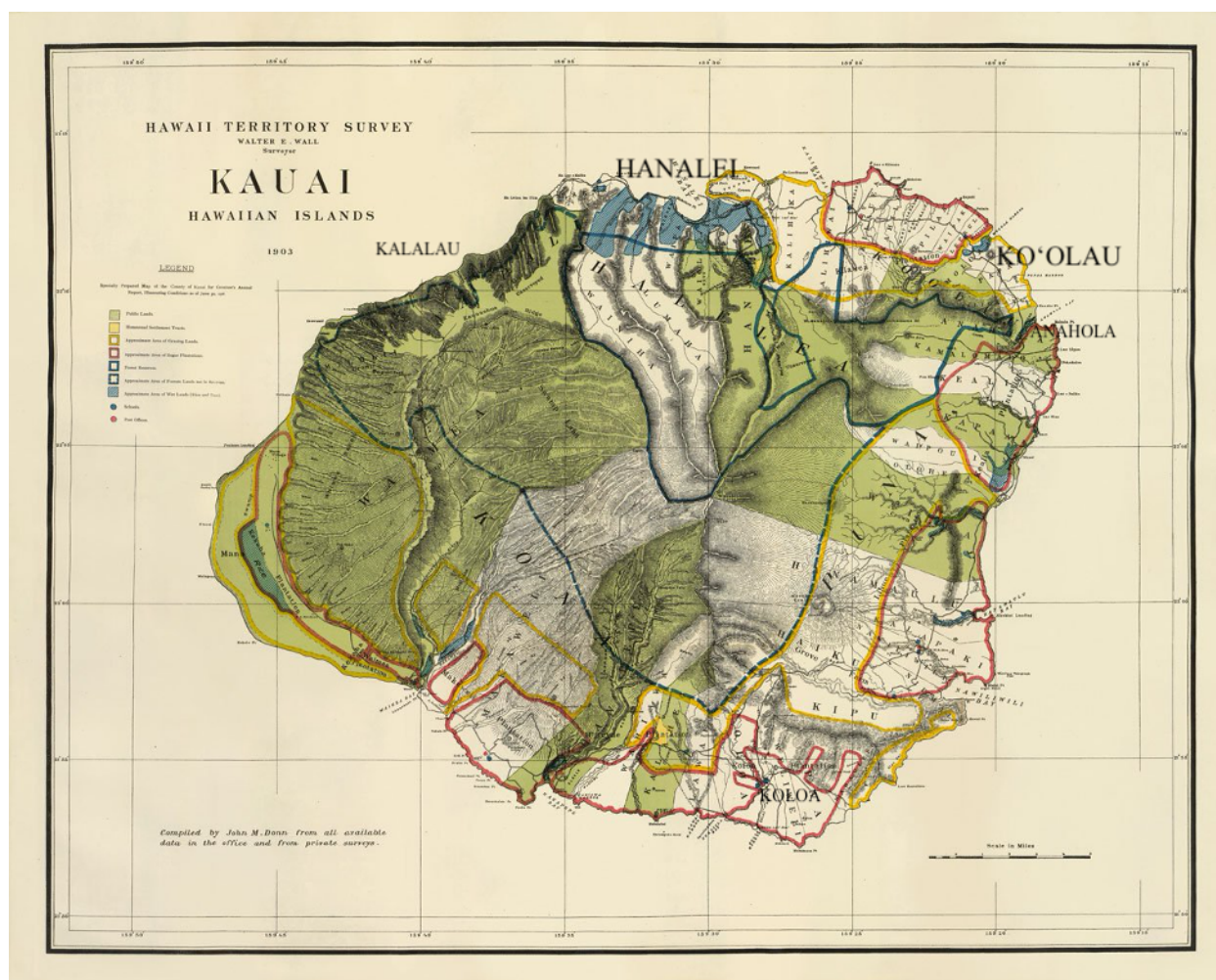


The Hawaiian Islands, Printed at Lahainaluna, 1837, Library of Congress.



Alexander Hawaiian Government Survey Map of Maui, 1885.





Hawai'i Territory Survey Map of Kaua'i, 1903.

## **‘ŌLELO MUA (INTRODUCTION)**

The 1 May 1893 edition of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (*PCA*) reported that “five heavily loaded Kahului R.R. Company’s cars, freighted to their utmost capacity with citizens from Makawao, Spreckelsville and Kahului, pulled into Wailuku depot” on Maui the evening of April 22<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>1</sup> The enthusiastic crowd gathered at the courthouse for a rally in support of the annexation of *Kō Hawai‘i Pae ‘Āina* (Hawaiian Islands) by the United States, just three months after the overthrow of Her Hawaiian Majesty Queen Liliūokalani by a small group of powerful white business, political, and religious leaders. Some in the crowd were the descendants of New England Congregational missionaries who arrived in 1820 to “civilise and Christianise the heathen.”<sup>2</sup> Well might the editors of the *PCA* crow at the prospect of Native Hawaiians cheering for annexation, as the paper was a mouthpiece of the white oligarchy and dominated by missionary sons and grandsons.

Even allowing for the *PCA*’s reputation for “Yellow Journalism,” a large gathering of Hawaiians for the purpose of denying an independent future for their small island *lāhui* (nation) seemed paradoxical. After President Kalua’s call to order at 8 p.m, Annexation Club secretary George Hans read a letter from Hāna, declaring that “the most eastern district of Maui was nearly

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<sup>1</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May 1893, 6.

<sup>2</sup> See Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands: or The Civil, Religious, and Political History of Those Islands: Comprising a Particular View of the Missionary Operations ... among the Hawaiian People* (Hartford, CT: Hezekiah Huntington, 1847). Almost every page of Bingham repeats the tropes of “darkness,” “heathendom,” “barbarism” and “degradation,” for example, “The appearance of destitution, degradation, and barbarism, among the chattering, and almost naked savages, whose heads and feet, and much of their sunburnt swarthy skins, were bare, was appalling.” (p. 6).



‘solid’ for closer relations with the United States.” Considering that East Maui was a bastion of Native Hawaiian traditionalism, this letter’s optimism for annexation was wishful thinking. The annexationist pastor of Wananalua Church in Hāna, J.K. Iosepa, would be hounded from his parish for his role as co-editor of the annexationist Hawaiian language newspaper, *Nupepa Puka La Kuokoa*.<sup>3</sup>

Present that night was Elia Helekūnihi (1839-1896), illustrious son of Kaupō in Hāna district, scion of an ancient chiefly family, author of an expansive “*Mo ‘olelo Hawai ‘i*” (Hawaiian History), Calvinist pastor, advocate of traditional Hawaiian medicine, lawyer, judge, and twice member of the Legislature of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. His colleague, John William Kalua (1846-1928), that evening exhibited “electrifying enthusiasm, and from his rapid, eloquent delivery it could be easily seen why he has been called ‘the fire of Wailuku.’”<sup>4</sup> At this rally, both Helekūnihi and Kalua were selected with Revs. J.M. Napulua and Adam Pali as Native Hawaiian representatives for the Annexation Club at an historic meeting in Honolulu on 1 May. Pali’s congregation at Waine‘e Church in Lahaina was just then ejecting him from his pulpit for signing the oath of allegiance to the oligarchic “Provisional Government.”<sup>5</sup>

The Honolulu meeting was to be with James Blount, the U.S. commissioner dispatched by President Grover Cleveland to investigate events surrounding the overthrow of the Queen. The Hawaiians were accompanied by missionary sons, E.H. Bailey (1838-1910), and William Fawcett Pogue (1856-1932), whose father, John Fawcett Pogue (1814-1887), was Helekūnihi’s

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<sup>3</sup> Ronald Williams, “Claiming Christianity: The Struggle Over God and the Nation in Hawai‘i, 1880-1900.” PhD Dissertation, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 2013, p. 106.

<sup>4</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May 1893, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Williams, “Claiming Christianity,” p. 135.

teacher at Lahainaluna in the 1850s and whose mother, Maria Kapule Whitney, was sister of Henry M. Whitney, founder and editor of both the *PCA* and the *Nupepa Kuokoa*, the pro-American Hawaiian language newspaper that printed many of Helekūnihi's letters and editorials. Helekūnihi remained dedicated to this paper his entire life.<sup>6</sup> The Wailuku Courthouse meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m, "great enthusiasm having been shown throughout."<sup>7</sup>

In the same edition, the *PCA* reported another mass meeting of several hundred people assembled at the Hamakuapoko "Native" Church in Pā'ia on 27 April. Gathered under the auspices of the Maui Annexation Club, no fewer than twenty speakers were announced by President Kalua, each of whom was allotted fifteen minutes. J.L. Dumas of Waihe'e enlightened the audience with "facts concerning the territorial form of government and the generous treatment of the Indians by the United States." Rev. Thomas Lafon Gulick (1839-1904), missionary son and pastor of the Makawao "Foreign" Church "took a moral view of the situation and advocated stability of government, pointing out the immorality of the former Hawaiian Court and the instability of the previous government." This "moral view" proved to be a commonly cited rationale by the white oligarchs for the illegal overthrow of Hawai'i's Queen.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, "Lawyer Helekūnihi, made a lengthy and very interesting address dealing with the history of the past Hawaiian sovereigns," undoubtedly based on his lengthy *Mo'olelo Hawai'i* (Hawaiian History), written between 1873 and 1883. In this piece, he supplemented the work of renowned Hawaiian historians with material handed down to him from his own father,

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<sup>6</sup> Chapin, Helen Geracimos, *Shaping History, The Role of Newspapers in Hawai'i* (Honolulu HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), pp. 53-58.

<sup>7</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May, 1893, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, "Claiming Christianity," pp. 90-99.

Paulo Kū. In a letter written just a month after the overthrow of the Queen to missionary son, Oliver Emerson, Elia stated, “My history is taken from that of S.M. Kamakau, combined with bits and pieces from John ‘Ī‘Ī, and some from my own father.”<sup>9</sup> Helekūnihi placed himself squarely within the ranks of the luminaries of nineteenth century Native Hawaiian historiography. Three weeks prior to Elia’s letter, Emerson had signed the oath of allegiance to the “Provisional Government” and became a major voice in the delicate task of convincing the U.S. government and public of the merits of annexing Hawai‘i.<sup>10</sup> The purpose of the letter was to respond to Emerson’s questions about the *Mo‘olelo*, the text of which had been sent to him by the hand of Elia’s wife, “with her happiness in meeting with you all.”<sup>11</sup> There seems to have been much affection between the family of the Hawaiian traditionalist and that of the arch annexationist.

Twelve years ago, in the course of a focussed research on the remote Maui district of Kaupō in both archives and Hawaiian language newspapers, I encountered the name “Elia Helekunihi,” “E.Helekunihi,” “E.H. Paulo,” or “E. Paulo” so frequently that it necessitated a deeper examination of the life of this man. I was intrigued that he was of chiefly lineage rooted deeply in the soil of Kaupō and dedicated to set down in writing the oral traditions, history and

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<sup>9</sup> Elia Helekūnihi to Rev. Oliver Emerson, 25 February 1893, Ms. Group 284, Bishop Museum Archives: *Ua loa a mai ka Moolelo mai a S.M. Kamakau, i hui ia me na hunahuna a John Ii, a mai ko‘u wahi makuakane mai no hoi kekahi.*” Oliver Emerson was the youngest son of Waialua missionaries John and Ursula Emerson, who arrived with the Fifth Company of missionaries from Boston in 1832. As was customary among the missionaries of the ABCFM, he was sent “home” to the U.S. to complete his education at Williams College and Andover Seminary. Having served as pastor of several congregations in the U.S., Oliver was called back to Hawai‘i in 1888, during the turbulent period after the “Bayonet Constitution,” to serve as secretary of the *haole* (white, usually Anglo) dominated Board of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association. Later, he chaired the Discipline Committee of the HEA, for which he travelled to many Native Hawaiian congregations in anguish over the illegal overthrow of their Queen at the hands of the *haole* oligarchy, some of whom leaders of their own denomination. He was to discipline the recalcitrant who refused to accept the “moral view,” excommunicate them if necessary, and provide support for Native Hawaiian pastors who remained faithful to the annexationist position of the HEA Board.

<sup>10</sup> Williams, “Claiming Christianity,” pp. 216-217.

<sup>11</sup> “*ame kona hauoli no kona halawai ana me oukou*”

medicinal practices of the Hawaiian people, which had been passed down through his lineage. As an Hawaiian elite in the decades after the arrival of the New England missionaries, he was highly educated and dedicated his life to the service of church and nation. Though a traditionalist, who never learned English and whose worldview remained essentially Hawaiian, Helekūnihi became an ardent supporter of the annexation of Hawai'i by the United States. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the paradox of this man who was faithful to his heritage, yet advocated the loss of independence of the nation he loved. Helekūnihi and other Hawaiian conservative Calvinists of the lesser chiefly class employed traditional Hawaiian metaphors and categories to support annexation. They did so as an act of fidelity to the revered chiefs who supported and orchestrated the Calvinist mission early in the nineteenth century and viewed the American Republic as a source of *na 'auao* (enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge, civilisation).<sup>12</sup>

Elia Helekūnihi, a man of lesser *ali'i* (chiefly) status, linked by genealogy to the great ruling chiefs of Maui, was a Hawaiian religious, political and literary figure deeply rooted in what historian Noenoe Silva describes as “*mo 'okū 'auhau* consciousness”<sup>13</sup> *Mo 'okū 'auhau* is often glossed as “genealogy,” but has deeper meaning among Native Hawaiians. Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa defines it as “a mnemonic device by which the *mo 'olelo*, or exploits of the *Ali'i*, are recalled...and these, in turn, form the body of tradition by which their descendants pattern their Chiefly behaviour.”<sup>14</sup> Helekūnihi was in the *kākā 'ōlelo* (orator, person skilled in use of language, storyteller) lineage inherited from his father, Paulo Kū. The *kākā 'ōlelo* were retainers

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<sup>12</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893.

<sup>13</sup> Noenoe K. Silva and Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o, *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen: Reconstructing Native Hawaiian Intellectual History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), pp. 4, 6-8.

<sup>14</sup> Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa, *Native Lands and Foreign Desires: Pehea Lā E Pono Ai? How Shall we Live in Harmony?* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1992), p.22.

of lesser chiefly status in the retinues of the *ali‘i nui* (high chiefs) responsible for the recitation of stories, histories, tales, traditions and myths relating to the successful exploits of past chiefly ancestors. Inspiration from tradition, through the medium of the *kākā‘ōlelo*, guided important decisions of living chiefs.<sup>15</sup>

Helekūnihi, like many other Hawaiians in the first two generations after the Christianisation of Hawai‘i, remained rooted in the traditions and *mo‘olelo* (stories, tales, histories, traditions) of old Hawai‘i. The Calvinist Christianity they espoused was a genuine Hawaiian articulation of Christianity, not the imposition of a foreign belief system on an unwilling people. The chiefs were not naïve victims of U.S. colonial intervention by a handful of New England missionaries. Marshall Sahlins asserts that we must cease to have “Hawaiians appear on the stage of history as the dummies of Haole (white, usually Anglo) ventriloquists.”<sup>16</sup> The chiefs received theological and pedagogical guidance from these young *haoles*, but the Hawaiian Christian mission was instituted and co-ordinated through chiefly agency. I concur with Sahlins that “Hawaiian culture reproduced itself in the early years of European contact – it did not cease to be Hawaiian.”<sup>17</sup> His assertion that “a structure of the long run shadows forth in historic change” led me to examine how decisions made late in the century by Hawaiian intellectuals like Elia Helekūnihi were rooted in their *mo‘okū‘auhau* consciousness.

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<sup>15</sup> Davida Malo et al., *The Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i of Davida Malo* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2020), 18:8.

<sup>16</sup> Marshall Sahlins, *How “Natives” Think, About Captain Cook, for Example* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Marshall Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2010), p. 33.

Helekūnihi's *mo'okū'auhau* and his dedication to Hawaiian tradition demonstrates the continuity of tradition as a source of inspiration, as through the voice of the *kā kā'ōlelo* of old Hawai'i. The reproduction of tradition, which "shadowed forth" in the Calvinism of the chiefs in the circle of *ali'i nui* Ka'ahumanu (c.1762-1832), provided guidance for him all his life. This dissertation examines the multiple influences that formed his world view, from his mythic roots in Maui chiefly traditions to his relationships with missionary teachers and mentors and their successors. Helekūnihi's world-view remained fundamentally Hawaiian, not Yankee, and the choices he made were predicated on a foundation of tradition. Like the Christianity of Ka'ahumanu *mā* (those in her circle), Helekūnihi's Christianity was an *Hawaiian* articulation, not simply a foreign construct imposed on him. This dissertation is premised on the persistence of tradition and aims to recover Native Hawaiian agency in the face of the complex challenges confronting chiefs and commoners alike in the long century after European contact.

Helekūnihi's own *mo'okū'auhau* connected him to illustrious chiefly lineages through what Native Hawaiians regard as "inferior" branches. He remained faithful in his *kuleana* (responsibility, privilege, authority) for this *mo'okū'auhau*, faithful to the new *kapu* (tabu) system of Queen Ka'ahumanu and faithful to the missionaries, its bearers from America. For Helekūnihi, the United States was the source of *na'auao* and this belief, rooted in the Hawaiian metaphor of *Kahiki* (Tahiti, the mystical land of sacred origins across the sea, any foreign nation) as the source of new religious systems, was the foundation for his position on annexation.<sup>18</sup> This dissertation examines the politics of tradition, demonstrating that Elia Helekūnihi's support for annexation must be seen in light of his understanding that Hawaiian tradition was rearticulated in

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<sup>18</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893.

the establishment of Calvinist Christianity as the new Hawaiian *kapu* by Queen Ka‘ahumanu in the 1820s.

We do not have the full text of Helekūnihi’s “address dealing with the history of the Hawaiian sovereigns” at that Pā‘ia rally in April 1893, but we know that he commonly employed traditional Hawaiian metaphors to justify annexation.<sup>19</sup> His speech was contrasted with that of John Kalama, the only speaker who opposed annexation. “His words were mostly of a sentimental nature,” the correspondent wrote, “extolling the aloha of Hawaiians for their Queen, chiefs and native land. He said Americans were after money, while Hawaiians wanted only their poi, and to be left alone.”<sup>20</sup> Helekūnihi shared the Hawaiian Evangelical Association’s (HEA) “moral view” that the royal courts of Mō‘ī (King) Kalākaua and his sister Mō‘ī Wahine (Queen) Liliūokalani were rife with debauchery and “heathenish ways,” which justified annexation by the “ethical” Republic.<sup>21</sup> This is not surprising, as he adhered to the rigid proscriptions of the Calvinist *kapu* order of Ka‘ahumanu *mā*, inculcated by education in mission schools and confirmed through a life as pastor in the HEA and long association with both missionary families and Hawaiian Protestant friends and colleagues.

It would do a grave injustice to the legacy of this Hawaiian traditionalist if we remember him solely as the “pet” of the *haole* oligarchy, an accusation made of him in the polarised press of the time.<sup>22</sup> To respect the nuances underlying the agency exercised by Native Hawaiians we must acknowledge that decisions that appear to us perplexing were made within the context of

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<sup>19</sup> *Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May 1893.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Oliver Emerson in *The Friend*, February, 1894, p. 10, cited in Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, p. 101.

<sup>22</sup> *Hawaii Holomua*, 13 September, 1894.

their unique life experience and cultural framework. Helekūnihi was by no means alone among Hawaiian pastors of the HEA in supporting annexation. Some of them suffered at the hands of the members of their own congregations, who largely remained monarchists.<sup>23</sup> These pastors, like Helekūnihi, had multiple and complex reasons for supporting the annexation of Hawai'i. Some felt that it was a way of honouring the U.S. origin of the Calvinist tradition that had nurtured them, associated with the Hawaiian understanding of *pono* (goodness, uprightness, balance, harmony, true condition of nature) and *na 'auao*. Some had deep-seated concerns about the legitimacy of the Kalākaua dynasty. A few may have supported the white oligarchy out of financial expediency, because Hawaiian Protestant congregations were in serious decline and could not afford to pay their pastors. Pastors relied on income from performing marriages, for which a government license was required. After the Overthrow in January 1893, all government agents were required to take an oath of loyalty to the Provisional Government, and later, the Republic, which meant that conscientious objectors to the new regime suffered genuine financial hardship.<sup>24</sup> While some Hawaiian pastors may have supported annexation for gain, I do not agree that many would have done so. Elia Helekūnihi was among those Hawaiian elites who made this decision, unpopular among many of their compatriots, for reasons rooted in Hawaiian tradition, fulfilling the old chiefly *kuleana* to promote the prosperity and well-being of the *maka 'āinana* (common people).

The primary agents of the Calvinist mission were not *haoles*, but Native Hawaiians, who established churches and schools under Hawaiian leadership with a Hawaiian character, though the project was interwoven with American pedagogic models and patterns of organization. The

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<sup>23</sup> Williams, "Claiming Christianity," p. 222-224.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 224.



U.S. colonial project in Hawai‘i did not include direct intervention until the close of the nineteenth century, but involved a slow penetration and eventual control of Hawaiian educational, legal, political, economic, and religious spheres. This “colonisation by stealth” was a mode of settler colonialism whereby the U.S. imperial presence in the Islands gradually evolved in the course of the nineteenth century to where Hawai‘i appeared by some to be an integral part of the American sphere of influence.<sup>25</sup> By the 1870s, American residents of Hawai‘i, though few in number, felt they were no longer dwelling in a foreign land, but in an extension of their own republic.<sup>26</sup>

In the nineteenth century, many Hawaiians fiercely resisted the appropriation of their lands, traditions, and sovereignty, while others sought a variety of ways to accommodate or transform and make creative use of Euro-American political, cultural, and religious traditions to their own advantage. Kamainakamalani Beamer, asserts that “the Hawaiian Kingdom was a *Hawaiian* creation” and that the “ali‘i (chiefs) were able to adapt to foreign systems while maintaining their Hawaiiness.”<sup>27</sup> Ronald Williams made a critical and vital contribution to the understanding of the full agency of Native Hawaiians in the adoption and use of the Christian faith in distinctly Hawaiian ways. He “repositions Christianity in the Hawai‘i of this era as a tool, not of the imperial white missionary, but rather, of the Native patriot.”<sup>28</sup> The leadership of the HEA remained in the hands of annexationist *haole* oligarchs, while many of the congregations became centers of resistance to annexation, and a significant number of their Hawaiian pastors,

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<sup>25</sup> See Seth Archer, *Sharks Upon the Land*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 92: “The colonia presence in Hawai‘i was vicious, lethal, and inexorable. But no one was at the helm.”

<sup>26</sup> For an example of how Americanised Hawai‘i had become by the 1870s, see Charles Nordhoff, *Northern California, Oregon and the Sandwich Islands* (New York, NY: Harper Brothers, 1877), pp. 22-24.

<sup>27</sup> Kamanamaikalani Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana: Liberating the Nation* (Honolulu, HI: Kamehameha Publishing, 2014), pp.11-16.

<sup>28</sup> Williams, “Claiming Christianity,” p. 18.

like Helekūnihi, stood firmly with the HEA. These Hawaiian annexationists, despite being educated and influential men rooted in ancient chiefly traditions, were widely condemned as traitors of their people. The historiography on Hawaiian colonialism has not adequately addressed the complexity of their motivations, characterising them simply as “perplexing” or motivated by financial need.<sup>29</sup> My aim is to comprehend the motivations of a man who made this unpopular choice, yet made that choice based on a lifetime of experience and reflection rooted in his understanding of Hawaiian tradition. Helekūnihi’s decision proved costly to him, as he supported men who ultimately betrayed him, a stark reminder that in the project of colonialism, the colonised, even those who appear complicit, seldom win. Despite Helekūnihi’s paradoxical use of tradition to support annexation, the ancient Hawaiian world-view he helped perpetuate persisted long after annexation in 1898 extinguished Native sovereignty and remains the source of hope and empowerment for Hawaiians today.

## Literature Review

This thesis utilises, where possible, Hawaiian language primary source materials available from the period of the Hawaiian Kingdom (1795-1893) and the “Republic of Hawai‘i” (1893-1898) to elucidate the genealogical, social, religious, educational and political processes and relations that formed the development and evolution of Elia Helekūnihi’s world view.<sup>30</sup> Knowledge of the Hawaiian language enables me to privilege Hawaiian language sources, which

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<sup>29</sup> Silva, *The Power of the Steel-tipped Pen*, p. 121; Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, p. 222-224.

<sup>30</sup> Archival sources include the Hawai‘i State Archives, the library of the Hawaiian Historical Society, the Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society, the Hamilton Library of the University of Hawai‘i, the Bishop Museum, the Maui Historical Society, the Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai‘i and the Archives of the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Honolulu. Many editions of *Nā Nūpepa Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian Newspapers) have been digitised and can be accessed on the *Papakilo* and *Ulu kau* databases.

until recently have been neglected in the historiography of Hawai‘i. This ensures a balanced understanding of the events and processes that led to the U.S. colonisation of the Island Kingdom.<sup>31</sup> Reliance solely on English language letters, journals, missionary reports and official correspondence of European and American visitors, residents and government agents has provided a euro-centric view of Hawai‘i and its people. Early translations of Hawaiian language classics, often made by missionary sons, are inadequate and biased.<sup>32</sup> The Hawaiian language government documents in the Archives of Hawai‘i were seldom consulted, and the many newspapers printed in the Hawaiian language (*Nā Nūpepa*), when Hawai‘i was one of the most literate nations on earth, have largely been neglected. *Nā Nūpepa* provided a rich forum for the publication of letters, epic tales, histories, ethnographies, *kanikau* (poetic tributes written for departed loved ones) and political, religious and social commentary for Hawaiians eager to record their oral traditions and engage intellectually with their compatriots on issues critical for the Hawaiian nation. The work of Puakea Nogelmeier and others has resulted in the digitisation of a large number of these papers, providing the most valuable primary source material for my study of the life of Elia Helekūnihi. I have reviewed and translated some 723 Hawaiian language articles in seventeen publications with articles by or about Elia Helekūnihi. The value of this work is demonstrated by the fact that he is featured in a mere handful of English language publications, revealing the necessity of recovering in their own tongue the voices of Hawaiian intellectuals neglected in the historiography.

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<sup>31</sup> In recent years there has been a renaissance of interest in privileging the use of Hawaiian language resources. See the work of Puakea Nogelmeier, Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa, Noenoe Silva, David Change, Tiffany Ing, Kamanamaikalani Beamer, Jon Osorio, Alohalani Brown, Kapali Lyon, Ronald Williams and Noelani Arista.

<sup>32</sup> For an important contribution to the theme of the “discourse of sufficiency” in the limitation of sources for indigenous history, see Puakea Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa‘a i Ka Leo Historical Voice in Hawaiian Primary Materials; Looking Forward and Listening Back* (Honolulu, Hawai‘i: Bishop Museum Press, 2010).

The most valuable source for the earlier period of Hawaiian history, both pre and post-contact, is the work of historian Samuel Mānaiakalani Kamakau (1815-1876). Kamakau had a similar background and education to Elia Helekūnihi: of lesser *ali* 'i status; a student at Lahainaluna, where he assisted in writing the first *Moolelo Hawaii* of 1838; founding member of the first Hawaiian Historical Society in 1841; an educator; a member of the Royal Agricultural Society; a legislator; and the district judge of Wailuku, Maui.<sup>33</sup> Though a dedicated Calvinist much of his life, he was never ordained pastor and converted to Catholicism in the 1860s.<sup>34</sup> His own *Mo'olelo* was published in serial form in the newspapers *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* and *Ke Au Okoa* from 1866 to 1869.<sup>35</sup> The original Hawaiian text, with modern diacritical marks, edited by Puakea Nogelmeier and published in two volumes as *Ke Kumu Aupuni* and *Ke Aupuni Mō'ī*, is now the standard for Kamakau and the primary text utilised in this paper.<sup>36</sup> His work, with that of John Papa 'Ī'ī, inspired Elia to write his own *Mo'olelo Hawai'i* (Hawaiian History), based both on sources common to all three men and on oral traditions passed down to him by his father.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa'a*, pp.109, 118; Introduction by Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa, Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, iv-v. As we shall see, Elia Helekūnihi would later serve as district judge of Wailuku.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> English translations of this work have been problematic, due to both the quality of translation and bias in the choice and ordering of material. See Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI: Kamehameha Schools Press, 1992); Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, Mary Kawena Pukui, and Dorothy B. Barrère, *Ka Po'e Kahiko: the People of Old* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1992); Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, Mary Kawena Pukui, and Dorothy B. Barrère, *The Works of the People of Old = Na Hana a Ka Po'e Kahiko* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1992); Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, *Na Mo'olelo a Ka Po'e Kahiko* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1993).

For an excellent summary of the problematic nature of these translations see Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa'a I Ka Leo*, pp. 106-143.

<sup>36</sup> Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau and Puakea Nogelmeier, *Ke Kumu Aupuni: Ka Mo'olelo Hawai'i No Kamehameha Ka Na'i Aupuni a Me Kāna Aupuni i Ho'okumu Ai* (Honolulu, HI: 'Ahahui 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, 1996). ; Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau and Puakea Nogelmeier, *Ke Aupuni Mō'ī: Ka Mo'olelo Hawai'i No Kauikeaouli, Keiki Ho'oilina a Kamehameha a Me Ke Aupuni Āna i Noho Mō'ī Ai* (Honolulu, HI: Kamehameha Schools Press, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> Elia Helekūnihi to Rev. Oliver Emerson, February 25, 1893; Elia Helekūnihi, *Moolelo Hawaii*, Ms. Group 284, Bishop Museum Archives.

Davidā Malo (1795-1853) is the primary Native Hawaiian authority on the pre-contact culture and religion of his people.<sup>38</sup> His *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i* is not a narrative history, but a comprehensive survey of ancient Hawaiian tradition.<sup>39</sup> Malo was born on Hawai‘i Island at a chiefly centre and educated in “knowledge of national affairs, the genealogies of chiefs, the tabu system, traditions etc.”<sup>40</sup> He was in the *aloal‘i* (court) of Queen Keōpūolani in Lahaina at the time of her conversion to Christianity through the ministrations of Tahitian Christians and became tutor of Hawaiian language to missionary William Richards.<sup>41</sup> He converted to Christianity in 1825 and subsequently was counselor to both chiefs and missionaries and an enthusiastic promoter of both the new *kapu* and *palapala* (literacy). Malo was in the first class of Lahainaluna, founded in 1831, collaborated in the first *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i* under Rev. Sheldon’s direction, was school agent and superintendant, legislator, pastor and prolific writer.<sup>42</sup> The recent publication of Langlas and Lyon’s two volume annotated Hawaiian text of Malo’s work with meticulously researched translation is the primary text used in this dissertation.

The final two scholars in the “canon” of nineteenth century Hawaiian literature and historiography are John Papa ‘Ī‘ī (1800-1870) and Zephyrin Kepelino (1830-1878). ‘Ī‘ī was born into a family of *kahu* (chiefly attendants) at the court of Kamehameha the Great.<sup>43</sup> An early convert to Christianity, he spent his life in service to both chiefs and missionaries, was a noted

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<sup>38</sup> Malo et al, *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i*, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* Despite the importance of the work of this man who was such a luminary in the affairs of the Hawaiian Kingdom, the standard translation of his work for more than a century was the heavily biased work of missionary son, Nathaniel Emerson, which did not include the Hawaiian text, unlike Langlas and Lyon’s comprehensive two-volume work.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-52.

<sup>43</sup> John Papa. Ii, Mary Kawena. Pukui, and Dorothy B. Barrère, *Fragments of Hawaiian History* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1983); Marie Alohalani Brown, *Facing the Spears of Change: the Life and Legacy of John Papa ‘I‘i* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016).

educator, sat in both houses of the Hawaiian legislature and served on both the Privy Council and the Supreme Court of the Kingdom. ‘Ī‘Ī’s literary work consists of serialised accounts of recollections of pre-Christian life at the court of the *ali ‘i nui* published in the *Kuokoa* from 1866 to his death in 1870. The only translation available is more satisfactory than the earlier translations of Kamakau, but the original Hawaiian is not included in the text.<sup>44</sup>

Kepelino was unusual among nineteenth century intellectuals in that he came from a family of Catholic converts. His work contains a variety of mythological, historic, religious and cultural details of interest to this thesis because, like Elia Helekūnihi’s wife, Luika Keo‘ahu, he was in the lineage of Pā‘ao, the voyaging priest who brought new religious traditions to Hawai‘i.<sup>45</sup> In the 1860s he attacked Protestantism and the Calvinist missionaries frequently in the Catholic press and was personal secretary to Queen Emma in the 1870s.<sup>46</sup> Historian Noelani Arista’s introduction to Kepelino’s work offers a helpful model for approaching Hawaiian modes of thinking and transmission of knowledge. Arista asserts that, “knowledge was a *kuleana* or duty and responsibility that both Malo and Kepelino could lay claim to on the basis of their genealogies and the various levels of formal Hawaiian training that they received because of their (priestly) lineages.”<sup>47</sup> Kepelino spoke of Hawai‘i as *‘imiloa*, engaging “in profound inquiry, to seek or search,” and suggested that “however diligently a foreigner inquires, he cannot fathom all the doings of far seeking Hawai‘i.”<sup>48</sup> Arista explains that “a Hawaiian approach to a satisfying

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<sup>44</sup> See Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa ‘a*, pp. 144-154.

<sup>45</sup> Noelani Arista in Kepelino and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Kepelino's Traditions of Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 2007), p. viii.

<sup>46</sup> When Emma lost the election for monarch to Kalākaua in 1874, Kepelino was put on trial for treason for writing to the monarchs of England and Italy to request warships to support Emma’s claim to the throne. He was convicted and sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted after two years in prison.

<sup>47</sup> Arista, *Kepelino's Traditions of Hawaii*, p. viii.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xi-x.

sense of knowing assumes that a multiplicity of meanings, rather than a set or fixed quantity, will serve as an answer.” Though Kepelino was the youngest member of the classic “tetrarchy” of nineteenth century Hawaiian intellectuals, in many respects, his work emphasising this non-linear search for meaning displays an archaic way of thinking less influenced by Western modalities.<sup>49</sup> Elia Helekūnihi shared in this archaic modality of thinking.

To supplement the work of these four Native Hawaiian intellectuals, I have consulted the work of Abraham Fornander (1812-1887), a Swede who married a Hawaiian chief and lived in the Islands for forty-three years. In the 1870s, he wrote *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, volume two of which contains a valuable history of the Hawaiian people from the settlement of the Islands to the reign of Kamehameha I. Much of his work overlaps that of Kamakau and Kepelino, whom he consulted, but he interviewed other Hawaiians knowledgeable about the ancient oral traditions. “I employed two sometimes three, intelligent and educated Hawaiians,” he wrote, “to travel over the entire group and collect and transcribe, from the lips of the old natives, all the legends, chants, prayers etc., bearing upon the history, culte, and customs of the people, that they possibly could get hold of.”<sup>50</sup> He also assembled a rich collection of “Hawaiian mythology, traditions, mele and genealogies,” which was published posthumously in 1916 by Thomas Thrum for the Bishop Museum.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

<sup>50</sup> From Abraham Fornander’s introduction to *An Account of the Polynesian Race*, cited in Glen Grant’s introduction to Abraham Fornander and Glen Grant, *An Account of the Polynesian Race: Its Origins and Migrations, and the Ancient History of the Hawaiian People to the Times of Kamehameha I* (Honolulu, HI: Mutual Publishing Company, 1996), p. xiii.

<sup>51</sup> Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa’a*, pp. 37-38.

Nogelmeier warns of relying too much on the four classic Hawaiian writers, as if they alone can speak for a century of rich literary expression in the Hawaiian language. Calling this over-reliance on a limited number of texts “the discourse of sufficiency,” he calls for an examination of the 99% of Hawaiian auto-representation, particularly the material published in *Nā Nūpepa* that has been largely neglected by historians.<sup>52</sup> “Consideration of the actual scope of historical Hawaiian-language resources starkly illuminates major gaps in most modern scholarship,” he writes. “It also brings to light analytical possibilities that can only be made feasible by stepping beyond the limited resources used today.” Alongside Hawaiian newspapers, I have accessed letters, church and school reports and census and tax records from the largely unexplored resources in the Hawai‘i State Archives, the Hawaiian Historical Society, the Bishop Museum and the Hawaiian Mission Childrens Society Archives.

Amongst contemporary historians, Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa provides meticulously researched insight into early post-contact Hawaiian chiefly society, shedding light on the cultural and religious roots of Elia Helekūnihi.<sup>53</sup> Her early work, *Native Lands and Foreign Desires* (1992), inspired a generation of scholars in the field of Hawaiian history by elucidating the important metaphors on which Hawaiian society is built, the nature of *pono*, *mana* and *mo‘okū‘auhau*, the tragic effects of the *Māhele* of 1848 (division of land according to Western principles of land ownership) and the transformation of *pono* through the agency of Queen Ka‘ahumanu.<sup>54</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa provides a welcome shift in the narrative away from a euro-centric historiography based on Western sources to a Hawaiian perspective. However, I contest

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<sup>52</sup> Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa‘a*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>53</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Lands*.

<sup>54</sup> *Māhele*, glossed as “division,” is historically the events of the late 1840s that culminated in the conversion of Hawai‘i to Western ideas of land ownership.



her suggestion that the Hawaiian chiefs “were obliged to conform to the advice of their new *kāhuna* (the missionaries), regardless of their personal opinion.”<sup>55</sup> This dissertation emphasizes the agency of the chiefs by addressing and stressing that Native Hawaiian teachers, under chiefly guidance, were largely responsible for the Christianisation of the Islands. They built on Hawaiian tradition to create an articulation of Hawaiian Christianity that functioned well for their purposes at a time of cataclysmic change, something that scholarship has hitherto largely ignored.

Jon Osorio’s work recovers the agency and dignity of the Hawaiian chiefs, while providing insight into the process whereby Western legal systems ultimately brought down the Hawaiian Kingdom. He views U.S. colonial desire from the Native Hawaiian perspective, particularly during the reign of King Kalākaua, a critical time for understanding Elia Helekūnihi’s work in church and government.<sup>56</sup> Sally Engle Merry traces the intricate patterns of change whereby the Hawaiian Kingdom was colonised through the implementation of Western legal concepts, resulting in the rejection of chiefly authority.<sup>57</sup> Juri Mykkänen also traces the manner in which missionary influence restructured the Hawaiian chiefship, leading to the shift to Western law and government and ultimately to the domination of Euro-Americans in the political and economic spheres.<sup>58</sup> Both Merry and Mykkänen provide perspective on the manner in which the minds of men like Helekūnihi were “colonised” through their study and practice of law, a profession strongly advocated by the missionaries at Lahainaluna Seminary, the *alma mater* of almost all the Hawaiian leaders of the old chiefly class.

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<sup>55</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Lands*, p. 141.

<sup>56</sup> Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwa‘ole Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002).

<sup>57</sup> Sally Engle Merry, *Colonizing Hawai‘i: the Cultural Power of Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> Juri Mykkänen, *Inventing Politics: a New Political Anthropology of the Hawaiian Kingdom* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2003).

Noenoe Silva's *Aloha Betrayed* stresses the importance of using Hawaiian language sources to rewrite the story of Native Hawaiian resistance to U.S. colonialism.<sup>59</sup> While admitting that the early chiefs colluded with colonial capitalism, enjoying Western luxury goods, she hesitates to suggest that they collaborated with the missionaries in employing elements of the Hawaiian *kapu* system in establishing a new state religion. Downplaying the importance of Hawaiian agency in conducting the Christian mission, she quotes Patricia Grimshaw in asserting that there was an "obvious reluctance and an unflattering lack of enthusiasm" on the part of the *ali 'i*," who did not take to their proselytizing right away.<sup>60</sup> In fact, the conversion of Queen Keōpūolani as early as 1823 proves that the chiefs took to Christianity rather quickly and the subsequent mobilisation of the Hawaiian elites to facilitate the rapid conversion of the entire people demonstrated that the chiefs were active agents in the Christian mission. Silva's work on Native Hawaiian literary and political luminaries, *The Power of the Steel-tipped Pen*, traces the lives of men of Helekūnihi's class who have been, like him, neglected in the historiography.<sup>61</sup> However, when noted journalist and political activist, Joseph Poepoe, supported annexation in 1895, she writes, "This was as perplexing to some at the time as it seems to us today."<sup>62</sup> The aim of my work on Elia Helekūnihi is to address this very paradox. How could an educated Hawaiian who loved his nation use Hawaiian tradition to support annexation?

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<sup>59</sup> Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>61</sup> Silva, *The Power of the Steel-tipped Pen*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

Marie Alohalani Brown's work on John Papa 'Ī'ī, whose story has parallels with Helekūnihi's, establishes connections between the old order and the new by examining the *kuleana* (concern, responsibility, concern, fidelity) that men of lesser chiefly status had for the high chiefs.<sup>63</sup> My research supports the view that this *kuleana* extended to fidelity to the Calvinism of those chiefs, which included loyalty to the American missionaries whom the chiefs regarded as *kāhuna* (priests, specialists). Ronald Williams's 2013 PhD dissertation at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, *Claiming Christianity*, has broken promising new ground in recovering the indigenous nature of Christianity in nineteenth century Hawai'i and the essential *Hawaiianness* of Hawaiian Christianity. His emphasis on the role of the Church in resisting U.S. colonialism is a welcome critique of the view that Christianity subverted Hawaiian culture and sovereignty.<sup>64</sup> I aim to understand the perspective of another group of Hawaiian Christians, who like Elia Helekūnihi, supported annexation for reasons rooted in Hawaiian tradition, or at the very least, because they believed it would improve the condition of their people.

Historical anthropologist Marshall Sahlins' *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* focusses on "the structures of the long run," whereby metaphors retain their power and meaning through and beyond historical transitions.<sup>65</sup> Sahlins writes, "Polynesian cosmology may lend itself in a specially powerful way to stereotypic reproduction. Strong logical continuities link the earliest elements of cosmogonic myths to the chiefly heroes of the latest historical legends." Sahlins emphasises the persistence of tradition in the context of Hawaiian contact with the West and the subsequent Christian mission. His "structure of the conjuncture" in *Islands of History* is

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<sup>63</sup> Brown, *Facing the Spears of Change*.

<sup>64</sup> Williams, *Claiming Christianity*.

<sup>65</sup> Marshall Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities*, p. 13.

“the practical realization of the cultural categories in a specific historical context, as expressed in the interested action of the historic agents...”<sup>66</sup> *How Natives Think* is a testimony to the necessity of examining the structure of the conjuncture through the lens of “native” culture, while not interposing Western categories.<sup>67</sup> My work builds on his by examining how Ka‘ahumanu *mā* transformed the ancient Hawaiian religious *kapu* system in the 1820s into a new *kapu* based on the Calvinist Christianity of both Tahitians and New England missionaries.<sup>68</sup> Elia Helekūnihi and other descendants of the lesser chiefs of Ka‘ahumanu *mā*, maintained throughout their lives a *kuleana* for the new *kapu* of their beloved chiefs. Later in the century, some of them were the conservatives of the Hawaiian community who welcomed U.S. intervention, believing that the U.S. was the source of *na ‘auao* and *pono*.

This dissertation also engages with a variety of scholars in the broader fields of imperial history, Christian missions and indigeneity. Christopher Bayly establishes the place of the U.S. colonisation of Hawai‘i within the wider context of the rise of globalism and Western hegemony.<sup>69</sup> He asserts that, “conversion to Christianity accorded with the interests of powerful men in local societies” and “the victory of Christianity was achieved with the agency of local people.”<sup>70</sup> His opinion that “in Polynesia the new faith confirmed the old social order” supports my understanding that the Christianity of the Hawaiian chiefs was built on the foundation of Hawaiian tradition.<sup>71</sup> His rejection of the view that Christianity was imposed upon an unwilling people confirms my own research into the manner by which Christianity came to the “outer

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<sup>66</sup> Marshall David Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. xiv.

<sup>67</sup> Marshall Sahlins, *How Natives Think*.

<sup>68</sup> Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu*.

<sup>69</sup> Christopher Alan Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World: 1780-1914 ; Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2012).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

districts” of Hawai‘i, not through white missionary imposition, but through the direction of the Hawaiian chiefs.

Emily Conroy-Krutz explores the roots of both American imperialism and missionary fervour in ideas rooted in Britain’s expansionist and hegemonic desire to be the moral guide to the world and remake it in its own image.<sup>72</sup> According to Paul Kramer, the “cultures of U.S. imperialism,” inspired and justified by Jefferson’s “Empire of Liberty,” the “large and impressive domain” of American influence, infiltrated the fabric of the Hawaiian Kingdom.<sup>73</sup> In Hawai‘i, the hegemonic cultural, racial, and gendered desires of the Republic constituted Kramer’s “limited liability” or “low overhead” empire, where economic and private sector actors were at work long before formal annexation. Elia Helekūnihi rearticulated Hawaiian tradition through Anglo-American legal and religious values, placing him among those Native actors who consciously or subconsciously promoted stronger ties with the U.S. This is supported by William Appleman Williams, who quotes President Madison’s assertion that, “republican government can only be sustained by enlarging the sphere.”<sup>74</sup> This process of slow acculturation accurately describes Hawai‘i’s long “colonisation by stealth” in the course of Helekunihi’s lifetime. U.S. influence gradually enlarged and penetrated the religious, cultural, legal and economic life of the Island Kingdom until its absorption into the Republic appeared to some to be a natural and inevitable outcome. One primary means of this acculturation was education in the missionary

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<sup>72</sup> Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornell University Press, 2018); Conroy-Krutz, *Empire and the Early Republic*, (H-Diplo: An H-Diplo State of the Field Essay, 2015).

<sup>73</sup> Paul A. Kramer, “Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,” *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011): pp. 1348-1391, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.116.5.1348>.

<sup>74</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Roots of the Modern American Empire: a Study of the Growth and Shaping of Social Consciousness in a Marketplace Society* (New York, NY: Random House, 1969). p. 8.

seminary of Lahainaluna where American values infiltrated the minds and helped form the world view of many in the Hawaiian governing elite.

Ian Tyrell speaks of U.S. empire in the nineteenth century as “all but invisible to the naked eye,” despite the power, economic and cultural, that the young Republic wielded abroad.<sup>75</sup> While Americans nurtured a distaste for formal colonialism, the export of American culture could be called “soft power,” of which Hawai‘i was a prime recipient.<sup>76</sup> Elia Helekūnihi’s affection for the U.S. mingled old Hawaiian ideas of *pono* and *na ‘auao* with missionary “righteousness” and “enlightenment,” coupled with the common nineteenth century trope of “civilisation.” Brett Bowden explores the deep roots in the West of the idea that humanity is divided between the “savage” and the “civilised” races, a perspective that men like Helekūnihi absorbed through missionary education.<sup>77</sup> This perspective, coupled with the understanding that the U.S. was Hawai‘i’s source of *na ‘auao* and *pono*, led Helekūnihi to the desire for a deeper association with America. Bowden suggests that the perceived lack of civilisation led Europeans to believe that native peoples were “incapable” of governing themselves, thereby “tutelage” required colonial appropriation. Internalised racism, rooted in acculturation to white supremacist views associated with Social Darwinism beginning in the 1860s, may explain why some men of the Hawaiian elite classes, like Helekūnihi, deferred to white foreigners.

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<sup>75</sup> Ian Tyrell, “Empire in American History” in Alfred W. MacCoy and Francisco Antonio Scarano, *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), p. 544.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 545.

<sup>77</sup> Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization: the Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

Ann Laura Stoler's "Tense and Tender Ties" elucidates how men like Helekūnihi were colonised relationally.<sup>78</sup> "We must go beyond the boundaries of the nation state to understand the larger dimensions of the imperial system," she writes, addressing the role of intimate spaces in advancing colonialism. Intimacy provided a means of colonising minds and the imperial project proceeded through the medium of personal relationships. Elia Helekūnihi's sojourn through three schools, two of which were dominated by *haole* educators, had a profound influence on his world view. Calvinist schools, like most colonial institutions, were "about disciplining desires and policing the boundaries of race," a characterisation that aptly fits Lahainaluna Seminary, Helekūnihi's *alma mater*. Stoler states that in North America, it was asserted that "The Indian should be taught how to work, but also his duty to do so." Lahainaluna, like other boarding institutions in the Islands, focussed on inculcating the Protestant work ethic, removing Native boys from "the influence of their intimate environments" to place them in an institution dominated by the Western world view. Helekūnihi had profound respect for the teachers who influenced his personal and professional development. He maintained close, sometimes dependent, relationships with their descendants, the men who formed the core of the white political and economic oligarchy of late nineteenth century Hawai'i. According to Jennifer Thigpen, personal relationships between missionary wives and female chiefs were a major influence on chiefly conversion to Christianity.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, her assertion that the chiefs viewed the missionaries as "subject peoples," as their "inferiors" who depended on them for survival, supports my understanding that the Hawaiian chiefs were not unwitting puppets of American

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<sup>78</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (2001): p. 829, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2700385>.

<sup>79</sup> Jennifer Thigpen, *Island Queens and Mission Wives* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

colonial desire, but dynamic actors in determining what they viewed as the best choices for their people in accordance with Hawaiian traditions and values.

Privileging indigenous agency in the mission programme and beyond lies at the foundation of my thesis. Norman Etherington asserts that, “The greatest difficulty faced by those who have tried to argue that Christian missions were a form of cultural imperialism has been the overwhelming evidence that the agents of conversion were local people, not foreign missionaries. Christian beliefs were spread by ordinary people.”<sup>80</sup> In districts like Helekūnihi’s Kaupō, native teachers established multiple schools and churches with no white missionary assistance at all a full seventy years before the formal advance of the U.S political frontier. Anthropologist John Barker suggests that interaction with local elites, as in the case of the Hawaiian chiefs, resulted in a situation whereby “native agency in the spread of Christianity without direct missionary involvement, resulted in new ways the religion was appropriated, absorbed, and redefined in local societies.”<sup>81</sup> The articulation of Calvinism as a form of the ancient Hawaiian *kapu* system enabled men like Elia Helekūnihi to embrace the Hawaianness of American Christianity and to defend U.S. colonial intervention in the name of Hawaiian traditionalism. According to Peggy Brock, the “footsoldiers” of the missionary movement were indigenous preachers, who were highly influential in the larger imperial project of cultural colonialism.<sup>82</sup> In Brock’s view, men like Helekūnihi were both insiders and outsiders, adopting European cultural practices and standing in judgement of their fellows, with a sense of superiority over “those not yet enlightened by the Word of God.”<sup>83</sup> Helekūnihi’s criticism of

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<sup>80</sup> Norman Etherington, *Missions and Empire* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 4-7.

<sup>81</sup> Barker, “Where the Missionary Frontier Ran Ahead of the Empire,” in Etherington, *Missions*, pp. 86-96.

<sup>82</sup> Peggy Brock, “New Christians as Evangelists,” in Etherington, *Missions*, pp. 132-133.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.



fellow Hawaiians, including his later moral critique of the King and Queen, his spying on fellow Hawaiians for the missionaries and his conflicts with other Hawaiian elites rendered him unpopular with many of his compatriots.

Brian Stanley attempts to recover the sincere religious motives behind Christian missions by elaborating on the movements, such as the 18th and early 19th century “Great Awakenings,” that inspired the missions.<sup>84</sup> The joining of Enlightenment and millennial ideas with religious imperative gave rise to the understanding that evangelism entailed “civilising” the heathen and recreating them in the image of middle class Anglo-Americans. Religious sentiment among the Calvinists of Hawai‘i was bound up with Western *kapu* prohibitions on sexuality, consumption of alcohol and narcotics and the adoption of external Western cultural forms, all of which motivated and sustained Helekūnihi’s life as teacher, pastor, lawyer and politician.

A shift occurred in Hawai‘i, from the early 19th century when most missionaries respected the humanity of Native Hawaiians and urged them to prepare to govern themselves (under their “benevolent” guidance), to the later Social Darwinist perspective that viewed them as essentially inferior and incapable of intelligent leadership. Catherine Hall’s study of the British mission on Jamaica and its relationship with the metropole traces the same process, whereby white optimism over Black Jamaican “progress” turned to disappointment and disdain as Jamaicans revealed they would never conform to standards of English middle class domesticity.<sup>85</sup> Echoing Thomas Carlyle’s 1849 claim that “black people are an inferior race who

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<sup>84</sup> Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester, England, UK: Apollos, 2010).

<sup>85</sup> Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002).

have to be mastered,” the white elites that overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy claimed that Native Hawaiians were not capable of good governance.<sup>86</sup> Richard Hofstadter argued that, “Imperialists, calling upon Darwinism in defence of the subjugation of weaker races, could point to the *Origin of Species*, which had referred in its subtitle to *The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Darwin had been talking about pigeons, but the imperialists saw no reason why his theories should not apply to men.”<sup>87</sup> The tragedy of Elia Helekūnihi’s life and death lay in the fact that he had deep *aloha* (love, compassion) for the missionaries and their descendants who could not embrace his full humanity, and they were the men who betrayed him.

Most Hawaiian schools were taught by Native teachers, who like Elia Helekūnihi, were acculturated to a Western world view by the very act of teaching using the written word and curricula designed by missionaries. Linford Fisher’s work on education of Native Americans in colonial New England, provides some useful parallels with the Hawaiian experience.<sup>88</sup> As in Hawai‘i, Native Americans were increasingly troubled by the devaluing of their traditional way of life and the alienation of their land and were disenchanted when they realised that the “religion of the swindlers and the religion of the evangelists was one and the same.”<sup>89</sup> Hawaiians later departed the Calvinist Church in significant numbers and joined other Christian traditions or participated with their king to re-establish pre-Christian practices. Helekūnihi and some other Hawaiian Christians joined the *haoles* in their abhorrence of this movement. Placing fidelity to the Calvinism of the old chiefs before the neo-traditionalism of King Kalākaua, put them at odds

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<sup>86</sup> Thomas Carlyle, “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question, *Fraser’s Magazine* 40 (Dec. 1849), cited in Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, 349-354.

<sup>87</sup> Richard Hofstadter and Eric Foner, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006 [1944]), p. 170.

<sup>88</sup> Linford D. Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

with most of their compatriots. Jocelyn Linnekin provides insight into the manner in which cultural identity is “a potent basis for political mobilization among peoples disenfranchized under colonial rule.”<sup>90</sup> Citing Wallerstein, she asserts that “the past is recreated in the present” and “everything is contemporaneous, even that which is the past.”<sup>91</sup> Linnekin argues that in the politics of tradition it is not always clear what one might mean by “traditional” practices. I suggest that Elia Helekūnihi and others of his class viewed Calvinist Christianity, not Kalākaua’s “invention” of old practices, as authentic Hawaiian tradition in the 1880s and 1890s.

Akin to the Hawaiian mission experience, Nicholas Cushner insists that Jesuits in Native America realised that the conversion of the esteemed chiefs meant the conversion of an entire people.<sup>92</sup> The desire by the Jesuit fathers to insulate Native people from poor examples of the Christian life in the non-missionary European communities echoes the perspective of the missionaries in Hawai‘i. Helekūnihi had a high degree of respect for the moral “purity” (however rigid) of the New England missionaries, which made him critical of both his own countrymen and *haoles* who missed the mark. Cushner also offers a useful presentation of Native American religious systems for which Christianity provided solutions to longstanding problems, such as among the Indians of Sinaloa and the Guarani of Paraguay, where “the Indian could reach out into his past and link the old with the new.”<sup>93</sup> Ka‘ahumanu’s adoption of the new *kāpu* as the re-articulation of the ancient Hawaiian state religion is a similar example of how an indigenous system easily co-opted Christianity. Cushner’s discussion of the Jesuit College in Sinaloa

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<sup>90</sup> Jocelyn Linnekin, “The Politics of Culture in the Pacific,” in Jocelyn Linnekin and Lin Poyer, *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 150.

<sup>91</sup> Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), p. 9, cited in Linnekin, *Cultural Identity*, p. 151.

<sup>92</sup> Nicholas P. Cushner, *Why Have You Come Here? the Jesuits and the First Evangelization of Native America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

parallels the Calvinist mission's seminary at Lahainaluna. Just as the aim at Sinaloa was to Hispanicise and Christianise the Indians to return to their villages as agents of change, Lahainaluna's purpose was to raise up Native Hawaiian religious and political leaders to raise up a Christian community acculturated to Western values from the top down, a cadre of men who believed they were responsible for maintaining the Euro-American order.

The rich and lively pre-contact Native Hawaiian history, recorded in the works of Kamakau, Malo, 'Ī'Ī, Kepelino, Helekūnihi and others, has been largely ignored in favour of the narrative of a passive feminised paradise awaiting discovery by a "superior" race. Helekūnihi's roots in the complex pre-contact civilisation of conquering chiefs, elaborate rituals and sophisticated oral poetic traditions informed the decisions he made throughout his life. The Christianity adopted by the high chiefs and his father, Paulo Kū, was built on these traditions, which were transformed by them into a uniquely Hawaiian articulation of the faith. The work of Daniel K. Richter parallels my own by examining the European migration to North American from the Native American perspective, a welcome shift from the conventional Euro-centric view.<sup>94</sup> This dissertation attempts to do the same by privileging Hawaiian language sources. Richter's assertion that we must understand that "Indian country had its own set of dynamics, its own pattern of population movements, conquests and political and cultural change that had been going on for centuries" prior to the arrival of Europeans, shifts our perspective away from viewing Native cultures as static and passive in the face of "dynamic" European civilisation.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: a Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

The understanding that the essential qualities of a dynamic Hawaiian tradition persisted through contact, Christianisation and colonisation is the foundation of my work.

## Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation is to enter into the paradox of Elia Helekūnihi's decision to support annexation and to understand the cultural and relational dynamics that led him to take this position. I do not affirm or judge his decision, but rather I examine his motivation within the context of his class, lineage, lifelong relationships and religious and cultural values. In the process, I explore the full dimensions of Native Hawaiian agency in the nineteenth century, while affirming with Marx that "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please."<sup>96</sup> This useful way of approaching the critical issue of the agency of historical players parallels Sahlins' view of the "structures of the long run," whereby "Hawaiian culture reproduced itself in the early years of European contact – it did not cease to be Hawaiian."<sup>97</sup> The power and authority of tradition met the new circumstances generated by the convulsive impact of this contact on what historian Greg Denning describes as "beaches," the metaphorical space of encounter between two worlds.<sup>98</sup> Agency is the manner in which men and women exercise a will determined by all that has gone before in the light of the new. The old does not cease to be what it is, but it can never be quite the same because the very act of encounter is transformative. The reproduction of Hawaiian culture encompassed the advent of the Europeans, and specifically the

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<sup>96</sup> Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History*. 2003, Fall. p. 114.

<sup>97</sup> Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 33.

<sup>98</sup> Greg Denning, *Islands and Beaches: Discourse on a Silent Land: Marquesas, 1774-1880* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1980).

missionaries of 1820, within the system as constituted, “thus to integrate circumstance as structure and make of the event a version of itself.”<sup>99</sup>

This dissertation casts light on the complexity and nuance of the Native Hawaiian response to colonialism. By tracing and analysing the life of one Hawaiian intellectual and political figure, Elia Helekūnihi, it demonstrates that salient and critical elements of Hawaiian tradition remained vital in and through the adoption of Calvinist Christianity by the chiefs in the circle of Ka‘ahumanu early in the nineteenth century. The Christianity they espoused was a truly Hawaiian phenomenon and the chiefs were not naive victims of U.S. colonial intervention by a handful of New England missionaries. They were intentional in their adoption and use of Christianity as a re-formulation of the *kapu* system deeply rooted in the Polynesian world-view. I demonstrate that this articulation of tradition persisted through the long nineteenth century and beyond, manifested in the response of some Hawaiians, like Helekūnihi, to the growing strength of the U.S. colonial presence in Hawai‘i. By privileging Hawaiian voices over those of Western commentators, I argue that some intellectuals, mostly in the lineage of the chiefs who sponsored the Calvinist mission, employed traditional cultural Hawaiian categories to support their position on annexation.

## Chapter Outline

Chapter One establishes Elia Helekūnihi of Kaupō within the chiefly traditions of pre-contact Hawai‘i by examining his *mo‘okū‘ahuhau* (genealogy) in the lineage of the high chiefs

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<sup>99</sup> Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 50.

of Maui island. His lineage inspired and sustained him all his life and fidelity to his lineage formed his religious and political identity and world view. Chapter Two asserts that Calvinism was adopted by the Hawaiian chiefs as a new articulation of the traditional *kapu* system, demonstrating that Hawaiian leadership inspired and sustained the mission and rapid spread of literacy. The chapter highlights how Helekūnihi's family played a key role in the establishment of churches and schools in Kaupō and had a stake in the Calvinist faith of the chiefs and missionaries.

Chapter Three traces the rich network of relationships, the “tense and tender ties” that formed the world view of Elia Helekūnihi in his early years. Extended family, teachers and pastors, Hawaiian and American, moulded his understanding of Hawaiian tradition, Christian teaching, medical practice and Euro-American legal concepts. Chapter Four outlines Helekūnihi's struggle for acceptance in the leadership of the Calvinist Church, particularly with respect to the mid-century rise of Social Darwinism. This chapter shows how his activism on behalf of Hawaiian contract labourers set him at odds with the establishment at Hāna and how his loyalty to the Calvinist order led to his opposition to the King and early support for annexation.

Chapter Five presents the reign of Kalākaua as a period of Native Hawaiian cultural renaissance and resistance to growing American economic, cultural and political influence. It demonstrates how Helekūnihi and other Hawaiian Calvinists resisted the perceived “paganising extravagances” of the King. The chapter shows how his election to the Legislature of 1876 gave voice to his advocacy on behalf of the Hawaiian poor, his defence of Calvinism, his resistance to

Kalākaua and his support for a stronger link between Hawai‘i and the U.S. Chapter Six demonstrates how Elia Helekūnihi came to support U.S. colonial intervention because he saw the U.S. as the source of spiritual “enlightenment.” His election as a Reform Party candidate to the “Bayonet” legislature of 1887 set him at odds with many of his compatriots, though his activism in the Legislature on behalf of marginalised Hawaiians offended the *haole* establishment. The chapter outlines how Helekūnihi emerged as an arch annexationist after the overthrow of the Queen in 1893, employing metaphors from Hawaiian tradition to support his position. Lastly, the Conclusion demonstrates how Helekūnihi, as district judge of Wailuku, was in the unenviable position of appearing to be a *haole* pet while remaining true to his values as a Christian and a Hawaiian. His final betrayal demonstrates the tragic fact that even Hawaiians who appeared complicit with the imperial project of the United States were expendable by the colonists.



## CHAPTER ONE

### *Mo'okū'auhau*

## Hawaiian Tradition and its Reproduction under the Maui Ruling Chiefs

When discussing the rationale for his letter to Oliver Emerson in February 1893, Elia Helekūnihi revealed an underlying principle that had guided him throughout his life: the recollection, publication and transmission of the great chiefly traditions of pre-contact Hawai'i. He wrote, "The reason for my writing is my regret that the History of our Beloved Hawai'i may be lost."<sup>1</sup> Later he continued, "I am an old man, left with great anxiety that something precious may be lost and because I have heard about the 'Hawaiian History' that is being published in the *Kuokoa*, the thought came to me to send this (*Mo'olelo Hawai'i*) to you for you to look at it closely so that it does not become rubbish after my passing."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to Rev. Oliver Emerson from Elia Helekunihi, February 25, 1893, Ms. Group 284, Bishop Museum Archives. "*O ke kumu o ko'u kakau ana no kuu minamina i ka Moolelo o Hawaii nei o nalowale ia.*"

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, "*Ua elemakule no waiho pu me ka minamina nui, a no kuu lohe ana nau e hoopuka nei ka Moolelo Hawaii ma ke Kuokoa, Ulu ae ana ka'u (sic.) manao e houma 'ku ia oe i nana wale iho he ole hoi ka lilo i opala mahope o kuu make ana.*" Helekūnihi never saw the publication within his own lifetime of his *Mo'olelo Hawai'i*. A poorly photocopied manuscript of the lengthy work, originally in the Van Dyke collection, now resides in the Archives of the Bishop Museum. See Bishop Museum, ms. Group 284, "Helekūnihi." Written in Elia's artful hand, the beautiful lines of nineteenth century Hawaiian calligraphy are difficult to read. It is regretted that this important work can, at present, only be accessed in this poor form, an almost illegible photocopy from the 1970s of the original. I have attempted to find the original, but to no avail as yet. Legible portions have been examined by Hawaiian language specialist Puakea Nogelmeier, who found that much of the text appears to have been lifted from the historian Kamakau, which Elia admitted to Emerson. There are, however, portions that Helekūnihi ascribes, not to Kamakau or 'Ī'i, but to his own father. See letter 1893 letter to Emerson. At the back of "Spencer's" *Buke 'Oihana Lapa'au* there is a summary of Hawaiian history that may be a condensation of Helekūnihi's *Mo'olelo Hawai'i*. See Spencer (Helekunihi), *Buke 'Oihana Lapa'au*, 83. If so, then Elia's work is more than a mere rehashing of earlier historians, as this short *mo'olelo* contains material found nowhere else in the record, such as establishing the importance of both Nu'u and Kaupō in the narratives of the high chiefs. According to Nathaniel Emerson, Helekūnihi's work contains previously undocumented material from the era of the chiefly navigators, and sheds light on the tradition of a new religious system from Kahiki, connecting Elia Helekūnihi to both. See, Nathaniel Bright Emerson, "The Long Voyages of the Ancient Hawaiians," Papers of the Hawaiian Historical Society Number Five, 1893 and Spencer (Helekunihi), *Buke 'Oihana Lapa'au*, 83.

Helekūnihi's heart and mind were governed by the Hawaiian world view defined by Noenoe Silva as "*mo'okū'auhau* consciousness." Silva asserts that nineteenth-century Hawaiian intellectuals "drew on their ancestral knowledge and accepted and carried out the kuleana to record it so that Kānaka (Native Hawaiians) in their own time(s) as well as in the distant future would benefit from it."<sup>3</sup> Marie Alohalani Brown affirms that "the kuamo'o (backbone) of Hawaiian culture is *mo'okū'auhau*. We perceive the world genealogically – everything is relational."<sup>4</sup> In times of crisis, the *ali'i* sent for a *kākā'ōlelo* (orator, advisor, antiquarian, genealogist, storyteller, bard) who recited the appropriate *mo'olelo* recounting the deeds of illustrious *ali'i* ancestors to enable him or her to make decisions based on actions that had brought success to their ancestors.<sup>5</sup> Helekūnihi's lineage in the *kākā'ōlelo* class enabled him to see the cataclysmic events that beset his people in the nineteenth century through the lens of Hawaiian history and tradition. Successful choices of the high chiefs of the past inspired him to prescribe a future for his people. Although this future was distasteful to the majority of his compatriots, Helekūnihi believed that his prescription for annexation was rooted in an authentic expression of Hawaiian tradition.

Sahlins argues that there is such a strong continuity between the ancient belief systems, cosmogonies, myths and epic tales of pre-contact Hawai'i and the seemingly radically altered post-contact society that "continuity between such beginnings and the present, between abstract categories and historical persons, is guaranteed by the unbroken succession of births between

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<sup>3</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary: Hawaiian-English, English-Hawaiian* (Honolulu, HI: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1986), p. 254. Unless otherwise indicated, all definitions are from this standard text; Silva, *The Power of the Steel-tipped Pen*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, *Facing Spears of Change*, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Kame'eleiwi, *Native Lands and Foreign Desires*, p. 22.

them.”<sup>6</sup> This aligns with Silva’s “*mo ‘okā ‘auhau* consciousness,” whereby the Polynesian concept of descent (actually ascent) contributes to a consistent pattern of cultural repetition. Living persons are so thoroughly identified with their forbears that they tell the tales of their ancestor in the first person.<sup>7</sup> “Mythical incidents constitute archetypal situations...the living *become* mythical heroes,” notes Sahli<sup>8</sup>

Sahlins’ “structure of the conjuncture,” demonstrates that a culture, specifically the Hawaiian, at contact with the West, was subjected to the condition whereby *plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*.<sup>9</sup> Despite cataclysmic change, the *essential* patterns that constituted the Hawaiian worldview remained intact and constituted and informed the manner in which historical actors performed. Sahlins insists that the reverse is also true: *plus c’est la même chose, plus ça change*. Culture is dynamic and in the structure of the conjuncture lies a tension between the power of mythical archetypes and the historical situations that challenge those patterns as people reconsider conventional schemes in the light of new information. “The culture is reproduced in action. It is also historically altered in action as people reconsider their conventional schemes...In action or in the world the cultural categories acquire new functional values. Burdened with the world, the cultural meanings are thus altered. The structure is transformed.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 13..

<sup>7</sup> For an excellent discussion of the profound connections Hawaiians have with their ancestors, particularly through their *aumākua*, see Mary Kawena Pukui, E. W. Haertig, and Catherine A. Lee, *Nānā i Ke Kumu = Look to the Source*, vol. 1 (Honolulu, HI: Hui Hānai, 1979), pp. 35-43, 42-43.

<sup>8</sup> Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Sahlins, *Islands of History*, pp. vii, 138.

As a member of the lesser *ali'i* class, known as *kaukau ali'i*, Helekūnihi had his own *mo'okū'auhau*, of which he was justly proud, and which gave him status within the Hawaiian community. This meant that, unlike the *maka'āinana* (common people), he was able to trace his lineage back more than three generations. Malo states, “Perhaps in the earliest generations everyone was an *ali'i*, and only in later generations did the commoners become separated from the *ali'i* class. This is what caused the separation: the people did whatever they wanted and went to have fun and wandered off here and there.”<sup>11</sup> All humans originated from the sacred parents Papahānaumoku (female) and Wākea (male), but only those of true *ali'i* lineage retained the *mana* (sacred power) of divinity. Within Native Hawaiian categories of meaning, it is logical that those with a high-status *mo'okū'auhau*, like Helekūnihi, would retain a stronger link with the heroes of the mythic past, who served as “models, transposable to many different domains, of the right relations between things.” The archetype from the legend of the foreign priest Pā'ao, ancestor of his wife Luika, who imported a new religious system from “Kahiki,” would remain Helekūnihi's model. Because the Christianisation programme of his kinswoman in the lineage of King Kekaulike, Queen Ka'ahumanu, conformed to this archetype, for both mythological and genealogical reasons, fidelity to Calvinist Christianity and to the “Kahiki” from whence it came, is foundational in comprehending Helekūnihi's motives throughout his life.

The aim of this chapter is to dig deeply into ancient Hawaiian tradition to trace Helekūnihi's genealogy in the lineages of the Maui chiefs. This will enable us to understand how his own lineage defined his *kuleana* for those chiefs who inspired and motivated him up to that

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<sup>11</sup> Malo, *The Mo'olelo of Hawai'i of Davida Malo*, 18:57-58: *Ma nā hanauna mua paha, he ali'i wale nō nā kānaka a pau, a ma nā hanauna hope mai paha, 'o ia ka wā i ka 'wale ai kānaka a me nā ali'i. Eia nō ka mea i ka 'awale ai: 'o ka lilo o nā kānaka ma muli o ko lākou makemake iho: a hele ma muli o ka le'ale'a a 'auana loa ma kēlā wahi ma kēia wahi.* Translation by Langlas and Lyon.

last critical decade of Hawaiian independence. I will examine the importance of Helekūnihi's own *mo'okūauhau* consciousness by illuminating those antecedents who provided the patterns and models by which he lived his life. The dynamics and patterns of Hawaiian history in the nineteenth century cannot be fully comprehended without tracing the means by which "mo'okūauhau consciousness" motivated the actions of the players in that history. "Because culture is reproduced in action," the entire century exhibited a conjuncture, whose structure can be analysed to define the elements of the ancient tradition that persisted despite the cataclysmic changes that convulsed the Hawaiian people.<sup>12</sup> Through a study of Helekūnihi's life, the persistence and power of traditional Hawaiian archetypes and the manner in which those archetypes, "burdened with the world," were transformed, yet remained dynamic, will be revealed. Hawaiian chiefs were not passive victims of the introduction of a foreign religious tradition, New England Calvinism, but exercised decisive agency to absorb this tradition into their own mythic system. Through the reproduction of tradition they rearticulated Christianity in a Hawaiian form, defining a new *kapu* system that worked for them and their people in a rapidly changing world.

### ***Kaukauali'i, Kahu and Kākā'ōlelo*** **Definers and Transmitters of Chiefly Tradition**

Elia Helekūnihi's *mo'okūauhau* was defined by his status in the lineage of *kaukauali'i*, the descendants of unions between *ali'i nui* and lower-ranking *ali'i* who commonly resided at the *aloal'i* (court or retinue) of the *ali'i nui* serving in a variety of capacities.<sup>13</sup> The *aloal'i* was a

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<sup>12</sup> Sahlins, *Islands of History*, pp. vii, 138.

<sup>13</sup> Malo, *The Mo'olelo*, 18:20.

complex community, probably numbering in the hundreds of individuals with a variety of skills and functions.<sup>14</sup> These retainers were often from less illustrious branches of high status *ali'i* lineages, the products of the dilution of the lineage through mating with persons of lower *ali'i* or *maka'āinana* status.<sup>15</sup> Others were *maka'āinana* whose beauty, art, or technical skills caught the eye of the *ali'i nui* in his or her travels about the island.<sup>16</sup> Some retainers were *konohiki*, managers of the lands of the *ali'i*; some were *kahu*, honored attendants and keepers of the chiefs and their families; some were *kāhuna*, experts in professions such as that of the priest or medical practitioner; and others were *kākā'ōlelo*, specialists in the arts of language, including oratory and the recitation of *mo'olelo*, *ka'ao* (legends, romances), and *mo'o kū'auhau*. Kepelino writes, “The *kākā'ōlelo*, he is the one who exercises skill in the use of ancient *mo'olelo* and who corrects the decisions they make by means of the *mo'olelo*, discarding what is unsuitable in each *mo'olelo* of all the periods that have gone before. These people persist in their work to such a degree that this has become a trait handed down within the family, the trait of *kākā'ōlelo*.”<sup>17</sup>

Elia Helekūnihi was a *kaukau ali'i*, in a lineage of *kākā'ōlelo*, a *kuleana* which he received directly from his father, Paulo Kū. He felt compelled to remain faithful to the sacred duty to transmit the ancient chiefly *mo'okū'auhau* and *mo'olelo* until his dying day. His dedication to the writing of the *Mo'olelo Hawai'i*, which occupied him in the 1870s and 1880s, and his interest in *la'au lapa'au* (Hawaiian medicine), placed him in the lineage of the *kākā'ōlelo* and possibly also of the *kāhuna lapa'au*. Helekūnihi was also adept in *haku mele*, the

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 18:47-55; 19:1, 11-21, 14-26.

<sup>15</sup> Malo, *The Mo'olelo*, 18:48; Brown, *Facing the Spears of Change*, 32.

<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey “Kapali” Lyon, Personal Communication, March 15, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Kepelino, *Traditions of Hawai'i*, p. 130: *Ke Kakaolelo, oia no ka mea, a mau mea paha, e loio ana i ke ano o kela keia moolelo kahiko, a e hooponopono a i na mea a lakou e hooholo ai, a e olepu ana i na kupono ole o kela keia moolelo o ia kau aku ia kau aku. A o ia poe, ua mau lakou ma ko lakou oihana iho; a ua lilo ia welo, he welo Kakaolelo.* Translation with the assistance of Jeffrey “Kapali” Lyon.

composition of traditional Hawaiian poetry, rich in metaphoric references to forces of nature and place names.

For Hawaiians, lineage and connection to vital traditions from the past provides meaning for the present and illuminates the rationale for actions of an individual throughout his or her life.<sup>18</sup> Helekūnihi's lineage in a family of *kaukau ali* 'i led him to his vocation as pastor, teacher, lawyer and legislator. His *konohiki* lineage, whose *kuleana* was to support the interests of the landowner, while standing for the well-being of the *maka 'āinana* who worked the lands, inspired his vocation as a pastor and legislator with a deep concern for poor, sick and marginalised Hawaiians. In this manner, his life combined both traditional Hawaiian *mo 'okūahauhau* consciousness and Christian compassion. His desire to write the "*Mo 'olelo Hawai 'i* revealed his passion to perpetuate the values and metaphors of the Hawaiian past to inform the present. When it was said at the Annexationist rally at the Hawaiian church in Pā'ia in 1893 that he spoke eloquently about the history of the Hawaiian monarchy to support his position on annexation by the United States, Helekūnihi acted in the tradition of the *kākā 'ōlelo*, whose task was to advise the chiefs in the present employing exempla from the heroic acts of their chiefly ancestors.<sup>19</sup> His sense of *kuleana*, his skill in reciting the story of his people in the tradition of the *kākā 'ōlelo*, and his talent in composing traditional Hawaiian *mele* made him a gifted teacher, pastor, lawyer and advocate for the causes he was compelled to fight for: justice, Christian *pono* and paradoxically, annexation of Hawai'i by the United States.

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<sup>18</sup> See Brown, *Facing the Spears of Change*, p. 27: "And in terms of intellectual endeavors, mo'okū'auhau refers to the worldview we have inherited as 'Ōiwi, which informs how we conceive, reason about, and understand thought and artistic production."

<sup>19</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May 1893, 6.

Helekūnihi's letter to Emerson was written, like his "*Mo'olelo*," entirely in '*Ōlelo Hawai'i* (the Hawaiian language) and as late as 1893 he still employed the ancient month names, *Kā'elo* ("wet month") and *Ka'aona* for "April," revealing that he remained a dedicated Hawaiian traditionalist.<sup>20</sup> There is no evidence that Elia ever learned English, confirmed by all of his extant writings, and his insistence that proceedings of the Hawaiian Legislature be translated into '*Ōlelo Hawai'i*.<sup>21</sup> Helekūnihi informed Emerson that he had also written a *Puke Lapaau Hawaii* ("Book of Hawaiian Medicine"), collected from twenty or more *kāhuna*, confirming Elia's reverence for the traditions of old Hawai'i.<sup>22</sup> He had taken his manuscript to the *hapa haole* (mixed Hawaiian-white) publisher, Thomas P. "Kamaki" Spencer, in Honolulu in 1887 and gave him \$21.00 for its printing, but was grieved that Spencer took his money without publishing it. Spencer, it must be noted, was a staunch monarchist, who strongly opposed Helekūnihi's annexationist sympathies.<sup>23</sup> He wrote, "If it had been published, the wearisome labor of my mind would have been rewarded, having it made into a book."<sup>24</sup> The unscrupulous Spencer published Helekūnihi's text under his own name in 1895 with the title, *Buke 'Oihana Lapa'au me nā 'Apu Lā'au Hawai'i*.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, pp. 108,109.

<sup>21</sup> Despite this, he gave "notice of intention to introduce a bill that the English language be taught in the Public Schools instead of Hawaiian" during the legislative session of 1876. See "Journal of the Legislative Session, Spring, 1876.," Punawaiola, accessed October 13, 2020, <http://www.punawaiola.org/es6/index.html?path=/Collections/LegKing/LegKing1876002.pdf>. Proceedings of November 11.

<sup>22</sup> This suggested a reconsideration of his earlier negative position on *lapa'au Hawai'i* shared in the newspaper *Ka Hae Hawaii* in his letter-writing days when a young schoolteacher at Nu'u. As we shall see in Chapter Three, at that time he ranted, like his missionary teachers, about the dangers of traditional Hawaiian medicine, but later in life returned to his cultural roots and reasserted the value of traditional medicine. See *Ka Hae Hawaii*, 13 June 1860, 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Hawaii Holomua*, 2 May 1893.

<sup>24</sup> Elia Helekūnihi to Rev. Oliver Emerson, February 25 1893: "*Ina i puka ia make pono loa kuu luhi o ka manao e hana i Puke.*"

<sup>25</sup> Thomas P. Spencer, Puakea Nogelmeier, and Mary Kawena Pukui (actually authored by Elia Helekūnihi), *Buke 'Oihana Lapa'au Me Nā 'apu Lā'au Hawai'i: He Alaka'i No Nā Home Hawai'i i Ka 'oihana Kahuna, i Kūkulu a Ho'ola'a 'ia e Nā Kūpuna o Hawai'i Lāhui No Ka Make'e i Ke Olakino* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 2003). It must be noted that this title with the diacritical marks is the modern facsimile publication of the original which did not have them. Elia's legacy was retrieved and honored in the Foreword by Puakea Nogelmeier. At last, "the wearisome labor" of his mind has been rewarded.



As a young man, Helekūnihi resisted traditionalism, but as he grew older, he embraced Hawaiian tradition and saw himself, as noted in his letter to Emerson, as having a *kuleana* to preserve and transmit it. The anxiety and passion he exhibited over the publication of this work, the aim of which was to pass on the oral traditions of his people when the keepers of that tradition were passing, is a manifestation of his *mo 'okūahauhau consciousness*. I assert that this same consciousness paradoxically influenced his decision to support annexation. Helekūnihi also maintained a *kuleana* for the old chiefs and their rearticulation of the traditional Hawaiian *kapu* order as Calvinist Christianity all his life, believing like them that the New England missionaries were *kāhuna* (priests) and bearers of *na 'auao* to the Hawaiian people.<sup>26</sup> Though most of the old chiefs had passed by the 1840s, Helekūnihi maintained his *kuleana* for them and continued to look to the missionaries and their sons as the *kāhuna* of that system. In 1879, as a consequence of the rise of Hawaiian anti-American sentiment, this *kuleana* led him to take refuge in Ha'ikū among the missionary sons, whose fathers and mothers were powerfully linked to the beloved old high chiefs who had sponsored the Calvinist mission.

It is possible that Helekūnihi believed that in Ha'ikū he could live a life more dedicated to the Hawaiian value of *pono*, one of the most significant concepts of Hawaiian culture. Kame'eleihiwa asserts that in pre-contact Hawai'i, when the *'āina* (the land), *kalo* (taro, the Hawaiian staff of life) and the *ali 'i* feed and care for the Hawaiian people and the people love, serve and honour the *'āina* and the *ali 'i*, then there is that perfect harmony which Hawaiians call *pono*.<sup>27</sup> Proper *pono* behaviour with respect to religious observances on the part of the *ali 'i nui*,

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<sup>26</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July, 1893.

<sup>27</sup> Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Lands*, pp. 23-25.

and especially the *mō‘ī* (king), brought equilibrium and balance to society, but if the *ali‘i nui* or *mō‘ī* did not observe the *pono*, then harmony was removed and the whole community suffered.<sup>28</sup> The Christian chiefs’ redefinition of the old Hawaiian value of *pono* as Christian “righteousness” would be the fundamental principle governing Helekūnihi’s life. As we shall see, his understanding of *pono* informed Elia Helekūnihi’s critique of the reigns of King Kalākaua and Queen Lili‘uokalani, the last reigning monarchs.

While both *kuleana* and *pono* were redefined in the “structure of the conjuncture,” they remained thoroughly Hawaiian principles and continued to motivate and guide many men of the chiefly class like Elia Helekūnihi. The persistence of tradition throughout the nineteenth century ensured that the underlying principles of *mo‘okū‘auhau*, *pono*, *aloha*, *kuleana* and *mālama‘aina* (care for the land) continued to inspire and motivate Hawaiians as they negotiated change and upheaval brought by settler colonialism. As a man imbued with *mo‘okū‘auhau* consciousness, Helekūnihi lived and breathed the chiefly traditions of old Hawai‘i. His *kākā‘ōlelo* lineage was demonstrated in the recording of Hawai‘i’s oral traditions in his *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i*, while his use of traditional Hawaiian nature imagery in prose writing for *nā nūpepa* and the beautiful poetry of his *kanikau* (poetic tributes to the dead, lamentations) demonstrated the principle of *mālama‘aina* which characterised a *pono* chief.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

***Ke Kama‘āina o Ka Ua Pe‘e Pōhaku o Kaupō*<sup>29</sup>**  
**The Native of the Land of Kaupō, Where the Rain Forces One to Hide Behind a Rock Wall**

Elia’s birth in the rugged lava country of Nu‘u in Kaupō was an apt beginning for a man characterised by grit and determination to remain steadfast and resolute in his convictions.

When he was born on 12 April 1839 at Kuakini, Nu‘u, at the parched Kahikinui (western) end of Kaupō, the ancient district was still a relatively thriving, well-populated community.<sup>30</sup> Though much depleted by Western diseases, warfare, and out-migration to the port towns favoured by *haole* traders, missionaries, and the Hawaiian chiefs who courted them, it was not yet the “marginal” district it was to become later in the century. There were many reminders of the halcyon days of the early 18th century when King Kekaulike made his royal center at Mokulau and the district boasted as many as 17,500 inhabitants.<sup>31</sup> The forested upper slopes of Haleakalā received greater rainfall than today and the landscape was more verdant, with greater surface flows in streams and springs than we see today.<sup>32</sup> The famed ‘uala (sweet potato) gardens still flourished even in the dryer portions of Nu‘u, *pili* (*Heteropogon contortus*) grass used for thatching houses dominated the grasslands and dry *kalo* (taro) was cultivated in the rainier

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<sup>29</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui, *‘Ōlelo No’eau: Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1983), 1595. The wind-driven rain of Kaupō comes up so quickly that one has to rush to seek shelter behind the stone walls characteristic of the district. The implication is that Kaupō people, dwelling in a rough and rocky country covered in lava flows where winds blow strong and torrential rains come suddenly, are a tough and resilient people.

<sup>30</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, May 11, 1876, 2. Having been elected to represent Hāna District in the legislature of 1876, Helekunihi provided a short autobiography in the newspaper to introduce himself to the electorate. This piece provides much of the biographical information up to this date.

<sup>31</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, p. 3; Patrick Kirch, John Holson and Alexander Baer, “Intensive Dryland Agriculture in Kaupō, Maui, Hawaiian Islands,” *Asian Perspectives*, vol. 48, No. 2 (Honolulu, 2010).

<sup>32</sup> Alex Underhill Baer, *On the Cloak of Kings: Agriculture, Power, and Community in Kaupō, Maui*. PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2015, p. 82. Kaupō *kūpuna* (elders) have memories of springs that flowed in their childhood, but now run dry. Alike Smith, Personal Communication, May, 2016. Alike pointed out the once significant spring on the west end of Nu‘u beach, where he bathed as a child, and which once watered the cattle that were shipped from the beach there. It no longer runs. *One hānau*, “birth sands,” is the poetic term Hawaiians still use for their beloved homeland.

uplands.<sup>33</sup> This prosperous land, once a centre of great Maui *mō‘ī*, was Elia’s *one hānau*, the “sands of his birth.”<sup>34</sup>

The name Helekūnihi can be glossed as, “to go steeply” or “proceed with difficulty, as through a tight opening or with special observance of the *kapu*.”<sup>35</sup> His father was known as Paulo Kū, Kūloko, or Lolokū, and his aunt simply as “Helekūnihi.”<sup>36</sup> Both the names Paulo (“Paul”) and Elia (“Elijah”) are baptismal names signifying the family’s devotion to the Protestant faith espoused by their chiefs, adopted by Paulo at his conversion as a young adult. The family’s *mo‘okū‘auha* conferred status through a lineage back to *ali‘i nui* of awesome sanctity, as there are hints of links to powerful Maui high chiefs with connections to Kaupō and its smaller *‘okana* (collection of *ahupua‘a* subdivisions within a larger district) of Nu‘u. Paulo’s wife Lydia described him as “a man of the highest rank,” a designation that would not have been made lightly.<sup>37</sup>

Keme‘eleihiwa points out that, “Ancestral identity is revealed in the names that Hawaiians carry, for the names of our ancestors continue as our names also...Names of the *Ali‘i Nui* are repeated for successive generations to enhance and share the honour of the original

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<sup>33</sup> Patrick Kirch, “The Impact of the Prehistoric Polynesians on the Hawaiian Ecosystem,” 8.

<sup>34</sup> The term *Mō‘ī*, glossed as “king” is likely a 19th century invention. Though it has become a conventional term for both pre and post-contact Hawaiian rulers, strictly speaking *ali‘i nui* (high chief) is a more accurate term for all the rulers prior to (and possibly including) Kamehameha the Great. Personal communication, Jeffrey “Kapali” Lyon, 17 August, 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Perhaps this latter meaning was associated with the caution exercised by Native Hawaiian retainers of the *ali‘i nui* in whose presence they were required to be cautious lest they violate one of the many *kapu* surrounding these sacred personages.

<sup>36</sup> Until the end of the 19th century, only well-educated Hawaiians used both a Christian name and a surname, but most preferred the simplicity of a single moniker associated with an esteemed ancestor or an event that concurred with the time of their birth.

<sup>37</sup> *Ka Nupepa* Kuokoa, 26 November, 1866, 3.

ancestor. In this process, the name collects its own *mana* (sacred power) and endows the successor who carries it.”<sup>38</sup> Helekūnihi named his daughter, born in 1885 to his second wife Abigail, “Jedidia Lydia Kamalalawalu.” By naming her Kamalalawalu, he claimed ancestry from a 17th century Maui king renowned for his fearlessness and intended to bestow the *mana* and *pono* of the illustrious chief on his daughter.<sup>39</sup> Maui is known to this day as “Maui, land of Kama in honour of him.”<sup>40</sup> The *mo‘okū‘auhau* exhibited in his lineage privileged Helekūnihi to access the authority and *mana* of his ancestors in the present.

Elia Helekūnihi’s lineage was through what Hawaiian genealogists would term an “inferior” branch. In the early 18th century, Kekaulike assumed the kingship of Maui and reigned from his royal centre at Mokulau in Kaupō, Elia’s own district. From there, he made war on the Hawai‘i Island chiefs across the ‘Alenuihāhā Channel.<sup>41</sup> His wife, the *ali‘i nui* Kahawalu, gave birth to the king’s first son, Kauhiaimokuakama, but because Kahawalu was of inferior rank to Kekaulike’s second wife, Kekuiapoiwanui, her son, Kamehamehanui, succeeded him to the throne.<sup>42</sup> Kauhiaimokuakama, nevertheless, was ancestor to Wahinepi‘o, Kalanimoku and

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<sup>38</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land*, p. 21

<sup>39</sup> According to Kamakau, “He showed no fear or cowardice, but went forward to meet his death” (in battle at Puakō on Hawai‘i Island). See *Ke Au Okoa*, 2 February, 1871. Nineteenth century collector of oral traditions, Abraham Fornander, tells us that “His reputation stood deservedly high among his contemporaries and with posterity for good management of his resources, just government of his people, and a liberal and magnificent court according to the ideas of those times...Maui probably never stood higher, politically, among the sister kingdoms of the group than during the life of Kamalalawalu.” See Fornander, *Ancient History of the Hawaiian People*, p. 207.

<sup>40</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, p. 68. Kamehemeha the Great had demonstrated the importance of gaining *mana* by association through taking as his wife Keōpūolani, the sacred descendant of both Maui and Hawai‘i Island lineages of chiefs. Through her he sired his sons and successors, Liholiho and Kūikeyouli, as well as the much-loved Princess Nāhi‘ena‘ena. See Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities*, p. 12. Elia himself took as his first wife, Luika Ke‘oahu, granddaughter of Hewahewa, undoubtedly to raise the status of his own progeny.

<sup>41</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Kumū Aupuni*, p. 3. In the 1870s, when Elia entered into conflict with J.K. Hanuna, district judge of Hāna, Hanuna repeatedly referred to him as “Kekahawalu” (The Kahawalu), stating that this was an alternative name for Elia. Hanuna referred to Helekūnihi as “the distinguished gentleman of high rank,” associating Elia with this illustrious ancestor. See *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 22 July, 1876, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Fornander, *Ancient History of the Hawaiian People*, p. 211.

Kekau‘ōnohi, powerful Christian chiefs in the circle of Queen Ka‘ahumanu in the early years of the New England mission. Helekūnihi was related to these important chiefs through their common descent from Kahawalu, which determined his *kuleana* for them and for the Calvinist Christianity they established as Hawai‘i’s state religion.<sup>43</sup> By bestowing the names of these ancestors on himself and his children, Elia understood that other Hawaiians would respect his lineage and render him the authority that was due to one with such a *mo‘okū‘auhau*.

Helekūnihi’s family shared with these chiefs a common descent from Kekaulike, therefore they held important positions at the courts of their more sacred cousins.<sup>44</sup> They were also distant cousins to Queen Ka‘ahumanu, Kamehameha’s favourite wife and the most important agent in the Christianisation of the Hawaiian Kingdom in the 1820s. Kekau‘ōnohi, a closer relation of Elia, held many *ahupua‘a* (small pie-shaped land divisions from sea to mountain) in Kaupō at the time of the *Māhele* of 1848 (division of Hawaiian lands according to Western principles of land ownership).<sup>45</sup> She was a descendant of Kekaulike and granddaughter of both Kamehameha and Kamanawa, one of the famous chiefly twins who supported Kamehameha in his rise to power resulting in the unification of the Islands. Kekau‘ōnohi was also cousin to Kaleimoku, the chief who held Elia’s district of Nu‘u at the *Māhele*. Like her cousin Ka‘ahumanu, Kekau‘ōnohi was a devout Protestant Christian, who did much to advance

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<sup>43</sup> I follow the 19th century convention of referring to *ali‘i nui* Ka‘ahumanu as “Queen,” though this is, strictly speaking inaccurate. A preferred title might be “Regent.” Jeffrey “Kapali” Lyon, personal communication, 15 August, 2020.

<sup>44</sup> *Buke Māhele*, Book 10, p. 497: L.C.A. 6239.

<sup>45</sup> *Buke Māhele*, Books 25-28, p. 326, L.C.A. 11216 in Dorothy B. Barrère, *The King's Mahele: the Awardees and Their Lands* (Hawaii, HI: D.B. Barrère, 1994). *Ahupua‘a* (“pig altar” from the custom of placing offerings to the chief on an altar with a pig effigy at the boundary of the *ahupua‘a*) are land divisions, usually pie-shaped, running from sea to mountain.

the cause of the new *kapu* in the Hawaiian Kingdom.<sup>46</sup> She later married Keli‘iahonui, who was also said to have been the brother (or cousin) of Kaleimoku.<sup>47</sup> This is relevant to my thesis because Helekūnihi’s *kuleana* for these chiefs in this lineage determined his devotion to the Calvinist Christianity they sponsored and adopted as the state religion in the 1820s.

## Nu‘u

Few cultures maintain such a rich and powerful connection with specific localities as the Hawaiian, whereby every place name has symbolic meaning. One’s *one hānau* remains a source of poetic inspiration, determining one’s character and the course of one’s life.<sup>48</sup> John Charlot writes, “Each locality develops a population with a distinctive general character and cultural style.”<sup>49</sup> To comprehend and evaluate Elia Helekūnihi’s life, we must first understand the significance of the land of his birth. Chiefly associations with Helekūnihi’s birthplace of Nu‘u strengthened his connection with the Maui chiefs who sponsored the Calvinist mission. Myths and oral histories relating to the place gave him, through his own *mo‘okū‘auhau*, authority to relate these traditions with pride and assurance. The lustre of his association with great lineages and defining myths commanded authority in the Native Hawaiian community.

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<sup>46</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, p. 67. To complicate matters further, this formidable woman, described by Kamakau as “that naughty (‘eu) girl,” despite her piety, ran off with Keli‘iahonui, son of the former King of Kaua‘i and stepson of Ka‘ahumanu. See Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, p. 37.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas K. Maunupau, Noelanioko‘olau Losch, and Roger G. Rose, *Huakai Makaikai a Kaupo, Maui = A Visit to Kaupō, Maui: as Published in Ka Nupepa Kuokoa, June 1, 1922-March 15, 1923* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1998), p. 48: *Ua hoike mai o Alapai Kapaeko na ke alii Keliiahonui, kaikaina o Kaleimoku, alii o Lahaina, i hana ke alanui pa-ala o Nuui nei. He lawai‘a ka hana a keia alii o ka noho ana ianei, a ua hana oia i alanui mai ke awapae mai ahiki i kona hale.*

<sup>48</sup> John Charlot, Philip Spalding, and Martin Charlot, *Chanting the Universe: Hawaiian Religious Culture* (Hong Kong: Emphasis International, 1983), pp. 55-78.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Located at the western edge of Kaupō, Nu‘u is regarded as an *ahupua‘a* of that district, but may actually have been a collection of *ahupua‘a* known as an *‘okana*.<sup>50</sup> The fine canoe landing on Nu‘u Bay and the *loko i‘a* (fish pond) just back of the shore provided the ideal conditions for the development of the location as a royal center, not unlike those more famous centers on Hawai‘i Island in Kona and Kohala.<sup>51</sup> Nu‘u may have “bookended” the chiefly center at the eastern end of Kaupō at Mokulau, embracing the entire district with lines of important *heiau* (temples) that march up the slopes of Haleakalā mountain from each of these centers, forming lines of spiritual “defence” for the great *‘uala* growing region stretching from Nu‘u to Mokulau. They functioned to generate productivity through ritual, to maintain elite control over the *maka‘āinana*, and to provide an efficient means of resource extraction to enable the *ali‘i nui* to pursue their conquering desires.<sup>52</sup>

The *loko i‘a* at Nu‘u had historic associations with the *ali‘i* like similar fishponds across the channel on Hawai‘i Island. While the oral traditions make no mention of the Nu‘u pond in relation to the well-known royal center at Mokulau at the other end of the district, it would be surprising if it did not play a role in the economy of the great 18th century conquering *ali‘i nui* Kekaulike’s court at Mokulau and may have been one factor in choosing Kaupō as his capital.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> An *ahupua‘a* is a Native Hawaiian land division generally pie-shaped, providing the fulness of resources from the sea to the mountain. The *ahupua‘a* of Kaupō, even in the dryer western portions of the district, are very small, while Nu‘u is immense by comparison. My study of early maps of Kaupō revealed land division names that appear to function like traditional *ahupua‘a* (Puukalaneo, Kailili, Hupuaa, Hawelewele etc).

<sup>51</sup> Honokōhau, Ka‘ūpūlehu, ‘Anaeho‘omalū, and Kalāhuipua‘a were important centres of chiefly power directly across the ‘Alenuihāhā Channel from Kaupō.

<sup>52</sup> Alex Baer, Personal Communication, June, 2010; Patrick Vinton Kirch, *A Shark Going Inland Is My Chief the Island Civilization of Ancient Hawai‘i* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), p. 140.

<sup>53</sup> The *kūpuna* (elders) whom Mary Kawena Pukui interviewed in Kaupō in 1960 and 1961 had distinct memories of *ali‘i* associations with the *loko*. Caroline Ka‘aelani Kenui (1892-1974), who was born at Nu‘u, recollected that the pond, bordered by a *hau* grove (a tree in the genus *Hibiscus*), “was used by the *ali‘i* in prior times and had *‘opae* (fresh water shrimp) and a big *mo‘o* (a female dragon deity), that she was nearly taken by.” Apple and Kikuchi discuss the importance of *loko i‘a* in connection with royal centers and the high value placed by the *ali‘i* on the prized *‘ama‘ama* (mullet) and *awa* (milkfish) that were harvested from them and which were carried live great



Oldtimers told Thomas Maunupau in 1922 that King Kekaulike had a residence at Nu‘u, where “he was living with his people to farm and fish.”<sup>54</sup> The tradition that his *nī‘aupi‘o* son, Kamehamehanui, was born in Nu‘u supports Kekaulike’s association with this ‘*okana*.<sup>55</sup>

Kamanawa, a *hānai* (adopted) son of Kekaulike, one of the chiefly allies of Kamehameha (c.1758-1819), may have been awarded Nu‘u as a prize for assisting the King in uniting the islands. His grandson, Kaleimoku, was awarded the entire ‘*okana* of Nu‘u at the *Māhele* in 1848.<sup>56</sup> He was a *hoahānau* (brother or cousin) of the Queen Ka‘ahumanu, and lived at court in Lahaina with Kamehameha III.<sup>57</sup> Helekūnihi’s family, as *konohiki* of the chiefs who ruled Nu‘u,

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distances by runners. See Pukui, Bishop Museum Audio File HAW.1.3. and Russell Anderson Apple and William Kenji Kikuchi, “Ancient Hawaii Shore Zone Fishponds : an Evaluation of Survivors for Historical Preservation,” accessed October 8, 2020, <https://www.worldcat.org/title/ancient-hawaii-shore-zone-fishponds-an-evaluation-of-survivors-for-historical-preservation/oclc/2407041>, pp. 1, 62. Mrs. Josephine Marciel was able to recall that “a person named Kala took care of the fishpond of the *ali‘i* at Nu‘u.”<sup>53</sup> She refers to the pond as *Nu‘ukalalawa* (*lālāwai* means “rich, prosperous”), which may suggest association with the high chiefs of Kaupō.

<sup>54</sup> Maunupau, *Huakai*, p. 80-81. Also known as “Kaaoakalani,” his house was said to be on the western rim of Haleakalā crater. See also *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 9 September 1921.

<sup>55</sup> *Nī‘aupi‘o* were offspring of high born *ali‘i* brothers and sisters who, according to Kame‘eleihiwa, behave “like *Akua* (gods)...Hence, incest is not only for producing divinity, but the very act of incest is proof of divinity.” (Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land*, p. 40.); For reference to Kamehamehanui’s birth at Nu‘u, see Spencer (Helekūnihi), *Buke‘Oihana Lapa‘au*, 83. This is, as far as I know, the only reference to this association of Nu‘u with the birth of such a sacred *ali‘i nui* and would signify the high status of the location in Hawaiian tradition.

<sup>56</sup> LCA 6239, Book 10, AH. Kaleimoku is also spelled Kalaimoku in the sources and is not to be confused with the more famous premier of King Kamehameha I. As late as 1922, local *maka‘āinana* of Nu‘u still remembered Kaleimoku’s association with their district: “Albert Kapaeko said that it was the chief Keliiahonui, younger brother of Kaleimoku, chief of Lahaina, who built the road of water-smoothed stones of Nu‘u. Fishing is what this chief did when staying here, so he made a path from the canoe landing to his house.” See Maunupau, *Huakai*, p. 48: *Ua hoike mai o Alapai Kapaeko na ke alii Keliiahonui, kaikaina o Kaleimoku, alii o Lahaina, i hana ke alanui pa-ala o Nuunui. He lawai‘a ka hana a keia alii o ka noho ana ianei, a ua hana oia i alanui mai ke awapae mai ahiki i kona hale.* The association of Keliiahonui with Kaleimoku as “brothers” (*hoahānau* can mean cousins in Hawaiian) adds further intrigue to the chiefly genealogical ties with Nu‘u, as the former was the son of Kaumuali‘i, king of Kaua‘i, who was himself also the grandson of Kekaulike. Both Keliiahonui and his father were forced into dynastic marriages with the formidable Queen Ka‘ahumanu, after whose death Keli‘iahonui wed high chiefess Kekau‘ōnohi, who, as already indicated, held many of the *ahupua‘a* of Kaupō at the time of the *Māhele* (a total of nineteen). Keli‘iahonui held three important *ahupua‘a* in the district, including Popoiwi, site of the temple-palace complex of Kekaulike, which at the time of the *Māhele*, he shared with Kekau‘ōnohi. See Interior Department, 13 December, 1848. “M. Kekauonohi and A. Keliiahonui” ceded Popoiwi to the Government in the *Māhele*.

<sup>57</sup> Barrere, *The King’s Māhele*, 1994, Claims 6239, 577, and 526. It is of interest that he was married to Nohea, the sister of Kamakahonu, and granddaughter of the famed Nae‘ole, who saved the infant future King Kamehameha from danger. This provides further evidence of his strong connection to Kamehameha.

were therefore not only linked genealogically with the ruling chiefs of Maui, but served the chiefs associated with Kamehameha who rewarded them with lands after his conquest of Maui in 1795. These associations determined Elia's lifelong *kuleana* for both the Calvinism promoted by the Maui chiefs under Ka'ahumanu and for the dynasty of Kamehameha.

Elia Helekūnihi lived and breathed the heroes of his genealogical past. The *mana* of the high chiefs of Maui and Hawai'i Island was potent to him in the present by virtue of his *mo'okū'auhau* and the Hawaiian understanding that the power of the past is released anew in the eternal present. When "Lawyer Helekunihi, made a lengthy and very interesting address dealing with the history of the past Hawaiian sovereigns," he drew on his *mo'okū'auhau*, seeking insight from his chiefly lineage in the mythic past, to make a determination about the annexation of the Islands by the United States.<sup>58</sup> We may disagree with his argument, but we cannot deny the validity of his agency, rooted as it was, in his *kuleana* for his *kūpuna* (ancestors, sources, starting points). We cannot comprehend Hawaiian culture or Hawaiian history unless we honour the truth that agency is determined not solely by individual choice. As Marx put it, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please...but under circumstances encountered, given and transmitted from the past."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, May 1, 1893, 6.

<sup>59</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York, 1963), p. 15, cited in Walter Johnson, "'On Agency,'" *Journal of Social History*, January 1, 1970, <https://scholar.harvard.edu/wjohnson/publications/agency>, p. 114.

## Paulo Kū

The circumstances of the birth and early life of Elia's father, Paulo Kū, further reveal the family's connection with the chiefs in the circle of Kamehameha. Paulo Kū was born in a "great canoe of King Kamehameha's famed *Peleleu* (large, often double-hulled, canoes) Fleet off O'ahu near the end of the year 1803."<sup>60</sup> According to Kamakau, 800 massive *peleleu* canoes, with covered platforms and European style sails, set sail from Kawaihae, Hawai'i Island, in 1802 to conquer Kaua'i in fulfilment of Kamehameha's ambition to unite all the islands into one kingdom.<sup>61</sup> Soon after, the fleet stopped at Kaupō *en route* to Lahaina in West Maui, where it rested for a full year, feasting on the wealth of Maui. It is likely that Elia's grandfather, Kanaulo, and grandmother, Mahoemakakau, joined the fleet in Kaupō where they may have been settled as part Kamanawa's (d. 1802) entourage after Kamehameha's conquest of Maui in 1795. Mahoemakakau's name, which can mean "twin with a fixed or steady eye," is perhaps a reference to Kamanawa the chiefly twin.<sup>62</sup> Kanaulo may have served as *kākā'ōlelo* for Kamanawa or at the court of his daughter, Peleuli, one Kamehameha's wives, and grandmother of Kekau'ōnohi, supporting my assertion that Paulo Kū was in the lineage of *konohiki* at Nu'u who served under Kamanawa and his descendants.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 November 1866, 3. This is Paulo Kū's obituary, written by Elia.

<sup>61</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, pp.165-167.

<sup>62</sup> With his brother, Kame'eiamoku, he is featured as one of the two warriors on the Hawaiian coat of arms. King Kalākaua and Queen Lili'uokalani, the last monarchs of Hawai'i, who inherited Nu'u from Kaleimoku and held it until the end of the nineteenth century, were the direct descendants of Kame'eiamoku.

<sup>63</sup> Barrere, *The King's Māhele*, Claim 6239. See *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 November, 1866, 3. Paulo is described as "the head of the church at Nu'u." As the Christian mission was conducted in its early years by mostly *kaukaual'i* it is not unreasonable to assume that Paulo was a *konohiki* at Nu'u who was taught *palapala* at the court of the high chiefs in Lahaina and sent back to Nu'u to proselytise and open schools. See Chapter Two.

## *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i*

The sources for Elia Helekūnihi’s *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i*, demonstrate that his lineage in the *kā kā‘ōlelo* tradition from his father gave him access to unique material from the oral tradition. This ancient tradition was the foundation of his life of religious and political service and specific elements of it moulded his world view and sustained his devotion to Calvinist Christianity. In his 1893 letter to Oliver Emerson, he confidently placed himself within the great *mo‘olelo*-writing tradition of Samuel Kamakau and John Papa ‘Ī‘Ī.<sup>64</sup> Helekūnihi informed the missionary son that inspiration for his own *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i* did not come solely from the *kā kā‘ōlelo* tradition of his father or the great Hawaiian historians, but also from the work of a *haole*, his former teacher at Lahainaluna seminary in the 1850s, John Fawcett Pogue. When we consider that both Emerson’s father and Pogue were in the circle of the New England missionaries sponsored by the Ka‘ahumanu *mā* chiefs as *kāhuna* in the lineage of the ancient Hawaiian priestly advisors to the high chiefs, this is not inconceivable.<sup>65</sup>

Oliver Emerson passed Helekūnihi’s *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i* to his brother Nathaniel Bright Emerson, physician and ethnologist, whose work demonstrates that Helekūnihi provided unique material not found in the accounts of other Native Hawaiian historians.<sup>66</sup> In a paper read on May 18, 1893 before the newly-created Historical Society entitled “The Long Voyages of the Ancient

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<sup>64</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Rev. Oliver Emerson, 25 February 1893, Ms. Group 284, Bishop Museum Archives.

<sup>65</sup> Emerson actually arrived with the Fifth Company of missionaries just a few weeks prior to Ka‘ahumanu’s death in June 1832. John Fawcett Pogue arrived with the Eleventh Company in July, 1844. Neither was associated directly with the great Queen, but both definitely shared in her religious legacy. David W. Forbes, Ralph Thomas Kam, and Thomas A. Woods, *Partners in Change: a Biographical Encyclopedia of American Protestant Missionaries in Hawai‘i and Their Hawaiian and Tahitian Colleagues, 1820-1900* / David W. Forbes, Ralph Thomas Kam, Thomas A. Woods (Honolulu, HI: Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, 2018), pp. 252, 507.

<sup>66</sup> Nathaniel was a founding member of the Hawaiian League, which instigated the infamous “Bayonet Constitution,” of which he is credited with having been the chief architect, former president of the Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society, and founding member of the Hawaiian Historical Society. See Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, pp. 68, 228.

Hawaiians,” Nathaniel states, “The bulk of the information given in this paper has been obtained from the works, mostly in manuscript, of S.M. Kamakau, David Malo, and Elia Helekunihi.”<sup>67</sup> Nathaniel Emerson credited Helekūnihi with unique information in reference to La‘amaikahiki’s two voyages from Kahiki to Hawai‘i and for the stories of Paumakua, Kukulu o Kahiki, and Pā‘ao.<sup>68</sup> In the important tale of Pā‘ao and his brother Lonopele, Emerson attributed to Helekūnihi some elements about the conflict between these two priests of Kahiki.<sup>69</sup> When Pā‘ao arrived in the Hawaiian Islands, he established at Mo‘okini *heiau* on Hawai‘i Island new forms of worship, including human sacrifice and veneration of the god Kūka‘ilimoku (“Kū, snatcher of islands”), powerful deity of Kamehameha and other conquering chiefs.<sup>70</sup> The Kahiki origin of a new religious system points to the recapitulation of Hawaiian myth in the arrival and bringing of another religious system by the Calvinists from that “Kahiki” called America. As I shall demonstrate in Chapter Two, Ka‘ahumanu *mā* rearticulated Calvinist Christianity in a Hawaiian image within the context of the Pā‘ao/Kahiki tradition.

In a hand-written preamble to his talk to the Historical Society, Nathaniel Emerson acknowledged the sources for his work, beginning with “the men and women whose memories are still charged with the traditions, meles, prayers and personal reminiscences of the old times,

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<sup>67</sup> Emerson, Nathaniel Bright, “The Long Voyages of the Ancient Hawaiians,” Papers of the Hawaiian Historical Society Number Five, p. 28.

<sup>68</sup> Emerson’s spelling of the name La‘amaikahiki; Emerson, “The Long Voyages.” p. 23.

<sup>69</sup> “The relations between the brothers were by no means pleasant,” he writes, citing Elia, “and seem to have become so strained as to result in open violence.” Helekūnihi used the terms *kipaku aku* and *kipaku mai* (“they sent one another into exile”) in relation to the events that led to Pā‘ao’s voyage to Hawai‘i, though Kamakau stated that only Pā‘ao was sent into exile by Lonopele for the murder of his son. *Kahiki* in pre-contact Hawai‘i, though likely a distant memory of the real place with which the Hawaiians had not had contact for centuries, had the meaning of a remote mythological place beyond or above the horizon. After contact, it came to mean both the physical island in the Society group and any foreign country. Translation of *kipaku aku/kipaku mai* courtesy Kapali Lyon; see Kamakau, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, p. 32: *e ku ‘oe a e hele pēlā, no ka mea, he kanaka ‘ino ‘oe* (“stand up and depart from here, because you are an evil man”).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* Emerson accessed this material on page 14 of “Moolelo Hawaii by E. Helekunihi (mss.).”

fisherman, canoe-makers, craftsmen, professional raconteurs, some of them possessed of wonderful power of memory, some of them former favorites and attendants about the court, or kahus of some chief, who by this relation have enjoyed enlarged opportunities for acquaintance with the ancient lore.”<sup>71</sup> While Emerson mentioned Malo and Kamakau as important sources for his work, he cites Helekūnihi on multiple occasions, but does not directly acknowledge him in his list of contributors. This may have been due to Emerson’s interest in downplaying Hawaiian contributions to this history, apart from acknowledged luminaries like Malo and Kamakau. As Chapter Five elucidates, personal resentment against Helekūnihi might have also played a role in Emerson’s decision to exclude him. This may also explain why Nathaniel and Oliver Emerson did not assist Helekūnihi in publishing his “*Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i*.” Nevertheless, he does speak of “Persons of literary and antiquarian tastes among the Hawaiians who have directed their attention to the history and antiquities of their own people.”<sup>72</sup> Helekūnihi would certainly was in that company.<sup>73</sup>

Hewahewa, the last *Kahuna Nui* (high priest) under Kamehameha, was a direct descendant of Pā‘ao, the high priest who voyaged from Kahiki. This man in the lineage of the priest who founded the ancient Hawaiian *kapu* system was, ironically, responsible for the overthrow of the old deities after Kamehameha’s death in the time of the *‘ainoa* (free-eating),

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<sup>71</sup> Nathaniel Emerson, *The Long Voyages of the Ancient Hawaiians*, Read before the Hawaiian Historical Society, 18 May, 1893, manuscript in the *Emerson Papers* Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. Early print and three versions of hand-written manuscripts were consulted.

<sup>72</sup> Emerson Papers, Huntington Library, conclusion of papers on *The Long Voyages*, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Among the papers in the Huntington Library file containing his hand-written notes for *The Long Voyages*, Emerson has crossed out a paragraph containing a curious, but inaccurate, criticism of Helekūnihi’s work: “It seems probable to me that Helekunihi is in error when he asserts that Pili accompanied Pao on this voyage from Samoa to Hawaii.” Emerson Papers, conclusion of papers on *The Long Voyages*, p. 11. He must have decided to eliminate this attack on Elia’s credibility when he realised that, according to both Kamakau and Malo, Pili, ancestor of the Hawai‘i Island lineage of high chiefs did, in fact, accompany Pā‘ao. See Kamakau, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, p. 32, Malo, *Mo‘olelo*, 4:10-11.

when Queens Keōpūolani and Ka‘ahumanu openly broke the old *kapu* by publicly eating with the sacred son and heir, Liholiho. Hewahewa was the grandfather of Elia Helekūnihi’s first wife, Luika Keo‘ahu, who would have been a likely source for the version of the *mo‘olelo* of Pā‘ao that Emerson found in Elia’s work.<sup>74</sup> This *mo‘olelo*, the source for the Hawaiian mythical metaphor of new religious systems originating in Kahiki, also includes the story of the high chief Pili, ancestor of the chiefly lineages of Hawai‘i Island (therefore of Kamehameha), who came from Kahiki at Pā‘ao’s request.<sup>75</sup> Helekūnihi was, therefore, connected through both his and Luika’s *mo‘okū‘auhau* to the founder of Hawai‘i’s archetypal religious system and Kamehameha, founder of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

Helekūnihi was both master of the ancient Hawaiian oral tradition of *mo‘olelo* recitation by virtue of his *mo‘okū‘auhau* and an historian in the Western tradition. Therefore, it made sense that he sought membership in the newly formed Hawaiian Historical Society. In a postscript to his letter to Oliver Emerson, Helekūnihi expressed interest in joining the Society: “Can you, perhaps, please explain the purpose and founding principles of the Hawaiian Historical Society, to the end that I might know about the Society and possibly join it?”<sup>76</sup> The ranks of its membership contained multiple levels of irony. Charles Bishop, husband of Bernice Pauahi Pākī of the Kamehameha dynasty, founder of Bishop Museum and Kamehameha Schools, was its first president and Hawai‘i’s last Queen, Lili‘uokalani, was its patron. Its membership was dominated

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<sup>74</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March 1877. That Luika was a grand daughter of Kamehameha’s famous high priest, Hewahewa, is made clear in her obituary.

<sup>75</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, pp. 31-33; Fornander, *Ancient History*, pp. 35-37; Beckwith, *Mythology*, p. 371. Beckwith cites Nathaniel Emerson, who himself used Helekūnihi as one of his sources. The *ahupua‘a* of Hāmoa, regarded by scholars as a transliteration to Hawaiian of “Samoa,” is close by the birthplace of Luika Keo‘ahu at Aleamai in Hāna District.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Letter to Rev. Emerson from Elia Helekunihi, February 25, 1893. “P.S. *E hiki paha oe e oluolu e wehewehe mai i ke kulana a me ke kahua hana o ka Hui Moolelo Hawaii a ike au malia hoi owau aku ana kekahi lala oia Hui.*”

by missionary descendants, and its early roll reads as a veritable “Who’s Who” of annexationist sympathy, including Nathaniel Emerson and Sanford B. Dole, future president of the “Republic of Hawai‘i.” Helekūnihi’s interest in the Society testifies to the complexity of his role as both guardian of Hawai‘i’s hallowed traditions and advocate of the absorption of his beloved nation into the voracious republic to the east.<sup>77</sup> Helekūnihi’s position, rooted in his understanding of Hawaiian culture in relation to *pono* and *na ‘auao*, was deeply sincere. The tragedy of his life rests on the sad fact that the *haole* oligarchy of comfortable businessmen and missionary descendants, for whom Hawaiian tradition meant little, and for whom *mo ‘okū ‘auhau* consciousness meant even less, found in him a useful ally for their colonial designs, and when he was no longer useful, betrayed him.

## Conclusion

Addressing the paradox of a Hawaiian traditionalist supporting annexation by the United States necessitates reaching deep into Hawaiian tradition to determine the elements of that tradition that informed his decision. In the process, we must examine how the key principles of *mo ‘okū ‘auhau*, *pono*, *kapu*, *aloha*, *kuleana* and *na ‘auao* formed the world view of a man like Elia Helekūnihi, whose lineage connected him to the key chiefly players in the programme of Christianising Hawai‘i and determined his lifelong fidelity to those chiefs and their American missionary protégés. Helekūnihi had a primary sense of *kuleana* (responsibility) to this programme and its initiators. He would ironically extend this profoundly Hawaiian principle to

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<sup>77</sup> He did, indeed, join the Society and is listed as a “Life Member” of the organisation in *Fifth Annual Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society, 1897* (Honolulu, 1897), p. 30. Perhaps the members had not been informed of his death the previous year?



include annexation by the United States, which he perceived to be the source both *pono* and *na 'auao* for the Hawaiian people.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Kalawina*

### The Making of an Indigenous Hawaiian Christianity, 1819-1845

Noelani Arista asserts that, “any history of the first contact in Hawai‘i, let alone a history of contemporary Hawai‘i, can easily be trapped in its own Western cultural paradigms unless we rigorously recognise how ‘our’ (Native Hawaiian) paradigms and tropes replicate them, working instead to respect and seek the cultural differences that make all the difference.”<sup>1</sup> “Hawaiians too,” Arista writes, “engaged in forms of meaning-making and obtained structure for their lives through interpreting their presents through their pasts.”<sup>2</sup> The persistence of ancient religio-cultural patterns of meaning throughout the nineteenth century provided models by which men like Elia Helekūnihi made critical decisions that impacted the destiny of their people. It is inconceivable that the Hawaiian *ali‘i nui* and *maka‘āinana* viewed the 1820 arrival of the New England missionaries in religious, cultural and political categories that were not Hawaiian. To comprehend the early choices that Hawaiian chiefs made with respect to their adoption of Western religious, economic and political structures in the early nineteenth century, we must look to Hawaiian tradition for meaning and cease to rely solely on histories viewed through a Western lens.

The Hawaiian chiefs in the circle of Ka‘ahumanu made use of the young American missionaries to establish a new *kapu* system, no longer rooted in the old *‘ai kapu* (eating tabus),

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<sup>1</sup> Noelani Arista, *The Kingdom*, p. 7. Arista is referencing Sahlins.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

but based on the biblical *kapu* of New England Calvinism.<sup>3</sup> This particular tradition suited the Hawaiian chiefs well, as its legalism reproduced the familiar Polynesian *kapu* order and narrowly defined the concept of *pono*, while enabling them and their people to make sense of their relationship with the Europeans who were reaching Hawai‘i’s shores. It had become clear to the chiefs that the old *kapu* was no longer *pono* because the people were dying in terrifying numbers from introduced Western diseases. Historian Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa writes, “If the old *Akua* (gods) did not *ho‘omalu* (protect) and preserve the *Lāhui* (nation, race), even when the *Mō‘ī* (King) was as faultless in his *pono* as had been Kamehameha, why should the *Lāhui* continue to *mālama* (care for) the *Akua*?...They no longer viewed the *‘Aikapu* religion as *pono*.”<sup>4</sup>

Initially, the most valued contribution of the missionaries was the *palapala* (literacy), which enabled the chiefs to communicate with one another across the islands, facilitated participation in a rapidly evolving global trade network and put their sacred oral traditions in concrete form at a time when many of the old guardians of that tradition, the *kākā‘olelo*, were dying from introduced diseases. *Kahiki* (Tahiti) had converted to this same form of Christianity some decades prior, conveniently placing this new source of *pono* within the ancient “migrating chiefs” tradition of Pā‘ao and Pili. If New England was the source of Calvinism, a new religious system, then the mythic *Kahiki* metaphor could be transferred to America. The cultural meanings of the Hawaiian traditions of *pono*, *mana*, *kapu* and *kahiki* changed significantly with the adoption of Calvinist Christianity, but the mythical archetypes and essential categories of Hawaiian culture remained constant for many more decades, forming the world view of men like Elia Helekūnihi. Hawaiian Christianity was Hawaiian, propagated by Native Hawaiians under

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<sup>3</sup> The *‘aikapu*, constituted the core tabu religious system of pre-Christian Hawai‘i.

<sup>4</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land*, p. 81.

the direction of their chiefs, and professed by Hawaiians through the lens of Hawaiian culture and history because this was the only cultural category they knew. The chiefs made use of the New England missionaries to recreate Christianity in a Hawaiian mode. The chiefly family of Elia Helekūnihi participated in the Christianisation of their local district of Kaupō and fidelity to this American brand of Calvinist tradition remained constant throughout Elia's life.

In the historiography of the New England mission in Hawai'i, it has been rare to find scholars who honour the agency of the Hawaiian chiefs as key orchestrators of the mission. Early work suggested that the entire mission was conducted heroically by a handful of white missionaries, disregarding the record that by 1826 numerous schools and Calvinist meeting houses had been established in remote districts far from the residence of any of the missionaries.<sup>5</sup> Kaupō and Hāna are just two examples of communities where white missionaries found thriving Christian congregations, established by Hawaiian evangelists, long before they themselves were on the ground.<sup>6</sup> When he acknowledged the ministry of the evangelist, "Blind Bartimeus" (Pua'aiki), Rufus Anderson, Foreign Secretary of the ABCFM (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions), was rare among missionaries in recognising the role of Hawaiians in the growth of the church.<sup>7</sup> Ralph Kuykendall, the foremost historian of the Hawaiian Kingdom, tended to follow the traditional model, but broke new ground in suggesting that Hawaiians "aided" the mission: "A phase of missionary history overlooked was the aid

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<sup>5</sup> See Bingham, *A Residence*; C. S. Stewart, *Journal of a Residence in the Sandwich Islands, during the Years, 1823, 1824, and 1825: Including Remarks on the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press for Friends of the Library of Hawaii, 1970); Harold Whitman Bradley, *The American Frontier in Hawaii; the Pioneers 1789-1843* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1942).

<sup>6</sup> Daniel T. Conde, *Hana Mission Report*, 1839, Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, pp. 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> Anderson, Rufus, *History of the Missions: of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Hawaiian Islands* (MA: Congregational Pub. Society, 1875), pp. 209-19.

rendered by native assistants as interpreters, teachers of the language, and even exhorters.”<sup>8</sup> The magnitude of the problem of Native Hawaiian erasure is compounded by the fact that a man familiar with the sources like Kuykendall viewed Hawaiians as adjunct resources for the white missionaries. In fact, the record demonstrates that the missionaries assisted the chiefs, the primary agents of the Christian mission.

Some scholars embrace the agency of the chiefs in the spread of the *palapala*, while negating their interest in the religious component of the mission. David Chang demonstrates that the Hawaiian ‘Ōpūkaha‘ia inspired the missionaries in Connecticut prior to their embarkation for Hawai‘i, but downplays the role of religious faith in the conversion of the Hawaiians. “By their own initiative,” notes Chang, “Kānaka made a place for Christianity in Hawai‘i, and in large part their motive was to learn and explore and gain knowledge about matter that we today would not consider to be specifically religious.”<sup>9</sup> Despite Kame‘eleihiwa’s embrace of the dignity and determination of the *ali‘i* in facing cataclysmic change, she states that the *ali‘i* “were obliged to conform to the advice of their new *kāhuna*, regardless of their personal opinions.”<sup>10</sup> However, an analysis of the “opinions” of the chiefs demonstrates that they embraced the religious dimension of Christianity wholeheartedly as a means of strengthening and reforming the ancient *kapu* system and enabling their people to deal more effectively with the rapid changes that assaulted them.

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<sup>8</sup> Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1. (Honolulu, HI: University Press of Hawaii, 1938), p. 103.

<sup>9</sup> David A. Chang, *The World and All the Things upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), p. 80.

<sup>10</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Lands*, p. 141.

Christopher Bayly asserts that “conversion to Christianity accorded with the interests of powerful men in local societies” and “the victory of Christianity was achieved with the agency of local people.”<sup>11</sup> His suggestion, however, that “Christian education conferred literacy and literacy conferred power and economic status,” while inspiring indigenous intellectuals to adopt the narrative of “civilization” and “barbarism” that the cultural invaders had forced on them, implies that the religious motivation was secondary.<sup>12</sup> The Hawaiian chiefs demonstrated a clear interest in the religious dimension and were not “the simple-hearted victims of colonialism,” nor “participants in a moral and cognitive venture against oppression.”<sup>13</sup> They were men and women on a religious mission inspired and informed by their understanding of the Hawaiian mythic and cultural past.

In Hawai‘i, the religious system of Calvinism fit well into the old order of *kāpu* and *pono* under chiefly authority. John Barker suggests that, “Native agency in the spread of Christianity, without direct missionary involvement, resulted in new ways the religion was appropriated, absorbed, and redefined in local societies.”<sup>14</sup> Under the direction of Native chiefs and teachers, Calvinism assumed an Hawaiian cultural and theological perspective, one which endures to our own day. Cultural imperialism, however, was almost always a corollary of Christian missions. Peggy Brock’s view that indigenous preachers were the “footsoldiers” of the missionary movement influential in the larger imperial project of cultural colonialism supports my assertion that Hawaiian evangelists inadvertently contributed to the spread of Western cultural values as

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<sup>11</sup> Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, p. 335.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349; pp. 112, 118.

<sup>13</sup> Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. xiv, cited in Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> John Barker, “Where the Missionary Frontier Ran Ahead of Empire,” in Etherington, *Missions and Empire*, pp. 92-93.

footsoldiers of New England Calvinism.<sup>15</sup> They became purveyors, in particular, of Anglo-American legal principles in this “colonisation by stealth,” despite the absence in Hawai‘i in the early nineteenth century of an overt “imperial project.”

Ronald Williams has done much to recover the agency of Native Hawaiian Christians in defining their own faith and destiny.<sup>16</sup> Though he focusses on the struggle within the Hawaiian church against U.S. colonialism late in the century, he recovers the essential “Hawaiianness” of the church, rejecting the suggestion that Christianity is a “tool of foreign usurpers” that “has worked to elide Native claims on both God and nation.”<sup>17</sup> Sahlins examines a discrete district of O‘ahu, where the chiefs, not the missionaries, were primarily responsible for re-constituting Hawaiian society in the 1820s through imposing the *kapu* of Calvinist Christianity. This demonstrated their power and hegemony over both their white missionary assistants and the *maka‘āinana* (common people).<sup>18</sup> Jeffrey “Kapali” Lyon astutely observes, “The authority of the *ali‘i nui* in matters of land, government, and collective religious observation was absolute, both before and after the death of Kamehameha until the Constitution of 1840” (which instituted a constitutional monarchy).<sup>19</sup> Lyon insists that we cannot ignore that Christianity appealed to the Hawaiian chiefs, a likely observation when consulting the majority of sources, both Hawaiian and English. “Many of the Ali‘i, such as Ka‘ahumanu and her circle” he writes, “as well as Kamehameha’s *kahuna nui*, Hewahewa (as expressed in a letter the former high priest wrote to missionary Levi Chamberlain in 1830), even appear to have become as convinced of the

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<sup>15</sup> Peggy Brock, “New Christians as Evangelists,” in Etherington, *Missions and Empire* pp. 132-133.

<sup>16</sup> Williams, *Claiming Christianity*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vi.

<sup>18</sup> Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu*, p.69.

<sup>19</sup> Jeffrey “Kapali” Lyon, “Huliāmahi – Ali‘i and Missionary Collaboration During the First Twenty Years of the Sandwich Islands Mission,” *Kōkua Aku, Kōkua Mai: Chiefs, Missionaries, and Five Transformations of the Hawaiian Kingdom* / Edited by Thomas A. Woods (Honolulu, HI: Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, 2018), p.59.

promises of Christianity as the preachers who first proclaimed it to them. Ka‘ahumanu, more than any missionary, carried its message throughout the Kingdom and ordered its adoption with a fervour and sincerity that commanded the respect of a skeptical white evangelical world and the obedience of her people. Who of her people could refuse her?”<sup>20</sup>

Far from being manipulated by a small group of young white religious enthusiasts, the chiefs made use of the American missionaries to establish their new *kapu* system rooted in traditional Hawaiian categories. Conversion was sincere and serious, not submission to a foreign religious system, but a rearticulation of the Native Hawaiian *kapu* system. Elia Helekūnihi remained faithful to this system until his death in 1896. It informed and determined his religious, social and political identity as he navigated the complex world of Hawai‘i in the last decades of the Kingdom.

## **Out of Kahiki**

The Hawaiian tradition of the Pā‘ao story as an archetype for the arrival of a new religious system in the Islands was confirmed by Puget of the Vancouver expedition, who in 1793 was told by a priest that their existing religion originated with Pā‘ao. Puget wrote, “Their religion underwent a total change by the arrival of a Man from Taitah (Kahiki) who was suffered to land. His visit produced the morai (temple) & the present established form of worship, no other account could the Priest give of its origin.”<sup>21</sup> This provided a potent rationale for the adoption and promotion of Christianity by the chiefs in the 1820s.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.

<sup>21</sup> Lt. Peter Puget, *Fragments of Journals 1792-1794*, cited in Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 25.



Dorothy Barrere and Marshall Sahlins discuss the vital link between the Pā‘ao tradition and the arrival (also from “Kahiki”) and establishment of Calvinist Christianity in Hawai‘i.<sup>22</sup> In their study of the Tahitian influence on the conversion of the Hawaiian chiefs, they point out that the unsung players in the mission to Hawai‘i were the Tahitian missionaries, such as Toketa, Auna, Kahikona, and Kuke, themselves products of the earlier mission to Tahiti of the London Missionary Society.<sup>23</sup> The conversion of Pōmare II in 1812 may have been more influential on the future success of Christianity in Hawai‘i than the arrival of the New England missionaries in 1820. Tahitian converts played key roles at the courts of the Hawaiian chiefs, teaching *palapala*, assisting in the translation of the scriptures, and reinforcing the understanding that Calvinist Christianity was consistent with ancient Hawaiian religious and mythological traditions. The Tahitian language is a close cognate of Hawaiian and the Tahitians learned the language long before the U.S. missionaries, ensuring them a primary role in the establishment of *palapala* and Christianity among the Hawaiian chiefs. They enabled the Ka‘ahumanu *mā* chiefs to remake Christianity in a Hawaiian image.

Toketa, who arrived two years prior to the missionaries, taught the high chiefess Kekau‘ōnohi, possessor of many lands in Elia Helikūnihi’s district of Kaupō, and may have been the teacher of lesser chiefs such as Paul Nahaolelua and Paulo Kū.<sup>24</sup> The New England

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<sup>22</sup> Dorothy Barrere and Marshall Sahlins, “Tahitians in the Early History of Hawaiian Christianity: the Journal of Toketa,” *Hawaiian Journal of History*, vol. 23, 1989.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Barrere and Marshall Sahlins, “Tahitians,” p. 20; *Missionary Herald*, 1823, vol. 19, pp. 182-183. By 1822, Toketa had taught Kuakini how to read and subsequently moved to Maui, where he taught the impressive Governor Hoapili to read and guided him through his adoption of Christianity. See Charles Stewart, *Journal of a Residence in the Sandwich Islands* (Honolulu, 1970), p. 262. Toketa’s teaching informed Hoapili’s fierce adherence to Calvinist Christianity, which made Maui a bastion of the faith through the 1820s and 1830s. The English missionary, William Ellis, spoke of him as “a favourite with the chiefs, a diligent teacher.” See Barrere and Sahlins, “Tahitians,” p. 22.

missionaries lauded him as “a man of considerable discernment and discretion.”<sup>25</sup> Missionary Hiram Bingham claimed that, when Toketa wrote a letter to him on behalf of *ali‘i nui* Kuakini, “This may be considered as the commencement of epistolary correspondence in this language.”<sup>26</sup>

Auna arrived in Hawai‘i in 1822 with William Ellis and remained at the urgent request of the chiefs, living in the household of Ka‘ahumanu, teaching the chiefs the *palapala*, and explaining the Christian faith to the King and all the chiefs.<sup>27</sup> Missionary Charles Stewart emphasised his importance in the conversion of the chiefs, notably that of the most high-born chief in the Islands, Queen Keōpūolani, who “desired” him at her deathbed.<sup>28</sup> According to Stewart, Auna “was instrumental in enlightening the mind of this dying chief into salvation,” and by the ministrations of this Tahitian, she was the first and most important chiefly convert to the Calvinist mission.<sup>29</sup> The missionaries credited Auna, who was himself of Tahitian chiefly lineage, with convincing the Hawaiian chiefs that Christianity had been well-received in Tahiti (“Kahiki”) and, therefore it was a natural choice for the Hawaiians.<sup>30</sup>

Kahikona arrived in Hawai‘i in 1819, joining the entourage of Keli‘iahonui, son of Kaumuali‘i, last king of Kaua‘i, who had a strong connection with Nu‘u.<sup>31</sup> Keli‘iahonui wrote to

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<sup>25</sup> *Missionary Herald*, vol. 22, 1826, p.172.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 19, 1823, pp. 182-183.

<sup>27</sup> Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>28</sup> Stewart, *Journal*, p. 214.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* He was succeeded by the more famous Kaomi, who later lapsed from the Christian faith and became *aikāne* (close companion, sometimes male lover) of Kauikeaouli, King Kamehameha III. See Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, pp. 117-118. Auna functioned as a regular preacher at the Lahaina mission in the earliest days and was described by Stewart as a “Noble-looking man, a graceful speaker, and an enlightened and zealous Christian.” See Stewart, *Journal*, p. 210

<sup>30</sup> Stewart, *Journal*, p. 162.

<sup>31</sup> Keli‘iahonui was forced into a political marriage with Ka‘ahumanu in 1825 and, such was Kahikona’s importance to the Christian Hawaiian chiefs that he served as the couple’s personal teacher and chaplain. See Barrere and Sahlins, “Tahitians,” p. 23.

Jeremiah Everts of the A.B.C.F.M in 1823 to thank the board for “sending a teacher here to teach the *palapala* of the word of Jesus Christ.”<sup>32</sup> The early date of this letter suggests that Keali‘iahonui was Christianised early before the coming of the white missionaries, most likely through the efforts of Kahikona. As Keli‘iahonui and Kekau‘ōnohi both had strong ties to Nu‘u, it is possible that Kahikona was also instrumental in the conversion of Paul Nāhaolelua and Paulo Kū.”

The chiefs were eager to attach Tahitian teachers to their retinues because they established a powerful link with the concept of Kahiki as a main source of religious cult. These men assumed the position of old Hawaiian *kāhuna* “whose ceremonial functions and inspired counsels were indispensable to chiefly rule...and helped fill the sacerdotal void created by the abolition of the *kapu* in 1819.”<sup>33</sup> While the *haole* missionaries filled a similar void (Hiram Bingham was referred to as *kahuna nui*, “high priest”), the Tahitians filled a critical mythological niche, reproducing the legendary arrival in Hawai‘i of Pā‘ao from Kahiki with Pili, ancestor of the Hawai‘i Island chiefs, along with the religious cults (of the god Kū) that confirmed their legitimacy as rulers.<sup>34</sup>

The Hawaiian chiefs may have employed traditional metaphors to conceive of the New England missionaries as *kāhuna* from Kahiki, the mystical land of the gods beyond the horizon. A new religious system emerged from America, as one had once come from the Kahiki of

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<sup>32</sup> Keali‘iahonui (Keali‘iahonui) to Jeremiah Everts, November 8, 1823, Oahu, ABCFM Records, reel 793, frames 890-93, cited in Chang, *The World and all the Things Upon it*, p. 97.

<sup>33</sup> Barrere and Sahlins, “Tahitians,” p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Hawaiian tradition.<sup>35</sup> If the Tahitian missionaries had embodied the Pā‘ao tradition, we should not underestimate the role the New England missionaries may have played in the recapitulation of this ancient religious motif. Within this schema, for the chiefs, Calvinist Christianity was a genuine expression, though radically transformed, of a Hawaiian religious tradition. As Sahlins asserts, in the sequel to the November 1819 overthrow of the old *kapu* system, originally brought to Hawai‘i by Pa‘ao centuries before, “there would be another significant change, although perhaps better considered a permutation than a transformation, since the structure was preserved in an inversion of values.”<sup>36</sup> The structure preserved was the Pā‘ao myth, recapitulated in the establishment of Calvinist Christianity.

Calvinism, the rearticulated *kapu* system, would be the foundation of Hawaiian chiefly power under Ka‘ahumanu *mā*, for whom its rapid spread became a matter, not purely of religious urgency, but of political necessity. Despite the grandiose claims of the young New England missionaries, the Hawaiian chiefs ordered and facilitated the mission and were responsible for its success, the result of which was a genuinely Hawaiian institution, not the imposition of Yankee Christianity. Though Ka‘ahumanu *mā* attempted to control the young King Kamehameha III, he rebelled against the strictures of the new *kapu* order, only to submit eventually to it, cementing its role as the state religion of Hawai‘i for the duration of his reign (1825-1854).<sup>37</sup> It is not surprising, then, that many Hawaiian traditionalists of lesser *ali ‘i* status, like Elia Helekūnihi, remained true to this faith until their dying day.

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<sup>35</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, p. 11; Malo et al, *Mo‘olelo*, 4:4-26, n. p. 77. In Hawaiian, *Kahiki* refers to a mystical land of divine and human origins beyond and above the horizon, to any foreign country and to the actual island, Tahiti, in the Society Islands.

<sup>36</sup> Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 64.

<sup>37</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, pp. 117,121-122.

## *Nā Mikionalī*

### **The New England Missionaries and the Calvinist Mission**

The traditional nineteenth century narrative celebrated the 1820 New England missionaries as heroic saviours of the Hawaiian people from the “darkness,” “debauchery,” and “baseness” of “gross heathenism.”<sup>38</sup> Yankee Calvinist reactions to their first sight of the Hawaiians, for whom they had sailed thousands of miles on a “mission of mercy, wholly a labour of love,” was startlingly negative and racist in the extreme.<sup>39</sup> “The appearance of destitution, degradation, and barbarism, among the chattering, and almost naked savages, whose heads and feet, and much of their sunburnt swarthy skins, were bare, was appalling,” wrote Hiram Bingham, leader of the Mission in its early years.<sup>40</sup> Clarissa Richards echoed Bingham on the occasion of her first encounter with Hawaiians in 1823: “I had often heard of the heathen, -- I had often spoken of them, (perhaps with indifference) – but now I saw them wretched, degraded, ignorant of that “name by which alone they can be saved”, and my heart bled for them.”<sup>41</sup> Despite their self-image as compassionate men and women engaged in a high calling of salvation, the missionaries carried notions of racial and cultural supremacy which fed into the Social Darwinism of their descendants later in the century.

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<sup>38</sup> Chang, *The World and all the Things Upon it*, pp. 28, 83.

<sup>39</sup> *Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Islands Mission* (Lahainaluna, 1838), cited in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, p. 101.

<sup>40</sup> Bingham, *Residence*, p. 81.

<sup>41</sup> Clarissa Richards Journal, 25 April, 1823, HMCS Digital Archive, Accessed 8 October 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/browse?collection=145>.

Participants in the early missionary movement in the young American republic viewed themselves, according to historian Emily Conroy-Krutz, as partners in “Britain’s role as a moral guide to the world; in joining the work of global missions, the United States became Britain’s peer.”<sup>42</sup> The impetus was both evangelistic and imperial as Americans understood their role in terms of “improving” the world in the image of the young republic. Rooted in Anglo-American views on the superiority of Protestant culture, they saw their mission as an imperative to make other nations “equal members of Christ’s family and to counter the exploitation that they believed inherent in ‘heathen’ societies.”<sup>43</sup> The American missionary movement was, therefore, inspired by a “benevolent” passion to save Native peoples from themselves. Because American society was “the embodiment of civilisation, the pinnacle of human social and cultural organisation,” they endeavoured to bring the blessing and enlightenment of this civilisation to “heathen” nations that walked in darkness.<sup>44</sup> Prior to their departure to Hawai‘i in the autumn of 1819, Dr. Samuel Worcester, corresponding secretary of the ABCFM, delivered formal instructions to the young missionaries. “Your mission” he exclaimed, was “to a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without order, and where the light is darkness.”<sup>45</sup> Elia Helekunihi and others among the missionised Hawaiians similarly viewed America as the source of “enlightenment” and “civilisation” (*na ‘auao*) in order to justify the annexation of Hawai‘i by the U.S.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, pp. xiii-xvii.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>45</sup> “From the Boston Recorder,” *Newburyport (MA) Herald*, 26 October, 1819. Cited in Noelani Arista, *The Kingdom and the Republic: Sovereign Hawai‘i and the Early United States* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press., 2019), p. 93.

<sup>46</sup> Political historian Brett Bowden summarises the Christian civilising mission by examining the development of the narrative of “uplift” that characterised this mission. See Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization*, p. 2-14. Since the Enlightenment, Bowden asserts, an idea of “progress” has informed the architects of international society. Characterised by the belief that “there seems to be a point to it all,” the West’s march to modernity has been understood as the expansion of “the empire of civilization.” “Progress,” according Bowden, is rooted in the

To the missionaries, Hawaiians were “savages,” essentially children, requiring the tutelage of rational adults. They were incapable of separating the inculcation of Christian faith from their “civilising” programme, which required the adoption of the superficial accoutrements of Western culture. Gingham dresses, frame houses, and the cultivation of wheat instead of traditional Hawaiian crops were regarded as “godly” and “civilised.”<sup>47</sup> The missionaries had, after all, been exhorted to “aim at nothing short of covering those islands with fruitful fields and pleasant dwellings, and schools and churches; of raising up the whole people to an elevated state of Christian civilization; of bringing, or preparing the means of bringing, thousands and millions of the present and succeeding generations to the mansions of eternal blessedness.”<sup>48</sup> Their aim was nothing less than to transform Hawai‘i into a facsimile of rural New England.

Much has been written about the events that inspired the New England missionaries to set sail on their “benevolent” mission to bring the light of Christian faith and learning to the Hawaiians.<sup>49</sup> Attention was drawn to the Hawaiian Islands due to their important position in the mid-Pacific in the Yankee-China trade. Christopher Bayly’s assertion that “All local histories must be global histories” applies to Hawai‘i, where U.S. pan-Pacific commercial interests

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understanding that humanity progresses from an original “savagery,” through “barbarism,” culminating in “civilization,” the apex of progress.

<sup>47</sup> Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, pp. 112, 238.

<sup>48</sup> *Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Islands Mission* (Lahaina, 1838), pp. 19-20.

<sup>49</sup> See especially Chang, *The World and All the Things Upon it*, pp. 82-92 for an insightful analysis of the life of the Hawaiian traveller ‘Ōpūkaha‘ia who came to New England in the 1810s and “inspired” the mission to Hawai‘i; for the classic historiography that views the events of the time from the Western perspective see Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Hawaiian Islands*; Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom vol. 1*; and Bradley, *The American Frontier in Hawaii*.

inspired and facilitated the Christian “civilising mission.”<sup>50</sup> The combined commercial and religious interests of the U.S. provided the foundation for the colonial interest that grew over the long century. The missionaries were accused of having political designs on the Hawaiian Kingdom, yet remained consistently adamant that they had no interest in such meddling.<sup>51</sup> Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM on the subject were, in fact, clear in stating that they must “abstain from all interference with the local and political views of the people,” and “stand aloof from the private and transient interests of the chiefs and rulers.”<sup>52</sup> Their mission was to be purely evangelistic and “benevolent,” despite the active role in government several of them eventually took and the evolving colonial desires of their descendants during the course of the century. However, the Western religious, cultural and political hegemony they imposed on the Island Kingdom through their dominance of government and education enabled American values to saturate Hawai‘i to such a degree that many, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, already viewed the Kingdom as an appendage of the U.S.<sup>53</sup> This “colonisation by stealth” was not the product of articulated design, but occurred through the inculcation among Hawaiians that “civilisation” was an ideal toward which they must progress and that the U.S. manifested its finest iteration.

While missionary descendants and other *haoles* in the latter part of the nineteenth century came to embrace Social Darwinism, redefining Hawaiians as incapable, the missionaries themselves exhibited a high degree of respect, even devotion, toward the Hawaiian chiefs and

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<sup>50</sup> Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Stephen Reynolds and Pauline King, *The Journals of Stephen Reynolds Vol. 1* (Salem MA: Ku Pa‘a, 1989), 1824-1826, *passim*.

<sup>52</sup> *Missionary Herald*, XIX, April, 1823. Cited in Bradley, *The American Frontier*, 168.

<sup>53</sup> Nordhoff, *Northern California, Oregon and the Sandwich Islands*, pp. 22-24, 96.



their authority.<sup>54</sup> As both children of the Great Awakening and the Enlightenment, they often saw beauty and kindness in the Hawaiian people. Missionary Charles Stewart left a glowing, almost homoerotic, account of an encounter with a beautiful young man on the path to Waikīkī in 1825, “whose black eye sparkled with youth and spirit; and every motion was free as the wind, in which his light mantle flowed gracefully from his shoulders.”<sup>55</sup> Theodosia Green was delighted by the warmth and gracious hospitality of the chiefs: “Perhaps there were never Missionaries more cordially received. All the Chief Rulers of the nation have given us a cordial welcome.”<sup>56</sup> Despite these examples of love and respect for Hawaiians, missionaries lamented that the “sins” of the people would exterminate the race. Richard Armstrong wrote in 1836, “We see more and more every year of the instability of the native character. Adultery is still as it ever has been the besetting sin of the nation. It is this single sin, too, that is bringing down the judgments of God and exterminating the race.”<sup>57</sup> They assumed a future when the Islands would be in the hands of a more “worthy” race and, as it happens, that “race” would be their children.

The consequence of privileging white missionary voice over that of Hawaiians is that conventional histories place a disproportionate emphasis on the role of the New England missionaries in the Christianisation of the Islands. The missionaries were prodigious in letter and journal writing and meticulous in keeping records of every kind, a product of their New England Puritan heritage and the universal practice of missionaries of corresponding with communities back home to assure funding. It was expedient for them to exaggerate the progress of the

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<sup>54</sup> For the adulation of Queens Keopūolani and Ka‘ahumanu see Bingham, *Residence*, pp. 183, 241.

<sup>55</sup> Stewart, *Journal*, p. 134.

<sup>56</sup> Theodosia Green, “Green, Theodosia - Journal - 1827-1828,” Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive, accessed October 8, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/77>.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Armstrong to Reuben Chapman, Boston, November 8, 1836, Archives of the Maui Historical Society, Wailuku.

mission, the “hopeful” signs of conversion, the march of literacy and the adoption by Hawaiians of “civilised” dress, furniture, housing and all manner of Western habits as indications of their success.<sup>58</sup> The degree to which the missionaries projected the most superficial signs of “civilisation,” understood in terms of silks and sofas, onto the Hawaiians as indications of their advancement in Christian faith would be comical if it were not for the pernicious effect it had on the economy of the Kingdom and the well-being of the common people. Neglecting food production, they strenuously provided their chiefs with products, notably sandalwood, demanded by Western traders for the purchase of imported luxuries.<sup>59</sup>

The missionaries were well-educated, many of them graduates of Dartmouth, Williams, Amherst, Yale and Princeton, but young and naive. Because of their “high” calling and the adulation they received from their communities back home, they had an inflated sense of themselves and their importance in the great mission for which they were appointed by God himself. Despite their inflated notions of grand importance, they were dependent on the chiefs for their very survival, which from the Hawaiian perspective, put the balance of power in favour of the Hawaiians. Though the missionaries saw the generosity of the chiefs in proffering gifts and foodstuffs as a sign of divine providence, for the chiefs these actions merely clarified the missionaries’ status as subject peoples. Thigpen suggests that by requesting and receiving offerings of Western clothing, the chiefs assumed the traditional Hawaiian position of receiving *ho’okupu* (ceremonial gift-giving to the chiefs) of *kapa* (bark cloth) from their inferiors.<sup>60</sup> When the missionary experience is viewed through a Hawaiian cultural lens, and not solely from the

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<sup>58</sup> See January 1824 journal of “Messrs. Stewart and Richards at Lahinah,” *Missionary Herald*, September, 1825.

<sup>59</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, pp. 253-254.

<sup>60</sup> Thigpen, *Island Queens*, pp. 69-70.

perspective of Anglo-American observers, the Christian chiefs can be seen, not as the “simple-hearted victims of colonialism,” but as free agents of the destiny of their people, making choices, rooted in Hawaiian tradition, which they believed were wise and good at a time of cataclysmic change and demographic crisis.<sup>61</sup>

In May 1819, the great Kamehameha died and the following summer Queen Keōpūolani initiated the *‘ai noa* (free-eating, the end of eating *kapu*, “tabus”) by eating publicly with her young son, Kauikeaouli, in defiance of her elder son, Liholiho, the successor to the throne. In October, Liholiho himself made the decision to abolish the Hawaiian religious *kapu* system altogether by eating publicly at the women’s table. According to some sources, Hewahewa, Kamehameha’s *kahuna nui* advised the young king to do away with the old gods of Hawai‘i entirely.<sup>62</sup> It was customary for *‘ai noa* to follow the death of the ruling chief and for the new *kapu* to be restored by the new ruler after a prescribed period of mourning following the old traditions. It was believed that if a new *kapu* was not proclaimed the king would not have a long reign. Failure to restore the *kapu* was considered to be the impious act of one who “did not believe in a god...Such people were looked upon as lower than slaves.”<sup>63</sup> The *‘ai noa*, therefore, must be seen as a bold statement on the part of *Ka ‘ahumanu mā*, the powerful female Maui chiefly wives of Kamehameha, who reflected on Hawaiian tradition to take their people in a new direction.

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<sup>61</sup> Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, p. xiv, cited in Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, p. 6.

<sup>62</sup> Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, pp. 67-68.

<sup>63</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, p. 207; Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs*, p. 222.

When the missionaries landed on Hawai‘i Island on 31 March 1820, the culture of both New England missionaries and that of the Native Hawaiian chiefs was both “reproduced in action” and “historically altered in action.”<sup>64</sup> Hiram Bingham and others quietly recognised that internal movements within Hawaiian society may have led to the *‘ai noa* and the overthrowing of the idols. The death of the revered Kamehameha and the fact that the Hawaiian people were dying in frightening numbers from introduced diseases, while the foreigners, who did not observe the *kapu* thrived, precipitated the Hawaiian religious revolution.<sup>65</sup> However, for these Calvinists, enthralled by a postmillennial theology bent on the conversion of the “heathen,” the theme of divine Providence, whereby the hand of God was at work in overthrowing the demons to prepare the way of the Lord was more critical. “Whatever may have been the immediate cause or causes of this singular event, the pious heart will recognise in it the hand of Him, who doeth all things according to his good pleasure, and who, only can ‘IN THE WILDERNESS, PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD...”<sup>66</sup> According to Bingham, Kamehameha’s death was regarded as a sign of the “impotency” of the old Hawaiian gods, thus shaking the “superstitious confidence” the people had in them. Moreover, “The Providence of God, for some wise purpose of which Kamehameha had no conception, had led him to allow almost equal authority to Kaahumanu...”<sup>67</sup> Within the Calvinist mythic universe, in which “the hand of God” orchestrates all events, the rise of Ka‘ahumanu constituted an archetypal situation. Though Ka‘ahumanu, according to Bingham, was merely asserting “the rights of women” at the occasion of the *‘ai noa*, the hand of God, working in mysterious ways, prepared the way for the Gospel by raising up the woman who would eventually be the sponsor of the Christian mission. Regardless of her

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<sup>64</sup> Sahlins, *Islands of History*, pp. vii, 138.

<sup>65</sup> Bingham, *Residence*, pp. 77-8; Stewart, *Journal*, pp.36-7.

<sup>66</sup> Stewart, *Journal*, p. 37. Bold type in the original text.

<sup>67</sup> Bingham, *Residence*, 77.

significance in the promotion of Christianity, the missionaries could only view her as an instrument of *their* work. Only their agency was responsible for the Christianisation of Hawai‘i, not hers, or any other Hawaiian due to their postmillennial theology that “precluded the possibility of ‘heathen’ acting in ways that could willingly aid in the spread of the gospel.”<sup>68</sup>

At the “conjuncture” of 1820, the Hawaiian chiefs reproduced in action the patterns of their own mythic universe and these patterns continued to motivate them in the succeeding years as they orchestrated the Christianisation of their kingdom. Kame‘eleihiwa concurs with Bingham’s theory that the ‘*ai noa* resulted from the crisis after the death of Kamehameha.<sup>69</sup> The chiefs began a search for a new source of *mana* (spiritual power) in a traditional Hawaiian process known as ‘*imihaku* (a chief or priest seeking a new master) because the gods of the old *kapu* religion were no longer regarded as *pono*. According to Kame‘eleihiwa, “To the extent that Ka‘ahumanu could offer the *Ali‘i Nui* a new *pono*, she would become the true source of *mana* for the nation. When Ka‘ahumanu declared that ‘we intend to eat pork and bananas and coconuts (all foods denied to women under the old ‘*ai kapu*), and to live as the white people do,’ possibly she meant ‘to live...’ ‘*ai noa* was the white man’s secret to life.”<sup>70</sup> Having constructed a satisfactory view of the ‘*ai noa* using Hawaiian modes of meaning, Kame‘eleihiwa declares the arrival of the missionaries in 1820 as “unfortunate for the Hawaiian race,” because “their precipitous arrival did not allow enough time for a new Hawaiian religion to emerge, one more appropriate to Hawaiian culture and the changing times... Tragically for Hawaiians, the Calvinists settled upon

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<sup>68</sup> Lyon, “Huliāmahī,” p. 65.

<sup>69</sup> See Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land*, p 81: “Yet despite his *pono*, the people continued to die at a horrendous rate. Why should the Lāhui continue to *mālama* (care for) the Akua (gods), when the Akua did not protect their lives?”

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

our shores, preaching a religion that offered a new set of rules for the determination of *pono*. As these new rules were not particularly sympathetic to Hawaiian custom, the *Ali'i Nui* did not rush to convert.”<sup>71</sup>

However, the sources suggest that the chiefs were, in fact, eager to adopt the new religion as a rearticulation of the old *kapu* order.<sup>72</sup> When Ka‘ahumanu fell ill in December 1821, she attributed her recovery to the *mana* of Bingham’s prayers.<sup>73</sup> Charles Stewart recorded that when the missionaries first arrived in 1820, “The haughty and powerful queen Kaahumanu was at first exceedingly jealous of the teachers.”<sup>74</sup> By May 1823, she “expressed her full determination to serve Jehovah and to keep his law.”<sup>75</sup> In December 1825, as recorded by the Hawaiian Kamakau, Ka‘ahumanu demonstrated that she was already a devout Christian: “My heart is loving you so very much; my mind yearns for us all to seek the presence of Jehovah, our Father. May we all trust in Jesus, that we may all be saved by God. My heart accepts the Word of God above.”<sup>76</sup> The Queen then proceeded to plead with her people to accept the Christian faith.

Kamakau tells us that shortly before her death and baptism in September 1823, the sacred *ali'i nui* Keōpūolani demonstrated faith in God. She retired to Lahaina, bringing with her two

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 138-9.

<sup>72</sup> Archer suggests that “fatalism was central to the Christianization of Hawai’i.” I maintain that the chiefs’ rearticulation of the *kapu* order in the form of Calvinism was a positive means of defining Hawai’i’s relationship with the larger world based on traditional Hawaiian modes of thinking. See Archer, *Sharks*, p. 200.

<sup>73</sup> Bingham, *A Residence*, p. 149. This is, of course, Bingham’s own account of the events.

<sup>74</sup> Stewart, *Journal*, p. 164.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>76</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, p. 96. “*Ke aloha nui nei nō ko ‘u na ‘au iā ‘oukou; e ake nō ko ‘u mana ‘o e huli mai nō kākou a pau loa i mua i ke alo o Iehōva, o ko kākou makua. E hilina ‘i kākou a pau iā Iesū, i ola kākou a pau loa i ke akua. Ke lawe nei ka na ‘au i ka ‘ōlelo a ke akua ma luna.*”

missionaries, Stewart and Richards, and two Tahitian Christian teachers, Auna and Taua.<sup>77</sup>

There, she had prayers offered before meals, as well as family prayers. Kamakau writes, “These pious Boraborans became the persons who taught Keōpūolani the worship of God and showed her the way of life to reach heaven.”<sup>78</sup> Missionary William Richards, who was present at her death, recorded her admonition to the young King Liholiho: “Protect the missionaries, and be kind to them. Walk in the straight path. Keep the Sabbath. Serve God. Love him, and love Jesus Christ. Attend also to the word of God, that you may be happy, and that we two may meet in heaven.”<sup>79</sup> Though we can allow for missionary poetic licence by Richards, Kamakau tells us that at her death, chief Hoapili forbade traditional Hawaiian mourning rituals because Keōpūolani “had given herself to God in heaven.”<sup>80</sup> Kamakau could not resist a pious exclamation at the conversion of this beloved queen: “Blessed indeed was the faith of Keōpūolani in God!”<sup>81</sup> The chiefs clearly embraced Christianity wholeheartedly without coercion and embarked on a systematic programme to make Calvinism the established faith of the kingdom. Kame‘eleihiwa asserts that “Christianity had so transformed the definition of *pono* that the *Mō‘ī* (king) and the *Ali‘i Nui* were obliged to conform to the advice of their new *kāhuna*, regardless of their personal opinions.”<sup>82</sup> “Their personal opinions,” however, suggest that these were strong and determined men and women whose adoption of Christianity was sincere and rooted in traditional Hawaiian modes of thinking.

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<sup>77</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, p. 257.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258. “Ua lilo kēia po‘e Borabora haipule i po‘e nāna e a‘o iā Keōpūolani i ka haipule ‘ana, a me ke kuhikuhi ‘ana i ke alanui o ke ola e hiki ai i ka lani...”

<sup>79</sup> William Richards, *Memoir of Keopuolani, Late Queen of the Sandwich Islands, 1825* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2011).

<sup>80</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Kumu Aupuni*, p. 259. “ua hā‘awi ‘o ia iā ia ke akua i ka lani.”

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, “Pōmaika‘i nō ka man‘o‘i‘o o Keōpūolani i ke akua...”

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

## ***Nā Kaukaual'i***

### **The Lesser Chiefs, Agents of the Christian Mission**

When the chiefs made the choice to replace the old *kapu* system for the new *kapu* of Calvinist Christianity, the *kuleana* of the chiefly retainers required that they follow suit. The influence and power that the families of Ka‘ahumanu (regent 1819 to 1832) and High Chief Ulumāheihei Hoapili, governor of Maui (c.1826-1840), on the spread of both *palapala* and Christianity was immense. Proselytisation occurred through the efforts of a massive cadre of Hawaiian *kaukaual'i* educated at the courts of the *ali'i nui* and sent out by their chiefs to the *kua'āina* (country districts) to establish schools and worship centres. The white missionaries were few in number, not yet proficient in the Hawaiian language and reticent to leave the security of the chiefly and white mercantile centers of Honolulu, Lāhaina, Hilo, and Waimea. Missionaries and Tahitians provided the early teaching of the high chiefs and their retainers and, with Hawaiian assistance, developed the written form of the Hawaiian language. They established a printing press, organised the translation of the Bible and provided patterns and modalities for teaching and establishing schools, but Native Hawaiians did the leg-work in the districts. Thriving schools under the new *kapu* of Calvinism became, “a useful way of extending the Ka‘ahumanu regime into the countryside.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu*, p. 70.



The Christianity of this early period had a distinctive Hawaiian cultural flavour, rearticulating a variety of traditional indigenous practices, such as the annual circuit of each island by the *ali 'i nui* during the *Makahiki* (New Year) season to collect taxes and reconsecrate temples to reconfirm their reign.<sup>84</sup> Ka'ahumanu and other chiefs made a point of making annual circuits, with or without the missionaries, around the islands, travelling in a clock-wise direction in imitation of the ancient *Makahiki* circuit, dedicating churches and enforcing Calvinistic religious *kapu*. Missionary Sheldon Dibble wrote, "Kaahumanu and other high chiefs made repeated tours around all the principal islands...assembling the people from village to village and delivering addresses day after day in which they prohibited immoral acts, enjoined the observance of the Christian Sabbath, encouraged people to learn to read, and exhorted them to love and obey the Saviour as sinners."<sup>85</sup> According to Kamakau, Ka'ahumanu was eager to spread the word of God in all her travels and "It was truly known that in her works she was contented and her face showed delight when men and women worshipped with her and her eyes expressed pleasure when the people continuously read portions of Holy Scripture."<sup>86</sup> He tells us that she herself "went about O'ahu preaching God's Word."<sup>87</sup> The *ali 'i*, not the missionaries, generally organized the construction of churches, to which they gave the name *luakini*, the term used for large temples of human sacrifice under the old order. The construction and rededication of *luakini* in pre-Christian times was the privilege of rule, as the building of churches would also

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* p. 71.

<sup>85</sup> Sheldon Dibble, *History of the Sandwich Islands / by Sheldon Dibble*. -- (Lahainaluna: Press of the Mission seminary, 1843), p. 179.

<sup>86</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō'ī*, p. 77: "Ua 'ike maoli 'ia ma kāna mau hana, ua 'olu'olu a ua le'ale'a kona mau helehelena i ke kanaka, ka wahine e haipule pū ana me ia, a ua 'olu'olu nō ho'i kona mau maka i ka po'e e heluhelu mau ana i nā 'āpana o ka palapala hemolele."

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

be.<sup>88</sup> When Elia Helekūnihi built his own church at Anahola in 1864, he called it a *luakini*, a demonstration of his chiefly status.<sup>89</sup>

Ka‘ahumanu *mā* made use of the naive and enthusiastic young New Englander missionaries to support their own religious and political agenda to restore the *kapu* system and maintain balance, harmony and prosperity through the *pono* behaviour of the high chiefs. Davida Malo placed a great emphasis on the importance of the practice of *pono* among the chiefs, who must be modest and kind, act deliberately, with patience and respect for others.”<sup>90</sup> As Hawaiian chiefs, this is how they were to function if they were to maintain their rule, regardless of the guidance or remonstrations of *haole* missionaries. Sahlins asserts that the tabu system was not totally abolished in 1819, “but rather, it was preserved in a transposed form.”<sup>91</sup> The Calvinist Church of Ka‘ahumanu *mā* was a national church, a genuinely Hawaiian institution, recapitulating ancient Hawaiian values and categories, and as in pre-Christian Hawai‘i, there were serious consequences for non-participating citizens.<sup>92</sup>

As a young man, Paulo Kū is likely to have been summoned to the residence of the *ali‘i nui* at Lahaina to learn *palapala* and the new faith and sent back to Nu‘u to open the school in the mid-1820s during the great wave of school foundation under Queen Ka‘ahumanu and Governor

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<sup>88</sup> Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu*, p. 71; *Missionary Herald*, vol. 21, 1825, p. 98; for the purpose of the *luakini* in ancient Hawai‘i, see Davida Malo, *Mo‘olelo*, 37:10-15.

<sup>89</sup> *Ka Hoku Loa*, 21 June 1864, 6.

<sup>90</sup> Davida Malo, *Mo‘olelo*, 38:101.

<sup>91</sup> Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu*, p. 73.

<sup>92</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, p. 65. In 1830, Queen Ka‘ahumanu, not the missionaries, banned the *hula*, chant, songs of pleasure, foul speech and women bathing in public places; Sahlins and Kirch, *Anahulu*, pp. 72-3.

Hoapili. Though formally admitted to the rolls of the church at Hāna in 1843, Paulo would have been active as an evangelist and teacher long before this.<sup>93</sup> Hāna was the location of the nearest formal missionary station, which was not established until 1838. There were, however, schools in Kaupō as early as 1827 and a school and Protestant meeting house (“the old school lot” across the County Road from the fish pond) were established at Nu‘u around this time or shortly thereafter.<sup>94</sup> Paulo became the “head of the church at Nu‘u,” not pastor, but in the capacity of lay elder, because the white missionaries refused to ordain a Native Hawaiian until 1849.<sup>95</sup>

It appears that the extended family of Elia Helekūnihi formed the coterie of *kaukau* ‘i sent to the district to teach and proselytise by Ka‘ahumanu *mā*. His brother S. (Solomona?) Aki, long-time head of the school at Nu‘u, and his wife Kaaiohelo named their son Huakini (also called Kia), referencing the location of the family *kauhale* (homestead) on the bay of that name

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<sup>93</sup> Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, p.114. Due to the missionaries’ requirement of rigorous preparation and review, Hawaiians were not formally admitted to membership of the church for many years.

<sup>94</sup> *Ka Hae Hawaii*, 19 May 1858; Jackson, “Map of Nu‘u Harbor, 1882,” Reg. 1229, Hawai‘i State Survey Office; Annual Report of Pastor Paul W. Kaawa to the Hawaiian Evangelical Association, June 1866 to May 1867, HMCS Archives. Kaawa specifically states that “there is at Nu‘u a meeting house built by the Church and Protestant school teachers taught in that house when Armstrong was President of the Board of Education (1847-1855).” We know, however, from other sources that there was a school here as early as 1828. The *Missionary Herald* of 1829 described an eye-witness account of an *ali‘i* circuit of Maui in the summer of 1828, whereby the 13 year-old Princess Nāhi‘en‘ena preached in Kaupō to those who “stood aloof from instruction, who feared the *palapala*.” “Proceeded on our way, about five miles by water, and three by land brought us to Kaupo, where we examined another very large school. We were particularly pleased with the speech of the princess to the people of this district; addressing those who stood aloof from instruction, who feared the ‘palapala,’ she contrasted the present with the former times. ‘Formerly we,’ (meaning the chiefs) ‘were the terror of the country. When visiting your district, we should, perhaps, have bidden you erect an *heiau*; and, after you were worn out with this labor, we should have sacrificed you in it. Now, we bring you the *palapala*, the word of God, and why should you fear it?’” Few people are apt to think how common human sacrifices were at these islands, while under the dominion of heathenism. But here the princess tells the people, that, according to the old system, the chiefs would have offered some of them in sacrifice, without the least scruple or hesitation. “After walking about three miles farther, we reached Nuei (Nu‘u), a small village, where we examined a small school, and tarried over night. Here we found another large canoe, sent from Lahaina, to our assistance.” See *Missionary Herald*, 1829, p.246.

<sup>95</sup> Nancy J. Morris and Robert Benedetto, *Na Kahu. Portraits of Native Hawaiian Pastors at Home and Abroad, 1820-1900* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2019), p. 159.

at the western extremity of Nu‘u.<sup>96</sup> Kia was *hanaied* (adopted) by Elia’s aunt, Helekūnihi, and her husband Paul Nahaolelua, early teacher at Kaupō and *hanai* son of John Young, a valued Englishman in the entourage of King Kamehameha.<sup>97</sup> Nahaolelua was said to be the son or grandson of Ke‘eaumoku, twin brother of Kamanawa. As such, he had family connections to the chiefs of Kaupō and it made sense that he was sent to the district as teacher and apostle of the new faith.<sup>98</sup> Nahaolelua, future governor of Maui and advisor to the kings, became one of the most prominent statesmen of nineteenth century Hawai‘i. Through marriage, therefore, Elia Helekūnihi was connected to significant Hawaiian players in the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, positioning him well for a life of social, religious and political influence.

## **Noa and the Hawaiian Great Awakening**

The *moku* (district) of Kaupō was still thriving and well-populated when Helekūnihi was born in 1839. In the first census conducted by the missionaries in 1831-32, Kaupō with 3,220 persons, was one of the most populated districts on Maui, and when the missionaries toured East Maui in August 1833 the schools there had almost 400 students, significantly more than any other district.<sup>99</sup> By 1836, the population had declined to 1,985, a precipitous drop from the

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<sup>96</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May 1876; School Reports, Maui 4th District, 1841, 1842, 1847, 1848, 1852, 1855, 1857, Hawai‘i State Archives; *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com>: accessed 12 June 2019), memorial page for Paul Nahaolelua (11 Sep 1806–15 Sep 1875), Find a Grave Memorial no. 5019435, citing Hale Aloha Cemetery, Lahaina, Maui County, Hawaii, USA ; Maintained by Vicki DeLeo (contributor 7889596).

<sup>97</sup> We are told that Nahaolelua was “of distinguished descent, tracing his ancestry to exalted High Chiefs associated with the reign of Kamehameha the Great.” His father or grandfather, it is said, was no less than Ke‘eaumoku Pāpa‘iahiahi, brother of Kamanawa, counselor to Kamehameha, and father of Queen Ka‘ahumanu. See *Honolulu Advertiser*, 11 April 1940, 20. He was also *hanai* brother to Fanny Young, mother of the future Queen Emma, with whom he remained a close confidant. A prominent statesman in the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, he participated in the creation of the constitution of 1840, sat on the King’s Privy Council and served as governor of Maui from 1852 to 1874.

<sup>98</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 25 September 1875, 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ka Lama Hawaii*, April 4, 1834, 3.

estimated 17,500 prior to 1778.<sup>100</sup> Still, it remained a vital community through Helekūnihi's childhood and beyond, as revealed by the school reports of the Board of Education, established in 1840. The first official report for 1841 revealed that Kaupō had an astonishing nine schools with ten teachers and 531 students. The school at Nu'u, under the administration of Elia's uncle, S. Aki, had 100 children at this time, and enrollment did not seriously decline until the 1860s.<sup>101</sup>

There are convincing parallels between the rhythms of the ancient Hawaiian traditions of *kapu* and *noa* and the patterns of religious and social life under the Christian chiefs.<sup>102</sup> The release of the 'ai *kapu* that resulted with the 'ai *noa* of the sacred queens of Kamehameha, Keōpūolani and Ka'ahumanu in 1819 accorded with ancient practice following the death of a high chief. Traditionally, the 'ai *noa* was a brief ten day period of license with the removal of the *kapu*, establishing a period of ritual inversion until the heir ascended to the throne and restored the *kapu* order. After the famous 'ai *noa* of 1819, however, Ka'ahumanu chose to prolong the period of ritual license, only reimposing the *kapu* in the form of Calvinist Christianity five years later with the death of Kamehameha's young son and successor, Liholiho.<sup>103</sup>

With the death of Ka'ahumanu in 1832, again came the traditional *noa* that marked the death of the *ali 'i nui*. The young Mō'i Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III) instituted a release of the *kapu* of Calvinism and the kingdom enjoyed a period of *le 'ale 'a* (amusements), often referred to

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<sup>100</sup> *Mission Census, Hawaiian Islands, 1831-1832* and *Mission Census, Hawaiian Islands, 1836*, Hawaiian Mission Childrens Society Archives.

<sup>101</sup> *School Reports, Maui, Fourth District, Kingdom of Hawaii, 1841-1865*, AH.

<sup>102</sup> Sahlins, *Islands of History*, p. 155.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

as “the King’s Revolt,” from the missionaries’ perspective a time of alarming backsliding from the *pono* of Calvinism. This included rum and ‘awa (kava) consumption, *hula*-dancing, gambling, and sexual pleasure, indulged in by both *maka ‘āinana* and many of the *ali ‘i*, much to the horror of the American missionaries.<sup>104</sup>

Missionaries noted a marked decrease in interest in Christian faith and observance of Calvinist mores in the months following the passing of Ka‘ahumanu. Ancient games, gambling, and the flying of kites, all of which had been banned under the Queen’s puritanical regime, were revived. Missionary William Alexander complained to a colleague that “multitudes, tired of the restraints of the gospel, had lost all interest in religion.”<sup>105</sup> “The people were still “heathen in their desires” and longed for “the days of former darkness.”<sup>106</sup> There was decreased interest and attendance in schools across the islands and the quality of the teachers, as well as the moral state, declined.<sup>107</sup> This period of the classic *noa* following the death of a high chief persisted for several years, and was manifested in declining church attendance across the Islands. In 1834, Levi Chamberlain complained that the people of Honolulu had “cast off entirely the fear of God.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land*, pp. 157-60. How this played out in Nu‘u we have no record, but we do have an account of the wild orgy of pleasure and “dissipation” that erupted in Kaupō at the *noa* following the death of Princess Nahi‘en‘ena, sister and lover of the king, at the end of 1836, which the missionary editor of the *Kumu Hawaii* refers to as a *haunaele* (riot, panic). See “No Ka Haunaele, Kumu Hawaii,” 26 April 1837, 1.

<sup>105</sup> William P. Alexander to Anderson, Honolulu, 15 March, 1833, cited in Bradley, *The American Frontier*, p. 336.

<sup>106</sup> Emerson to Anderson, Waialua, November 25, 1833 and Baldwin and Lyons to the American Board, Waimea, Hawaii, 26 October, 1833, cited in Bradley, *American Frontier*, p. 337.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>108</sup> Chamberlain to Greene, Honolulu, August 26, 1834, cited in Bradley, *American Frontier*, p. 369. The missionaries had little understanding of Hawaiian traditions of *kapu* and *noa*, imposed and released by the chiefs since time immemorial, which created a rhythm of life familiar to the *maka ‘āinana*. All they could see were the moral failings of a “savage nation,” a people mired in indolence and spiritual darkness, for how else could one explain the fickle nature of their dedication to the Christian way? The truth is that Calvinist Christianity had been

In response to missionary anxiety that the fruits of their labours had come to nought, at their annual meeting of 1834, the Mission determined that the publication of a newspaper would revive the failing interest of the Hawaiian people in spiritual things. The publication that year of the first Hawaiian language newspaper for general readership, *Ke Kumu Hawaii* (“The Hawaiian Teacher”), instantly achieved enormous success. Entirely controlled by the Mission, the content of the paper provided religious and moral reinforcement to a nation flagging in its zeal for the Calvinist way and its multiple restrictions.<sup>109</sup> Cunningly, the editors chose to make this small paper of more general interest, including news of local affairs, expositions of weird and wonderful foreign places and animals, and ancient *mo‘olelo* and *mele* (songs, poems) of the Hawaiian people, to hook the interest of the *maka‘āinana*. Thus began the great tradition of Hawaiian newspapers, which over the next century proved to be the primary repository of Hawaiian oral and literary traditions and a venue for men like Helekūnihi to engage in a public dialogue on critical religious, social and political issues.

The spiritual doldrums continued through the mid-1830s, characterized by no chiefly re-imposition of Ka‘ahumanu’s “new *kapu*.” There was a minor increase in church and school attendance, but the missionaries were concerned that the Protestant faith had become so established that men and women joined the church more out of the desire to achieve social distinction in the community than out of genuine religious fervour. They were more anxious “to get into church than to get into heaven.”<sup>110</sup> The next few years, however, saw a revolutionary

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imposed as a “new *kapu*” by a revered queen and her death meant *noa*, effective release from the *kapu*, essentially no different from the *noa* of ancient times.

<sup>109</sup> Bradley, *American Frontier*, p. 370.

<sup>110</sup> Letter of the Rev. W.P. Alexander, January 23, 1835, cited in Mary C. Alexander, *William Patterson Alexander: In Kentucky the Marquesas Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI: Privately Printed, 1934), pp. 191-192.

change in the religious disposition of the people, resulting in a movement that would have serious consequences for the future social history of Hawai‘i, particularly with respect to the relationship between the *maka‘āinana* and their chiefs. The year of Helekūnihi’s birth, 1839, saw the culmination of the dramatic event known as the “Hawaiian Great Awakening.”

The Calvinist mission understood the Hawaiian Great Awakening as a child of the convulsive evangelical revival that manifested itself in England and America in the 1730s and 40s, which ultimately spawned the evangelical movement that was to “bring light to the heathen.”<sup>111</sup> The Hawaiian Awakening began, not as earlier, with a *kapu* placed on the nation by a high chief, but through the inspiration of the charismatic missionary Titus Coan of Hilo at the end of 1837. Here we see another recapitulation of ancient Hawaiian tradition, as the revival began, auspiciously, at the time of the ancient Hawaiian *Makahiki* season, the new year celebrations commemorating Lono, god of peace, fertility, and revelry.<sup>112</sup> Coan reported from Hilo “a glorious work of grace,” which resulted in an extraordinary religious revival that spread throughout the islands.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>112</sup> Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu*, pp. 127-28.

<sup>113</sup> Cited in Bradley, *The American Frontier*, p. 372. By the end of 1838, Coan had admitted more than 5,000 new members to the church at Hilo, making his parish the largest Protestant church in the world. In the two years ending in June 1839, two months after Elia’s birth, five thousand new members were added to the congregation of Lorenzo Lyon’s mission station at Waimea and despite serious qualms on the part of some members of the Mission inclined to make burdensome requirements on full membership in the church, more than 15,000 Hawaiians joined the Calvinist church in this period. See James Jackson Jarves, *Scenes and Scenery in the Sandwich Islands* (Boston, MA: James Monroe & Co., 1843), pp. 187-188.



The Christian *kapu* was reinstated with this revival movement, but not by the chiefs.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, since the days of Ka‘ahumanu, despite the traditional pattern of these cycles of *kapu* and *noa*, the role of the *ali‘i* had diminished. Though the Great Awakening began during the traditional *Makahiki* season, the part the chiefs played in its inception, was negligible. The new religious movement, though inspired by missionaries, was led and promoted by the *maka‘āinana*, creating yet another manifestation of Hawaiian agency resulting in a different dynamic in their relationship with their chiefs.

In the early years of the mission, the *maka‘āinana* were drawn, by command and by virtue of devotion and *kuleana* for their chiefs, into the practice of Christianity. This was effectively a re-articulation of the pre-contact system by which the chiefs ordered society through imposition of *kapu* and temple ceremonies. Sahlins asserts that the *maka‘āinana* had shifted from a socio-religious model rooted in “hierarchical life-giving” to one of “individual soul-saving,” creating a new way of ordering their lives more independent of the rule of the *ali‘i* in this religious movement driven by the *maka‘āinana* themselves.<sup>115</sup> Rufus Anderson wrote, “Several of the brethren, going to outstations, were surprised to find that the awakening influence had preceeded them.”<sup>116</sup> White missionaries were astonished to find that in many cases the “Awakening” occurred without the presence of any *haole* at all. The earlier spread of Calvinism itself had been almost entirely driven by the *ali‘i*, but these later movements were guided by the *maka‘āinana* in the absence of much chiefly or *haole* guidance. This individualistic and

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<sup>114</sup> Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu*, pp. 127-129.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p.127.

<sup>116</sup> Rufus Anderson, *History of the Sandwich Island Mission* (Boston, MA: Congregational Publishing Company, 1870, p. 147.

democratic development engendered a new paradigm for defining religious identity, with profound socio-political implications. This is of immense importance for understanding the religious and political divide that arose between a significant proportion of the *maka‘āinana* and conservative elites like Elia Helekūnihi. By the 1840s, the former demonstrated resistance to the missionaries by deserting Calvinism in favour of Hawaiian traditionalism or other Christian churches, while the latter maintained loyalty to the memory of the Ka‘ahumanu chiefs, to the *haole* missionaries and to the Calvinist faith. I will demonstrate that this gulf within the Native Hawaiian community widened as the century progressed and played a role in determining sides in the annexation debate.

There is evidence that Kaupō was influenced by the Great Awakening. The mission station at Hāna, which included Kaupō as an outstation, was founded in the midst of the Awakening in 1838 by missionary Daniel T. Conde (1807-1897). Upon arrival in the district he wrote, “we were very kindly welcomed by the people of the place and with manifest indications of joy at the idea of our settling among them as their Teachers in holy things.” Despite the suggestion that he was a godsend to the people of Hāna, Conde admitted that “many of them date their conversion back to some time previous to the commencement of our labours among them.”<sup>117</sup> As no white missionary had resided in Hāna prior to 1838, this demonstrates the efficacy of Hawaiian agency in Ka‘ahumanu’s Christianising programme and that the Great Awakening was not solely a product of white inspiration and guidance.

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<sup>117</sup> Daniel T. Conde, Hāna Mission Report, 1839, Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society, pp. 5-6.

Conde's unrelenting rigour could only view the Hāna folk's faith wanting and requiring his labours to put them on the straight and narrow: "we found them generally very ignorant, but quite accessible, and willing to receive instruction."<sup>118</sup> Within a short space of time, meetings began to fill up with enthusiastic crowds from all over the district and the pastor's houses "were literally crowded, every day, excepting Sabbath, with persons apparently anxious to hear and understand the truth as it is in Jesus...and we now look back upon these feeble efforts, with much satisfaction, and believe that the Spirit of God was both with us and the people, and that some impressions were made, even then, which have since resulted in true conversions to God."<sup>119</sup> The Great Awakening had struck in Hāna, where protracted meetings of four or five days, like those in Hilo under Coan's inspiration, took place with congregations appearing "attentive and solemn," "a refreshing season, according to Conde."<sup>120</sup> Conde reported that in this first year, at the height of the revival, he visited Kaupō and the other outlying districts, where "2 protracted meetings of from 2 to 12 days continuance, held in each of the districts. Two or three of these meetings were attended with considerable interest – people very attentive and solemn and the Spirit of God was evidently present to give efficacy to the word spoken. We trust that the Lord has some in all those places who have really begun to serve him."<sup>121</sup> Kaupō was ablaze with the Spirit of God and it is likely that Paulo Kū, "head of the church at Nu'u," played a role in this local manifestation of the Great Awakening. It was into this world of revived religious enthusiasm, led mostly by Hawaiians in local communities, that Elia Helekūnihi was born. The Awakening was the last flowering of the Protestant faith of the missionaries, though some, like the family of

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<sup>118</sup> Daniel T. Conde, Hāna Mission Report, 1839, p. 4.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Paulo Kū, remained zealous for the church long after the embers of the Great Awakening had grown cold in the hearts of most Hawaiians.

## The Passing of the Chiefs

Another significant change in Hawaiian society at the time of Elia's birth resulted from the passing of the *ali 'i nui* of the family and lineage of Queen Ka'ahumanu.<sup>122</sup> Ka'ahumanu's passing in 1832 and Nahi'ena'ena's in 1836 proved to be a terrible blow to both missionaries and *maka'āinana* alike, but with the deaths of Kīna'u, Kaikioewa, Hoapili, and Kapi'olani between April 1839 and May 1841, the old chiefly order was passing, and with its passing, the religio-political order of old Hawai'i. This is of importance in understanding the conservatism of men like Elia Helekūnihi later in the century, whose continued fidelity to the old order and the *kapu* of American Calvinism informed and determined their position on annexation. The Great Awakening had stimulated a new individualism among the *maka'āinana*, emboldening them to protest the coercive practices of the old chiefs and their American mission protégés. They made a home in the Protestant church on their own terms, or abandoned the new *kapu* of Calvinism entirely. The Great Awakening appears to have ended with the death of the *kuhina nui* (premier) Kīna'u in April, 1839, suggesting that the tradition of *noa* at the death of a high chief retained

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<sup>122</sup> Virtually every important chief from the days of the old queen had been highly supportive of the Calvinist mission and the new *kapu*. A notable exception was the young *Mō'i* Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III) himself. Though some of his most "dissolute" associates joined the church at the time of the Awakening, the *Mō'i* continued to remain aloof, likely because he disliked limiting the personal freedoms that "conversion" would have entailed. Nevertheless, even the resistant young King was "apparently friendly" toward the mission and "disposed to favour of improvements" during the period of the Awakening. See Bradley, *American Frontier*, pp. 376-377.

some efficacy at that time, but by the mid-1840s, this ancient cycle ceased entirely with the passing of the last of the Ka‘ahumanu chiefs.<sup>123</sup>

Though Hawaiians never ceased to have *aloha* for their chiefs, the high chiefs’ authority and prestige was in decline. The brutality of the demand that the *maka‘āinana* labour to pay for foreign luxury goods had diminished loyalty to chiefly political and religious authority as the *maka‘āinana* ceased to trust that their chiefs were *pono*.<sup>124</sup> Davida Malo set down this process in a piece published in *The Spectator* of 1839, the year of Elia Helekūnihi’s birth, in which he decried the loss of *pono* by the chiefs, who “seem to have left off caring for the people.”<sup>125</sup> Though he remained true to the Calvinist faith all his life, his despair over the loss of the old order of balance, built on *pono*, that once enabled the *maka‘āinana* to prosper and thrive under their chiefs, is palpable. The common people, from the 1840s on, viewing with rising anxiety the growing political and economic influence of the American missionaries and their sons, demonstrated their resistance by abandoning the old established church of the chiefs. After all, Hawaiians had realistic fears of losing both their lands and their nation to these men whom the chiefs had sponsored and to whom they had given enormous concessions. However, a faithful remnant of loyalists, led by the descendants of retainers at the courts of the old chiefs, such as the family of Elia Helekūnihi, remained dedicated to Calvinism and retained admiration for the land from which it came. Davida Malo was a wise and prescient man. Prior to his death in 1854, he

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<sup>123</sup> Sahlins, *Anahulu*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>124</sup> The desire of the *ali‘i nui* to maintain their ancient chiefly prestige and authority previously through the display of exquisite luxury items, such as *‘ahu‘ula* (gorgeous capes made of the colourful feathers of rare forest birds) and finely woven *moena* (mats) had given way to an insatiable desire for fine Western luxury goods. The forced labour imposed on the *maka‘āinana* to abandon their economic activities to climb into the mountains to harvest the sandalwood demanded by the chiefs to acquire “bolts of silks and velvets, Western clothes, furniture, cutlery, jewelry, guns ammunitions, ships, and liquor purchased from Western traders bound for China eroded confidence in the *pono* of their chiefs. Kame‘eleihiwa suggests that “in their search for control over the foreign element in their world, the *Ali‘i Nui* were determined to ‘ai (eat, consume, rule) the physical manifestations of the foreigner – his goods, his food, and his ‘sparkling water’ (liquor).” See Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Lands*, pp.145-146.

<sup>125</sup> Davida Malo, *The Hawaiian Spectator*, 1838,2{2}, pp.121-130.

asked to be buried above Lahainaluna, the mission seminary on Maui, at the top of Mount Pa‘upa‘u where “no white man would ever build his house.”<sup>126</sup>

### ***Nā Kakōlika a me Nā Molemona*** **Catholics and Mormons**

Helekūnihi’s birth year of 1839 also saw an alarming display of imperial gun power with the arrival at Honolulu of the French warship *L’Artemise* under the command of Captain LaPlace. The French government had viewed itself as guardian and protector of Catholic interests in the Pacific since the arrival of the first missionary priests in the islands in 1827.<sup>127</sup> Ka‘ahumanu *mā*, under the influence of the missionaries, whose opinions of the doctrines and rituals of the “Papists” were hardly charitable, did all in their power to keep the priests out of their kingdom and harass their converts among the *maka‘āinana*. Kaupō became an important theatre for the demonstration of Catholicism as a means of resistance towards both the chiefs and American colonial desires. Kamakau wrote, “Many troubles came to the government during Kekauluohi’s time occasioned by the persecution of the followers of the Roman Catholic religion.”<sup>128</sup> Captain LaPlace threatened to bomb Honolulu if the King refused to pay an indemnity of \$20,000 to guarantee protection of French citizens and secure freedom for Catholics.<sup>129</sup> The king and chiefs, of course, submitted.

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<sup>126</sup> Cited in Langlas and Lyon, *The Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i*, p. 51.

<sup>127</sup> Reginald Yzendoorn, *History of the Catholic Mission in the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu, HI: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 1927), pp. 28-33.

<sup>128</sup> S.M. Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī* (Honolulu, 2001), p.111.

<sup>129</sup> Sahlins, *Anahulu*, p. 118; R.S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom, Vol. 1* (Honolulu, 1938).

The Catholic faith liberated the *maka ‘āinana* from Calvinism’s strick and onerous legalism and gave expression to traditional Hawaiian usage of image and ritual. Hawaiians may have associated Catholicism with the Pā‘ao/Kahiki tradition, as Tahiti was now a French protectorate.<sup>130</sup> Though Tahiti itself was predominantly Protestant by the 1820s, the French protectors of Catholicism in Hawai‘i may have been viewed as liberators by the *maka ‘ānana* from both the exacting rule of their chiefs and the emerging reality of U.S. colonialism.<sup>131</sup>

The remarkable quality of the Hawaiian Catholic mission, like that of the Protestant new *kapu*, was that it was largely a product of Native Hawaiian agency. This time, it was led and promulgated, not by the chiefs, but by the *maka ‘āinana*, with sacramental guidance from a handful of French and Belgian priests. When the first priests arrived to establish a formal mission on Maui in April, 1846, “they were welcomed by a goodly number of over four thousand catechumens, who had been won over to the Catholic Faith principally by the untiring efforts of the catechist Helio Koaeloa, who therefore well deserves to be called the Apostle of that island.”<sup>132</sup> He and his brother, Peter Mahoe, beginning in 1842, without the aid of priests, proselytised and built small chapels throughout the island, particularly in East Maui.<sup>133</sup> It is likely that the small Catholic chapel at Nu‘u, the ruins of which can be seen *mauka* (upcountry) of the highway, was built at this time. A few hundred yards east of Huakini and the *kauhale* of Paulo Kū’s family, it was a short distance from the Protestant school and meeting house by the

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<sup>130</sup> Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, pp. 371-375. *Palani* is Hawaiian for “French,” though

<sup>131</sup> The arrival of the Catholic faith, detested by the Calvinist missionaries as an insidious alternative form of the “idolatry” they had successfully overthrown, caused alarm and consternation. See Yzendoorn, *History* pp. 44-49 and Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom, Vol. 1*, pp. 140-141. The high chiefs, who had made Calvinism the state religion, viewed conversions to the *Palani* (French) faith as nothing less than insubordination by the *maka ‘āinana*. See S.M.Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, pp. 104-5.

<sup>132</sup> Yzendoorn, *History*, p. 178.

<sup>133</sup> *Souvenir, 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the Catholic Church on Maui*, April 3, 1921.

*loko i 'a*. Two other chapels were constructed in Kaupō district, where evangelist Fr. Modeste Favens made the headquarters of his mission and baptized hundreds of catechumens on his arrival in May 1846.<sup>134</sup>

One can imagine the consternation of Paulo's family and the dwindling Calvinist community of Nu'u at this new threat to the Ka'ahumanu's *kapu* order as their neighbours abandoned the Protestant faith for the new way of the *Palani*.<sup>135</sup> Conde's mission station at Hāna in 1846 determined to send missionary Eliphalet Whittlesey (1816-1889) to Kaupō to address the threat of Catholicism in that district. In his 1844 report, Conde mentioned that, "Romanists also attracted a considerable amount of attention for a while." Whittlesey lasted less than one year in his Kaupō assignment, never resided in the district, and in 1847 recorded a mere 236 Protestant church members in both Kaupō and the neighboring district of Kīpahulu.<sup>136</sup> Those few years, 1845-1849, when Elia attended S. Aki's school at Nu'u, saw momentous change, as the old religious establishment of Ka'ahumanu *mā* began to crumble as distrust of the chiefs and their American mission protégés intensified.

Another threat on the religious front came with the arrival of the Mormons at Nu'u in the early months of 1852. Maui was a fruitful field of the early Mormon mission and vital communities of the Saints arose on Maui, particularly in Wailuku, where a local *konohiki*,

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<sup>134</sup> *Journal of Modeste Favens*, Archives of the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts of Mary and Jesus, Rome.

<sup>135</sup> *Palani* is Hawaiian for "French" or "France" and was sometimes used to designate Catholicism, the "French Church." When Mary Kawena Pukui interviewed Mrs. Josephine Marciel in 1960, Mrs. Marciel referred to the site of the Catholic chapel in upcountry Kaupō at Maua as the "Palani House, a church." See Pukui, Bishop Museum Audio File HAW.85.8.

<sup>136</sup> *Hāna Mission Reports, 1844 and 1847*, HMCS Archives, Honolulu.



Jonathan Napela, became an ardent convert and important evangelist for the Mormon cause.<sup>137</sup>

Thriving centres with meeting houses were established in Ke‘anae, Kaupō, Nu‘u and Waiū. Nu‘u appears to have had several Mormon communities by 1853, the year Elia returned from four years of boarding school in Hāna to live for a few months with his parents at home before commencing his education at Lahainaluna.<sup>138</sup> In March 1852, Elder James Keeler arrived in the community “after a hard day’s travel” by canoe and over rough lava “very sharp to the feet.” He stayed in the house of “one Manu who is very friendly” and talked with the people of Nu‘u “considerable (*sic*) on the first principals (*sic*) of the gospel.”<sup>139</sup> A year later, Mormon missionary George Cannon visited Nu‘u and again stayed in the home of Manu, the leader of the movement in the district.<sup>140</sup> At nearby Waiū, Cannon “gave them a history of the restoration of the church to the earth in these last days through the ministry of angels to Bro. Joseph Smith, &c., in which they seem very much interested.”<sup>141</sup> The precise locations of the Mormon meeting houses in Nu‘u and Waiū are unknown, but it is not difficult to imagine the anxiety they caused to the Calvinist family of Paulo Kū, stalwarts of the old established faith of Ka‘ahumanu *mā*.

There is ample evidence in Mormon journals of the persecution of the Saints by Protestant and Catholic Hawaiians and *haoles*.<sup>142</sup> After all, they had no foreign gunboats to protect them and suffered persecution in Utah by the U.S. government.<sup>143</sup> Hawaiians were

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<sup>137</sup> George Q. Cannon et al., *The Journals of George Q. Cannon: Hawaiian Mission, 1850-1854* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2014), pp. 60-61.

<sup>138</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May, 1876.

<sup>139</sup> James Keeler (1817-1907), 8-10 March, 1852, Journal, September 1850-March 1852, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=63b6278f-fad0-4c5e-8acf-107beb8b5208&crate=0&index=0> (accessed: October 8, 2020). Old maps show that Manu resided close to the spring at Waiū.

<sup>140</sup> Cannon, *Journals*, pp. 266-267.

<sup>141</sup> George Q. Cannon, *Journals*, pp. 266-267.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86-89

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

attracted to Mormonism and Catholicism as points of resistance to the growing colonial presence of the United States in Hawai‘i with which many *maka ‘āinana* linked the Calvinist mission.

## Conclusion

The Calvinist mission in Hawai‘i succeeded because the high chiefs in the circle of Ka‘ahumanu determined to rearticulate the traditional Hawaiian *kapu* system as a national Protestant church. They were the impetus behind the mission and provided the “footsoldiers” to orchestrate it. As the American presence intensified and these chiefs passed, many *maka ‘āinana* awakened to the truth that the mission was a Trojan horse for U.S. colonial desires.<sup>144</sup> The Hawaiian Great Awakening inspired the *maka ‘āinana* to take charge of their own religious lives and Catholicism and Mormonism arrived to draw people away from the established church. Despite this shift in religio-political views among the *maka ‘āinana*, conservative members of the old *kaukaual‘i* class, courtiers of the old chiefs, many of them mission educated, retained for the better part of the nineteenth century their *kuleana* for the Kamehameha dynasty and the *pono* of Ka‘ahumanu’s “new *kapu*.” Elia Helekūnihi and others maintained this *kuleana* for the church of the missionaries and the missionary sons until their dying day, and this ultimately contributed to their desire for the annexation of Hawai‘i by the United States. These men constituted a good portion of the teachers, pastors, lawyers, judges, and politicians of Hawai‘i from the 1830s to the 1890s. The old chiefs may have failed in their administration of *pono* and many had passed, but the *kuleana* of their faithful *konohiki* resisted the multiple changes that the island kingdom faced

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<sup>144</sup> The angry Petition Movement of 1845 was specifically directed at the presence and influence of former missionaries in government. See *The Friend*, 1 August, 1845, 118-119.

in the succeeding decades. Helekūnihi was such a man, deeply conservative, a traditionalist unwavering in his dedication to the *pono* of Ka‘ahumanu’s *kapu*, to the lineage of the Kamehameha dynasty, and to the New England missionaries and their descendants, whom he and others continued to respect as *kāhuna*, bearers of the new *pono*, the new *kānāwai* (law) and the new *kapu*. To them the United States was the source of *na ‘auao* (enlightenment) and Hawai‘i’s bright future lay with the growing and voracious republic.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Pilina* (Relationships)

### Tense and Tender Ties

### 1845-1862

#### *Pili Koke*

#### Intimacy

Elia Helekūnihi's world view was formed and defined by his *mo'okū'auhahu* consciousness and *kuleana* for the chiefs in the circle of Queen Ka'ahumanu who promoted the new *kapu* of Calvinist Christianity. Until the age of ten, when he left his *one hanau* at Nu'u to attend boarding school at the Hāna mission station, the influences that formed him were entirely Hawaiian. Even the stern and moralistic Calvinism that defined his own faith was an expression of the traditional Hawaiian *kapu* system transformed by the changes wrought by Ka'ahumanu *mā*.<sup>1</sup> His dedication to that tradition was deeply rooted in his fidelity to the Maui high chiefs and his own, as well as his wife Luika's lineage. This *kuleana*, traditionally demonstrated in service to the chiefs, for some Hawaiians extended to the American missionaries, who had brought the Protestant faith to Hawai'i. Elia was one such man, who viewed this faith as *na'auao*, and America its source.<sup>2</sup>

Laura Ann Stoler asserts that “intimate domains – sex, sentiment, domestic arrangement and child-rearing – figure in the making of racial categories and in the management of imperial

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<sup>1</sup> Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> See Elia Helekūnihi's lengthy contribution to *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893 entitled, “Na Kumu Kupono e Hookui ai me Amerika Huipua” (“The Proper Reasons for Joining with the United States”), which shall be discussed in Chapter Six.

rule.”<sup>3</sup> Pointing out that in contemporary historiography there is “an increasing attention to intimacy in the making of empire,” Stoler cites the earlier work of Albert Hurtado, who wrote of “the intimate frontiers of Empire, a social and cultural space where racial classifications were defined and defied, where relations between colonizer and colonized could powerfully confound or confirm the structures of governance and the categories of rule.”<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Sylvia Van Kirk urges a focus on “such tender ties as a way to explore the human dimension of the colonial encounter.”<sup>5</sup> It is a pity that Stoler, Hurtado and Van Kirk focus their studies of intimacy in colonial spaces solely on the domains of sexuality and child-rearing, while neglecting the equally powerful and enduring bonds of friendship, or those between teachers and students. We cannot adequately explore the evolving religious, social and political world view of a man like Elia Helekūnihi without delineating the value he placed on the “tender ties” of friendship and mentorship. Many decades prior to the overthrow of the Queen in 1893, U.S. Empire colonised the hearts and minds of men and women like Elia through its “intimate frontiers.” With Stoler, we must recognise that “the personal is political.”<sup>6</sup>

This chapter explores the relationships beyond family that formed Elia Helekūnihi’s world view. The aim is to make clear how this world view, formed by associations with individuals who impacted his life, contributed to his decision to support the annexation of Hawai‘i by the United States. His teachers, his wife, his friends, even his detractors, formed the

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<sup>3</sup> Stoler, Ann Laura. “Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies.” *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (2001): 829. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2700385>.

<sup>4</sup> Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), pp. xxi-xxix, cited in Laura Ann Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties,” p. 830-831.

<sup>5</sup> Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg, Canada: Watson & Dwyer, 2011), cited in Laura Ann Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties,” p. 831.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 838.

network of “tense and tender ties” that defined Helekūnihi the man.<sup>7</sup> The introduction of Western legal principles replaced the old *pono* system’s reliance on chiefly prerogative with one rooted in an understanding of individual rights. This oriented many elite Hawaiians, especially those educated at Lahainaluna, favourably towards American republican traditions. Helekūnihi’s education within schools whose curricula were designed by the New England missionaries moulded his worldview and influenced his future position on annexation. He developed relationships with *haole* teachers and pastors that proved influential all his life, though their support for him often proved ambiguous. Withdrawal of missionary support for his ordination as pastor proved to be a defining event in his lifelong struggle between fulfilling Calvinist missionary expectations and maintaining fidelity to his *mo ‘okūauhau*. Forced to put his vocational aspirations on hold, Helekūnihi pursued teaching in his home community of Nu‘u. There he sharpened his intellect by entering into the furious debate raging in the Hawaiian press on the merits of *haole* medicine vs. traditional Hawaiian healing practices at a time when opposition to Western culture had become an expression of resistance to U.S. colonial desire. Siding with the Western perspective of his Lahainaluna teachers at that time, Helekūnihi later took a vocal stand on behalf of Hawaiian tradition, while never ceasing to admire America, to him the source of Hawaiian “enlightenment.”<sup>8</sup>

Elia Helekūnihi established early ties with missionaries as mentors, friends and colleagues. His life was lived in a veritable web of these men as teachers, pastoral associates, colleagues in the Legislature and as benefactors. Influential Hawaiians in his life were mission educated men who, like him, were dedicated to the Calvinist Church. Hawaiian culture is highly

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 829.

<sup>8</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893.

relational and generosity a valued virtue.<sup>9</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui writes about the relational aspect of education: “My impression of Hawaiians, in general, is that they are primarily people-oriented, rather than subject or task or machine-oriented. This certainly operates within the classroom.”<sup>10</sup> She writes of the intense relationships Hawaiians have with teachers and how the learning experience depends on the quality of those relationships. Though these observations verge on the stereotypical, it cannot be denied that traditionally fidelity to “tender ties” remained strong and steadfast. Helekūnihi retained a *kuleana* for his missionary teachers and mentors throughout his life, possibly because teachers, like the *kā kā‘olelo*, were honoured in pre-literate Hawai‘i as guardians and transmitters of the oral tradition. The webs of relationships that formed his world view contributed to his stand for what he regarded as *pono*, right action on behalf of his people. His agency, built on a foundation of ancient Hawaiian principles and Christian faith, guided him at times to take positions that pleased neither Hawaiians nor *haoles*. He chose, for example, to support plantation contract labourers in opposition to powerful sugar planters and became a passionate advocate of Hawaiian lepers in defiance of the president of the Board of Health, a powerful missionary son. He perplexed many of his compatriots when he presented himself as a Hawaiian traditionalist in favour of annexation.

The Hawaiian Christian mission was crafted on a foundation of relationships.

Highlighting the importance of friendship between female high chiefs and missionary wives,

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<sup>9</sup> Edward Smith Craighill. Handy, Elizabeth Green. Handy, and Mary Kawena. Pukui, *Native Planters in Old Hawaii: Their Life, Lore, and Environment* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1978), p. 311. Craighill Handy write, “Generosity was admired, and it enhanced both self-respect and prestige. His (the Hawaiian’s) relationship to *akua* (gods), *kāhuna* (priests), and *ali‘i* (chiefs) was less a matter of calculation or expectation than of affectionate dependence, mixed with reverence...The Hawaiian’s *aloha* (love, compassion) is geniality, a mode of consciousness toward nature and man welling up from a highly sensitive, emotionally rich, labile and expressive organism that is normally relaxed in all relationships.”

<sup>10</sup> Pukui et al, *Nānā i ke Kumu*, p. 64.

Thigpen suggests that, “women’s relationships, organized around the exchange of gift items, became critical sites for the building and maintenance of important diplomatic and political alliances.”<sup>11</sup> Sybil Bingham’s sympathetic nursing of Queen Ka‘ahumanu during the Queen’s serious illness in 1822 created a bond between the two women that “was a crucial element in Ka‘ahumanu’s reorientation toward the mission.”<sup>12</sup> As the most powerful chief in the kingdom, Ka‘ahumanu was the key figure in promoting the new *kapu* as the state religion of Hawai‘i. Very little work has been done on the bonds that formed between male missionaries and chiefs, both male and female, though Thigpen acknowledges that the “American missionaries stayed as settlers in Hawai‘i in part because they forged advantageous relationships among Hawaiians.”<sup>13</sup>

Hawaiians needed to place the strange *haole* newcomers in a traditional cultural category. Despite their intention to maintain the relationship of dependency with the missionaries, the chiefs’ fidelity to Hawaiian cultural categories led them to view them as *kāhuna*. Under the old order, the *kāhuna pule* (prayer priests) were of the *ali ‘i* class and the role of the *kahuna* was, suggests Valerio Valeri, to “permit the mediation between man and the gods...He is defined above all by his knowledge, by his expertise, by his connection with a particular deity.”<sup>14</sup> The deity for whom the Calvinist missionaries provided mediation for Hawaiian chiefs was, of course, Jehovah, and it appears that Hiram Bingham, missionary leader, was regarded as *kahuna nui* (high priest) by Queen Ka‘ahumanu and her chiefs, a kind of “royal chaplain,” indispensable

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<sup>11</sup> Thigpen, *Island Queenss*, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93; Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-one Years in the Sandwich Islands*, p. 149. This is, of course, the testimony of a missionary husband.

<sup>13</sup> Thigpen, *Island Queenss*, p. 106.

<sup>14</sup> Kamakau, *The People of Old*, p. 7; Valerio Valeri, *Kingship and Sacrifice: Ritual and Society in Ancient Hawaii* (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 134.



for seeking the will and *mana* of the deity.<sup>15</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa suggests that this structure continued after Ka‘ahumanu’s death and well into the 1840s, as William Richards served as the King’s *kahuna nui* after Bingham’s departure in 1840.<sup>16</sup> Considering Elia Helekūnihi’s ties to the circle of Ka‘ahumanu and the new *kapu* order, it is not surprising that he maintained a devotion to her priests until his dying day, a devotion that extended to the land from which they had brought “enlightenment.”

### ***Ke Kānāwai a me Ke Kumukānāwai Haole*** **Western Law and Constitution**

The transition, beginning in the 1820s, from the oral tradition of legal pronouncements issued from the mouth of the *ali‘i* to a Western written system of law diminished the power of the *ali‘i*. Sally Engle Merry points out that, “the shift to a printed system fosters universalism at the expense of local particularism.”<sup>17</sup> Merry and Arista both assert that orally proclaimed laws, even those promoting the mores of the new *kapu* of Calvinism under Ka‘ahumanu, were vigorously proclaimed by criers throughout the islands until the end of the 1820s.<sup>18</sup> Subsequent to that, Western legal practices, promoted by the missionaries, such as printed laws and trial by jury, displaced power from the hands of the *ali‘i*, diminishing the importance of local law. No longer was the sovereign power of the chief the embodiment of the will of the *akua* (gods), for sovereignty of the people through representative government (at least after the Constitution of

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<sup>15</sup> Sahlins, *Anahulu*, p. 68; Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 65; Mykkanen, *Inventing Politics*, p. 60; Oliver Emerson, *Pioneer Days in Hawaii* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1928), p. 166.

<sup>16</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Lands*, p. 154.

<sup>17</sup> Sally Engle Merry, *Colonizing Hawai‘i: the Cultural Power of Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 68.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69; Arista, *The Kingdom and the Republic*, pp. 132-140.

1840) replaced chiefly authority. Merry suggests that this transition in legal understanding “shared the cultural logic of the *kapu* system” because “both the missionaries and the Hawaiians envisioned law as descending from a divine source through earthly intermediaries.”<sup>19</sup>

The transmission of Western legal principles to Hawaiians of the old chiefly class largely took place at the mission “seminary,” Lahainaluna, founded in 1831, one year prior to Ka‘ahumanu’s death. Paul Nahaolelua, and possibly Paulo Kū and S. Aki, were students of missionary Lorrin Andrews, Lahainaluna’s founder, who served as advisor to the chiefs in law and government and sat on the supreme court of the Kingdom.<sup>20</sup> William Richards, pastor of Lahaina, primary advisor to the chiefs on political and legal theory, also had an impact on the formation of Lahainaluna students. Both Andrews and Richards were influential in passing on to their students a passion for constitutional law, and many graduates of the school served as prominent lawyers and politicians in the Hawaiian Kingdom. Though Helekūnihi began his working career as a pastor, it is undeniable that the foundation in Western law he received at the school was a powerful influence on his life, ultimately leading to his abandonment of the pastorate in favour of a career in law. This grounding in Western liberal principles, associated with the idea that *na‘auao* had come to Hawai‘i from America, undoubtedly influenced his position on annexation.

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<sup>19</sup> Merry, *Colonizing*, p. 71.

<sup>20</sup> Journal of Levi Chamberlain, August 3, 1837, “Chamberlain, Levi - Journal - Volume 0022 and Insert - 1837.08.03 - 1838.05.31,” Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/52>.

The inculcation of Western law was a primary means of colonisation by stealth as the transmission of liberal values, such as “the rights of man,” eroded the old religious and chiefly politics, making it possible for Hawai‘i to be a pluralist society with a variety of religious and political perspectives. Richards was appointed in 1838 to guide the chiefs through the process of creating the new legal system based on Anglo-American norms, resulting in the promulgation of the Hawaiian Bill of Rights in 1839 and the first constitution of 1840, after which further laws were published in two hundred page volumes in both English and Hawaiian.<sup>21</sup> Nahaolelua, Elia’s uncle, was among the Hawaiians who participated in drafting the constitution.<sup>22</sup> The adoption of the Constitution, taking as its model the U.S. Constitution, replaced the old *pono* system’s reliance on chiefly prerogative with a new legal order based on human rights. This shift of *pono* from chiefly exercise of will and duty to that of a fixed written law, combined with the legalisation of Catholicism, a religious system outside the *kapu* system ordained by the chiefs in the days of Ka‘ahumanu *mā*, contributed to the collapse of the old Protestant *kapu* order. As many insisted at the time, the creation of a Western legal system with a constitutional monarchy placed Hawai‘i among the “civilised” nations of the world, a position that Hawaiians fondly imagined would protect them from the colonial designs of the U.S. and European powers.<sup>23</sup>

Hawaiian envoys, William Richards and Timothy Haalilio, were sent to Europe and America in 1842 to secure guarantees of Hawaiian independence from the great powers.<sup>24</sup> When

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<sup>21</sup> The former missionary, William Richards, now advisor to the chiefs, was behind this considerable corpus of law. See Samuel Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, p. 190: “*O William Rikeke ka me nāna i hana i ke kumukānāwai.*” Elements of old Hawaiian law, in the category of “common law” were included, as well as biblical principles. Some of the laws were suggested by foreigner residents and visitors, while others by Hawaiian intellectuals, like Davida Malo, John Papa “Ī‘ī, or Paul Nahaolelua. See *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 25 September 1875, 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 25 September 1875, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Kamakau, *Ke Aupuni Mō‘ī*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165. Ex-missionary, William Richards, and the King’s secretary, Timothy Haalilio, departed for the U.S. and Europe on a “secret” mission in July of 1842 to seek recognition of Hawaiian independence from the U.S.,

they made a subtle threat to place their kingdom under the formal protection of Great Britain, the Americans made haste to take them seriously. The result was the infamous “Tyler Doctrine,” whereby President Tyler extended the Monroe Doctrine into the sphere of the Pacific, disavowing any desire on the part of the U.S. for immediate possession of the islands, yet declaring that “their near approach to the American continent would cause the United States to view with dissatisfaction any threat by another power to take possession of the islands, colonize them, and subvert the native Government.”<sup>25</sup> Sylvester Stevens suggests that applying the principles of the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 to Hawai‘i “created there virtually an American ‘sphere of influence.’”<sup>26</sup> The “Tyler Doctrine” remained a menace to the true independence of the island kingdom until its overthrow in 1893. Stevens asserts that Hawai‘i was a defacto protectorate of the U.S. from 1842, insisting that “Even American supporters of annexation invariably rested their case upon the ground of ‘protection,’ though Hawaiian independence might be extinguished.”<sup>27</sup>

When President Tyler’s message was reported to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in February 1843, he exhibited a strong religio-moral emphasis in U.S. interest in Hawai‘i:

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Britain and France. They reached Washington in December of that year, where they were at first treated with coldness by Secretary Webster, an affront to which former president John Quincy Adams attributed “to the dark complexion of Haalilio.” (see *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, XI, 274-275 (8 December, 1842), cited in Bradley, *American Frontier*, p. 442.

<sup>25</sup> *House Executive Documents*, 27th Congress, 3d Session, No. 35, pp. 1-4, cited in Bradley, *American Frontier*, p. 444. Tyler referred to “the very large intercourse of their (the United States’) citizens with the islands,” which “would justify the Government, should events hereafter arise, to require it, in making a decided remonstrance against the adoption of an opposite policy by any other power.”

<sup>26</sup> Sylvester K. Stevens, *American Expansion in Hawaii: 1842-1898* (Harrisburg, PA: Archives Publishing Company of Pennsylvania, 1945), pp. 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

It is a subject of cheering contemplation to the friends of human improvement and virtue, that, by the mild and gentle influence of Christian charity, dispensed by humble missionaries of the gospel...the people of this group of islands have been converted from the lowest debasement of idolatry to the blessings of the Christian gospel; united under one balanced government; rallied to the fold of civilization by a written language and constitution, providing for the rights of person, property, and mind, and invested with all the elements of right and power which can entitle them to be acknowledged by their brethren of the human race as a separate and independent community.<sup>28</sup>

These words of the American president foreshadow those of Elia Helekūnihi in his appeal to the Hawaiian people to support annexation fifty years later when he opined that, “America civilised this nation, illuminating the obscurity of the darkness which thickly veiled the land.”<sup>29</sup> Like the missionaries and their president, Helekūnihi viewed spiritual transformation and the introduction of a constitutional government and Western legal principles as signs of the “illumination” of his people through the introduction of “civilization.”

### ***I Ke Kula ma Nu‘u i ka Wā Kahuli Nui*** **At School in Nu‘u at a time of Great Change**

Elia Helekūnihi was “admitted by his parents into the school at Nu‘u, where S. Aki was teacher, in the years of Our Lord 1845-1849.”<sup>30</sup> At this time, the school, situated just *mauka* (upcountry) of the ancient *loko i‘a*, had between 75 and 85 pupils and had been established by

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<sup>28</sup> *Niles' National Register*, February 11, 1843. Cited in Stevens, *American Expansion in Hawaii*, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893.

<sup>30</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May, 1876.

Native Hawaiian teachers before 1828.<sup>31</sup> The location of the school and Protestant meeting house close by the sacred fish pond, petroglyphs, and row of *heiau* that form a line up the slope of Haleakalā, was significant. Its placing in this hallowed setting was reminiscent of the siting of the first Protestant church and school on Maui, near the sacred pond of Mokuhinia in Lahaina where, Kaleimoku resided, the chief who claimed Nu‘u during the Māhele of 1848.<sup>32</sup> The school reports of the 1840s and 1850s show that the large school at Nu‘u was paired with those at Waiū and Kou and, while the reports reveal that there were two teachers between the two schools, S. Aki was the head teacher.<sup>33</sup>

The period of Elia’s early schooling at Nu‘u under his uncle Aki saw an intensification of the dramatic changes in the life of the Hawaiian Kingdom. As the old chiefs passed, their positions in the ranks of government officials were taken by *haoles*, mostly former missionaries.<sup>34</sup> The Constitution of 1840 unsettled many of the *maka‘āinana*, who were concerned about the diminution of royal power inherent in a constitutional monarchy. There was anxiety over the rise of *haole* dominance in the government, represented by the *maka‘āinana* petition movement of 1845. Juri Mykkänen points out that, “While the king and his new *haole* ministers were getting ready for the great opening of the 1845 legislature, people all around the

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<sup>31</sup> *Missionary Herald*, 1829, p. 246.

<sup>32</sup> Barrere, *The King’s Māhele*, 1994, Claims 6239, 577, and 526.

<sup>33</sup> School Reports for 1841, 1842, 1847, 1848, 1852, 1855, 1857. Aki purchased thirty acres of land close to Kou in 1862, possibly because the entire district of Nu‘u had been appropriated by the family of the *ali‘i* Kaleimoku at the Māhele and Kou may have been the closest Aki could get to fee simple title to land near the “sands of his birth.” See Royal Patent 2849, Book 14, AH.

<sup>34</sup> William Richards, who left the mission in 1838 to advise the chiefs on legal and constitutional issues; Gerrit Judd, who became advisor to the king in 1842 and later assumed the positions of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Finance, and elected member of the Hawaiian House of Representatives; Lorrin Andrews, who left the mission to become judge, secretary of the king’s Privy Council, and publisher; and Richard Armstrong, who was appointed Minister of Public Instruction in 1847. See Forbes et al, *Partners in Change*, pp. 73-77, 62-65, 365-369, 521-526.

islands were holding protracted prayer meetings that much resembled those during the revival in the late 1830s.”<sup>35</sup> As the *maka ‘āinana* saw the old order rooted in the *pono* of their chiefs pass away, they resorted to prayers of the new *kapu* order to redress what they viewed to be an affront to the *ali ‘i*’s time-honoured relationship of *aloha* with the common people and their unique right to originate and execute the law.

From throughout the islands petitions were sent to the government expressing concern that *haoles* were usurping the rights and power of the *ali ‘i* and had designs on taking the country. The petition from Lahaina, Wailuku, and Kailua, addressed to Kamehameha III in June 1845 illustrates the anxieties expressed by the common people of the time: “Concerning the independence of your kingdom, that you dismiss the foreign officers whom you have appointed to be Hawaiian officers. We do not wish foreigners to take the oath of allegiance and become Hawaiian subjects. We do not wish you to sell any more land pertaining to your kingdom to foreigners.” Over 1600 names were ascribed to this petition. Another petition, dated 12 June 1845, from the *maka ‘āinana* of Lahaina, starkly and prophetically revealed the grief of a people who saw their *one hanau* slipping away from them: “If the nation is ours, what good can result from filling it with foreigners? Let us consider, lest the land pass entirely into the hands of the foreigners.”<sup>36</sup> Davida Malo, preeminent native Hawaiian intellectual of his time, was said to have been an instigator and architect of these petitions.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Mykannen, *Inventing Politics*, p. 177.

<sup>36</sup> *The Friend*, 1 August, 1845, 118-119.

<sup>37</sup> Levi Chamberlain, Journal, 12 and 16 June, 1845, “Chamberlain, Levi - Journal - Volume 0025 and Inserts - 1844.04.22 - 1848.07.31,” Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/55>.

The government of King Kamehameha III took these petitions seriously and named John Papa ʻĪʻĪ, Aaron Keliʻiahonui (who had strong associations with Kaupō), and attorney general John Ricord to investigate them.<sup>38</sup> Keoni Ana, *hanai* brother of Paul Nahaolelua, and *kuhina nui* replied to the petitions on behalf of the king with firm rebuttals of these *maka ʻāinana* concerns: “Let His Majesty select persons skilful like those from other lands to transact business with them;” “If these shall be dismissed, where is there a man who is qualified to transact business with foreigners?” Keoni Ana pointed out that foreigners should take the oath of allegiance to the king because, “if they take the oath of allegiance to Kamehameha III, will they not be faithful to him?”<sup>39</sup> It appeared that there was little sympathy in the constitutional monarchy of Kamehameha III for a return to the *ancien regime*, the loss of which the *maka ʻāinana* grieved. Hawaiʻi was to be governed under the rule of Western law, with *haoles* “assisting” the King in governance. It would not be long before these *haoles*, largely missionaries and their sons, achieved dominance.

Elia Helekūnihi’s coming of age in this time when governance shifted from chiefly autocracy to rule founded on Western liberal legal principles had a profound impact on the formation of his worldview. Helekūnihi and his family remained faithful to the autocratically imposed new *kapu* of Kaʻahumanu’s Calvinist Christianity, while rejecting the actual direct rule of the chiefs in favour of the *pono* of constitutional law introduced by the New England missionaries. While many men of their class shared enthusiasm for Anglo-American

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<sup>38</sup> Mykännén, *Inventing Politics*, p. 178.

<sup>39</sup> With respect to foreigners purchasing land in Hawaiʻi, Keoni Ana insisted that though “it is by no means proper to sell land to aliens, nor is it proper to give them land, for the land belongs to Kamehameha III,” but “it is proper to sell land to His Majesty’s people” and “if the people wish to sell to those who have taken the oath of allegiance, they can do so, for Kamehameha is King over them.” Cited in Mykännén, *Inventing Politics* See , p. 118.



constitutional law with the Native framers of the constitution like Nahaolelua, most *maka‘āinana* longed for the old *pono* constituted by the chiefs. However, the old chiefs were gone and the rule of law under the new constitution had replaced them. Constitutional governance became a Trojan horse for U.S. imperial desires and the intimate ties of empire were forged in the web of relations between missionaries eager to “enlighten” the “darkness” of Hawai‘i and Hawaiian elites who were educated at Lahainaluna in legal principles rooted in the American republic. These men, stalwarts of the Calvinist church like Elia Helekūnihi, thus embraced both the spiritual and the political “enlightenment” of their New England mentors.

***Ke Kula Hanai ma Hāna***  
**The Boarding School at Hāna**  
**1849-1853**

From 1849 to 1853 Elia Helekūnihi attended *kula hanai* (boarding school) at Hāna to the east of Kaupō. In 1848 Eliphalet Whittlesey had succeeded Conde and remained pastor of Hāna’s Wananalua Church until 1854.<sup>40</sup> In Whittlesey’s first report for Hāna of 1849, he recorded that “A select school has recently been commenced at the station under the care of the school Superintendent. There are about 30 scholars at present. The Bible Catechism, Geography, Arithmetic, *Hulikanaka* (moral philosophy), & Singing are branches taught.”<sup>41</sup> This

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<sup>40</sup> *Missionary Album, Portraits and Biographical Sketches of the American Protestant Missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu, HI, 1969: Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society), p. 200.

<sup>41</sup> Hāna Mission Report, E. Whittlesey, 1849, Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society Archives. “Select Schools” were a direct result of the arrival in April 1837 of the “Eighth Company of Missionaries,” which included teachers designated to assist the mission in establishing superior educational institutions at the various stations. According to Bradley, “Superficially, a select school was merely a school conducted by a missionary rather than by a native.” Such schools, “would be marked by more careful discipline, and exhibit methods of instruction which might provide a model for the teachers of the common schools.” See Bradley, *The American Frontier in Hawaii*, pp. 305. The founders of the Hāna mission station, Daniel Conde and Mark Ives, were members of the Eighth Company, which was particularly dedicated to education, and may have had a vision for a Select School at Hāna from the very beginning. Whittlesey established the boarding school in 1849, though little is known about it, as it has not received

“Superintendent” was Lota Maui, keeper or administrator of schools for Maui’s Fourth District, who provided the annual school reports for the districts of Hāna and Kaupō from at least 1847 until 1857.<sup>42</sup> Maui was the teacher at the largest school in Kaupō at Pukaauhuhu, adjacent to S. Aki’s schools at Kou and Waiū, from 1841 until his move to run the new “Select School” at Hāna in 1849. While residing and teaching there, he served as *Kahu Kula* (school master) for the entire district of Hāna. An intense and loyal Calvinist, Lota Maui was an associate of S. Aki and Elia’s father in Kaupō and was probably responsible for encouraging the promising young Elia to move with him to the superior school at Hāna. Maui proved to be an unwavering opponent of the desire of the growing Catholic population to establish their own schools in Kaupō and Hāna, and influenced the religious, moral, and political formation of the young Elia, who studied under him from ages 10 to 14.<sup>43</sup> At a time when missionaries seldom gave leadership roles to Native Hawaiians, Maui’s position as head of Hāna Select School was a sign of his ability as an educator, as well as his dedication to the Calvinist tradition at a time when its moral and religious hegemony in the Hawaiian Kingdom was already in decline.

This decline is marked in Whittlesey’s Hāna Station report for 1851, which decries the poor spiritual “progress” of the Protestants of East Maui: “East Maui is still a dark place. Foreigners who have lived in other parts of the Islands give the people there the name of being different from other natives, that they are meaner in their dealings, and more indolent in their habits.” Whittlesey contrasted the classic tropes of “native indolence” and spiritual “darkness”

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the scholarly attention of the more renowned institutions at Hilo, Wailuku, Waialua, Punahou, or the Chiefs’ School in Honolulu. See Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, Vol. 1, 112-113.

<sup>42</sup> Maui Fourth District School Reports, 1847-1857, Archives of Hawai’i: “*Kahu Kula, Apana 4, Maui.*”

<sup>43</sup> Letter of Joane Marie, Catholic Teacher to Lota Maui, 22 July 1849, 261-1-15, Incoming Letters to the Minister of Public Instruction and Board of Education, Maui. 1849, January – July, AH.

with the rising light of Western “civilisation.” Like many Euro-Americans of his time, it was impossible for him to separate religious enlightenment from the superficial trappings of European culture.<sup>44</sup> At Hāna, Whittlesey reluctantly admitted that there was some positive evidence of an increase in “civilisation, “noting that “many are furnishing themselves with more and better clothing and in other ways increasing the comforts of their homes.” He noted that “The number of those who own cattle, horses, and donkies (*sic.*) is increasing.”<sup>45</sup> It is within these dimensions of “improvement” and “civilisation,” where Christianisation was understood as the adoption of Western lifeways, that we can see the subtle designs of colonialism. Whittlesey would have denied that the purpose of the missionaries was imperial, but the consistent presentation of the superiority of Western education, dress, food, law and religion colonised the minds of Hawaiians. Conscious or not, a cultural imperial design penetrated Hawai‘i and prepared the way for the political seizure of the Islands at the end of the century. By the 1870s, journalist Charles Nordhoff viewed the Kingdom as an appendage of America with “white frame houses scattered about, the narrow ‘front yards,’ the frequent school houses...all are New England, genuine and unadulterated.”<sup>46</sup> As acculturation towards the American way of life spread, combined with a rising tide of U.S. political and economic influence, it is small wonder that Hawaiians like Elia Helekūnihi, under the tutelage of men like Whittlesey, saw annexation by the U.S. a natural step in the “progress” of their people.

Lota Maui was playing his own role in the increase of “civilisation” in this “remote” corner of East Maui. On the anniversary of the Restoration, Whittlesey proudly reported that

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<sup>44</sup> *Missionary Herald*, September 1825.

<sup>45</sup> Eliphalet Whittlesey, Hāna Station Report, 1851, Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society Archives, 2.

<sup>46</sup> Nordhoff, *Northern California, Oregon and the Sandwich Islands*, pp. 22-23.

Maui had “made a law that the teachers & parents should provide themselves with certain articles of household (*sic.*) furniture, such as tables, plates, knives & forks.<sup>47</sup> At the feast there was such a display of those articles as was very creditable to the industry & enterprise of the people. It looks more like civilization being forced into them than like their imbibing it naturally.”<sup>48</sup> Whittlesey approved of the new signs of “civilisation” in his flock, but retained the Calvinist pessimism that was unable to trust genuine “improvement” in the habits of the “natives.” Later in the century, under the influence of Social Darwinism, the idea evolved among white people that no matter how many “improvements” could be employed to raise their level of civilisation, non-white people could never be equal to the “white race.”<sup>49</sup> Whittlesey’s pessimism at Hāna reveals that notions of white supremacy circulated long before Darwin. The first *haole* Helekūnihi would have known, Whittlesey modeled the fusion of Calvinist Christianity and Euro-American culture that assisted the evolution of U.S. colonialism in Hawai‘i. Elia and other educated Calvinists found it impossible to separate their faith from admiration for the *haole kāhuna*, bearers of the faith and of the *na ‘auao* from America. Their protégés, Lahainaluna educated teachers like Maui, Nahaolelua, Aki and Paulo Kū, were Hawaiian role models for maintaining the old *kapu* order of the first Calvinist chiefs, while facilitating the colonisation of Hawaiian minds.

The years of Elia’s schooling at Hāna saw rapid change in the Kingdom due to two transformative factors. The Great Māhele, which brought about the privatisation of land in

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<sup>47</sup> July 31 was the Hawaiian Independence Day, commemorating the restoration of sovereignty of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1843 by the British Rear-Admiral Richard Thomas after the “Paulet Affair” of February of that year in which Captain Paulet annexed Hawai‘i to Great Britain without the knowledge of officials in his home country.

<sup>48</sup> Whittlesey, Hāna, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter Six.

Hawai‘i, culminating in the passage by the Legislature of the act of 10 July 1850, allowed resident aliens to buy and sell land in fee simple for the first time.<sup>50</sup> This opened the door to an influx of settler colonists from both the U.S. and Europe and the ultimate alienation of most Hawaiians from their lands. In the beginning, the A.B.C.F.M. had forbidden the missionaries from owning land.<sup>51</sup> However, in 1853, the Board released them from this constraint and the following year, the Hawaiian government made provision for them to be permitted to acquire lands previously belonging to the mission.<sup>52</sup> As a New Englander, dedicated to the principles of profit and progress, Rev. Whittlesey himself acquired 682 acres of land for \$168.00 in 1850 at Koali on the Kaupō side of Hāna, undoubtedly hoping to join the rising tide of opportunity brought to the Islands by changes in land tenure.<sup>53</sup> There is no evidence that Whittlesey ever attempted to start a plantation on this large parcel of land, but his complaint in the Hāna Report of 1851 that the Hawaiians in the district “are so lazy, that they will not work,” is possibly a hint at his bitterness as to why his venture did not succeed.<sup>54</sup>

The other critical event was the California gold rush of 1849, which flooded the islands with restless young *haole* men looking for quick ways to strike it rich. Whittlesey made the stark, but ominous, statement, “The number of foreigners is increasing in our neighborhood.”<sup>55</sup> Apart

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<sup>50</sup> Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, pp. 297-298. “Fee simple” is the permanent tenure of land with freedom to dispose of it at will, as opposed to land secured by lease. It is the traditional form of land ownership in the West.

<sup>51</sup> *Missionary Herald*, vol. 19, 1823, pp. 108-109.

<sup>52</sup> Jean Hobbs, *Hawaii a Pageant of the Soil* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1935), pp 83-101.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178; Whittlesey, Eliphalet, Ahupua‘a of Koali, TMK 2-1-5-01, 08-09, Royal Patent 382, awarded in 1850. HA. By applying to purchase this land in 1849 (see Interior Department Letters, Interior Department to Eliphalet Whittlesey, 26 September, 1849, Book 2, p. 425, HA), Whittlesey not only immediately preceded the 1850 law allowing foreigners to own land, he broke the rules prior to the ABCFM’s 1853 ruling. See Hobbs, *Hawaii, A Pageant*, p. 83.

<sup>54</sup> Whittlesey, Hāna, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

from the presence of Catholic priests since 1846 and the New England missionaries at Hāna since 1838, there is no evidence of *haole* settlement in the far eastern districts of Maui prior to 1850. Indeed, one of the most common complaints of the missionaries stationed at Hāna was their loneliness due to isolation from their compatriots.<sup>56</sup> Whittlesey went on to write, “Two young men from California during the year past have applied for land at Honomaile and commenced a sugar cane plantation which is the third in that end of the island.”<sup>57</sup> The uncertain fortunes from gold mining brought such men to Hawai‘i to take advantage of the increase in the demand for sugar created by the gold rush itself. While at school in Hāna, Helekūnihi was introduced to the two factors that ultimately resulted in the annexation of Hawai‘i: white settlement and the profitable sugar industry. His relationships with these settlers, especially the missionaries and their sons, as well as his conviction of the high value of sugar for Hawai‘i influenced his position on annexation.

Letters written by both Eliphalet and his wife Elizabeth reveal that this was a period of devastating decline of the Hawaiian population in East Maui. In a note to Lucia Lyons at Waimea on Hawai‘i Island in February, 1849, Elizabeth wrote, “Like you all for the few past months we have been in the midst of sickness, suffering and death.” She went on to reveal the bald reality of American colonial desires by referencing a recent directive of the ABCFM, “The Board recommends our settling in these islands: 1. Because we have become so great a people that it is impractical that all the parents go home with their children to America. 2. These islands

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<sup>56</sup> Letter, Hāna, Whittlesey to Baldwin, 24 June, 1845, HMCS Archives, “Whittlesey, Eliphalet - Missionary Letters - 1843-1854 - to Baldwin, Dwight,” Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/802>. “We were glad to hear from you as we have no associates now to break Hawaiian monotony.”

<sup>57</sup> Whittlesey, Hāna, 2. He means “Honoma‘ele.”

are fast becoming depopulated and it is desirable that a godly race should possess the land.”<sup>58</sup>

By 1849 most of the missionaries knew they were in the Islands to stay. Effectively, they were settler colonists and began to build their prosperity on the acquisition of land for profitable sugar plantations. In this manner, they lay the foundation for the powerful oligarchy they would become, “the godly race that should possess the land.”

Writing to Dr. Baldwin at Lahaina in August, 1849, Whittlesey announced ominously that “smallpox had arrived” in the district.<sup>59</sup> In letters from August to October 1853, during the height of the smallpox epidemic that devastated all the islands, Whittlesey informed Dr. Baldwin of the success and failure of his inoculation programme conducted by him and Dr. Rae in Hāna, with statistics regarding deaths and recoveries. He noted that Kaupō seemed to have been spared the worst of the epidemic, possibly due to its isolation.<sup>60</sup> Still, the demographic impact of the epidemic on the Islands overall was devastating and led to the establishment of Queen’s Hospital in Honolulu and the rise of the *Ho‘oulu Lāhui* (increase the nation) movement in which Helekūnihi took leadership later in the century.

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<sup>58</sup> Letter, Hāna, Elizabeth Whittlesey to Lucia Lyons, 13 February, 1849, HMCS Archives, “Whittlesey, Eliphalet - Missionary Letters - 1846-1887 - from Whittlesey, Elizabeth to missionaries,” Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/803>.

<sup>59</sup> Letter, Hāna, Eliphalet Whittlesey to Dwight Baldwin, 20 August, 1849, HMCS Archives, Whittlesey, Eliphalet - Missionary Letters - 1843-1854 - to Baldwin, Dwight,” Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive, accessed October 9, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/802>.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 August, 1853.

## Lahainaluna

In 1853, Helekūnihi returned home to Nu‘u, where he resided briefly with his parents and with Iosepa Mawae at Huialoha Church in Mokulau, the largest Calvinist congregation in Kaupō district.<sup>61</sup> Mawae was a Lahainaluna graduate and the first native Hawaiian pastor of Huialoha, where he was formally licensed in 1854.<sup>62</sup> The elders of the church at Kaupō, including Elia’s father, had written that year to Dwight Baldwin at Lahainaluna: “Here is our opinion, which we shall present when you come to us, that you assign Joseph Mawae as Pastor for us.”<sup>63</sup> Though this request was granted, earlier in 1854, Elia’s father, Paulo Kū, and 61 other Kaupō citizens wrote to Minister of the Interior, Keoni Ana, complaining of the unjust practices of John Gower, *haole* Land Agent who “swindled” native Hawaiians out of their land in favour of foreigners. They commended Mawae as a “clever person living in our midst, a minister of the gospel, who knows how to make surveys, and has great knowledge,” to replace the swindler Gower.<sup>64</sup> As Hawaiians viewed with dismay the rising tide of *haole* power in the government and economy of the Islands, they recognised the importance of raising up educated Hawaiians to fight for their right to the land. The stated intention of the Great Māhele of 1848 had been to preserve “the Native race, and “to render them industrious, moral and happy” by allowing them to hold land in fee simple.<sup>65</sup> Sadly, their concerns were not heeded and land records show that Gower continued to oversee the appropriation of large pieces of the best land in Kaupō by *haoles* through the

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<sup>61</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May, 1876.

<sup>62</sup> *The Friend*, 6 May, 1854, 36.

<sup>63</sup> Letter from the elders of Kaupō to Baldwin at Lahainaluna, 16 September 1854, HMCS Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Letter of Kuloku and 61 the people of Kaupō, 13 January, 1854, Int. Min. Letters, Box 68, Int. Dept., Land, Incoming Letters, Jan 1-16, AH.

<sup>65</sup> Wyllie, Robert Crichton. *Answers to Questions Proposed*. Honolulu, HI, 1848, cited in Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land*, p. 202.



1850s and 60s.<sup>66</sup> Though Mawae was admired by the Kaupō people and Elia saw him as a mentor until his matriculation at Lahainaluna in July of that year, he was driven from the Kaupō pulpit in October 1857 and sent to the remote community of Ke‘anae because W.O. Baldwin, missionary pastor at Hāna station, insisted that “harmony could never exist in the Kaupō church while Mawae remained preacher.”<sup>67</sup> As we shall see, Baldwin had little time for independently minded Hawaiians.

In July 1854 Elia Helekūnihi matriculated to Lahainaluna, the missionary seminary established in 1831 in the uplands above the chiefly centre and port town of Lahaina in West Maui.<sup>68</sup> The aim of the school, founded by missionary Lorrin Andrews, was to address a crisis in education after the initial novelty of learning the *palapala* had worn off.<sup>69</sup> Conroy-Krutz suggests that, though the mission had been successful in Christianising the Hawaiians, the missionaries “were convinced that (the schools taught by Natives) had not done much in turning Hawai‘i into the elevated state of Christian civilisation that they had been instructed to create.”<sup>70</sup> The missionaries determined that they could not rely solely on Native teachers due to “their incompetancy” and their failure “to interest the children” because “their stock of knowledge is exhausted.” To make matters worse, “the immorality of many of the teachers has also given much trouble to the missionaries.”<sup>71</sup> To take care of the bulk of the educational programme, they

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<sup>66</sup> Duncan, RP 1683, 1855; Wills, RP 1684, 1855; Dedrick, RP 1299, 1856; Coe RP 2373, 1857; Wilmington, RP 2340, 1862 etc. Government Land Sales, Interior Department, HA.

<sup>67</sup> W.O. Baldwin, Hana Mission Report, 1858, HMCS Archives.

<sup>68</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May, 1876; Lecker, *Lahainaluna*, p. 345.

<sup>69</sup> Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, pp. 109-111.

<sup>70</sup> Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, pp. 127-128. Conroy-Krutz cites Lorrin Andrews as the source for this philosophy of civilising “uplift.”

<sup>71</sup> *Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Read at the Twenty-Third Annual Meeting: Which Was Held in the City of New York, Oct. 3, 4, and 5, 1832* (Boston, MA: Printed for the Board by Crocker and Brewster, 1832), pp. 77-78.

resolved to take charge themselves to ensure that Natives were better prepared as teachers. This trope of Native “incompetance” would grow in the next decade as the missionaries confronted the impossibility of Hawaiians ever becoming middle class New Englanders.

The promising new institution would train young men to “disseminate sound knowledge through the islands, embracing literature and the sciences, and whatever will tend eventually to elevate the natives from their present ignorance, and to render them a thinking, enlightened and virtuous people.”<sup>72</sup> These “enlightened” young men were to be prepared to become “assistant teachers of religion, and fellow labourers with the missionaries in publishing the gospel of Jesus.”<sup>73</sup> Missionary William Patterson Alexander succeeded Andrews as head of the school in 1843 and John Fawcett Pogue assumed the title in 1856.<sup>74</sup> Both men were influential in the development of Elia Helekūnihi’s world view. Graduates of Lahainaluna assumed important leadership roles as teachers, pastors, lawyers, judges and legislators in the Hawaiian Kingdom. Writing after his tour of the Islands in 1863, Rufus Anderson of the ABCFM, opined that “It numbers among its graduates the best qualified teachers of the common schools, and a large proportion of the natives in employments implying a good degree of education, such as surveyors, lawyers and judges.”<sup>75</sup>

Despite this glowing assessment of the alumni of Lahainaluna, Anderson was disappointed that the missionaries invoked “Native incompetance” when confronted with the

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Forbes, Kam and Woods, *Partners in Change*, pp. 52-53, 507.

<sup>75</sup> Rufus Anderson, *History of the Missions*, p. 296.

question of why they continued to refuse to promote Hawaiians to leadership in the church.<sup>76</sup>

The first Hawaiian to be formally ordained pastor was James Kekela in 1849 on O‘ahu and he was a rare outlier; when Elia Helekūnihi was ordained in 1865, he was the first on Kaua‘i.<sup>77</sup>

Sceptics fretted that converts, only barely out of ‘heathenism,’ would spread confusion or even heresy. Ignoring their own failings, they questioned whether Native teachers possessed the strength of character to maintain moral discipline without missionary oversight.”<sup>78</sup> In the course of the 19th century, this scepticism over Native ability intensified under the influence of a white supremacist Social Darwinism rooted that promoted the rationale of “incapability” for excluding Native people from leadership. However, William Patterson Alexander of Lahainaluna, as early as 1853, wrote, “Foreigners will greatly increase anyhow and will have the power, because they have superior intelligence and energy.”<sup>79</sup>

White supremacist theories were heartily promoted by Samuel Chapman Armstrong, son of Alexander’s missionary colleague, Richard Armstrong, Minister of Public Instruction for the Kingdom of Hawai‘i from 1847 to 1860.<sup>80</sup> The younger Armstrong was founder of the famed Hampton Institute in Virginia where newly-liberated African American slaves and recently “pacified” Native Americans were prepared for citizenship in the American republic. Armstrong claimed that he received inspiration for his work from his parents’ idealistic Christian educational work among the Hawaiians. “The Negro,” he wrote, “and the Polynesian have many striking similarities. Of both it is true that not mere ignorance, but deficiency of character is the

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 280-281.

<sup>77</sup> Nancy Morris, *Nā Haku*, pp. 159. For Elia Helekūnihi, see Chapter Four below.

<sup>78</sup> Norman Etherington, *Missions and Empire* (Oxford, 2005), p. 94.

<sup>79</sup> Alexander, *William Patterson Alexander*, p. 336.

<sup>80</sup> Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), p. 53.

chief difficulty, and that to build up character is the objective point in education.” At Hampton, Armstrong’s aim was to teach Africans and Native Americans “how to educate their own race and to provide them with Christian values...to abjure politics and concentrate on uplifting their race through hard work, thrift and the acquisition of property.”<sup>81</sup> These words could have been taken directly from the journals and reports of missionaries in Hawai‘i. Ominously, Armstrong wrote, “The darky needed the experience of ‘tender violence’ to rouse him from the passivity of his race.”<sup>82</sup> This project of “tender violence” in the education of Hawaiians required their domestication according to New England Calvinist norms. The oxymoron imagined disciplining young Hawaiians out of their “immorality” with the smiling face of Christian “benevolence,” reforming them as “a thinking, enlightened and virtuous people.” Alexander “was close friends with Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s father, Richard Armstrong, who often stayed at Lahainaluna...and with whom he was in hearty sympathy in the work of Hawaiian education.”<sup>83</sup>

The year 1853 saw the introduction of the English language at Lahainaluna. The report of the Minister of Public Instruction for 1854 claimed, “In addition to the branches taught heretofore in the school, all the pupils have been prosecuting the study of English this year, in which study their desire, though ardent at first, increases with their progress.”<sup>84</sup> In March, 1853, Rev. Alexander had written, “A most feverish desire exists to enter our school amounting almost to a frenzy, arising from the desire in particular to learn the English language.”<sup>85</sup> There is no evidence that Helekūnihi ever became proficient in English, as the only examples of his writing

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>83</sup> James McKinney Alexander, *Mission Life in Hawaii: Memoir of Rev. William P. Alexander* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1888), p. 104.

<sup>84</sup> Lecker, *Lahainaluna*, p. 342.

<sup>85</sup> Alexander, *William Patterson Alexander*, pp. 333-334.

are in Hawaiian, but he later became an advocate for the replacement of Hawaiian with English in the public schools, a position he likely developed under the influence of Alexander. The evolution of the use of English in the Kingdom followed closely the growing tide of U.S. imperial desire and played no small role in colonising the minds of Native Hawaiians. Providentially, Alexander, went on to write, “The people will get this language, & soon all their business will be done in English. Soon they will be of the universal Yankee nation, at least annexed to them.”<sup>86</sup> By 1896, the year of Helekūnihi’s death, the revised laws of the “Republic” of Hawai‘i specified English as the sole language of instruction in all schools.<sup>87</sup> Two years later, Hawai‘i was annexed by the United States.

Helekūnihi’s class, entering in July 1854, numbered twenty-eight scholars, with Rev. Alexander, Rev. Pogue, and an Hawaiian, Mr. Nahiiu, serving as instructors. The students cultivated the land to support themselves, so paid nothing for tuition or board. Armstrong opined that, “a more intelligent, healthy, and promising company of native boys, it would be difficult to find on the islands.”<sup>88</sup> In his report to the Legislature for 1855, Armstrong continued effusive praise for the school: “It would be difficult to over-rate the importance of this institution to His Majesty’s Government and people. It has educated many, if not most of his public native

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* Linguist Puakea Nogelmeier discusses the process whereby Hawaiian was superseded by English as the primary language of the Islands. See Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa ‘a i ka Leo*, pp. 9-16. As early as 1839, at the Chief’s Children’s School (attended by most of the Hawaiian monarchs), English was the language of instruction “to prepare the young chiefs for their future responsibilities.” Though Hawaiian retained supremacy among the majority of the population, by 1859 English was given primacy in interpretation of the law. See *Hawaiian Civil Code* Section 1493, 17 May, 1859, cited in Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa ‘a*, p. 10. Both languages were used in government, though Elia Helekūnihi, on occasion, needed to request translations of documents into Hawaiian, such as his desire for the “Bayonet Constitution” in his own language in the legislative session of 1887-1888. See *Extraordinary Session of the Legislature of the Hawaiian Kingdom Assembled November 3, 1887*, accessed 11 October 2020, <http://www.llmc.com/OpenAccess/docDisplay5.aspx?textid=4931259>.

<sup>87</sup> *Laws of the Republic of Hawai‘i* (Honolulu, HI: Hawaiian Gazette Co.), Act 57, sec. 30, cited in Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa ‘a*, p. 11.

<sup>88</sup> Lecker, *Lahainaluna*, p. 345.

servants and the leading men of the nation are from its walls...The influence of this institution on the national mind and character has been very great, much greater than that of any other on the islands.”<sup>89</sup> The missionaries clearly understood that Lahainaluna’s role in colonising the minds of Hawai‘i’s future leaders was of inestimable value.

Early in 1856, Rev. Alexander made the reluctant decision to resign as head of Lahainaluna because, he wrote, “my health has been running down in my sedentary employment in the Seminary.”<sup>90</sup> He was soon called to be pastor of Wailuku, where in October 1863 Alexander opened the first theological school in the islands for the training of native Hawaiian pastors in response to the directive by ABCFM secretary, Rufus Anderson, to indigenise the Hawaiian Church.<sup>91</sup> Until the theological school’s transfer to Honolulu in 1872, Alexander prepared for ministry seventy-three students, forty-nine of whom were licensed to preach, twenty-two were ordained as pastors, and six went on foreign missions.<sup>92</sup> Helekūnihi was too early to avail himself of training at the Wailuku Theological School, but it is not surprising that several of his colleagues in the HEA in the 1890s would, like him, support annexation by the U.S.<sup>93</sup> Undeniably, the “tender ties” that bound these men to their missionary teachers also informed their pro-American sympathies. As we have seen, Alexander, the influential teacher of them all had made his position clear on annexation as early as 1853.

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> The result was taking a much more lucrative position as manager of Ulupalakua plantation in the upcountry region of East Maui, a position that he thought would be more conducive to his health and find better job opportunities for his sons. It is clear that he imagined this to be for the remainder of his life, but by the end of the year he accepted the call to be pastor of Wailuku. See Alexander, *William Patterson Alexander*, pp. 379-380

<sup>91</sup> The reorganization of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association, had taken place earlier that year under his leadership with the aim of expanding its membership to include Hawaiians for the first time. The original HEA of 1854 restricted membership entirely to white missionaries and pastors of “foreign” (i.e. white) congregations.

<sup>92</sup> Alexander, *William Patterson Alexander*, p.503; Lecker, *Lahainaluna*, p. 349.

<sup>93</sup> Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, p. 155; see Chapter Six.

In June 1856, Rev. Claudius B. Andrews, returned to teach at Lahainaluna alongside Rev. John Fawcett Pogue, Helekūnihi's mentor. Pogue's son, William, would represent with Elia the Annexationist Club of Maui at the meeting with Commissioner James Blount in May 1893 to advocate for union with the U.S. Andrews' son, Lorrin, would play a significant role in the final chapter of Elia's life. We cannot underestimate the importance of these webs of relationship with missionaries and missionary sons in the colonisation of Elia Helekūnihi's mind.

Helekūnihi's collaboration with Rev. Pogue on the publication of his "*Mo'olelo Hawai'i*" took place in his last two years at Lahainaluna. This important work was based on an earlier collaboration in the 1830s between Rev. Dibble and his students Samuel Kamakau and Davida Malo, and published under the same title in 1838. On both occasions, the *haole* teachers, understanding that many of their students came from families that had resided at the courts of the *ali'i*, requested that the young men go throughout the islands to gather stories of Hawai'i from elders who had memorised them in the great oral tradition. Though the work of Pogue and his students was based on that of Dibble, the teacher added much material not previously recorded. Helekūnihi refers in his letter to Oliver Emerson to his collaboration with John Fawcett Pogue: "The book *Mo'olelo Hawai'i*, that was edited by my teacher (as well as by us) has served as a model for what I have written."<sup>94</sup> Not only was Elia one of Pogue's student informants, he later wrote his own *Mo'olelo* based on the works of Kamakau and John Papa 'Ī'ī, to which he added contributions from his own father, some of which may have been included in this earlier

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<sup>94</sup> Letter to Rev. Oliver Emerson from Elia Helekunihi, February 25, 1893, Ms. Group 284, Bishop Museum Archives. Translation courtesy of Dr. Kapali Lyon.

collaboration with his fellow students and Pogue at Lahainaluna.<sup>95</sup> This established Helekūnihi within the limited circle of men who transcribed the oral traditions of Hawai‘i after the introduction of literacy and enabled him to command respect among his people as a man with an illustrious *mo‘okū‘auahu*.

At Helekūnihi’s graduation ceremony on May 6, 1858, he offered a speech titled, “It is the duty of the Hawaiian people to do what is necessary for the nation not to be lost.”<sup>96</sup> It is likely that he addressed the demographic decline of the nation, with prescriptions for the *pono* behaviour necessary to increase the nation, a theme that later inspired him when he served in the Legislature. It is also possible that Helekūnihi preached on the necessity for Hawaiians to behave in a *pono* manner in order not to literally *lose* their nation to a foreign power. His classmate, Hezekiah Manase, who later married Elia’s sister, Hakaleleponi, and served as pastor of Kaupō from 1861 to 1864, took as his title, “Concerning the debt of the Hawaiian people to the Pagan lands,” a call for Hawaiians to send missionaries to those who remained in the “darkness of heathendom” now that their own land was a “Christian nation.”<sup>97</sup> Manase, like many of his other classmates, later share Helekūnihi’s annexationist views.

Lahainaluna has been criticised as a “nexus of missionary and sugar business interests” that envisioned “a nation in the service of their business and commercial economy,” and where

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* It is likely that the unique contributions that he made to Nathaniel Bright Emerson’s 1893 essay, “The Long Voyages of the Ancient Hawaiians,” were included in his work at Lahainaluna, but this cannot be verified until we can obtain a clear copy of his own “*Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i*.” See Nathaniel Emerson, *The Long Voyages of the Ancient Hawaiians*, Read before the Hawaiian Historical Society, 18 May, 1893, manuscript in the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. Early print and three versions of hand-written manuscripts were consulted.

<sup>96</sup> *Ka Hae Hawaii*, 12 May 1858, 23. “*Ka kanaka Hawaii nei pono ke hana i nalo ole keia lahui.*” Special thanks to Kapali Lyon for assistance in my translation.

<sup>97</sup> “*No ka aie o ko Hawaii nei in na aina Pegana.*”



missionaries “worked to use the school as a way of sorting and segregating racialized citizen-subjects for an oppressive plantation society.”<sup>98</sup> Although what might be characterised as an “oppressive plantation society” had not developed until the school was several decades old, one can certainly claim that the missionaries intended that graduates of the school become leaders of the Hawaiian nation and play a role in the formation of the Kingdom into a “godly commonwealth,” modelled on their own republic. Lahainaluna was highly successful in training “young men to disseminate sound knowledge,” the elites who filled the ranks of Hawaiian leadership in education, church and government for decades to come. Elia Helekūnihi was one such man, who remained eternally grateful to what he understood as the “enlightenment” he received at the school. In 1881, he was invited to join the committee to celebrate the jubilee of the school, and near the end of his life, he poetically referred to his *alma mater* as “The Torch that cannot be extinguished by the Kauaula Wind.”<sup>99</sup>

### ***Ke Kumu Kula ma ke One Hānau* School Teacher in the Sands of His Birth**

After graduation in May 1858, Helekūnihi returned home to Kaupō and served as schoolteacher at Mokulau adjacent to Huialoha church.<sup>100</sup> He was intended to serve as a pastoral replacement at Mokulau for Mawae, ousted from his pulpit by Rev. Baldwin the previous fall.<sup>101</sup> However, Baldwin’s report for 1859 revealed that Elia brought challenges and controversies of his own to the community at Mokulau. The Hāna pastor wrote, “We have as yet no assistant

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<sup>98</sup> Chang, *The World and All Things on it*, p. 105.

<sup>99</sup> *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, 1 January, 1881; *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July, 1893. The “Kauaula Wind” is a strong mountain wind, often destructive, at Lahaina. See Pukui and Elbert, *Dictionary*, p. 134.

<sup>100</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May 1876.

<sup>101</sup> Morris and Benedetto, *Nā Haku*, p. 210.

permanently located at Kaupo. Our hopes have been sadly delayed in that quarter. At the close of the Seminary year of Lahainaluna in 1858, one of the graduating class, a good scholar, returned to his father's home in Kaupo. He was immediately employed as subpreacher there, but subsequent events led to his dismissal from that office, he having in the pastor's estimation shown himself unworthy to hold it. The brethren at Kaupo also holding the same opinion."<sup>102</sup> Baldwin's reference to Helekūnihi as "subpreacher" indicates that he was a candidate for ordination, mentored by the *haole* missionary of Hāna as acting pastor of Kaupō.<sup>103</sup> It appears from his inuendo that the missionary was referencing some kind of sexual indiscretion. The incident ensured that Elia would have to wait another six years to achieve his goal of ordination.

When we examine, not simply the censorious English language of the missionary, but texts penned by Helekūnihi in Hawaiian, the events of 1858-1859 at Mokulau take on a different meaning, enabling us to better comprehend the events that precipitated his dismissal. Elia explained in a short autobiography that he was still serving at Mokulau when, at age nineteen, he married Luika Keo'ahu Kunewa, on 12 October 1858.<sup>104</sup> She was a young girl of only thirteen, born 15 March 1845 in the Hāna at Haleki'i, Aleamai, on a piece of land, once held by Lota Maui, Elia's old teacher at Hāna school, who was possibly Luika's relative.<sup>105</sup> She was of illustrious heritage, a great granddaughter of Hewahewa, *kahuna nui* of Kamehameha on Hawai'i Island.<sup>106</sup> Due to her lineage in a priestly family intimately linked with Kamehameha, as well as

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<sup>102</sup> W.O. Baldwin, Hana Mission Report, 1859, HMCS Archives

<sup>103</sup> See Morris and Benedetto, *Nā Haku*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>104</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May 1876.

<sup>105</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March 1877. "He Eehia he Welina Aloha no Mrs. Louisa Keoahu i hala aku."

<sup>106</sup> *Kekoolani Genealogy of the Descendants of the Royal Chiefs*, accessed 4 May 2019, [https://kekoolani.org/Pages/Kekoolani%20Genealogy%20Database%20\(PAF\)/pafg144.htm#2727C](https://kekoolani.org/Pages/Kekoolani%20Genealogy%20Database%20(PAF)/pafg144.htm#2727C); Māhele Database, No. 600K, Paalua, Native Register, Vol. 2. p. 290, accessed 10 October 2020, <http://ulukau.org/cgi-bin/vicki?e=d-0vicki--00-1-0--010---4---text---0-11--1haw-Zz-1---20-about---010-131-0010escapewin-00&cl=CL2.10&d=C00600-K&l=en>.

her impeccable Christian background, Helekūnihi's family viewed the marriage as an ideal union. Hewahewa was a direct descendant of Pā'ao, the high priest who voyaged from *Kahiki* to Hawai'i many centuries earlier, and about whom Emerson tells us Helekūnihi's "*Mo'olelo*" provided unique information.<sup>107</sup> Elia likely received this narrative from Luika and her family at Hāna.

Helekūnihi and his parents, deeply rooted in the chiefly traditions of pre-contact Hawai'i, and linked with Ka'ahumanu *mā*, as well as the Kamehameha dynasty, were so enthralled by Luika's *mo'okū'auhau* that the desired union in the old Hawaiian way took precedence over Calvinist sensibilities. In Elia's 1877 obituary for Luika, he revealed that the two young people were betrothed to one another in a ceremony conducted by Rev. Josepa Mawae of Mokulau prior to Elia's matriculation at Lahainaluna in 1854, when he was merely fifteen and she not quite ten. In this decidedly un-Calvinistic ceremony, Mawae said, "I am betrothing the two of you; here is your husband, and here also is your wife for when you return from Lahainaluna."<sup>108</sup> Pukui states that in old Hawai'i, "both *ali'i* and commoners occasionally betrothed a boy and girl in babyhood," and in that case, "the girl was forbidden to men. Her person was *kapu* until she joined her husband on his sleeping mat."<sup>109</sup> Pukui continues, "With or without gift-giving, a *ho'opolau* (betrothal) was very binding. I have never heard of any [old] term or expression meaning a brokent engagement. This is consistent with Hawai'i's traditional horror of any kind of *hua'ōlelo* (broken promise)."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Emerson, "Long Voyages," pp. 23,28.

<sup>108</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March 1877.

<sup>109</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui, *Nānā i ke Kumu* (Honolulu, 1979), p.7.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

Helekūnihi began his service as subpreacher at Huialoha in 1858, the time determined at the betrothal to complete his union with Luika. Luika, still only thirteen, was not to Baldwin an acceptable match for the aspiring pastor. The conflict with the white missionary provides a useful case study for the persistence of tradition in the face of colonial cultural and religious demands. Elia Helekūnihi and his family were Calvinists in form, but in substance remained Hawaiian. The missionary had another woman lined up for him, a situation that Elia claimed created for the young couple a great deal of “mental agony and difficulties.” As this was an arranged marriage, designed to maintain the purity of high status lineage, this “mental agony” was caused more by anxiety over breaking old Hawaiian *kapu* and sacred vows than any kind of Christian guilt. Because Baldwin refused to marry them, they turned to Simeon P. Kanakaole, Native Hawaiian pastor and recent missionary to Micronesia, to perform the ceremony.<sup>111</sup> The young couple were married, not in the church, but at “Kaluanoho, Wananalua, Hana” on 12 October 1858.<sup>112</sup> “Because of the marriage to the woman of my parents’ choice,” Elia wrote, “Baldwin ended my preaching license under him at Mokulau, Kaupō.”

Even in fiercely Calvinist families, like those of Elia and Luika, powerful elements of the old culture endured, trumping the strictures of the new *kapu*. Eighty years after European contact, the reproduction of Hawaiian culture was validated in Elia’s insistence on renewing old Hawaiian tradition by marrying Luika against the wishes of the missionary pastor. Nevertheless, the couple still chose a Calvinist marriage conducted by a Hawaiian pastor, a transformation of the old Hawaiian order, yet involving the structural reproduction of Hawaiian tradition.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Nancy Morris and Robert Benedetto, *Nā Haku* (Honolulu, 2019), p. 119.

<sup>112</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March, 1877.

<sup>113</sup> Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p.68.

Baldwin, recently arrived from New Hampshire, was dismayed at the family's intransigence, and finding it impossible to reconcile Christian righteousness with Hawaiian tradition, deemed Helekūnihi "unworthy" to serve in a pastoral role.

Luika gave birth to "the first fruits of our loins," Solomona, on 22 February 1860, when she was not quite fifteen.<sup>114</sup> However, "In the first month, our Heavenly Father sent for him and he was a fruit cut from the earthly garden for the beautiful garden of Inna (Eden?) where there are many beautiful flowers." Elia later wrote an exquisite *kanikau* for this "first fruit of his loins."<sup>115</sup> "However," he went on to write, "we bore fruit again and a baby girl was born on the 19th of March, Year of Our Lord 1861, and she lived."<sup>116</sup> This was their daughter, Hazeleleponi, namesake of both her aunt and the beloved Queen Kalama. She and their son, Geresoma (born 1863), were the only two of their thirteen children to survive infancy.<sup>117</sup>

Dismissed ignominiously (at least from the Calvinist perspective) from his position of subpreacher at Huialoha, Helekūnihi was allowed to continue as teacher for the boys at Mokulau school.<sup>118</sup> The following year, he was offered the teacher's job at Nu'u, his birthplace, most likely through the influence of his father. His uncle, S. Aki, had vacated the position two years before, to take up farming on the 23.5 acres of land he purchased nearby in 1856.<sup>119</sup> A teacher named Malaihi filled the vacancy for the school year 1858-1859 and Elia took up the position at

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<sup>114</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March, 1877.

<sup>115</sup> See below, pp. 103-105.

<sup>116</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March, 1877.

<sup>117</sup> *Nupepa Kuokoa*, 14 April, 1877; Ancestors.FamilySearch.org, Elia Helekunihi, Accessed 4 May, 2019.

<sup>118</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March, 1877.

<sup>119</sup> Land Commission Awards: Aki, S., Ahupua'a of Paukū, Royal Patent 2849, Book 14, awarded in 1854, HA.

the beginning of the school year of 1859.<sup>120</sup> There were forty-nine children enrolled at Nu‘u that year, an alarming drop from ninety-two in 1852.<sup>121</sup>

## ***Nā Nūpepa Hawai‘i*** **The Hawaiian Newspapers**

During his tenure as teacher at Nu‘u from 1859 to 1862, Helekūnihi became an avid contributor to *Nā Nūpepa Hawai‘i*, writing letters on a variety of themes revealing the world view of a model Lahainaluna graduate formed by chiefly lineage and the Calvinist faith of his missionary mentors. Hawaiian language newspapers had become a vital means of disseminating knowledge in the small island kingdom, reputed at mid-century to have been more literate than either England or the U.S.<sup>122</sup> *Ke Kumu Hawaii* had been founded in 1834 by the missionaries as a means of addressing the decline of interest in spiritual things among the Hawaiians. It was hoped by them to be “a strong inducement to the more intelligent and enterprising to improve their own minds and exert an influence on their countrymen, by writing.”<sup>123</sup> When *Ka Hae Hawaii* (“The Hawaiian Flag”) was established in 1855, Richard Armstrong, Board of Education president, wrote that it was “a legitimate part of the work committed to their charge.” The aim of the new paper was to cover “news, politics, moral literature, and agriculture.”<sup>124</sup> Kittelson notes that this and other papers placed a “heavy emphasis on writing letters to the editor,” which “elicited a wide range of opinion on often controversial topics, as well as serving as a means for

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<sup>120</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May, 1876.

<sup>121</sup> Maui Fourth District School Report, 1859, HA.

<sup>122</sup> Nogelmeier, *Mai Pa‘a*, p. xii.

<sup>123</sup> David Kittelson, “Native Hawaiians as Western Teachers,” 1981, p. 14, accessed 10 October 2020, [https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/47173/EDPVol20%233\\_10-16.pdf](https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/47173/EDPVol20%233_10-16.pdf).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

perpetuating Hawaiian historical and literary traditions.”<sup>125</sup> In later editions of *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* (“The Independent Newspaper”), *Ke Au Okoa* (“The Whole Age”), and the short-lived *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika* (“The Star of the Pacific”) some of the treasures of the Hawaiian oral tradition were first published, notably the works of Kamakau. Though *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika*, founded by future King David Kalākaua, ran only from 1861 to 1863, it was an organ of resistance, representing Hawaiian interests as opposed to those of the “missionary party,” who controlled most of the papers in both English and Hawaiian. *Kuokoa*, founded by missionary son Henry Martyn Whitney to represent Calvinist and American interests to opposing *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipia*’s anti-missionary tone, would remain Helekūnihi’s favourite until his death. It proved to be the most influential of the Hawaiian language newspapers, running from 1861 to 1927.

Culture wars between Calvinists and Hawaiian traditionalists, political opinions for and against American influence and *mo‘olelo* from the ancient oral repertoire filled the columns of the papers, which were avidly read by Hawaiians of all classes. In his three years as teacher at Nu‘u, Helekūnihi was a frequent contributor to *Ka Hae Hawaii*, the organ of the missionary dominated Board of Education, and after 1861, to *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*. The “tender ties” of missionary association and influence ensured that he would generally take a public stand for the Calvinist faith and for the land from whence it came for the rest of his life, though we shall see that there were occasions when he crossed swords with the *haole* power brokers. Whitney, *Kuokoa*’s publisher, like Helekūnihi, did not always please the religious establishment by publishing pre-Christian Hawaiian *mo‘olelo* and *mele*. Though a missionary son, he too was an independent thinker who frequently offended and provoked the opposition of his brethren, most notably when

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

he waged war on the contract labour system of the sugar plantations in the late 1860s, an issue that also inspired Helekūnihi in the following decade.<sup>126</sup>

Helekūnihi's first forays into the public realm saw him serving primarily as a news reporter, while commentary and fiery debate on cultural or religious themes came later. His first piece, written on 29 August 1859, shortly after he began teaching at Nu'u, was entitled, *Hale Pau i ke Ahi* ("House Destroyed by Fire").<sup>127</sup> It is an early example of Helekūnihi's literary style, embedded in the ancient poetic forms of his people, rich in metaphor drawn from nature and place, with roots in the traditions of the *kāka'olelo*. Throughout his life, Helekūnihi could not resist opportunities to imbue events, people and places with symbolic or hidden meanings, employing the poetic device known as *kaona* (concealed reference). Literary scholar, John Charlot, writes that in Hawaiian poetry word play "was no mere game, but an indication of the mysterious reality revealed by language" and that "The use of ambiguity is a central and untranslatable device in Hawaiian literature."<sup>128</sup> Elia's use of traditional symbolic language of place and nature in seemingly prosaic newspaper reporting, as well as in more classic expressions, such as *kanikau* (lamentations), reveals that, despite his educational formation in the Western tradition, he remained rooted in the ancient Hawaiian poetic universe.

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<sup>126</sup> Helen Geracimos Chapin, *The Role of Newspapers in Hawai'i* (Honolulu, 1996), pp. 56-57.

<sup>127</sup> *Ka Hae Hawaii*, 7 September, 1859. The story detailed the house fire of Kainoa of Kipapanui in Kaupō, who left left two pots of goat fat on the fire before he and his family went to visit neighbours. He wrote that when the house caught fire, Kainoa heard "a sharp, loud crackling sound," but merely thought it was thunder or "a wind sweeping down from the cliffs." "It was as intense as the wild force of the waves crashing on the shore," and the house was completely destroyed with "the material wealth that comforted their lives."

<sup>128</sup> John Charlot, *Chanting the Universe*, p. 42.



## *La‘au Lapa‘au Hawai‘i* Traditional Hawaiian Medicine

One of Helekūnihi’s contributions to *Ka Hae Hawaii* while at Nu‘u in 1860 criticised traditional Hawaiian medicine. He told the tale of Keawe of Kaupō, who was *kano* (vain, proud, haughty) for seeking aid from a *kahuna lapa‘au* (native Hawaiian medical practitioner) named Kahuli. Keawe died as a result of drinking Kahuli’s ‘*apu la‘au* (medicinal potion).<sup>129</sup> This short letter precipitated a spirited series of letters in June and July of 1860 between George Belly ‘Ūkēkē, member of the Hawaiian House of Representatives, and either Helekūnihi or the editor of the paper, on the relative merits of the practices of *nā kāhuna lapa‘au* in relation to those of *nā kauka haole* (the white doctors).<sup>130</sup> His position on traditional Hawaiian medicine at this time was undoubtedly influenced by his missionary mentors, notably John Fawcett Pogue, who wrote, condemning Hawaiian practitioners: “Most of the invocations were evil, and the performances of the priests were worst. But the strange thing is that these evil practices of the priests are continuing to our present time, and many people have died. What a pity! When will these evil practices in ignorances (*sic.*) cease in these islands?”<sup>131</sup> Helekūnihi was not alone in his condemnation, for even Kamakau referred to native *kāhuna* as “pig-eating *kahunas*, liars and

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<sup>129</sup> *Ka Hae Hawaii*, 13 June, 1860, 4. *E hai akea oe, mai o a o.*

<sup>130</sup> I suggest that it is the editor because in the July 4 article he states, “here in Honolulu,” and Elia was certainly at Nu‘u in Kaupō at this date. George Belly ‘Ūkēkē was a rather passionate and rascally member of the Kingdom Legislature who had a reputation for making clever and humorous speeches. Kuykendall relates that in 1866, “the Honorable Mr. Ukeke stirred up a short debate by a resolution directing the cabinet to find a wife for the king.” (Kamehameha V, 1863-1872) and justified this extraordinary proposal by saying, ‘I take great interest in my Sovereign, as he is the only one left.’” See Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol 2, p. 240.

<sup>131</sup> John Fawcett Pogue, Charles W. Kenn, and J. F. Pokuea, *Moolelo of Ancient Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI: Topgallant Pub. Co., 1978), p. 53.

deceivers,” while admitting that “many times they are right, and they cure many who are sick unto death.”<sup>132</sup>

‘Ūkēkē’s response to Helekūnihi’s letter was characteristically tongue in cheek: “But here I’ll tell you something helpful about the *haole* doctor: Moluhi from Honolulu was killed by Dr. Hillibrand, who cut off his arm with a knife. Komo, a *haole* from Waialua, was killed by a *haole* doctor, and Ihihi, a policeman from here in Honolulu was killed by a *haole* doctor of Honolulu.”<sup>133</sup> The editor of *Ka Hae Hawaii* took ‘Ūkēkē’s bait and responded with some irony of his own: “I have thought a lot about this question, and I almost agree with the thoughts of ‘Ūkēkē, that the wisdom of the Native doctors is superior to that of the *haole* ones.”<sup>134</sup> The editor sarcastically looked at the results of treatment at Queens Hospital in Honolulu, which had only been open for less than a year, and wrote, “In Emma’s hospital here in Honolulu, 1,354 sick people have been treated, and 12 of these people have died!”<sup>135</sup> And it’s a *haole* doctor in that hospital! Twelve sick people have died under his care, and 1,342 have lived. What a terrible offence!” He went on to say that *haole* doctors do not know Hawaiian sickness because they eat *poi* (mashed taro, the Hawaiian staple), so have different bodies from people who eat British food and drink tea. “Rare is the man who is healed by medicine,” he wrote, because

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<sup>132</sup> Kamakau, *Ka Po’e Kahiko*, p. 96. For a discussion of the debate on the merits of Hawaiian versus Western practitioners in the early days of the mission, see Archer, *Sharks*, pp. 106-108, 196-197.

<sup>133</sup> *Ka Hae Hawaii*, 27 June, 1860, 2: “Aka, eia hoi ka’u ia oe e ka mea kokua i ke kauka haole, ua make o Moluhi no Honolulu, ia Kauka Hiliparani, i oki ia ka lima i ka pahi, ua make o Komo haole no Waialua, i ke haole po, a me Ihihi Makai no Honolulu nei no, i he kauka haole, aole i ke kauka o Hawaii nei.”

<sup>134</sup> *Ka Hae Hawaii*, 4 July, 1860: Ua noonoo nui au i keia ninau a ua aneane ae aku i ka manao o Ukeke, ua oi loa ke akamai o na Kauka maoli mamua o na Kauka haole..

<sup>135</sup> King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma had founded Queen’s Hospital in Honolulu in 1859 (at its current site in 1860) for the treatment of “indigent sick natives” in the tradition of Western medicine. The establishment of the hospital was the result of the King’s desire to fulfil his promise, at the opening of the legislature of 1855, to address the pressing issue of the demographic decline of the Hawaiian people. On that occasion, he said, “It is a subject, in comparison with which all others sink into insignificance,” and for which he felt “a heavy, and special responsibility.” See Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, Vol. 2, pp. 69-71.

“superstition, exorcism, and making a big performance are all the best. The *haole* doctor does not see this; for that, he is a very unskilled man.”

‘Ūkēkē provided a list of important chiefs who died as a result of *haole* doctoring. Kina‘u died when she went to a *haole* doctor called “Hukikaeke,” who used a brush as his “medicine.”<sup>136</sup> King Kamehameha III died as a result of treatment from another *haole*, Pokeokeo, while Paki was a chief who went to the shrunken little guy, Pihapono, and likewise died.<sup>137</sup> Are not the deaths of all these high chiefs the result of the work of the *haole* doctors?” Since the petition movement of the 1840s and the rising tide of opposition to *haole* appropriation of the best lands, resistance to white influence in the Islands had been growing. Hawaiian intellectuals examined the demographic decline of their people and linked it to the replacement of traditional values and practices with those of the foreigners. These seemingly humorous arguments for or against *haole* or Native medicine reveal anxiety among Hawaiians that perhaps Western medicine was the reason for the loss of so many of their people, including the beloved chiefs of old, and not the remedy the missionaries proposed to save them.

Later in life, Helekūnihi’s position on Hawaiian traditional practices evolved towards one less accommodating of missionary judgement and censure, though at this stage, the recent graduate of Lahainaluna conformed to the views of his teachers. As missionary influence waned in the 1850s and 1860s, during the cultural renaissance of the reigns of Kamehameha IV and V,

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<sup>136</sup> *Ka Hae Hawaii*, July 4, 1860. Hukikaeke: An odd word that can mean, “pull up the sack, fishnet or scrotum.” Hawaiians are adept at clever plays on words and the language is especially suitable for multiple meanings for one word or phrase.

<sup>137</sup> *Pokeokeo*: Another peculiar word, could mean either “turkey gobble” or “prosperous,” though literally it means “white night.” *Pihapono*: Means “full of goodness or correct procedure.”

many Hawaiians lost their aversion to the traditions of their people.<sup>138</sup> This was reflected in ‘Ūkēkē’s response to Helekūnihi’s spirited attack on Hawaiian medicine. By 1868, Hawaiian medicine had become so respectable that Kamehameha V instituted a second Board of Health to formally license *kāhuna lapa ‘au* in their profession.<sup>139</sup> Helekūnihi himself circled back to ancient Hawaiian practices, ultimately breaking with the sympathies of his *haole* mentors. In his 1893 letter to Emerson, he wrote, “the second thing of mine that I have spent time on is a *Book of Hawaiian Medicine from Twenty or more Kāhunas*,” demonstrating that his ideas on the subject had evolved considerably.<sup>140</sup> He also joined the *Ho ‘oulu Lāhui* (increase the nation) movement and struggled against *haole* resistance for a compassionate use of traditional remedies in treating leprosy among Hawaiians. It may be that the inevitability of annexation inspired his desire to memorialise, record and reinvigorate endangered Hawaiian traditions.

The depopulation of vast districts with once large populations, such as Kaupō, caused Hawaiians to question the efficacy of the *haole* solution to the manifest problems of their nation.<sup>141</sup> Many awakened to the alarming fact that not only was their culture, language and nation slipping away, but possibly their existence as a people. The result was wide-spread

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<sup>138</sup> Oswald A. Bushnell, *The Gifts of Civilization: Germs and Genocide in Hawai‘i* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), pp. 101-131.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p.110.

<sup>140</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Rev. Oliver Emerson, 25 February, 1893, Bishop Museum Archives, MS Group 284, Box 1.4 Helekunihi. *O ka lua o ka ‘u i hoolilo ai he Puke Lapaau Hawaii na Iwakalua a oi Kahuna*. He was profoundly disappointed when he sent the manuscript to the *hapa haole* (half white) publisher, Thomas (Kamaki) P. Spencer of Honolulu in 1887 with \$21.00 to have it printed. Spencer took the work and the cash, but published it in his own name under the title *Buke ‘Oihana Lapa ‘au me nā ‘Apu lā ‘au Hawai‘i* (“Book of Medical Practices and Hawaiian Prescriptions”). Though he had cheated Elia, he “graciously” acknowledged him in his introduction: “and it was prepared and edited anew only from certified medical practitioners by the Honorable Elia Helekunihi.” See Spencer (Helekūnihi), *Buke ‘Oihana Lapa ‘au*, p. 4: *a i hoomakaukau a hooponopono hou ia no na papahana laau kupono wale no e Hon. E. Helekunihi*. Translation with the assistance of Kapali Lyon.

<sup>141</sup> The only way to assess population in the absence of a census specific to Kaupō at this date is to examine the school reports, which indicate that in 1860 there were 244 children enrolled in seven schools in Kaupō, the largest of which was Helekūnihi’s school at Nu‘u with fifty-eight students (School Report of S. Kamakahiki, 1860, AH). My estimate is purely conjectural and aims to include parents, elders and single adults.

alienation from both the New England missionaries and the republic from which they came. The religious, cultural and political influences that had formed Elia Helekūnihi's world view ceased to hold value for the majority of Hawaiians, and the Calvinism of the missionaries and old chiefs in the circle of Queen Ka'ahumanu became the new conservatism.

Helekūnihi's letter in *Kuokoa* in autumn 1861 reflected further on the tragedy of Hawaiian demographic decline.<sup>142</sup> He wrote of a newly arrived contagion at Nu'u, which he called "an illness with red protruberances or bumps,"<sup>143</sup> possibly a re-infection of the smallpox that ravaged the Islands in 1853. "It started at the school in the last week of October and intensified in the first week of November," he wrote, "affecting above all the little children." Most of the children in his school were "completely exhausted" by this illness, which is "truly devastating."<sup>144</sup> One little girl from his named Kahi had died. Shortly after he wrote this letter, painful memories of the passing of his own beloved Solomona the year before inspired him to write at Nu'u on 31 December 1861 a beautiful *kanikau*, published in *Kuokoa* the following February. This piece demonstrates Elia Helekūnihi's grounding in the great poetic tradition of the *kākā'ōlelo* of his illustrious *mo'okū'auhau*.<sup>145</sup> In classic Hawaiian style, he draws on the

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<sup>142</sup> *Nupepa Kuokoa*, 2 December, 1861, 2.

<sup>143</sup> "He mai puupuu ulaula"

<sup>144</sup> "neoneo maoli"

<sup>145</sup> "He Kanikau Aloha no S.P.K. i Make," *Nupepa Kuokoa*, 8 February, 1862, 3:

In the evening your passing was like the setting of the sun.  
 Yours is the spirit that departs in the evening,  
 With the billowy clouds of Haleakalā,<sup>145</sup>  
 We two shall be in the cold and chill,  
 In the long night of winter, sleeping,  
 The cold fells the *hau* tree of Kula,<sup>145</sup>  
 The hawk passes through the waters of Kupalaia.<sup>145</sup>  
 The thought of you cannot be properly awakened.  
 My beloved little child of the waters of Muliwai.<sup>145</sup>  
 Yours, perhaps, is the star that rises on the night of Hiikua  
 Beloved child, carried in my arms,<sup>145</sup>  
 In the height and pinnacle of the utmost heavens,

forces of nature and the place names of his ancestral homeland to evoke the pathos of grief for a lost child, who passed “with the willowy clouds of Haleakalā,” while the cold of his death “felled the *hau* tree of Kula.” Solomona is “the beloved child of the waters of Muliwai” and “the star that rises on the night of Hiikua.”

### ***Ka ‘Ōlelo mai Nā Kūpuna mai*** **Keeping Tradition**

In July 1862 Helekūnihi contributed to *Kuokoa* the vivid legend from Hāna, Maui, of Popo‘alaea of Wai‘ānapanapa.<sup>146</sup> His interest in the *mo‘olelo* and *ka‘ao* (legends) of old Hawai‘i

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In heaven and on the earth,  
You shall meet there, perhaps, with a multitude of hosts,<sup>145</sup>  
With countless myriads of warrior angels,  
You will stand before the Lord of Hosts,  
To our God Jehovah, forever.  
To our God Jehovah, forever.<sup>145</sup>

*I ke ahiahi i ka napoo ana a ka la ka helena.  
Nou ka ka uhane hele ahiahi  
Me ke opua ala iluna o Haleakala,  
Elua no kaua i ke anu me ke koekoe e,  
I ka po loloa o ka hooilo ke moe ia,  
Ooki ke anu ka hau o Kula e,  
Puka ka io i ka wai o Kupalaia.  
Alahia ka manao pono ole ia oe.  
Kuu keiki iki o ka wai o Muliwai.  
Nou paha ka uhane i Hiikua, Hiialo e,  
I ka lewa a nuu i ka lewa lani,  
I ka paa iluna i ka paa ilalo e,  
Halawai aku la paha oe me ou kini,  
Me na puali anela pau ole i ka helu,  
E ku ana imua o ka Haku Sabati,  
Ia Iehova ke Akua, a mau aku,  
Ia Iehova ke Akua, a mau aku.*

<sup>146</sup> *Nupepa Kuokoa*, 12 April 1862, 2; *Nupepa Kuokoa*, 12 July 1862, 4. .

demonstrated the depth of his love for the pre-Christian traditions of his people. Helekūnihi became an active participant in the renaissance of Hawaiian tradition and literature published in newspapers in the 1860s and beyond, yet resisted the “paganising” programme of King Kalākaua in the 1870s and 1880s. Silva writes, “The publication of these mo‘olelo at that time is perhaps indicative of a loosening of the grip of missionary prohibition on Hawaiian knowledge, although missionaries continued to decry any such loosening.”<sup>147</sup> Helekūnihi, however, was comfortable in both worlds, as he saw the faith of the missionaries consonant with Hawaiian knowledge.

While resistance to Hawaiian tradition persisted among some missionaries, others made important contributions to its perpetuation. Whitney’s *Kuokoa*, though generally adhering to a Calvinist agenda, was one of the foremost sites for publication of Hawaiian *mo‘olelo*, *ka‘ao*, *kanikau* and *mele*. Pogue desired to record the stories of old Hawai‘i during Elia’s time at Lahainaluna and Alexander launched a project of collecting stories relating to ancient Hawaiian gods from his divinity students at the Wailuku Theological School in 1864.<sup>148</sup> Missionary son, Nathaniel Emerson, became a scholar of Hawaiian oral traditions, while Martha Beckwith, related to the Thurstons and raised in Ha‘ikū, Maui, close to the Alexanders (and, incidentally, Helekūnihi), was an authority on Hawaiian mythology.<sup>149</sup> Together, these figures and their work

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<sup>147</sup> Silva, *The Power of the Steel-tipped Pen*, p. 25. Silva employs the practice of not italicising Hawaiian words because in Hawai‘i the language is not foreign. Because I am writing in English, I have chosen to italicise the Hawaiian.

<sup>148</sup> Esther T. Mookini and Basil Kirtley, “Essays Upon Ancient Hawaiian Religion by Nineteenth Century Seminarists,” *Hawaiian Journal of History*, Volume 13, 1979, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa evols, accessed October 12, 2020, <https://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10524/182/2/JL13081.pdf>.

<sup>149</sup> Keone Nunes and Glen Grant in Emerson, Nathaniel Bright. Emerson, *Unwritten Literature of Hawaii. The Sacred Songs of the Hula. Coll. and Transl., with Notes and an Account of the Hula* (Honolulu, HI: Mutual Publishing, 1998), pp. 4-7; Katherine Luomala in Martha Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* (Honolulu, 1970), pp. x-xi.

indicate that it is perhaps inaccurate to suggest that missionaries consistently suppressed Hawaiian culture.

It would do well, however, to understand the motivation behind these *haole* collectors of Hawaiian traditions. Earlier Euro-American attempts to record the traditions of Hawai‘i were rooted in the Enlightenment desire to record, describe and categorise exotic phenomena. The journals of Captain Cook, though clearly the record of a European of his time, attempted to record events and people dispassionately and accurately.<sup>150</sup> Even some early missionaries, such as Englishman William Ellis, appeared to do the same.<sup>151</sup> Missionary sons may have been motivated by romanticism or nostalgia for old Hawaiian traditions remembered from their childhood, but forgotten in the late nineteenth century. However, some *haole* collectors of Hawaiian traditions were influenced by prevailing views of white supremacy in the rising fields of anthropology and ethnology. Lee Baker’s study of the construction of race in the new discipline of anthropology in America at the end of the century examines how Social Darwinist views of hierarchies of race dominated the “science.” According to Baker, Daniel G. Brinton, responsible for transforming anthropology from a romantic pastime to an academic discipline, “developed the field by advancing claims of the racial superiority of Whites and the racial inferiority of people of colour.”<sup>152</sup> Moreover, Brinton “anchored anthropology to an evolutionary paradigm.”<sup>153</sup> Like Brinton, Nathaniel Emerson was a physician trained in the Northeast prior to the Civil War, and like him, served as a surgeon in the war. It is not surprising that, despite

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<sup>150</sup> James Cook, J. C. Beaglehole, and Philip Edwards, *James Cook: the Journals* (London, UK: Penguin, 1999).

<sup>151</sup> William Ellis, *Journal of William Ellis: Narrative of a Tour of Hawaii, or Owhyhee; with Remarks on the History, Traditions, Manners, Customs, and Language of the Inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1979).

<sup>152</sup> Lee D. Baker, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2007), p. 20.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*



Emerson's excellent work transcribing Hawaiian traditions, he subscribed to views of "simple," "primitive" and "noble savages" similar to those of Brinton.<sup>154</sup> "The Hawaiians," he wrote, are "children of nature, more free and spontaneous than the more advanced race to which we are proud to belong."<sup>155</sup> In consideration of Emerson's later work to overthrow the Kingdom, it appears that he concurred with another early anthropologist, John Wesley Powell, a man passionate about recording the cultures of "vanishing races," who wrote that Indian customs should be studied because "they must necessarily be overthrown before new institutions, customs, philosophies and religions can be introduced."<sup>156</sup> Perhaps Helekūnihi was conscious of Nathaniel Emerson's appropriation of his culture to suit the *haole* agenda of recording the lore of a "dying race." Despite his own position on annexation, he hoped to record the *mo'olelo* of the Hawaiian people from the *Hawaiian* perspective before it was too late.<sup>157</sup>

## ***Kū'ē*** **Resistance**

As the century progressed, hierarchical theories of race began to dominate Euro-American thinking and Hawaiians experienced increased marginalisation by the growing *haole* minority in their own land. In 1849, the two young princes of the Kamehameha line, Alexander Liholiho, later Kamehameha IV (1834-1863), and his brother, Lot Kapuāiwa, future Kamehameha V (1830-1872), accompanied Dr. Gerrit P Judd (1803-1873), former missionary

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<sup>154</sup> Emerson, *Unwritten Literature*, p. 7.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, p. 26.

<sup>157</sup> Letter to Rev. Oliver Emerson from Elia Helekunihi, February 25, 1893, Ms. Group 284, Bishop Museum Archives.

advisor to the King, on a diplomatic mission to France, Great Britain and the United States. Kamehameha III sent Judd to negotiate treaties from all three nations with the aim of achieving guarantees of Hawaiian independence. Judd invited the teenage princes as “ornaments for his embassy,” and to gain “knowledge and experience of the world and courts.”<sup>158</sup> When boarding a train in Washington, Liholiho was asked by the others to reserve a seat for their party in a compartment. The conductor, who had “probably taken me for somebodys (*sic.*) servant, just because I had a darker skin than he had,” tried to throw him out, informing him that he “was in the wrong carriage.” This encounter with US domestic racism was emblazoned in the future King’s memory and contributed to the sea change among the Hawaiian people in their trust of Americans, whose designs on the Kingdom became clear at mid-century. Liholiho continued, “The confounded fool. The first time I ever received such treatment, not in England or France, or anywhere else. But in this country I must be treated like a dog to go & come at an Americans (*sic*) bidding. Here I must state that I am disappointed at the Americans. They have no manners, no politeness, not even common civilities, to a Stranger.”<sup>159</sup> As King, (1855-1863), Liholiho established the anti-American policy that characterised the monarchy until the overthrow of the Lili‘uokalani by U.S. backed interests in 1893.

## Conclusion

Elia Helekūnihi’s world view was formed and defined by both his *mo‘okūauhau* in the lineage and traditions of the Maui chiefs and his Calvinist missionary education. Tender ties

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<sup>158</sup> Kamehameha and Jacobs Adler, *The Journal of Prince Alexander Liholiho: the Voyages Made to the United States, England and France in 1849-1850; Edited by Jacobs Adler* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1967), pp. ix-x.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

established in the mission schools with missionaries and their sons created a network of relationships that guided him all his life as he negotiated his way through the cataclysmic religious and political changes confronting his people. These “intimate frontiers of empire” played a key role in colonising the hearts and minds of young Hawaiian elites in the mission schools, where *haole* missionaries, trusted and admired by the beloved old chiefs, inculcated Western cultural and legal values. These values, in turn, undermined the old chiefly polity and, ironically, contributed to the decline of American Calvinism as the established church of Hawai’i.

Pogue’s early missionary effort to preserve Hawaiian culture in the production of the *Mo’olelo* enabled Helekūnihi and others to record Hawaiian oral traditions and take pride in them. In the next decade, he shared with others in a renaissance of interest in these traditions by publishing them in *Nā Nūpepa*. However, his conflict with Baldwin at Kaupō foreshadowed challenges that later confronted him in reconciling Hawaiian tradition with Calvinist mores and in dealing with the white supremacy of the missionaries whom he admired. Helekūnihi consistently attempted to balance fidelity to Hawaiian tradition with dedication to the new *kapu* order of Ka’ahumanu *mā* that redefined *pono* in terms of Calvinist Christianity. This balancing act was demonstrated in his contributions to *Nā Nūpepa* where he showcased his skill in Hawaiian poetic traditions while engaging in the culture wars of his time. When many of his countrymen rejected Calvinism as a Trojan horse for U.S. imperial designs, Helekūnihi’s fidelity to the old chiefs and his tender ties with their missionary protégés caused him to turn a blind eye to the white supremacy that precluded his exercise of full leadership in church and government.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Gosena Hou* New Goshen 1862-1875

#### **The Struggle of a Native Hawaiian to Find Acceptance in the Leadership of the Calvinist Church**

Mid-century historian Richard Hofstadter wrote that “England gave Darwin to the world,” but “the U.S. gave to Darwinism an unusually quick and sympathetic reception.”<sup>1</sup> Elia Helekūnihi’s goal had been to achieve ordination in the church of the American missionaries, in essence to achieve missionary status himself, but William Otis Baldwin of Hāna had deemed him “unworthy.” Despite the ABCFM’s intention of raising up a Native Hawaiian ministry, the missionaries and their sons resisted acknowledging that Hawaiians were ready for leadership in either church or government. Later in the century, Rev. Sereno Bishop (erstwhile pastor of Hāna) spoke of Native Hawaiians as being “of the ‘savage’ races of mankind,” a perspective influenced by the rising tide of Social Darwinism that absorbed the American consciousness after the 1860s.<sup>2</sup> Matthew Frye Jacobson suggests that, “In the realm of social thought, bastardized notions of ‘the survival of the fittest’ became indispensable for expressing a certain meanness of spirit,” a quality that many missionary sons seemed to have had in abundance.<sup>3</sup> Bishop addressed the Honolulu Social Science Association in November 1888 on the subject of “Why the are Hawaiians Dying Out.” He began by stating that “Darwin is much in vogue,” and attributed

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<sup>1</sup> Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Sereno Bishop under the *nom de plume* “Kamehameha,” *The Washington Evening Star*, 2 June, 1894.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: the United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (Brantford, Ont., Canada: W. Ross MacDonald School, Resource Services Library, 2005), p. 140.

Hawaiian demographic decline primarily to “unchastity,” particularly that of the Hawaiian woman who “was, like males of other races, aggressive in solicitation.”<sup>4</sup> Other reasons proffered included “drunkenness,” “oppression of the chiefs,” “infectious and epidemic diseases,” “kahunas and sorcery,” “idolatry” (which “disorders the mental and debases the moral action of the people, and frustrates and neutralises remedial influences”), “the unnameable lewdness and unspeakable foulness of the *hula*” and “the bad influence of the Chinese.”<sup>5</sup> Social Darwinism intensified notions of white supremacy that had long prevailed among Anglo-Americans, but it “gave the force of natural law to the idea of competitive struggle” among human communities.<sup>6</sup>

Social Darwinism shifted the narrative of the *haole* missionaries and their descendants from one of viewing Native Hawaiians as subjects capable of embracing the fruits of Christian and republican civilisation to one of incapability rooted in racial animus. As early as the 1860s, this bias defined the struggle of Elia Helekūnihi to achieve the goal of ordination and leadership in the Church and would later be employed to justify the Queen’s overthrow in 1893. When Bishop wrote for the *Washington Evening Star* in 1894 under the ironic *nom de plume* “Kamehameha,” Social Darwinism had reached a crescendo whereby white Americans assumed, as Gail Bederman puts it, that “manly white civilisation” stood in opposition to “unmanly, swarthy barbarism.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bishop, *Why Hawaiians are Dying Out*; *The Washington Evening Star*, 2 June 1894.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-13.

<sup>6</sup> Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism*, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: a Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 36.

The “civilising mission” of the missionaries was intimately related to that of Christian proselytisation. It was universally assumed long before Darwin that in the natural sequence of events, Europeans would displace the weaker, less civilised people of the world.<sup>8</sup> There is no doubt that the New England missionaries subscribed to similar views, despite their stated love and dedication to the well-being of the Native Hawaiians.<sup>9</sup> Because of notions of white supremacy, Western missionaries and colonists everywhere were averse to the idea that “uncivilised” natives could ever possibly rule themselves, as they required the “tutelage” of “civilised” races. Kramer asserts that no matter how “civilised” indigenous people became, the Western hierarchy of race would never make them worthy to rule themselves.<sup>10</sup>

Helekūnihi’s departure from “the sands of his birth” for Kaua’i was due to opposition to his ordination in Kaupō, where Calvinist notions of propriety clashed with Hawaiian *mo‘oku‘auhau* consciousness. He hoped for a fresh start in a different community on another island, but found that the same resistance to Native leadership in the church continued to dog him there. Anderson of the ABCFM had written as early as 1847 that, “As a missionary society, and as a mission, we cannot proceed on the assumption, however plausibly stated, that the Saxon is to supercede the native races.”<sup>11</sup> Anderson’s insistence on raising up a Native Hawaiian ministry led him to visit the Islands in 1863, the year of the formal secession of the church in Hawai‘i from direct supervision by the ABCFM. His aim was to goad the white missionaries once and for all to hand over the ministry of the church to Hawaiians. The resistance, however,

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<sup>8</sup> Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization*, p. 142.

<sup>9</sup> The influential missionary, William Patterson Alexander, clearly stated that whites in Hawai‘i would overwhelm the natives: Alexander, *William Patterson Alexander*, p. 336.

<sup>10</sup> Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, p. 101.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson to the Sandwich Island Mission, 1846, quoted in Phillips, *Protestant America*, p. 126, cited in William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 88.

continued beyond his visit and, though Hawaiians were finally admitted to membership of the renewed HEA that year and many new parishes under Hawaiian leadership were established, white missionaries and their sons retained leadership in the church.

This chapter traces Helekūnihi's struggle with his missionary mentors for ordination as pastor in the Calvinist church sponsored by the Ka'ahumanu *mā* chiefs. These men toyed with him and other Hawaiians who sought to achieve status in the church, dangling the carrot of leadership, while denying full access. Even after achieving his goal, trust and respect by the *haole* leadership eluded him and other Hawaiians, whose place in the church would never achieve full recognition. The missionaries had once promised full inclusion of Hawaiians, but a racialised view of the hierarchy of peoples in the latter half of the century precluded their advancement to a status higher than subservience.

### ***Ka Ha'alele 'ana aku i ke One Hānau*** **Leaving the Sands of One's Birth**

Helekūnihi moved to Kaua'i in February 1863 to pursue ordination in the Calvinist Church. He landed first at Kōloa, Kaua'i, then proceeded north to Hanalei, where he "was given hospitality by Rev. Edward Johnson and went around with him" on the missionary's pastoral duties.<sup>12</sup> Prior to the establishment of Alexander's Theological School at Wailuku in 1863, it was customary for Native Hawaiians seeking ordination to shadow one of the *haole* missionaries.

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<sup>12</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 12 September 1863, 2; *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May, 1876; *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March 1877. This obituary, written by Elia for his wife, Luika Keo'ahu, includes an autobiographical sketch of much of his own life.

Nancy Morris refers to this as a system of “apprenticeship programs” for promising Hawaiians, combining both theological study and practical experience in leading congregations.<sup>13</sup> Johnson would have been aware of the “scandal” that followed him from Kaupō. Nevertheless, Johnson included him on his August 1863 tour of the remote district of Kalalau for a visit to the scattered community of Calvinist Christians there to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. Elia described the arduous nature of this visit to the famed district of cliffs rising steeply from an unforgiving sea, where because overland travel was impossible, the two travelled by canoe.<sup>14</sup> After a year of mentoring under Johnson, Elia was installed as teacher and given “the care of the Church at Kealakekua, Koolau, Kauai,” though formal ordination would not come for another two years.<sup>15</sup>

Edward Johnson (1813-1867) arrived in Hawai‘i in 1837 as a non-ordained teacher and spent thirty years at the Wai‘oli mission in Hanalei, where he was ordained pastor in 1848. Though Juliette Cooke, wife of missionary Amos Cooke, spoke of him as “a man of middling talents, very fond of natural history,” he was a faithful and conscientious pastor.<sup>16</sup> His numerous letters to Dr. Luther Halsey Gulick, secretary of the board of the newly formed HEA, provide insight into the state of the church on Kaua‘i during the 1860s, including references to Elia Helekūnihi whom he mentored. His annual Wai‘oli Mission Station reports document Johnson’s anxiety over declining membership in the Calvinist Church and the rise of other religious traditions viewed as competition for the souls of Kaua‘i Hawaiians. Helekūnihi rose to leadership in the church at a time when the institution represented a moribund and conservative perspective in a rapidly changing world and when the rise of Social Darwinism made navigating the path to

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<sup>13</sup> Morris and Benedetto, pp. 6-7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 12 September 1863, 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May, 1876.

<sup>16</sup> Forbes, Kam and Woods, *Partners in Change* pp. 356-358.



leadership tricky. Moreover, many Hawaiians had tired of the severe and moralistic tone of Calvinism and increasingly associated the church with American colonial desires.

Johnson wrote in his report for 1861, “At the beginning of the year, & for some time previous, much coldness and indifference was apparent among the people, both in & out of the Church,” but he adds, “For a few months past, there has been quite a waking up in certain positions of the field.”<sup>17</sup> This hopefulness was not to last, for the reports of the next two years revealed an institution in crisis. In 1862, Johnson expressed regret that the “waking up” was ephemeral and that “stupidity (a term missionaries frequently applied to Hawaiians) prevails to a considerable extent. Some have gone over to the Mormons.”<sup>18</sup> Typically, he blamed fornication, “the crying sin of the land,” and lamented that during the reign of Kamehameha IV the authorities were too lax in enforcing the punishments previously meted out for this “crime.” The problem had become severe in his district, he wrote, because “the increased attention to agriculture,” undoubtedly the establishment of Robert C. Wyllie’s Princeville sugar plantation, “has brought large numbers of both sexes congregated together.” Like Sereno Bishop, Johnson blamed Hawaiian sin for the tragic demographic decline of the people. Johnson wrote, “The marriage relation continues to be sadly disregarded, which is evidently one of the demoralizing causes of the wasting away of the people.”

In 1863, Johnson happily reported the decline in traditional Hawaiian practices and the erosion of the ancient *aloha* for their chiefs that characterized the old Hawaiian state of *pono*

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<sup>17</sup> “Mission Station Reports - Kauai - Waioli - 1835-1863,” *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed May 29, 2019, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/829>.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

which once brought balance and harmony to society: “The people are truly in a transition state. The notion of old kapus, and the veneration for Chiefs is almost obliterated from their minds.”<sup>19</sup> However, after more than forty years of missionary and *ali ‘i* teaching, at times coercive, the new *kapu* of Ka‘ahumanu *mā* had failed to hold the majority of the people whose “veneration” of the Calvinist chiefs once kept them in the thrall of the American mission. Those chiefs were dead and the reigning monarchs, Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma, were bent on making the Anglican Church of England the established faith of the realm. Despite the fall of the “old kapus,” Johnson went on to write, “I regret that I have so little of a cheering nature to report from the Waioli Mission field. While there is no outburst of sin, yet a general apathy pervades the Church.” He went on to report that “Catholicism does not appear to be on the increase, but the efforts of the local priest in Koolau (where Elia was working), are untiring and silent, and not without fruits.” Moreover, “Mormonism has met with more success of late, and chiefly among those who forsake the ordinance of the Gospel, and are willing to remain in a stupid state, even after being admonished of the same.”

Shortly after Helekūnihi’s arrival on Kaua‘i, Anglicanism became another threat to Calvinist religious hegemony. A latecomer on the Hawaiian scene, it stood out as the only faith invited to the Islands by the Hawaiians. Kamehameha IV (Liholiho) and Queen Emma wrote to Queen Victoria in 1860 to request a bishop to establish the church in the Islands, and in the spring of 1862, Bishop Thomas Nettleship Staley arrived.<sup>20</sup> Liholiho had long been clear about his aversion to the American church and to its association with U.S. colonialism and believed the

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> For an excellent summary of the events leading to the establishment of the “Hawaiian Reformed Catholic Church” see Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, pp. 84-96.

Anglican Church was “more accommodating, less strident, and a more ritualistic expression of Christianity, closer to the traditions and temperament of his people.”<sup>21</sup> The King himself translated *The Book of Common Prayer* into Hawaiian and invited Queen Victoria to be godmother to his son.<sup>22</sup> The Calvinist missionaries were horrified at the prospect of the establishment of the English Church as the National Church of Hawai‘i and the political implications of its presence in the Islands was indicated when the Americans revealed that they viewed Bishop Staley as a spy of the British.<sup>23</sup>

During this anxious time for the Calvinists, one hopeful sign for Edward Johnson was raising up Native Hawaiian church leaders, though he shared the doubts about Hawaiian capabilities voiced by his missionary brethren. For many years Rufus Anderson of the ABCFM had urged the missionaries to prepare Native Hawaiians to take pastoral and administrative leadership in the church, but this was met with resistance.<sup>24</sup> Anderson grew impatient with their shortsightedness and racialized antagonism to Hawaiians “capability” in leadership. He wrote, “As we now judge, in the light of experience, it was an error in this mission for the missionaries to retain the undivided pastoral charge of their large churches for some years after 1848...These arrangements were found at length to stand in the way of extending the native pastorate, since they inclined the brethren, when the ordaining of such pastors was urged as a present duty, to attach what proved to be undue importance to the difficulties in the way.”<sup>25</sup> Anderson chided the missionaries for refusing to allow Hawaiians to use their talents for leadership: “The (Native)

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<sup>21</sup> Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, p. 35 and Robert Louis Seems, “Hawai‘i’s Holy War: English Bishop Staley, American Congregationalists, and the Hawaiian Monarchs,” *Hawaiian Journal of History* Vol. 34 (2000). Semes, “Hawai‘i’s Holy War,” p. 114.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>24</sup> Nancy Morrisand Benedetto, *Nā Haku*, p.11.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson, *History of the Mission of the American Board*, pp. 280-281.

pastors on the Hawaiian Islands, however, had been held in subordination to the missionaries of their respective districts, and not having enjoyed full personal responsibility, were unable fully to demonstrate their capabilities.”<sup>26</sup> As early as 1846, he had criticised the missionaries for not raising up a Native Hawaiian ministry because he, fortuitously, believed that not developing Native leadership in all spheres would threaten the very independence of the Hawaiian Kingdom. “The great point is,” he wrote, “*to get a NATIVE MINISTRY*. In this I understand you to have failed.”<sup>27</sup>

Johnson and his cohorts on Kaua‘i remained leary of Native Hawaiian leadership until their hands were forced by Anderson’s visit in 1863 to remonstrate his *haole* brethren. He claimed that his visit was to respond to “the depressed tone of feeling at the time, in the letters of so many of the missionaries.”<sup>28</sup> Truthfully, the purpose of his visit was to ensure that the ABCFM’s goal of placing the leadership of the church in Hawaiian hands would be fulfilled. He met with the missionaries and convinced them to divide the large churches, “with convenient territorial limits; the missionaries retaining the pastoral care of the central churches, while native pastors were to be placed, as fast as possible, over others.” The HEA, which had previously only included *haole* pastors, was to include Native Hawaiian pastors, as well as elected lay delegates.<sup>29</sup> The ABCFM formally declared Hawai‘i a “Christian nation” and withdrew its direct

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, p. 337. Begrudgingly, the *haole* missionaries did ordain a handful of Native Hawaiian pastors prior to 1863, though they were placed under the authority of white ministers and pastored minor sub-stations of the major missions. James Kekela, ordained to pastor a small church at Kahuku, O‘ahu, in 1849, was the first and he was followed by Samuel Kauwealoha at Ka‘anapali, Maui, and Stephen Waimalu at Hau‘ula, O‘ahu, in 1850. By 1863 only a few Native Hawaiians had achieved ordination, all on the islands of Maui and O‘ahu. See Morris and Benedetto, pp. 149-153, 158-165, 252-253.

<sup>28</sup> Anderson, *History of the Mission of the American Board*, p. 285.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 286-287.

financial support in 1863. Within ten years, twenty-two large parishes had been divided into a total of fifty-eight, with only six still under *haole* leadership.<sup>30</sup>

Confirming Anderson's criticism, Johnson's report for 1863 revealed hesitency to entrust ministry to Native leaders: "There are four places of worship besides that of the station (Wai'oli at Hanalei)," he wrote, "where regular Sabbath services are held...These services are conducted by native lunas (overseers), when the pastor is not able to be present. Most of these are but indifferently prepared for teachers."<sup>31</sup> Despite racially overtone reservations, he remained hopeful about his protégé, Elia Helekūnihi: "We have, however, in Koolau, a graduate from the Seminary, who bids fair to be a useful laborer. He now holds the office of Teacher and School Superintendent, and preacher on the Sabbath."<sup>32</sup> Helekūnihi was a rising star among Native Hawaiian church leaders and he arrived at Anahola in Ko'olau just in time to bring to fruition Anderson's dictate to expand the number of churches under native leadership. He was, however, under a kind of probation for Johnson to determine his "worthiness" to pastor his own church.

Helekūnihi later wrote that, while still mentored by Johnson, he "was installed as school teacher and had the care of the church at Kealekekua, Koolau, Kauai, in 1863."<sup>33</sup> This was a Native congregation, which in accord with the new directive of the HEA, was to be pastored by a promising Hawaiian at a time when the Calvinist Church on Kaua'i was in serious decline.

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<sup>30</sup> Nancy Morris, *Nā Haku*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>31</sup> Mission Station Reports - Kauai - Waioli - 1835-1863," *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed 29 May 2019, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/829>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May, 1876: *Hoonoho ia i kumu kula, a me ka malama ana i ka ekalesia ma Kealekekua, Koolau, Kauai, 1863.*

Indeed, the decline was alarming, as James William Smith, missionary physician at Kōloa, wrote in January, 1864, “It is a time of dearth and backsliding in most of our Hawaiian churches.”<sup>34</sup>

In this period, the ambitious young Helekūnihi continued his tradition of writing letters to the Hawaiian language newspapers. In January 1864, in a possible effort to demonstrate his credentials as a rising star in the Church and to situate Native Hawaiian ministers within the intellectual tradition of American Congregationalism, he wrote in *Kuokoa* a lengthy treatise on the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit.<sup>35</sup> Though Helekūnihi stated that he had “the care” of the congregation at Anahola in Ko‘olau, Johnson wrote that he was just “preacher on the Sabbath,” as the missionary did not yet consider him ready to be ordained pastor. Under Elia’s leadership, some two years prior to his ordination, the people of Koolau raised \$150 “towards the erection of a new church edifice and a contract is already entered into for its construction.”<sup>36</sup> It seems to have taken a full year to raise the funds for the construction of what he referred to in June 1864, as “the *luakini* at Koolau.”<sup>37</sup> This grand term referred to the magnificent war temples of human sacrifice built by pre-Christian high chiefs. By employing the same term reserved for major Calvinist churches built by the chiefs of the new era Helekūnihi claimed his position and chiefly rank in the new *kapu* system of Ka’ahumanu *mā*. He made a point of profusely thanking Franz Bertelmann, illustrious German early settler on Kaua‘i Island, for his generous financial support “for this beautiful work,” and “the honourable *haoles*” whom he “thankfully salutes.”<sup>38</sup> His

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<sup>34</sup> J.W. Smith, Koloa, to his mother, 29 January, 1864, “Smith, James William - Missionary Letters - 1841-1865 - and Smith, Melicent to family (original),” *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed October 12, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/747>.

<sup>35</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 16 January 1864, 4.

<sup>36</sup> Mission Station Reports - Kauai - Waioli - 1835-1863,” *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed May 29, 2019, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/829>.

<sup>37</sup> *Ka Hoku Loa*, 21 June 1864, 6.

<sup>38</sup> There was a significant German colony, with a Lutheran church at Kōloa. Franz Bertelmann was the father of Henry, future supporter of Queen Liliuokalani in the Hawaiian uprising against the oligarchic “Republic of Hawai‘i”

somewhat obsequious tone suggests that, despite his education and “capability” in organising the construction of the first church in the district, Helekūnihi was viewed by both missionaries and white settlers as beneath them in status.

Helekūnihi had serious competition for the position of pastor of the new church at Anahola. In May 1864, just when he was completing its construction, Johnson revealed that he had another Hawaiian in mind to pastor Helekūnihi’s church. In a letter to Dr. Luther Halsey Gulick, secretary of the board of the HEA, he expressed disappointment that “Nuuhiva has declined to go to Anahola, giving as a reason that the Church is not ikaika (“strong”) in seeking a parsonage.”<sup>39</sup> Solomon Davida Nuuhiva was a native of Hanalei, Kaua‘i, and graduated from Lahainaluna in 1849, seven years ahead of Helekūnihi. Like Elia, he was mentored by Johnson at Wai‘oli church, where he received his preaching license in 1854 and served as superintendant of schools. Like many educated Hawaiians of his class, Nuuhiva took the position of district judge of Hanalei in 1857, while continuing some of his preaching duties.<sup>40</sup> Johnson left his letter to Gulick incomplete and when he finished it, Nuuhiva had flip-flopped and was again considering the position.<sup>41</sup> Johnson was in a high state of anxiety over the vacillation of Hawaiian pastors and exclaimed to Gulick, “Pray for us – that the work of establishing pastors in these parts be not defeated!”<sup>42</sup> However, the cruel vacillation of the missionaries, playing Hawaiian church leaders against each other, demonstrated their lack of respect for these “useful labourers.”

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in 1895. See Albertine Loomis, *For Whom Are the Stars? An Informal History of the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy in 1893 and the Ill-Fated Counterrevolution It Evoked* (Honolulu, HI: Univ. Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 126.

<sup>39</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 2 May 1864, HMCS Archives, “Johnson, Edward - Missionary Letters - 1853-1867 - to Hawaiian Board,” *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed October 12, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/592>.

<sup>40</sup> Morris and Benedetto, *Nā Kahu*, p. 223.

<sup>41</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 2 May 1864, HMCS Archives.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

Nuuhiwa was bent on giving the missionaries a run for their money when the Calvinists were threatened by a rising tide of Catholics, Mormons, and Anglicans on Kaua‘i. Kamehameha V had recently visited Hanalei, home of Johnson’s mission station of Wai‘oli and the Princeville Sugar Plantation, whose proprietor was Scotsman Robert Crichton Wyllie. Long-time advisor to three Hawaiian kings, Wyllie favoured an alliance with Great Britain over the United States, and as promoter of the Anglican mission, was a thorn in the side of the Calvinist missionaries. At Hanalei, the King offered a dangerous speech in which he said that “he desired the people no longer to *hoopili ia* (“be attached to”) Kaahumanu, but to choose what religion they wished.”<sup>43</sup>

The missionaries were in a state of panic that their long time hegemony in religious matters was ebbing away and their fear was exacerbated by the rumour that Kamehameha V (Lota Kapuāiwa), like his brother before him, favoured the formal establishment of the Anglican Church in Hawai‘i. An annexation crisis in the early 1850s had ceased with the anglophilic Kamehameha IV’s rise to the throne in 1855. Now, it appeared that his brother would take the dangerous step of favouring the English Church as a means of drawing Hawai‘i even more into Britain’s orbit. “It seems that we are falling on strange times,” Johnson wrote, “& to near the future of church & state here. Our churches are to be tried as in the furnace.”<sup>44</sup> Shocking to Johnson and Gulick’s American republican sensibilities, the King went on to state that he was going to abrogate the constitution, wishing “more absolute power than the present Constitution gives him.” Wyllie was delighted and exclaimed that “the King did prove himself the greatest of

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*



the Kamehamehas.”<sup>45</sup> Wyllie was pleased to see the unraveling of U.S. political and religious interests, as further movement out of the American sphere of influence and into that of Britain might safeguard Hawaiian independence. An imperial drama of global consequence was playing out on the soil of a small Hawaiian island.

After Nuuhiva’s flipflopping over the pastorship of Anahola, he vacillated yet again. By 27 July, Johnson was in a state of panic, fearing “that Nuuhiva will be tempted to become preacher for the Episcopalians, as I hear he has been solicited by them to do.”<sup>46</sup> The political implications of religious affiliation and service were actively played out in the mission field of provincial Hawai‘i as American interests continued to be represented under the banner of Calvinism and those of the British through the establishment of the Anglican Church. The King, like his brother, was no friend of the Americans and viewed the British as protectors of both Hawaiian independence and monarchical government. Nuuhiva was undoubtedly tempted to consider the Anglican offer, not simply because of what Johnson scurrilously described as Bishop Staley’s “bribe of \$300,” but because he was a well-educated Hawaiian who, like his King, saw the rising tide of American influence as a threat to the independence of his nation.<sup>47</sup> Johnson rightly feared what he described as “the folly of Bishop Staley.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 27 July 1864, HMCS Archives.

<sup>47</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 5 August, 1864, HMCS Archives.

<sup>48</sup> Despite American anxiety about the loss of Hawai‘i to the British sphere of influence, there is no evidence to suggest that Britain had colonial designs on the Islands. Chief Justice Elisha Hunt Allen was sent by Kamehameha V early in 1864 on a diplomatic mission to the U.S. to request that the U.S. go along with France and Britain in a treaty insuring Hawaiian independence from any foreign intervention. According to Kuykendall, his purpose was to “assure the government and people of the United States that those policies (of the Hawaiian Kingdom) were not anti-American or pro-British, but only pro-Hawaiian.” Secretary of State William Seward, however, made it clear that the U.S. would not be party to the treaty. See Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, p. 199-200. Further anxiety arose among Americans in Hawai‘i when Queen Emma chose to visit England, where she was lavished with much attention by Queen Victoria and British society. S Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce, stirred the pot by writing, “The Royal Family of those Islands have long sought to cultivate an English alliance; but it has been reserved for the present enlightened king to seek it in the way in which it can be most certainly secured – by planting

Helekūnihi, on the other hand, had few qualms about the New England Calvinists because he was a Hawaiian conservative, a Calvinist who *ho‘opili ‘ia* (“was joined to”) the new *kapu* of Queen Ka‘ahumanu. Johnson was delighted to inform Gulick that, though Nuuhiva appeared to have gone over to the “other side,” the Americans could depend on Helekūnihi. On 5 August 1864, he told Gulick that he was going to “spend next Sabbath at Anahola...to decide on settling Helekunihi.”<sup>49</sup> In a letter to Wyllie a few weeks later, Johnson continued his rant about Nuuhiva’s faithless behaviour. It was shocking that he would be tempted to accept an “offer from Bishop Staley of a salary of \$250 in consideration that he forsake his old teachers and join the Bishop’s Church and become a curate for the districts of Kalihi-mai, Kalihi-kai and Hanalei.”<sup>50</sup> The decision to shift religious allegiances was an act of betrayal, not simply to the tenets of Calvinism, but to the republican ideals so dear to the missionaries. The establishment of Anglicanism echoed the ties between the Church and Crown in England, and Kamehameha V desired to move his nation closer to Great Britain. Wyllie’s intention to build an Anglican church for the tenants on his plantation had frightful feudalistic implications for Johnson. What would happen if his own parishioners went over to the Anglicans en masse? “If they go over to this Bishop,” he wrote to Gulick, “shall I cut them off, or merely erase their names?”

Excommunication from the “established” church of Ka‘ahumanu *mā*, was once a terrible

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among his people...a branch of our Reformed Church.” There is no evidence, however, in the letters of Queen Emma or in the accounts of her meetings with Queen Victoria and British government officials, that her visit was for any other purpose than to take a trip during her time of mourning husband’s death to the land whose culture and religious traditions she admired and to promote interest in support of the Anglican mission in Hawai‘i. It appears that Queen Victoria had a genuine sympathy for the Hawaiian Queen and her people, which may have insured the independence of the Island Kingdom. See Alfons L. Korn et al., *The Victorian Visitors: an Account of the Hawaiian Kingdom, 1861-1866, Including the Journal Letters of Sophia Cracroft; Extracts from the Journals of Lady Franklin, and Diaries and Letters of Queen Emma of Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1969), pp. 202-255 for an excellent survey of the Queen’s visit to England, including many personal letters to and from Emma.

<sup>49</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 5 August 1864, HMCS Archives.

<sup>50</sup> Edward Johnson to Robert Crichton Wyllie, 25 August 1864, HMCS Archives.

banishment, but by the 1860s it was increasingly a badge of honour to Hawaiian patriots fed-up with rising U.S. colonial desires.

One day after Johnson's shrill letter to Wyllie expressing anxiety about the rise of Anglicanism on Kaua'i, John Fawcett Pogue, Helekunihi's teacher at Lahainaluna, wrote to Gulick concerned that the King's desire to establish Anglicanism would have a dire effect on the seminary. "The door is open for the English," he wrote, "I fear this source of influence may soon pass from us if we are not awake." Both he and S.T. Alexander pledged to resign if the school "goes into the hands of the English."<sup>51</sup> Pogue was well aware of the importance of keeping the premier institution for the education of young Hawaiian elites in Calvinist, therefore American, hands. However, like Johnson and most of the white leadership of the HEA, he still doubted the worthiness of Native Hawaiians for ordination in the church. "It seems to me," he later wrote to Gulick, "the great thing we have to contend with in raising up a Native ministry is worldliness. The young men love the employment of the government. The "hanohano" (glory), the "waiwai" (wealth) & on that rock many of them will be shipwrecked."<sup>52</sup> Pogue and his cohorts wanted to keep ambitious Hawaiians in their place, but were anxious about losing their "charges" to other religious traditions. However, they were not convinced that Hawaiians could ever be worthy of taking leadership positions in their tradition of New England Congregationalism. So high was the bar set by the American Calvinists, that Pogue doubted that George Wilcox, *haole* son of Abner Wilcox, Johnson's colleague at Hanalei, was enough of a "professed Christian" to be worthy of teaching at Lahainaluna. "Still," wrote Pogue, "Anybody to keep out the Staleyites (the

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<sup>51</sup> J.F. Pogue to L.H. Gulick, 26 August 1864, HMCS Archives, "Pogue, John - Missionary Letters - 1864-1866 - to Gulick, Luther Halsey," *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed October 12, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/695>.

<sup>52</sup> J.F. Pogue to L.H. Gulick, 7 September 1864, HMCS Archives.

Anglicans).”<sup>53</sup> Pogue was so fearful of non-Calvinist influences at Lahainaluna that he protested the Board of Education’s decision in November, 1865, to require the seminary to take the government English language newspaper, *The Hawaiian Gazette*.<sup>54</sup> Cherished Yankee values of freedom of speech did not to apply when Yankee religious and political hegemony were challenged.

Nuuhiwa’s indecision provided the opportunity for Elia Helekūnihi to become the first Native Hawaiian pastor ordained on Kaua‘i. On 25 August 1864, Johnson wrote to Gulick, “The people of Anahola have called Helekunihi or (E.H. Paulo) as he signs his name, to become their pastor.”<sup>55</sup> He will continue to teach until the close of the term & then give up his school & devote himself to the duties of the People.”<sup>56</sup> The month prior to his auspicious February 1865 ordination, Johnson wrote enthusiastically to Gulick about the upcoming event, “Now, as it is the first ordination of a Native Pastor on this Island, & as you have been engaged in the same work on the other Islands, & as we expect you to visit our Island during the year, can you not come at that time & preach the ordination sermon & help us in the services?”<sup>57</sup> Johnson was eager to include the white leadership of the HEA to give lustre to the event and wrote, “We would not object to two or more white men. We would be able to get by with one. Whoever comes should understand that he will be expected to preach the sermon.”<sup>58</sup> Though there were several prominent Native Hawaiian pastors on Maui and O‘ahu, they were not invited to this historic event, while Johnson assumed that there should be at least one white minister, as the presence of

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<sup>53</sup> J.F. Pogue to L.H. Gulick, 14 September 1864, HMCS Archives.

<sup>54</sup> J.F. Pogue to L.H. Gulick, 2 December 1865, HMCS Archives.

<sup>55</sup> This echo of his father’s name was Elia’s *nom de plume* in the newspapers.

<sup>56</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 25 August 1864, HMCS Archives.

<sup>57</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 16 January 1865, HMCS Archives.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

“whiteness” appeared to legitimise the occasion. Due to what James Smith described as the *pilikia loa* (the excessive trouble) in the ecclesiastical relations of the Calvinist Church on Kaua‘i, it was necessary to have some of the “big guns” of the HEA present because “the good of the cause will be very much promoted by having the aid of some brothers from abroad.” The old order of Calvinism was fraying as Native Hawaiians observed dissension in the ranks of the once-respected missionaries and a public relations campaign was in order.

This was an increasingly anxious time for the missionaries, as they saw their grip on the Hawaiian people diminish with each passing day. For this reason, Elia’s ordination was laden with significant meaning in the white community. Whitney had founded *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* in 1861 to counter the rise of an independent Native Hawaiian press and the drift away from American and missionary influence. The paper became a means of keeping Hawaiians within the fold by filling its columns with narratives from their rich store of oral history. Drawn in by colourful stories, Hawaiian readers were then subjected to parallel narratives of Calvinist morality, white supremacy, republican values, and annexationist sentiments. At the end of January 1865, Johnson wrote to Gulick, who was at that time also editor of *Kuokoa*, “So of the “*Kuokoa*,” I desire to get it into the hands of the people as a Teacher, civilizer etc. And I say time to trust a little in order to accomplish it.”<sup>59</sup> It was disappointing that after forty years of missionary activity Hawaiians required a newspaper to “teach and civilize them.” To the missionaries and their sons, the drift towards Hawaiian traditionalism, Catholicism, Mormonism, and now Anglicanism, suggested a serious decline in their progress towards “civilisation.” Elia

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<sup>59</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 23 January 1865, HMCS Archives.

Helekūnihi, however, who was now “agent” of the *Kuokoa* at Ko‘olau, could be relied on by his white mentors to remain dedicated to the “higher wisdom” that they promulgated.<sup>60</sup>

Johnson and his missionary colleagues were shaken by the arrival of Bishop Staley in the district the week prior to Elia’s ordination. The bishop preached at Wyllie’s on February 16, but “I have not heard who went to hear him,” Johnson anxiously wrote to Gulick the next day.<sup>61</sup> The ordination proceeded with little incident, but Johnson, generally descriptive of events of importance to him, is strangely silent about this supposedly historical religious service, betraying lack of enthusiasm for the long-awaited creation of a Native Hawaiian pastorate on Kaua‘i. “Of our ordination on the 23rd at Anahola, Brother Smith will inform you” he wrote to Gulick. “A native here by the name of Kaukaha has written a brief notice of the meeting which is probably about what you would desire to publish.”<sup>62</sup> He had such little regard for “the Native Pastor” that he does not even name him and suggested that the event of his ordination should be marked in the newspaper by little more than a “brief notice.” The event was noteworthy enough, however, for James Smith of Kōloa to mention in a letter to his mother briefly, “Last week we organized a new church 28 miles from here and ordained a Native pastor,” still not dignifying the pastor with a name.<sup>63</sup>

In March, just one month after his ordination, Helekūnihi and Johnson exchanged pulpits, Elia preaching at the old mission station of Wai‘oli at Hanalei and Johnson at Anahola.<sup>64</sup> Some

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<sup>60</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 30 January 1865, HMCS Archives.

<sup>61</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 17 February 1865, HMCS Archives.

<sup>62</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 27 February 1865, HMCS Archives.

<sup>63</sup> J.W. Smith, Kōloa, to his mother, 1 March 1865, HMCS Archives

<sup>64</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 27 March 1865, HMCS Archives.

weeks later, Smith of Kōloa “went to Koolau & went to Kealakaiolo & preached for Helekunihi.”<sup>65</sup> On Christmas Day of that same year, Johnson wrote, “I spent last Sabbath at Koolau with Helekunihi. He does pretty well as pastor and I regard him as a good man. His people has paid him some over \$100 towards his salary of \$150 for the year about to end, & have collected some timber toward building a house for him. He received 3 men members to the church & proposed 8.”<sup>66</sup> At this stage in Helekūnihi’s ministry, there was a considerable degree of collaboration between him and the missionary pastors of Kaua‘i, though their correspondence about him reveals more than a hint of condescension.

The year of Elia’s ordination saw the continued decline of the Calvinist mission on Kaua‘i, one of the most alarming manifestations of which was missionary George Berkeley Rowell going rogue. Rowell had been missionary pastor of the important Waimea station since 1846, but in 1865 seems to have begun to unravel. Johnson wrote on 16 January, “I am sorry to say that we came against our good Brother Rowell, & it is no longer a secret with the Natives that he differs from us in sentiment about Church matters.”<sup>67</sup> In March, Johnson wrote to Gulick, “Rowell is having communion in his home and going his own way. He is pupule maoli (truly crazy) and needs to be stopped. If not insane, he is undoubtedly possessed with the devil.”<sup>68</sup> Rowell was “going native” and his unconventional ways were attractive to Hawaiians disillusioned with the dull, moralising religion of the missionaries. To make matters worse,

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<sup>65</sup> Journal of J.W. Smith, 1 April, 1865, HMCS Archives, “Smith, James W. - Journal - 1855-1866,” *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed October 12 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/87>. *Kealakiole* means “way of the rat,” apparently another name for the site of Elia’s church in Anahola. It appears in *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 26 March 1881 as the name of the government school in Ko‘olau, Kaua‘i, which is likely to have been the location of the Protestant church.

<sup>66</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 25 December 1865, HMCS Archives.

<sup>67</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 16 January 1865, HMCS Archives.

<sup>68</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 21 March 1865, HMCS Archives.

Rowell, married to the plain Malvina Jerusha Chapin, confessed to several occasions of adultery with Native women, a condition that endeared him further to Hawaiians, but which rendered him an abomination to the missionaries. Johnson was horrified that “evidence comes in from all quarters that the matter was talked of years ago by the natives, & a Mormon priest told Helekunihi in Kaupo, Maui, several years ago that Mr. Rowell had a child at Waimea by a native woman.” He went on to question, “What is duty to do in this trying case?”<sup>69</sup> Elia, planted firmly in the camp of Calvinist moralism, was pleased to be the spy of the missionaries and report Rowell’s amorous adventures, placing himself in opposition to many Hawaiians who admired the charismatic pastor. At a meeting at Waimea of the “Ecclesiastical Association,” Rowell was formally deposed from ministry for *moekolohe* (literally “sleeping naughtily”).<sup>70</sup>

The church at Waimea split between the followers of Rowell and the missionary party, which on 10 June 1865 censured and expelled him from the church. To further complicate matters, Nuuhiva threw in his lot with Rowell and was himself accused of some kind of inpropriety with his own sister. Helekūnihi was employed to question him on this matter, but Johnson seemed disappointed that “there is no direct evidence of his (Nuuhiva’s) guilt.” Johnson used Elia’s moralism to have him investigate and judge the shortcomings of a fellow Hawaiian, a position that would later earn him the title of “Haole Pet.”<sup>71</sup> The silver lining for Johnson in this sordid matter was that it was “better for Nuuhiva to go to the Bishop without censure from us, & in that case the people will be less likely to follow him.”<sup>72</sup> That the common people would turn to Anglicanism if the missionaries had censured Nuuhiva is a stark acknowledgement that the

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<sup>69</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 14 March 1865, HMCS Archives

<sup>70</sup> J.W. Smith Journal, 29 March 1865, HMCS Archives.

<sup>71</sup> *Hawaii Holomua*, 13 September 1894, 2.

<sup>72</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick 5 May, 1865, HMCS Archives.



Americans had lost the respect of most Hawaiians.<sup>73</sup> Johnson had hoped that Nuuhiva would be his “pet” as first Native pastor at Anahola, but the man would not oblige and Helekūnihi stepped in.

### ***Kahuna Pule*** **Pastor**

After ordination in February 1865, Elia Helekūnihi settled into the life of a Kaua‘i country pastor. At last, he was himself a “missionary,” though his *haole* mentors would never dignify him with that title. Letters and reports in *Kuokoa* reveal that he continued as agent for the paper and ardent supporter of its Calvinistic moralism and pro-American sympathies.<sup>74</sup> In a letter to the editor of *Kuokoa* in November 1864, a few months before his ordination, Elia waxed lyrical about the paper and its benefit to the Hawaiian people in his efforts to get more subscribers at a cost of \$2.00 per year: “I cannot count the thousands of things it has done for us who eat heartily of the sweetness of its feast, who dwell below its pleasantness.” In reference to the need for Hawaiians to show their intellectual capabilities in the face of *haole* critics, he

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<sup>73</sup> Nuuhiva and other Hawaiians had even sought instruction from Rowell about “the Church usage in America,” despite the fact that according to Johnson, Rowell “had forsaken the usage of the Church.” See Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick 15 May, 1865, HMCS Archives. Ironically, Native Hawaiians had ceased to trust the missionaries to impart knowledge about how churches were run in America to such a degree that they turned to a notorious heretic for advice.

<sup>74</sup> Edward Johnson to Luther H. Gulick, 30 January 1865, HMCS Archives. Though the paper, whose first publisher was missionary son, Henry Whitney, was a not-so-subtle Trojan horse for U.S. cultural and political infiltration, it was exceedingly popular among Native Hawaiians and became the longest running Hawaiian language newspaper (1861-1927). As such, it proved to be a powerful influence in colonizing Hawaiian minds. This would become especially clear in the 1880s when the paper was strident in its criticism of King Kalākaua and the administration of his premier, Walter M. Gibson. Elia Helekūnihi later characterised it as “prized for its righteousness and freedom,” and for “uncovering mysterious hidden things in the government...There are no hidden nooks and crannies” (*Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, 17 November, 1883). After the overthrow of the Queen in 1893, the paper took a firm annexationist stand and made a point of giving voice to Native Hawaiian annexationists, like Elia, who waxed lyrical about the “enlightenment” that blessed Hawai‘i from America (*Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893).

wrote, “We should be wary in this time when the enemy has thought to strangle the clear voice of our beloved Hawai’i. Here is a refreshing stream of water that wells up from below.”<sup>75</sup> At a time when “the clear voice of our beloved Hawai’i” was increasingly moving in the direction of opposition to U.S. interests in the islands, Helekūnihi stood out as an outlier, remaining fiercely loyal to the old order of Ka’ahumanu *mā* and her American *kāhuna*.

Helekūnihi named his parsonage at Anahola *Gosena Hou* (“New Goshen”), as Goshen was the home of the Hebrew people in the land of Egypt.<sup>76</sup> Like the Hebrews in Goshen, the missionaries prospered and multiplied in a foreign land. Moreover, Goshen, Connecticut, was the home of several of them and the place of ordination of two of their most prominent leaders, Hiram Bingham and Asa Thurston.<sup>77</sup> At *Gosena Hou*, while pastor of Anahola, Helekūnihi continued to write human interest letters for *Kuokoa*. In November 1865, he wrote a moralistic letter entitled, “Rum is an Evil Thing for the Mind,” which sermonised in the manner of Calvinist temperance on the evils of alcohol: “It darkens the mind of a person...Many, indeed, are the strong men who have been vanquished by drunkenness, many are the ships wrecked to pieces by it...Sin grows to great proportions as a result of drinking rum...”<sup>78</sup> In January of 1866, he wrote another letter with news about his parish at Anahola, expressing pride in having eradicated the ancient Hawaiian practice of consuming ‘awa (kava) and commending himself for adding new members to the church. If only he could raise \$20 for the purchase of the New Testament and *Kumumua* (a reading primer), the school in his district would become decent.<sup>79</sup> While at

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 November 1864,6.

<sup>76</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Abner Wilcox, 23 November, 1868, “Wilcox, Abner - Letters written in Hawaiian - Helekunihi, E. ~ November 23, 1868, HMCS Archives; *Genesis* 49:1-10.

<sup>77</sup> Forbes et al, *Partners*, p. 116.

<sup>78</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 25 November 1865,1.

<sup>79</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 13 January 1866,1.

Anahola, Elia and Luika suffered the deaths of two of their children, as well as that of his own father, Paulo Kū, in November of 1866. Paulo had come from Nu‘u to join his son on Kaua‘i, “due to his love for him, like Jacob who followed Joseph into the Land of Egypt.”<sup>80</sup>

Helekūnihi remained pastor of Anahola until February 1869. During his pastorate, the Anahola church had struggled financially to such a degree that James Smith petitioned the Hawaiian Board in 1867 for a grant of \$50 towards Elia’s salary of \$150. The previous year, they had been able to pay him, but in 1867 the “native church” of Anahola, which had been so promising just a few years earlier, was in decline and could only muster \$30 to pay their pastor. Smith told Gulick that Helekūnihi was in debt “for lumber got at Honolulu for his house.” He went on to blame the Rowell controversy for the decline of the church in Ko‘olau, “The Rowell leaven is at work in his field & it seems to me important that he should have some aid.”<sup>81</sup> Rowell, the populist who appealed to Native Hawaiians, was drawing congregants away from the “established church,” including the one led by Kaua‘i’s first Hawaiian pastor. Smith then casually told Gulick that he himself would resign soon.

Helekūnihi was discouraged by his experience at Anahola and early in 1869 was ready to receive a call elsewhere. In November 1868 he had received a call from the small community of Kealia in South Kona on Hawai‘i Island and wrote to Abner Wilcox to seek his advice as to what to do. “I am thinking about this call,” he wrote, “and whether I should go and be among them or stay here.” “I have asked the Rev. J.W. Smith what he thinks about my call from the Kona

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<sup>80</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 November 1866,3.

<sup>81</sup> J.W. Smith to L.H. Gulick, 19 February 1868, HMCS Archives, “Smith, James William - Missionary Letters - 1864-1869 - to Gulick, Luther,” *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed October 12, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/742>.

people. I have been here (Anahola) but a little time, but perhaps that is sufficient.” His letter concluded with an account of the moral dereliction of his current parish, another hint as to why the Calvinistically inclined young pastor wanted to get out: “I have seen a lot of consumption of ti-root alcohol here and have heard that there is much drunkenness and smoking among the Kānaka (native Hawaiians).”<sup>82</sup> He may have earlier succeeded in eradicating the Hawaiian custom of ‘awa consumption, but his success in suppressing sins of Western origin was clearly limited. Laying aside the call to remote Kealia, and having heard that Smith was eager to leave Kōloa, he put his name in for that prominent parish in the heart of the sugar growing district of Kaua‘i with both English and Hawaiian language congregations and a select English school. According to Abner Wilcox, Helekūnihi had two calls “one to Hawai‘i (Island) & the other to Koloa. The members,” he wrote, “are not agreed where he ought to go. They are to talk & sleep over the subject, & vote tomorrow A.M.”<sup>83</sup> The next morning, the meeting voted to allow Helekūnihi to be installed as pastor of Kōloa in place of Dr. Smith.<sup>84</sup>

Smith did not, however, resign and worked alongside Helekūnihi at Kōloa. The state of the Calvinist Church on Kaua‘i remained dire and the division over Rowell and his Native Hawaiian followers continued to fester, so Smith may have felt responsible for staying on to improve the situation, not trusting the ministrations of an Hawaiian pastor. Johnson had left Wai‘oli in 1867 and leadership of that old mission station became a serious problem. Smith wrote to Gulick in February 1868, “But if no white man can be found suited to the place, then we

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<sup>82</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Abner Wilcox, 23 November 1868, “Wilcox, Abner - Letters written in Hawaiian - Helekunihi, E. ~ November 23, 1868,” *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed October 20, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/2183>.

<sup>83</sup> Abner Wilcox to Lowell Smith, 3 February 1869, HMCS Archives.

<sup>84</sup> Abner Wilcox to Lowell Smith, 4 February 1869, HMCS Archives.

think some good native preacher who has some experience would be very desirable.”<sup>85</sup> For Smith, it is clear that a “native preacher” was desirable only by default. He went on to write that “the Church has run down sadly & it is reported that Nuuhiva is plotting to become pastor of Waioli Church.” The troublesome Nuuhiva remained a thorn in the Calvinist side and, though he claimed to forswear “Rowellism,” his interest in the English Church had made him a non-starter to become pastor of the illustrious old mission station of Wai‘oli.<sup>86</sup> Hawaiian pastors Kealoha and Pali were installed there in quick succession, but in August, 1870, Smith threw his arms up in despair, “I fear our Kaua‘i churches are declining. Pali at Waioli is discouraged.”<sup>87</sup>

By February 1871, Helekūnihi had already tired of his pastorship at Kōloa and wanted to move on. Smith wrote to Pogue at the HEA that, “Helekunihi has a call from Hana with a salary of \$250.00 per annum - & the expenses of his removal to be paid by the Hana people. Helekunihi’s wife is a native of Hana, & would like to go. He will ask the advice of our ecclesiastical association.”<sup>88</sup> Later that month, Smith revealed his estimate of Elia’s worth to the Kōloa parish, “Among the questions that will come before the Island Association meeting at Waioli will be the call of the Hana Church to Helekunihi to become their pastor. I am not opposed to his accepting the call & do not believe the Koloa Church will lose very much to let him go. That I mean to say about Helekunihi’s going to Hana is this – if he wishes to go let him go, or if he wishes stay at Koloa, let him stay here. Let him be governed by his own sense of

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<sup>85</sup> J.W. Smith to L.H. Gulick, 19 February 1868, HMCS Archives.

<sup>86</sup> J.W. Smith to L.H. Gulick, 17 February 1868, HMCS Archives.

<sup>87</sup> J.W. Smith to John Fawcett Pogue, 17 August 1870, HMCS Archives, “Smith, James William - Missionary Letters - 1870-1880 - to Pogue and Bingham at the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (HEA),” *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed October 12, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/744>.

Pali was clearly a friend of the missionaries, as he became an ardent supporter of the Provisional Government and “Republic” after the overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1893. See Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, for a detailed description of his conflict with the royalist congregation at Wai‘e Church in Lahaina.

<sup>88</sup> J.W. Smith to J.F. Pogue, 9 February 1871, HMCS Archives.

duty.”<sup>89</sup> There was no love lost between the two men, though we have little evidence to know whether this was due to a personality conflict or simply refusal to trust Native Hawaiian leadership in the church.

Helekūnihi remained at Kōloa for much of the remainder of the year 1871 and Smith hinted at his irritation with his Hawaiian colleague in a July letter to Gulick. He had seen in *The Friend* periodical a mistake in the reported statistics of the Kōloa parish, one that fed into the *haole* missionary narrative of Native incompetence. “I see that Helekunihi made a blunder in reporting the Contributions of the Koloa Church,” he wrote, “For support of Pastor he has \$132, whereas the fact is that he received \$170.50 cash in hand. Total given was \$296.50, instead of \$258.” Smith was acting treasurer of the parish with receipts to prove Helekūnihi’s dishonesty and seemed triumphant in catching him in the act of cheating the church, proof of the inadequacy of Native pastors. There seemed no escape from the Social Darwinist tropes of inadequacy and incompetence that pursued every Native Hawaiian in the last decades of the century. Nevertheless, in the same letter, Johnson felt compelled to commend Elia for his exemplary pastoral care of the parish: “Helekunihi is visiting this week from house to house – an excellent work which I hope he will continue.”<sup>90</sup>

In October 1871, the Kōloa Church had a meeting to dismiss their pastor, Reverend Helekūnihi, “according to his request.” Oddly, in his letter to Gulick, Smith felt obliged to add to his negative report of Elia’s “dismissal” the joyful news of Luika’s delivery of “a pair of nice

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<sup>89</sup> J.W. Smith to J.F. Pogue, 18 February 1871, HMCS Archives

<sup>90</sup> J.W. Smith to J.F. Pogue, 19 July 1871, HMCS Archives.

little twins about 10 days old.”<sup>91</sup> Throughout November, the family prepared for their departure for Maui, which Smith hoped would happen by the end of that month, but actually took place on the 26 December.<sup>92</sup> Smith, it seems, was rid of a troublesome colleague and Elia was thrilled at last “to depart from Kaua‘i and return once again to the sands of my birth.”<sup>93</sup>

### ***Ma ka ‘Āina o ka Ua Kea*** **In the Land of the White Misty Rain**

Wananalua Church at Hāna had been mostly under white missionary leadership since its founding by Daniel Conde in 1838. Helekūnihi’s old nemesis, William Otis Baldwin, served from 1855 to 1859, a Native Hawaiian, Samuele Kamakahiki briefly in 1862, and the infamous missionary son, Sereno Bishop, from 1862 to 1865. As noted, Bishop was renowned for his defence of white supremacy, the racial and moral inferiority of the Hawaiian people and their inadequacy for positions of leadership in church or government.<sup>94</sup> His 1862 Hāna report was full of moralizing criticism of his Hawaiian flock: “Yet though so far superior to others, how low is the condition of our own church members,” he wrote. “This visitation has satisfied me that vice is prevalent in the church. It would appear that a majority of the church frequently fall into adultery; and many of them live it habitually. It is believed that more than half of them would

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<sup>91</sup> J.W. Smith to J.F. Pogue, 26 October 1871, HMCS Archives. Neither of these children survived infancy.

<sup>92</sup> J.W. Smith to J.F. Pogue, 10 November 1871, HMCS Archives; *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May, 1876.

<sup>93</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 11 May 1876. *Haalele ia Kauai a huli hoi hou i ke one oiwi*.

<sup>94</sup> Forbes, *Partners*, p.135; Sereno Bishop, *Why Hawaiians are Dying Out; the Washington Evening Star*, 2 June, 1894. During the period of the overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani, he became a mouthpiece for spreading scurrilous reports of immorality at the royal court, writing under the *nom de plume* “Kamehameha” for the *Washington Evening Star* expressing strongly racist sentiments in support of the annexation of Hawai‘i by the U.S. In one of his pieces, he wrote, “There seems to be in them all a hereditary lack of both moral strength and brain force. No one who knows these good-natured people would dare entrust them with votes which would enable them to control the government and destinies of a country like Hawaii.” Later, in the same piece, he expressed a fully developed social Darwinism: “They were of the ‘savage’ races of mankind, of a much higher and more kindly type than the ordinary savage, yet below the average in the scale of humanity.” See *The Washington Evening Star*, 2 June 1894.

easily be induced to connive at the prostitution of their daughters.” He referred to them as “these weak children of a degraded race” and that “Divine grace is not truly working in multitudes of souls.” He continued, “a lack of food exists through neglect and indolence,” and therefore, “there is a strong call for discipline.”<sup>95</sup> Bishop’s subjection of Hawaiians to a punishing regimen of toil and rigid morality to recreate the godly commonwealth of Puritan New England on Hawaiian soil is reminiscent of Armstrong’s “tender violence”<sup>96</sup>

While Hāna was served since Bishop’s departure in 1865 by some licensed preachers, the parish did not employ a full time pastor for almost seven years before Helekūnihi’s arrival early in 1872 as its first permanent Native Hawaiian minister. The racially charged and moralistic legacy of Sereno Bishop would have still been in evidence and Bishop’s unbending Calvinism suited Elia well, as he remained dedicated to the application of Queen Ka‘ahumanu’s now venerable *kapu* order.

In 1872, Hāna was home to several thriving sugar plantations, the Hāna Sugar Plantation under the ownership of the Danish brothers, Oscar and August Unna, being the largest.<sup>97</sup> As Helekūnihi’s parish at Wananaluna was surrounded by the plantation, and the Unnas’ home a mere stone’s throw from his, he was acquainted with the *haoles* who operated the plantation and it is likely they attended his church. However, his dedication to the well-being of the plantation workers led to his alienation from both the Unnas and the Native Hawaiian elites of the district.

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<sup>95</sup> Sereno Bishop, Hana Station Report, 1862, HMCS Archives.

<sup>96</sup> Wexler, *Tender Violence*, p. 108.

<sup>97</sup> Dorrance and Morgan, *Sugar Islands*, p.62.



After the contentious election of King Kalākaua in February 1874, these foreign planters and the local politicians supported the King, while Helekūnihi came out in vocal opposition.

### ***Pīthoihoi a me ke Ku‘ikahi Pāna‘i Like*** **Anxiety and Reciprocity**

*Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* was at this time promoting annexation to Hawaiians because its editor, missionary Luther Halsey Gulick, held that the King had denied them rights in the Constitution of 1864.<sup>98</sup> Some Lahainaluna men, like Helekūnihi, who held positions in the Church, schools and government were affronted by what they viewed as the King’s flouting of Western democratic principles of governance. However, the U.S. government had little interest in annexation at this time and the majority of the *maka ‘āinana* stood with their King in emphatically opposing it.<sup>99</sup>

When Kamehameha V died in 1872 and High Chief Lunalilo elected by plebiscite, an economic slump raised the spectre of either a reciprocity treaty or annexation by the U.S. to bring profitability back to the sugar industry. Henry Martyn Whitney recommended the lease of Pearl Harbor as a concession to the U.S. in return for reciprocity, his logic being that such a lease would “defeat and indefinitely postpone all projects for the annexation of these islands to any foreign power, at the same time that it will secure to us all the benefits claimed by the advocates of annexation, and will guarantee our national independence under our native rulers as long as

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<sup>98</sup> H.A.P. Carter to Edward Bond, 16 May 1867, Correspondence of Edward P. Bond, cited in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, p. 221.

<sup>99</sup> William H. Seward to Z.S. Spaulding, no 42, confidential, 5 July 1868, USDS, Instructions, Hawai‘i, Vol.II, printed in *Sen. Ex. Docs.*, 52 Congl. 2 sess., no. 77, p. 140p. 225. Cited in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, p. 225.

the treaty may continue.”<sup>100</sup> In July 1873, however, Queen Emma commented angrily about U.S. designs on Hawai‘i through the session of Pearl Harbor writing: “I like the *excessive* impudence of that race. What people possessed of any love of country, patriotism, identity and loyalty can calmly and passively sit and allow foreigners to their soil arrogating to themselves the right of proposing cession of the native borns’ soil, in spite of their unanimous protests? My blood boils with resentment against this insult.”<sup>101</sup> In November of that year, when it was clear that ceding any territory was unacceptable to the Hawaiian people, the government withdrew any suggestion of the cession of Pearl Harbor. The majority of Hawaiians realised in the heated debates of 1873 that their very existence as a nation was under serious threat and ceding or leasing any Hawaiian soil was anathems. Rising anti-American sentiment led to further weakening of the moral authority of the missionaries and their sons at a time when the latter’s economic and political power was growing exponentially.

## Conflict At Wananalua

In June 1873 Helekūnihi with fifty other HEA pastors signed a resolution enjoining the separation of lepers: “We as pastors have a pressing duty...to teach & persuade all people to obey the law of God, and separate the lepers from among us. July 18 is set aside as a day of fasting & repentance before God for our sins, and especially for those sins which promote the spread of

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<sup>100</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 26 February 1873. Ideas of reciprocity or annexation flooded the national debate through the spring, with most *maka‘āinana* fiercely in opposition to any concession to the Americans. On 30 June 1873, Native Hawaiians gathered at Kaumakapili Church in Honolulu to express antipathy towards any cession of land and resolutions in protest were adopted. Godfrey Rhodes, a British citizen of the Kingdom, regaled the gathered Hawaiians with frightful tales of the plight of the Native Americans under the cruel rule of the U.S. See *Hawaiian Gazette*, 2 July, 1873.

<sup>101</sup> Emma to Peter Kaeo, 18 July 1873, Alfons L. Korn, *News from Molokai; Letters between Peter Kaeo and Queen Emma, 1873 - 1876* (Honolulu, HI: Univ. Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 26.

this disease.”<sup>102</sup> While it is likely that *haole* pastors Bishop, Pogue, Baldwin and Dole inspired this resolution, thirty-eight Native Hawaiian pastors signed the draconian measure rooted in the Calvinist understanding that the diminution of the Hawaiian people was divine punishment for their “lasciviousness.” Helekūnihi mostly shared the hardline morality of his mentors, as did many of his Native Hawaiian colleagues in ministry.<sup>103</sup> In old Hawai‘i, the breaking of *kapu* meant death and the thirty-eight Hawaiian pastors who signed the resolution, believed they were not innovators, but traditonlists. The hardline position of the HEA was yet another issue alienating the *maka ‘āinana* from the Calvinist Church, as the segregation policy of the Board of Health for what Hawaiians called “the separating sickness” caused immense suffering in Native families. In the next decade, resistance to segregation was forefronted in the struggle against white dominance and represented indigenous sovereignty in the face of rising U.S. colonial desires. Helekūnihi’s later advocacy on behalf of “lepers” in the Legislature 1887-1888 demonstrated his shift toward a position of greater compassion, which would set him at odds with the *haole* oligarchy.<sup>104</sup>

At Wananalua Helekūnihi made his political and literary ambitions clear, while at the same time he demonstrated advocacy on behalf of poor Hawaiian workers. In February 1873, he

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<sup>102</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 10 June, 1873. “The sins which promote the spread of this disease” were of a sexual nature. Missionary son, Sereno Bishop, consistently insisted that the primary cause of the “dying out” of the Hawaiian people was their proclivity toward “unchastity.” See Bishop, *Why Hawaiians are Dying Out*, p. 4.

<sup>103</sup> Among the chiefs associated with Queen Ka‘ahumanu, *kapu* on sexual practices were familiar and appropriate, and those introduced by the New England missionaries fit well into their world view. While a high degree of sexual openness among the *maka ‘āinana* (common people) characterized pre-Christian Hawai‘i, the sexual lives of the high chiefs were hedged around with severe *kapu* to protect and maintain purity of lineage. Though sexual liaisons were permitted with individuals of lower rank, Davida Malo pointed out that the first couplings of high chiefs were controlled with utmost scrutiny. The difference, of course, is that under the strictures of Calvinism, both chiefs and common people were subject to the sexual *kapu*. See Malo, *Mo ‘olelo Hawai‘i*, 18:9-22; 35.

<sup>104</sup> See Chapter Six.

organised the legal incorporation of his church, an indication of his budding legal aspirations.<sup>105</sup>

Two months later, he began composition of his massive *Moolelo Hawaii*, which occupied him for ten years.<sup>106</sup> Though present at the annual May meeting of the Maui Presbytery of the HEA in 1872, he did not attend the meetings for the following two years.<sup>107</sup> Perhaps he was engrossed in his literary work, or too focussed on advocacy for plantation workers to find time for church politics.

In the autumn of 1873, though pastor of Wananalua, he declared his intention to run to represent the Hāna District in the Legislature to represent the “missionary” and pro-American perspective on the hot political issues of the time. In a firey letter to Edwin O. Hall (1810-1883), Minister of the Interior, on 2 December, he informed the former missionary that C.K. Kakani, member of the Legislatures of 1859, 1866, and 1867, and now candidate, like him, for the 1874 session for Hāna, had spread a scurrillous rumour “that the Americans have joined themselves together with the missionaries, as a secret association” to raise a large sum of money to bribe representatives in the 1874 legislature to support the “giving away” of Puuloa (Pearl Harbor) to the Americans.<sup>108</sup> He also reported that Kakani claimed that the Americans had conspired to change the constitution before Lunalilo ascended the throne almost a year earlier. The result of these rumours was the circulation by the people of Kaupō and Kahikinui of a petition to get Kakani elected to protect their interests. Elia was chagrined by the defection of his own Kaupō people to his opponent. Once again, he revealed his almost blind devotion to his missionary

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<sup>105</sup> The charter was granted on February 22 with a fee of \$22.00. See Interior Department, Book 12, p. 151, AH.

<sup>106</sup> Letter to Rev. Oliver Emerson from Elia Helekunihi, February 25 1893, Ms. Group 284, Bishop Museum Archives.

<sup>107</sup> Reports of the Maui Presbytery of the HEA, 1873, 1874, HMCS Archives.

<sup>108</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Edwin O. Hall, 2 December 1873, Interior Department, Elections, 1872-1873, AH.

teachers: “I do not believe that the Missionary fathers have joined in this, that it is a lie,” he wrote. To silence the anti-American voices of the Kaupō citizens who had withheld support for him he recommended that Hall close the sole polling station in the district, at Mokulau. Helekūnihi appeared willing to alienate himself from his compatriots in defence of the Americans.

The election of 2 February 1874 resulted in a victory for opponents of any U.S. intervention in Hawai‘i and Helekūnihi was roundly defeated by Kakani in Hāna District. The next day King Lunalilo died, resulting in yet another royal election and constitutional crisis.<sup>109</sup> David Kalākaua, whose opposition to the cession of Pearl Harbor had endeared him to Hawaiians, was the successor favoured by the new nationalist Hawaiian majority in the Legislature. Though popular as leader of the “Young Hawaiians” and advocate of the “Hawaii for Hawaiians” movement, his desire to win the throne forced him to court powerful American interests. His recommendation to repeal old Calvinist-inspired laws forbidding the sale of liquor to Native Hawaiians and requiring the observance of the Sabbath had caused consternation in the American community. To win the support of the so-called “missionary party” he made a last minute effort to appease them by making a complete about-face on these issues, promising not to touch the laws.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Lunalilo, like his predecessor, had not chosen a successor, despite the counsel of his chief minister, Charles Bishop and such venerable old Hawaiians as Elia’s uncle by marriage, Paul Nahaolelua. See Korn, *News from Moloka‘i*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>110</sup> Henry A. Peirce to Hamilton Fish, no. 236, 26 January 1874, USDS, Dispatches, Hawai‘i, Vol. XVI, printed in *Report of the Historical Commission...1928*, p.p. 33-34. Cited in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 7.

Queen Emma, the other serious contender for the throne and the favourite of the *maka ʻāinana*, had long made her anti-American sympathies clear.<sup>111</sup> Had Helekūnihi been elected, we have no clear indication of who he would have supported in the fiercely contested election for monarch that took place on 12 February in the Legislature. He may have sympathised with Emma because of his family connection to her through his uncle Paul Nahaolelua and her dynastic associations with the Kamehameha lineage would have made her appealing. However, her animosity towards the Americans, the Calvinist Church and the “missionary party” made full support by Helekūnihi impossible. Nor was it likely that he supported Kalākaua, who was disliked by the “missionary party” for his anti-Calvinist position and strident Hawaiian nationalism. It is likely that he was among those who constituted a third party supporting neither candidate for the throne. If so, then his support for annexation, which he revealed shortly after the election of 1874, may have emerged from the conviction that neither candidate for Hawaiʻi’s throne could be trusted to rule in a *pono* manner under the tenets of the Calvinist *kapu*.

Helekūnihi, reeling from defeat in the ballot box, wrote another revealing letter to Hall on 9 February 1874, in that critical interim between the election, Lunalilo’s death and the convening of the fateful meeting of the Legislature for election of a new monarch at the Honolulu courthouse on 12 February.<sup>112</sup> He claimed he had lost the election to Kakani, whom he believed had won “through crafty conduct,” demonstrated by Kakani’s supporters’ contravention of

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<sup>111</sup> In the lineage of Kamehameha, she was adored by the *maka ʻāinana* for her unfailing loyalty to the Hawaiian people and fierce opposition to American designs on Hawaiʻi. Her devotion to Great Britain and to the English Church made her feared, even despised, in the American community, especially among those of the so-called “missionary party.”

<sup>112</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Edwin O. Hall, 9 February 1874, Interior Department, Elections, 1874, AH.

Calvinist mores. Elia claimed that the people of Hāna had been allowed to make their own alcoholic beverages that day and so “were overcome by drunkenness.” Moreover, those who were “living in a concubinage state” were made polling agents on behalf of Kakani and those who would not vote for Kakani were threatened with arrest if he did not win the election. Peevishly, Elia claimed that his opponents were jealous of him because of his close relationships with the annexationists Edwin Hall and Charles Bishop (1822-1915), the American banker husband of Princess Bernice Pau‘ahi. Helekūnihi now openly supported the annexationist party, paradoxical because of his roots in the chiefly traditions of old Hawai‘i, yet consistent with his devotion to the *pono* of Calvinism, the source of which was for him the American Republic.

Elia’s rage at his opponent’s lack of *pono* went beyond displeasure at the breaking of temperance and sexual laws and encompassed both Christian compassion for the oppressed and a chief’s *kuleana* for the well-being of the *maka ‘āinana*. He complained that Hāna Plantation had thrown its lot in with Kakani because he (Elia) had supported a bill “to end the work of the contract laborers at 12 o’clock on Saturdays” with the aim that they “attend to personal cleanliness, and to keep the peace of the Sabbath.” He also supported creating more sanitary conditions in the places where the workers ate. He further claimed that Kakani’s drunken poll workers had torn up his ballots, as well as those of another rival, L. Kamaka, and that some “foreigners and half-whites” from the plantation had taken part in this outrage, though August Unna, the plantation owner, had not condoned it. The end result of all this illicit activity, he told Hall, was an illegal electoral process that ought to be invalidated. Finally, he insisted that, in the place of the corrupt Kakani, “it would be better for some person who is in love with the work (to serve as legislator), so that the poor will not be burdened.”

On 12 February, the day of the royal election, there was such feverish agitation among the common people that the British and American diplomats called for three warships, one British and two American, to be at hand in case of violence and to protect life and property.<sup>113</sup> When the crowd outside the courthouse where the legislature met heard the results in favour of Kalākaua, they erupted into violence, entered the courthouse, destroyed property and assaulted members of the assembly. As a vocal supporter of Kalākaua, Helekūnihi's nemesis Kakani was wounded in the riot.<sup>114</sup> British and American marines came ashore to restore order and when the British force arrived the crowds cheered, as they had assumed that because of Queen Emma's British proclivities they supported the "Emmaites." Instead, the British joined the U.S. marines in putting down the riot. Law and order to protect the lives and property of the *haole* citizens of Honolulu was more critical to these foreign powers than which Native chief occupied the throne.<sup>115</sup> Britain had no serious colonial designs on Hawai'i and, despite Emma's cordial relations with Queen Victoria, cooperation with the rising power of the United States was deemed more important than favouring one ruler over another in the small island kingdom. As the American community in Honolulu grudgingly favoured Kalākaua, despite his nationalism and opposition to the cession of Pearl Harbor, the key player in this drama was, and would remain, the United States.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 14 February, 1874;

<sup>114</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 18 February 1874.

<sup>115</sup> Korn, *News from Moloka'i*, p. 166; W.F. Allen to E.H. Allen, 23 February, 1874, Elisha H. Allen Papers. Cited in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 10.

<sup>116</sup> Merze Tate, *The United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom, A Political History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 34-37. The courthouse riot revealed a rift in the Kingdom that would never be healed. Kalākaua may have been a high-ranking *ali'i* with a fine education and much experience in government service, but he was not in the lineage of Kamehameha, nor was he perceived as faithful to the *kapu* order of Queen Ka'ahumanu. As such, though the American community grudgingly supported his election to the kingship as preferable to the Anglophilic Queen Emma, many Native Hawaiians could never accept him. The "Emmaites," mostly pro-British and anti-American, remained a thorn in Kalākaua's side, especially in Native Hawaiian communities on the important island



Helekūnihi's Christian sensibilities did not stretch much in the direction of forgiveness. A year later, in February 1875, he organized a petition with the German Catholic priests, Fathers Schaefer and Lauter, "preferring charges against C.K. Kakani, the District Magistrate of Hana."<sup>117</sup> At the same time, Elia alone "preferred charges" against August Unna, proprietor of Hāna Plantation.<sup>118</sup> We are not told specifically what these charges were, though the ongoing conflict between Elia and Hāna Plantation over the treatment of contract labourers was almost certainly at the heart of the charges. Charles T. Gulick, clerk of the court, passed the petition on to the Attorney General. Kakani had served his time in the legislature of 1874 and had been appointed district judge for Hāna. That Elia should include the Catholic priests in pressing charges indicated that the priests shared his pastoral concern for the plight of poor Hawaiian workers, as the Calvinist would not generally have chosen to ally himself with papists. Helekūnihi's sympathy for the workers was consistent with his *mo'okū'auahu*, as the *konohiki* traditionally had a special *kuleana* for both the *ali'i nui* and the *maka'āinana*. Whatever the specific charges were, they did not impress the Presbytery of Maui, which at its annual meeting on 18 November 1875, censured Helekūnihi for his behaviour the previous February. After church on the first Sunday of that month, he had requested that he be relieved of his duties because the church was in debt and that when the debt was paid, then he would return to ministry. The elders agreed to this, thinking that this "vacation" was actually due to the debt. The very next day, he "made calls on the people, urging them to sign a petition to put out C.K.

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of O'ahu, until Emma's death in 1885. At times, they plotted to overthrow the king and, when he supported a new reciprocity treaty in 1874 and 1875, they stirred up anxiety among Hawaiians that this was yet another Trojan horse for annexation. See Peter Kaeo to Emma, 14 March, 1876, Korn, *News from Moloka'i*, p. 308.

<sup>117</sup> Charles T. Gulick to Revs. Helekunihi, Schaefer, and Lauter, 17 February 1875, Box 12, Interior Dept. Letterbook, p. 651, AH.

<sup>118</sup> Charles T. Gulick to Rev. Helekunihi, 17 February 1875, Box 12, Interior Dept. Letterbook, p. 653, AH.

Kakani as judge of the district and that Rev. E. Helekūnihi be the judge,” and it appears that the presbytery did not approve of his not-so-subtle political maneuvering. Regardless, they were more concerned about his association with papists than either his dedication to the poor or his judicial aspirations because he was censured primarily for “becoming friends of the Roman Catholic teachers.”<sup>119</sup>

A committee appointed by the Presbytery determined that the charges against Helekūnihi were true and he was called upon to respond at the reconvening of the meeting later in the day.<sup>120</sup> At that time, he “stated his thought before the Presbytery that he will resign his pastorate of the church in Hana...but that he would help the church in all good works as far as possible.” He went on to insist that he have the last word on the issue of the debt, by requiring that “the balance of the debt of the church is to be made explicit.”<sup>121</sup> After his successful venture into politics the following year, despite this censure and resignation from ministry, Helekūnihi was restored to full fellowship with the Maui Presbytery, enjoying the status with W.P. Alexander of “permanent member” of the organization from 1879 until at least 1882 and serving as secretary in 1880.<sup>122</sup> In 1881, he read a paper entitled, “What is the right way in baptism, to sprinkle in water or to immerse in the water?” The brethren agreed that this should be printed in the *Nupepa Kuokoa*, indicating continued respect for Helekūnihi’s theological acumen.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Report of the Maui Presbytery of the HEA, 18 November 1875, HMCS Archives.

<sup>120</sup> The committee consisted of W.P. Kahale, pastor of Wailuku, “a gracious and generous man and was easily the foremost figure in the Maui Evangelical Association;” O. Nawahine, pastor of Waihe‘e; and D. Puhi, pastor of Kaupō and Kīpahulu. (Morris and Benedetto, *Nā Haku*).

<sup>121</sup> Report of the Maui Presbytery of the HEA, 18 November 1875, HMCS Archives.

<sup>122</sup> Reports of the Maui Presbytery of the HEA, 18 November 1879-1882 (reports from 1883 to 1890 appear to have been lost), HMCS Archives.

<sup>123</sup> Report of the Maui Presbytery of the HEA, 1 November 1881, HMCS Archives.

## Conclusion

By the 1860s the “large and impressive domain of American influence” had thoroughly penetrated the Hawaiian Kingdom through the dominance of U.S. missionaries in the religious, educational and legal systems of the nation. Social Darwinism built on the earlier “civilising” mission of the New England Calvinists to confirm racist assumptions of Native incapability in leadership resulting in the creation of a glass ceiling for Hawaiian elites seeking promotion in church and government. Elia Helekūnihi’s attempts to attain ordination in the church and to achieve leadership were consistently resisted by the white missionaries who, nevertheless, used him to promote their agenda at a time when their influence in the Islands was waning. Despite this, Helekūnihi remained faithful to them, to their church and to America, which he viewed as the source of *na ‘auao* and *pono*.

As many Hawaiians established modes of resistance to U.S. economic and political influence, Helekūnihi stood out as a conservative outlier willing to defend the missionaries in the face of Hawaiian assertion that they had imperial intentions. As the political climate became increasingly heated in 1874, his desire to make a stand on behalf of the missionaries and American influence led him to run for office representing Hāna. Embittered by his defeat, he lashed out at his opponent, Kakani, whom he accused of flouting Calvinist mores and of jealousy of his relationship with American annexationists. Helekūnihi’s conflict with the anti-American Hawaiian elites who supported King Kalākaua set the stage for his future resistance to the King and for his decision for annexation. His activism on behalf of the Hawaiian poor, however, ultimately led to conflict with the missionary sons. Elia Helekūnihi’s integrity disallowed the

temptation to entirely please either faction, but consistently demonstrated an independent agency rooted in the *kuleana* of a Hawaiian chief and the *pono* of Ka‘ahumanu’s Calvinist *kapu* order.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Kapuamae‘oleikalā<sup>1</sup>*

### Tradition and Resistance Under Kalākaua

### 1874-1887

Elia Helekūnihi carefully navigated the religious, political, economic and social challenges of the pivotal early years of Kalākaua’s reign. He participated in the traditionalism that arose in the 1860s and which characterised the “renaissance” of Hawaiian culture at Kalakaua’s court in the 1870s and 1880s. However, Helekūnihi’s own brand of traditionalism embraced the *kapu* order of Ka‘ahumanu *mā* demonstrated by a *kuleana* and *aloha* for the missionaries, the chiefs’ *kāhuna*, and the institutions of their land of origin. He was a man with his feet in two worlds, claiming two definitions of “tradition.” This tension within his traditionalism made him an outlier among his people, though he was not alone among his peers. His fidelity to American Calvinism and the political order inspired and instituted by the missionaries, as well as his dynastic concerns about Kalākaua’s legitimacy, led some church men of his class to resist the King, his behaviour and his policies. In Helekūnihi’s first term in the Hawaiian legislature he consistently stood for issues of grave concern to his people, such as increasing the population and improving the lot of plantation workers. His support for the Reciprocity Treaty placed him in the ranks of Hawaiians seeking closer ties with the U.S. The period in Hāna, after his legislative service, saw his adversarial relationship with other Hawaiian elites in the district intensify, leading him to move to Ha‘ikū among the missionary sons where

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<sup>1</sup> John Charlot, “The Literature of the Kalākaua Dynasty,” in John Charlot, *The Hawaiian Poetry of Religion and Politics: Some Religio-Political Concepts in Postcontact Literature* (Laie, HI: The Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1986), p. 10. “The flower that does not fade in the sun.” From King Kalākaua’s Name chant.

his support for a deeper affiliation with the U.S. grew. Helekūnihi's conservatism was rooted in his *mo'okū'auhau* consciousness and fidelity to the Calvinist *pono* order of the old chiefs, which remained the fundamental system governing his life long after it was abandoned by most of his compatriots.<sup>2</sup> Kalākau's cultivation of traditional pre-Christian Hawaiian practices was viewed as dangerous innovation by men like him and annexation by the United States preferable to the rule of a chief whom they viewed as lacking *pono*.

### ***Ka Mō'ī Kalākaua***

### **King Kalākaua: Symbol of Resistance to Hawaiians and of Native "Incompetence" to *Haoles***

When Robert Louis Stevenson's stepdaughter, Isobel Field, arrived to live in the Islands in 1883, her friend the poet Charles Stoddard demanded that she make a solemn decision. "Now you will have to decide," he said, "whether you will join the Royal set or the Missionaries. They don't mix."<sup>3</sup> The Island community was deeply divided throughout the reign of King David Kalākaua (1874-1891), which saw the denouement of the drama of U.S. colonial desire and Native resistance in Hawai'i. It is tempting to treat the King's conflict with the white oligarchy simplistically as either the triumph of good governance over the corrupt reign of an inept native monarch, or that of a benign ruler, beloved by his people, who was the victim of the greed and duplicity of the so-called "missionary party." The complex facts of the matter require a more nuanced approach.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Isobel Field, *This Life I've Loved: an Autobiography* (New York, NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1937), p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> For the former perspective, a classic work to consult is Lorrin A. Thurston, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution* (Honolulu, HI: Advertising Pub., 1936) and for a work attempting to recover a more balanced view of Kalākaua's life, see Tiffany Lani Ing, *Reclaiming Kalākaua: Nineteenth-Century Perspectives on a Hawaiian Sovereign* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019).

Tiffany Lani Ing portrays how the *maka ʻāinana* proffered almost universal *aloha* for Kalākaua in the Hawaiian tradition of *aloha* for their chiefs at his coronation and birthday jubilee, or when he made his circuit about the Islands.<sup>5</sup> However, many Hawaiians of the educated and political classes, some of whom also Hawaiian nationalists, such as Elia Helekūnihi, Joseph Nāwahī, George Washington Pilipō, John Lota Kaulukou, John William Kalua and Joseph Kawainui, were critical of the King. These men were generally graduates of Lāhainaluna and members of the Calvinist Church. Some, such as Helekūnihi, Kawainui and Kalua, supported both the “Bayonet Constitution” of 1887 and annexation by the U.S. While Kaulukou and famed writer and journalist Joseph Poepoe were both royalists who resisted the Bayonet Constitution, they ultimately supported annexation.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the racial anxiety that characterised the Hawaiian Kingdom in the last decades of the century, not all the King’s critics were *haole*, nor were all his supporters Hawaiian. Many British, American and European settlers in Hawai‘i, like the Unnas of Hāna, Isobel Field, the Makees of Ulupalakua, and others were strong supporters of the King. Even Sanford Dole, missionary son and future president of the “Republic” of Hawai‘i, reluctantly acquiesced to the overthrow of the monarchy.<sup>7</sup> Despite the frequent use of the pejorative term, “missionary party,” there was no such formal party, nor is it true that all *haole* critics of the King had missionary associations. The ABCFM had ceased to have a formal connection with Hawai‘i since 1863 and those who resisted the King were not all missionary sons, but men representing a spectrum of

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<sup>5</sup> Ing, *Reclaiming Kalākaua*.

<sup>6</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 245; Noenoe Silva, *Power of the Steel-tipped Pen*, pp. 127, 131, 134.

<sup>7</sup> Sanford B. Dole and Andrew Farrell, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution* (Honolulu, HI: Advertiser Publishing Co., Ltd., 1936), p. 77.

*haole* business and political interests. The missionary sons shared the religious and moral worldview of their parents, but their actions were largely motivated by American republican political sympathies, combined with economic concerns related to their investment in sugar. Their expression of disdain for the moral “depravity” of the Kalākaua court masked deeper anxieties about the economy and what appeared to be the return of more autocratic tendencies by the King. They genuinely believed that the “Bayonet Constitution” of 1887 restored a measure of democracy by replacing the King’s appointment of members of the House of Nobles with their election by an electorate with property qualifications. Cunningly, this “democratic” reform resulted in disenfranchising most Native Hawaiians and all “Asiatics” (who were simply excluded by fiat), handing power to a mostly white oligarchy of landowners and businessmen.<sup>8</sup>

Kalākaua’s reign was marked by the rise of Hawaiian traditionalism as a political movement in opposition to U.S. colonial desires. Public performances of Hawaiian cultural elements on occasions like the King’s coronation in 1883 were demonstrations of national pride. Among the *maka ‘āinana*, Kalākaua was identified with the nation, a symbol of the Hawaiian people, despite his weaknesses perceived by both *haole* and Hawaiian critics.<sup>9</sup> Jocelyn Linnekin discusses how cultural identity is “a potent basis for political mobilization among peoples disenfranchised under colonial rule.”<sup>10</sup> The Hawaiian Kingdom under Kalākaua provides a case study for her assertion that, “Invoking the cultural past to validate and solidify group identity is a

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<sup>8</sup> “Constitution of 1887” in *Roster of Legislatures 1841-1918*, “Roster Legislatures of Hawaii, 1841-1918 [Electronic Resource] : Constitutions of Monarchy and Republic : Speeches of Sovereigns and President : Hawaii. Laws, Etc., pp. 159-170, Internet Archive (Honolulu : Hawaiian Gazette Co., January 1, 1970), <https://archive.org/details/rosterlegislatur00hawarich>; Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, pp. 238-249; and Tate, *The United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom*, pp. 86-95.

<sup>9</sup> Ing, *Reclaiming Kalākaua*, p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> Linnekin, “The Politics of Culture in the Pacific,” *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific*, p. 150.



common practice in modern nationalism.”<sup>11</sup> The specific cultural forms utilised by Kalākaua to demonstrate Hawaiian sovereignty were lifted out of a perceived traditional past and re-designed for a political purpose in the present.<sup>12</sup> A man like Elia Helekūnihi perceived the King’s performances as dangerous “innovations,” lacking *pono*, because by the 1870s many of the practices, such as *hula*, had not had widespread public demonstration for generations, as they had been prohibited by the Ka‘ahumanu chiefs. For Helekūnihi and some others of his class, Calvinist Christianity was a more authentically “Hawaiian” tradition because it had been designated by those revered chiefs.

The traditional historiography of the reign of Kalākaua has not been kind to him and his premier Gibson. Lorrin A. Thurston, who was both a participant in the “Bayonet Constitution” and the overthrow of the Queen, initiated the narrative of the King as frivolous and corrupt.<sup>13</sup> Jon Osorio, Stacy Kamehiro and Tiffany Lani Ing have recently reassessed the narrative of Kalākaua’s reign, asserting that he gave hope and pride to Hawaiians at a time when they were demoralised by demographic decline and the weakening of Hawaiian sovereignty. The early narrative was dominated by *haole* detractors of the King, like Thurston, who controlled the press, and whose histories of the period became the primary sources for subsequent accounts. Ing suggests, however, that the “nationalist press,” provided another perspective on the coronation, one that represented most Hawaiians. The ceremonies, she insists, “were all representations of Kalākaua as the embodiment of the *lāhui* (nation).”<sup>14</sup> Osorio opines that, “the king was reaching

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>12</sup> Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, p. 9, cited in Linnekin, *Cultural Identity*, p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> Thurston, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution*, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Ing, *Reclaiming Kalākaua*, pp. 157-8. The Gibson-dominated *PCA* reported that attendance by thousands of natives and foreigners “certainly indicates the full and cordial acceptance of this ceremony, and its recognition as appropriate to our King and his sovereignty.” See *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 17 February, 1883, 2, cited in Ing, *Reclaiming Kalākaua*, p. 157.

out to his Native subjects, providing an arena in which they could all come together and share an appreciation for the things that made them Hawaiian.”<sup>15</sup> For Kamehilo, the coronation “must be understood within the context of mounting concerns to preserve national autonomy and promote Kalākaua’s ‘Hawai‘i for Hawaiians’ policies. As part of the king’s efforts to safeguard the ‘Hawaiianness of the nation, the coronation underscored the hierarchical nature of the chiefly leadership.”<sup>16</sup> However, the event had a negative impact on Hawaiians in the Calvinist Church, who viewed it as *lapuwale* (worthless).<sup>17</sup> In *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, Helekūnih’s colleague, Joseph Kawainui, wrote, “What are these things doing for the public? What value are all these deeds which have taken place? It is not a new blessing, but only vanity and a waste of the nation’s resources.”<sup>18</sup>

Many *maka‘āinanana* had drifted away from the Calvinist Church, and it is understandable that, anxious over U.S. imperialism, they took comfort in representations of authentic Hawaiian tradition. When Kalākaua and Gibson provided public displays of Hawaiian tradition, particularly those glorifying the high chief, they intended to “solidify group identity” at a time of national crisis.<sup>19</sup> Hawaiians who did not approve of these demonstrations of “tradition” viewed them as expensive political stunts designed to draw the kingdom’s attention away from the corruption of the regime. Men like Helekūnihi and Kawainui understood Ka‘ahumanu’s Calvinist order as authentic Hawaiian tradition and were not convinced that Kalākaua’s presentations stood for them. While the majority of Hawaiians supported their King because of

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<sup>15</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 206.

<sup>16</sup> Kanehiro, *The Arts of Kingship*, p. 28.

<sup>17</sup> Ing, *Reclaiming Kalākaua*, p. 158.

<sup>18</sup> *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, 24 February 1883, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Linnekin, “The Politics of Culture,” p. 151.

enduring *aloha* for the high chief, it is also wrong to suggest that those who did not support the King's agenda were traitors to their nation. Some conservative men of the old *ali'i* class, like Elia, did not support him for an equally valid Hawaiian traditional reason: they viewed Kalākaua as lacking *pono*, the *pono* as understood by Queen Ka'ahumanu *mā* and their New England *kāhuna*.

### **The Legislative Session of 1876: Chiefly *Kuleana*, Pastoral Concern for the Common People and Sympathy for America**

The 1874 legislature had elected the King, then swiftly debated two controversial bills close to Kalākaua's heart: the loan act, authorising the government to borrow up to a million dollars to improve infrastructure, lend money for the encouragement of agriculture, and refinance the existing government debt, and the perennial Reciprocity Treaty with the United States.<sup>20</sup> The two issues of fiscal responsibility and the degree to which Hawai'i should be tied economically and politically to the U.S. dominated the Kingdom until its fall in 1893. After his resignation from the pastorate of Hāna in 1875, Elia rushed enthusiastically into the political fray. The 1 January 1876 edition of *Kuokoa* listed him as one of three candidates from Hāna for the upcoming election.<sup>21</sup> The other two were men of his same religious and political class, Calvinist Lahainaluna men who distinguished themselves in public service to the Kingdom. One of them,

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<sup>20</sup> The loan act passed in the summer of 1874, but because it was impossible for the Kingdom to obtain the necessary funds the government devoted its energies for the next two years to the passage of the reciprocity treaty. Both issues were divisive, with most Hawaiians opposing both the borrowing of money and the giving away of any concessions to the United States. See Emma to Peter Kaeo, 23 February 1876, Korn, *News From Moloka'i*, p. 303; Emma to Peter Kaeo, 4 February 1874, in private collection of Emma's correspondence, cited in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, pp. 192-195. After his election as King, Kalākaua made an about face on the issue of the Reciprocity Act.

<sup>21</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 January 1876, 2.

John K. Hanuna (1830-1919) represented the sugar interests, as he was vice president and part owner of the Mokaenui Sugar Company and briefly served as Labor Contract Agent for Maui in 1880.<sup>22</sup> This demonstrates that not all sugar planters were *haole*, nor did they all oppose the King.<sup>23</sup> Hanuna was related by marriage to Helekūnihi's arch-rival Kakani and ran to continue Kakani's nationalist legacy.<sup>24</sup> His association with Unna of Hāna made him an obvious opponent of Helekūnihi.

The third candidate, Lahaina resident Daniel Kahā'ulelio was, like Elia, an annexationist and traditionalist anxious about the loss of old Hawaiian ways.<sup>25</sup> He wrote a history of Lahaina and a comprehensive study of Hawaiian fishing practices, *Ka 'Oihana Lawai'a*, a classic of Hawaiian literature.<sup>26</sup> *Kuokoa*, with its pro-American and Calvinist orientation, heartily supported Helekūnihi's candidacy, referring to him as "the only right man for the position,"

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<sup>22</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 13 May 1890; John Dockall, *An Archaeological Inventory Survey for An Approximate 129-Acre Parcel in Mokai Ahupua'a, Hana District, Island of Maui*, (Wailuku, 2005), pp. 9-13; J.K. Hanuna, *Government Office Holders*, Hawai'i State Archives, Digital Collections, accessed 12 October 2020, <https://digitalcollections.hawaii.gov/greenstone3/library/collection/governm1/search/TextQuery?qs=1&rt=rd&sl.level=Doc&startPage=1&sl.query=Hanuna&sl.index=PR>, AH.

<sup>23</sup> The wealthy part-Hawaiian William Humphreys Cummings, associate of the King, was part owner of the Reciprocity Sugar Company of Hāna and the King himself was an investor with American Capt. James Makee in a plantation on Kaua'i in 1877. See *The Daily Bulletin*, 6 September 1883; Francis S. Morgan, *Sugar Islands* (Honolulu, 2000), p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 14 November 1891, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Having served as Land Appraiser for Maui in 1873, Daniel Kahā'ulelio later served as District Judge of Lahaina and eventually was elected to the Republic of Hawai'i legislature for the annexation year of 1898. See *Government Office Holders*, Hawai'i State Archives, Digital Collections, accessed 12 October 2020, <https://digitalcollections.hawaii.gov/greenstone3/sites/localsite/collect/governm1/index/assoc/HASH6f97/11450836.dir/doc.pdf>, AH.

AH. Like Helekūnihi, he became a staunch annexationist, a trustee of the venerable Wainē'e Church in his home town, and one whom historian Ronald Williams describes as the "eyes and ears of Judd (missionary descendant who promoted annexation), the Board of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association, and the Provisional Government." See Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, p. 133.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel Kahā'ulelio, Mary Kawena Pukui, and M. Puakea Nogelmeier, *Ka 'Oihana Lawai'a Hawaiian Fishing Traditions* (Honolulu, Hawai'i: Bishop Museum Press, 2006).

while lambasting Hanuna as “having the nature of a child,” and Kahā‘ulelio as “doing nothing but talk.”<sup>27</sup>

English newspapers published the results of the 2 February election for all the districts of Maui, but omitted those for Hāna, revealing lack of interest among *haoles* for the overwhelmingly Hawaiian district. The Hawaiian press cheerfully reported Helekūnihi’s victory over his opponents with 169 votes.<sup>28</sup> Elia wrote to his new constituents in the columns of *Kuokoa* a letter that reads like a sermon, referencing servanthood, equity, prayer, Moses, and righteousness (*pono*):

“I am pleased to thank you, citizen leaders of the electoral district of Hāna, from Kahikinui to Ko‘olau, and the 169 names who voted for me. Your loyalty and and unity have won for me the opportunity to be your servant, such an honored servanthood, namely, to be the representative for the district of Hāna for the A.D. 1876 session that is coming up. The time is drawing near for the work to fall upon me (I will begin on the 29th of April, which is approaching) and I am hopeful that I will attend to the work in an independent manner. Thus, I will administer with equity, and judge with impartiality. For that reason, when I am in the legislative chamber, you will climb to exalted places with prayer for you in my mouth, and in my arms you will be carried, like Moses who prayed for the enemies of Israel. In this way, we shall be righteous.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 January 1876, 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 17 February 1876.

<sup>29</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 8 April, 1876, 2: *E ae mai ia'u e hoomaikai aku ia oukou e na haku makaainana o ka Apana Koho o Hana mai Kahikinui a Koolau, a me na inoa 169 Oiai ma ko oukou kupaa a me ka lokahi i eo ai ia'u ka lilo ana he kauwa na oukou, a he kauwa hanohano hoi, oia he lunamakaainana no ka apana o Hana no ke Kau o ka A. D. 1876 e hiki mai ana. A oiai ke kokoke mai nei ka manawa e ili ai ka hana iluna o'u, e hoomaka ana ma ka la 29 o Aperila e hiki mai ana, ke lana nei ko'u manao, e malama no au i ka hana ma ke ano kuokoa. Oia hoi, " He*

Helekūnihi's strong emphasis on *pono*, as understood in terms of Calvinist "righteousness," guided his public life and motivated his critique of the Kalākaua dynasty.

In the legislative session of 1876 Helekūnihi revealed much about his ideological blend of Hawaiian nationalism, concern of the pastor and Hawaiian chief for the health and well-being of his people, Calvinist ideology, and sympathy for America. At the opening of the session, when Rep. Kuihelani moved to eliminate the position of chaplain to the Legislature on grounds of economy, Helekūnihi virulently opposed "the notion as disgraceful, and unworthy the dignity of the House."<sup>30</sup> Rev. Kuaea was elected chaplain, but the fact that Kuihelani raised the issue at all revealed the truth, disturbing to Elia, that the old Calvinist role as *de facto* established church had greatly diminished. On 5 May, Elia gave notice of his intention to introduce bills "to regulate sugar plantations, amend the horse tax, and abolish duties on freights belonging to any religious denomination."<sup>31</sup> These bills reflected his perennial concern for oppressed plantation workers, his sympathy for poor Hawaiians burdened by taxes on animals required to make a living and desire to protect the interests of the Church.

Helekūnihi's introduction of "a bill fixing the English language as the language to be taught in all government schools" must be understood in light of his interest in improving the lot

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*hooponopono kaulike ana," a he hooholo kaulike ana. Nolaila, ia'u ma ka hale ahaolelo, e pii ae oukou ma na wahi kieke me ka pule i ka waha, a me na lima i hapai ia, me Mose i pule ai no na enemi o ka Iseraela. Pela kakou e pono ai. Ka oukou kauwa.*

<sup>30</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 6 May 1876; "Journal of the Legislative Session, Spring, 1876.," Punawaiola, accessed October 13, 2020,

<http://www.punawaiola.org/es6/index.html?path=/Collections/LegKing/LegKing1876002.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 May 1876.

of poor Hawaiians.<sup>32</sup> The decline in the use of the Hawaiian language was not solely the result of “missionary prohibition” or legislation under the *haole*-dominated “Republic” of Hawai‘i.<sup>33</sup> The missionaries resisted the introduction of English as medium of instruction in the Common Schools, despite the fact that many Hawaiians demanded it.<sup>34</sup> Though Helekūnihi was a graduate of the Select School of Hāna and Lahainaluna, he was a Hawaiian traditionalist, more comfortable in his native tongue than in English. His support for English instruction in Government schools did not indicate a radical position at the time, as there was growing support for it among the *maka ‘āinana*. The people of Kaupō, for example, requested that one English school should replace three conducted in Hawaiian.<sup>35</sup> Interest in English was due to the prevailing view among *haoles* and many Hawaiians that fluency in the language enabled Hawaiians to enter successfully the *haole*-dominated economy.

Helekūnihi’s poverty, as well as that of other Native Hawaiian elected officials, was reflected in his poignant 8 May request that “the Sergeant at Arms do furnish each member with ninety two-cent postage stamps.” Since the disastrous conversion of land tenure to a Western understanding of fee simple ownership in the “Great Mahele” of 1848, even Hawaiian elites

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 4 May, 1876.

<sup>33</sup> While it is accurate to say that the *haole* oligarchy of the “Republic” favoured the use of English, it is not accurate to suggest that many Hawaiians did not hold the same view for the education of their children. Kamanamaikalani Beamer’s statement that the loss of language was “due to its official removal from schools in 1896 by the “Republic of Hawai‘i” is misleading because by that date only one Hawaiian language school remained. Many Hawaiian parents had long advocated for the shift to English language instruction. See Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana*, p. 15. Noenoe Silva more accurately outlines the process whereby the shift to English instruction took place. See Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, pp. 145-145.

<sup>34</sup> Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, pp. 110-114. These Common Schools continued to teach in Hawaiian until the end of the century, though between 1848 and 1894 declined from 527 schools with 19,028 pupils to just eighteen with a mere 32 pupils. The Select Schools, using English as the medium of instruction, grew from fifteen in 1854 with 650 pupils to 107 with 7,732 pupils in 1894. The 1880s, a decade prior to the overthrow of the Queen, saw an enormous decline in the use of the Hawaiian language in education and even in districts overwhelmingly populated by Hawaiians parents often petitioned the Board of Education for English to replace Hawaiian.

<sup>35</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 17 June, 1886; 22 July 1886; 17 August, 1886. In the summer of 1886, the people of Kaupō requested the closure of the three Common Schools to be replaced by a single English school.

suffered grinding poverty, the primary beneficiaries being missionary descendants and *haole* newcomers.<sup>36</sup> The latter grew prosperous with the rise of sugar, a condition galling to Hawaiians. Poverty dogged Helekūnihi all his life and ultimately destroyed him.

Helekūnihi soon clarified the acts he intended to introduce to improved the conditions of poor Hawaiians.<sup>37</sup> The first was to repeal the seventy-five cent tax on horses, the second, reflecting his advocacy on behalf of poor Hawaiian labourers, was, “To designate the number of hours to be considered as a day’s work...and to provide eating houses on sugar plantations.”<sup>38</sup> Finally, his bill “to admit lumber, shingles, and other articles used in the erection of churchses, and clothing, and other articles for gratuitous distribution amongst the poor” reflected the mind of a pastor. He took his role as one of several pastors serving in the Legislature seriously and used his political position to advance the mission of the Church and its concern for the poor.

On 9 May Helekūnihi introduced a bill that struck a powerful nerve among all Hawaiians: “A law to increase the population.”<sup>39</sup> The Hawaiian people had experienced a catastrophic demographic decline, from as many as 500,000 to 800,000 at the time of contact, to little more than 51,000 in the census of 1872.<sup>40</sup> At his accession, Kalākaua voiced his own fears of population decline, stating, “The subject, however, that awakens my greatest solicitude is to increase my people, and to this point I desire to direct your earnest attention...The immigration of

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<sup>36</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Lands and Foreign Desires*, pp. 295-306.

<sup>37</sup> “Journal of the Legislative Session, Spring, 1876.,” Punawaiola, accessed October 13, 2020, <http://www.punawaiola.org/es6/index.html?path=/Collections/LegKing/LegKing1876002.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> Civil Code of the Hawaiian Islands - CHAPTER XXX, accessed October 13, 2020, [https://www.hawaiiankingdom.org/civilcode/CHAPTER\\_XXX.shtml](https://www.hawaiiankingdom.org/civilcode/CHAPTER_XXX.shtml).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, pp. 177-178..



free labor will undoubtedly enrich (*sic.*) and strengthen our country.”<sup>41</sup> Kalākaua shared the anxiety of the sugar planters, who predicted correctly that with the passage of the Reciprocity Treaty, the resulting rise in sugar production would require a substantial need for labour that the declining Native population could not fulfil. Hawaiians, however, were of mixed feelings about foreign immigration and anxious over loss of sovereignty due to the combined factors of population decline, Reciprocity and the possible leasing of Pearl Harbor to the U.S.<sup>42</sup> Helekūnihi shared the King’s concern about depopulation, and like him, supported Reciprocity to improve the economy of the nation, but did not support the immigration of Chinese workers.<sup>43</sup>

On 11 May, “The Honorable Member for Hana” presented numerous petitions to the Legislature, expressing many of the deepest concerns of Hawaiian people.<sup>44</sup> “That the poll tax be reduced” was aimed at relieving the heavy tax burden on poor Hawaiians. “That parents having large families be exempt from the poll tax” was related to that critical theme of the period: *Ho‘oulu Lahui* (increase the nation). “That owners of plantations establish eating houses etc” and “that laborers on plantations stop work at 12 o’clock Saturday” fleshed out Elia’s desire for justice for poor Hawaiian workers on the plantations. Consistently, he aimed to improve the lot of his people at a time when they were anxious about demographic decline, poverty, injustice and loss of sovereignty.

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<sup>41</sup> *Roster of the Legislatures of Hawaii*, p. 130

<sup>42</sup> James H. Wodehouse (British Commissioner) to Lord Derby (British Cabinet), no. 3, confidential, 5 January 1876, AH, British Consulate Records. Cited in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, 117.

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter Six for a discussion of Helekūnihi’s support for Chinese exclusion.

<sup>44</sup> 11 May 1876, “Journal of the Legislative Session, Spring, 1876.”

Helekūnihi gave notice of his intention to introduce a bill “to prevent Sugar Plantations from Distilling.” He heartily supported a bill (as did other Hawaiians, including famed patriot Joseph Nāwahi), forbidding the sale of rum to Hawaiians.<sup>45</sup> Elia’s Calvinist crusade against alcohol consumption by Hawaiians since the days of his 1865 “Rum is an Evil Thing for the Mind” in the *Kuokoa* remained a passionate issue all his life. Marilyn Brown points out the variety of ways in which U.S. colonisers used the theme of Hawaiian alcoholism to justify cultural and political imperialism.<sup>46</sup> Brown asserts that, “Hawaiians were considered to be especially vulnerable to the effects of alcohol because of their natural inferiority compared with the civilized peoples of the West.”<sup>47</sup> Missionaries and other nineteenth century *haole* commentators exploited the trope of alcohol abuse proving that Hawaiians were incapable of controlling themselves and, thus, unable to govern themselves adequately. Helekūnihi’s opposition to alcohol was a manifestation of his dedication to the *kapu* system of Ka‘ahumanu *mā* and the temperance programme of the missionaries. Helekūnihi and other Hawaiian Calvinists absorbed the racialised view of their own people through education in missionary schools, a particularly pernicious aspect of the colonisation of their minds. This contributed to the willingness of elites like Helekūnihi to support annexation by the U.S. in the hope that the paternalistic nation would impose appropriate *kapus* to police and control the passions of their own people. Many Calvinist Hawaiians in the last years of the Kingdom withdrew their support

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<sup>45</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 16 May 1876.

<sup>46</sup> Marilyn Brown, “‘Āina under the Influence,” *Theoretical Criminology* 7, no. 1 (2003): pp. 89-110, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480603007001201>. Missionary Hiram Bingham wrote in reference to King Liholiho’s drinking, “The demon of intemperance, so terrible in heathen nations, still held a cruel sway, and threatened to ruin many, but none, perhaps, more than the monarch of the isles. See Bingham, *Residence*, pp. 179-80.

<sup>47</sup> Brown, “‘Āina under the Influence,” p. 96. The Penal Code of 1850 prohibited the sale of alcohol to Native Hawaiians, who like Native Americans, were regarded as too immature to control their consumption, and the Penal Code of 1869 further elaborated restrictions on distillation of alcohol (allowed at only one establishment in Honolulu) and its sale to Hawaiians. See Brown, ‘Āina under the Influence,” pp. 100-101..

for the monarchy because the Kalākaua dynasty failed, in their view, to maintain the traditional Hawaiian value of *pono* of the *kapu* order put in place by the old chiefs.

Consistent with Helekūnihi's dedication to the welfare of Native Hawaiians, on 12 May, he presented a petition from his district, "That Konohiki fishing rights be made free." Later that year, Elia wrote to the Minister of the Interior complaining that Unna of Hāna Plantation had fined Hawaiians for fishing at Haneo'o, under lease by Unna.<sup>48</sup> The *konohiki*, under the old order, on behalf of the chief, controlled the fishing rights of the *maka'āinana* in many *ahupua'a*. Unna had assumed the rights of the *ali'i* of the *ahupua'a* of Haneo'o and had forbidden local people from fishing there. As a man with chiefly *mo'okū'auhau*, Helekūnihi expressed his *kuleana* and *aloha* for the *maka'āinana*, who in his opinion were maltreated by a cruel chief, though the "chief" in question was a European *haole*. Demonstrating his revived interest in Hawaiian medicine, he presented a petition to abolish government doctors, that is, Western practitioners, as opposed to traditional Native Hawaiian *kāhuna lapa'au*, and another requesting that native doctors be allowed to practice without license.<sup>49</sup> In consort with many Hawaiians of the 1870s, Elia returned to Hawaiian traditionalism, though he was clear that there were limits when the tradition of the old chiefs' Calvinism was threatened.

For the remainder of the 1876 legislative session, Helekūnihi continued to present petitions and offer motions for the benefit of poor Hawaiians: to abolish the road tax; to allow prisoners to work out their sentences in the districts where convicted; to fix the price of government lands at one dollar per acre; that an income tax be levied on government officials;

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<sup>48</sup> E. Helekunihi to Minister of the Interior, 16 September, 1876, Interior Department Letters, AH.

<sup>49</sup> *Legislative Session, Spring, 1876, Punawaiola*, accessed 30 August, 2019.

that hospitals be established in each gubernatorial district (the *PCA* claimed that this was related to his desire to increase the Hawaiian people); that Mechanical Institutes be established throughout the Islands; that the dog tax be abolished; and that an export duty be levied on sugar and rice plantations.<sup>50</sup> On 1 June, Elia introduced a “Bill to License Sugar Plantations,” aimed at men like Oscar Unna of Hāna. Almost without exception, Helekūnihi’s legislation was rooted in both the *aloha* of the *ali‘i* and the *aloha* of the Christian pastor for the *maka‘āinana*.

Helekūnihi’s petition, “That the office of Superintendent of Schools be abolished,” opened up a variety of religious and political issues.<sup>51</sup> Under Kamehamehas IV and V the Board of Education had undergone a number of important reforms, ultimately wresting education from the hands of the missionaries. The result was that for a number of years Anglicans formed a majority of the school board members, including Bishop Staley, so reviled by the missionaries. The dominance of Anglicans in education during this time signaled the decline of the old Calvinist order and the rise of British influence in the Islands. It seemed that even in the classrooms of the Kingdom, where young Hawaiian minds were moulded and colonised, the geopolitical struggle of the imperial powers was played out. By 1870, however, Americans had retaken control of the the board and in 1874 non-missionary American banker, Charles R. Bishop, was appointed Superintendent by King Kalākaua. This powerful man, linked to the Kamehameha dynasty through marriage to Princess Bernice Pau‘ahi, shared Helekūnihi’s annexationist sympathies and Elia had touted his friendship with him as a reason for Kakani’s purported “jealousy.”<sup>52</sup> It is a testimony to Helekūnihi’s independent agency and willingness to

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<sup>50</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 10 June 1876. Sugar plantations were mostly owned by *haoles* and rice plantations by Chinese.

<sup>51</sup> 23 May 1876, “Journal of the Legislative Session, Spring, 1876.”

<sup>52</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Edwin O. Hall, 9 February 1874, Interior Department, Elections, 1874, AH.

speaking truth to power that he challenged and potentially antagonised one of the most powerful *haoles* in the realm. Though Bishop was a nominal member of the Calvinist Church, he was known to hold liberal views, which explains Helekūnihi's opposition to his leadership in educating Hawaiian children.<sup>53</sup>

Helekūnihi also presented petitions expressing Hawaiian anxiety about alienation of their lands to foreigners. The petitions prayed, "That Hawaiians be forbidden from leaving their lands to White People for longer than two years," and "That they be forbidden to sell their lands to White People."<sup>54</sup> While minutes of the Legislature seldom recorded the reaction of the body to the multiple petitions that came to it, on this occasion the Journal of the session recorded that the petitions were "rejected." Sugar interests dominated the legislature because the economy of the Kingdom now relied heavily on its success. The crop required massive acreage and the diversion of an enormous amount of water raised Hawaiian anxiety over loss of lands and water rights to missionary sons and new *haole* settlers. From the 1860s to the 1880s *haole* planters accumulated land by whatever means at their disposal, purchasing or leasing thousands of acres of government lands and convincing impoverished Hawaiians to sell their old *kuleanas* (Māhele awards) cheaply. Though Helekūnihi supported the Reciprocity Treaty, which necessitated increased acreage planted in sugar, he resisted the alienation of Hawaiian lands to foreigners. It is significant that on the same day, he "read an act requiring plantations to take out licenses at \$500 a year."<sup>55</sup> This legislation may have been animated by his conflict with the Unnas and J.K. Hanuna of Hāna Plantation, or may have simply been the effort of a Hawaiian patriot to make

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<sup>53</sup> Harold Winfield Kent, *Charles Reed Bishop Man of Hawai'i* (Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Books, 1965), pp. 254-265.

<sup>54</sup> 3 June 1876, "Journal of the Legislative Session, Spring, 1876."

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

white men who profited from the lands and labour of Hawaiians contribute some of their profit to the welfare of the Kingdom. Helekūnihi was no “*haole* pet,” as he was later accused of being, but a Hawaiian who exercised free agency to oppose *haole* interests when his conscience required it.

Near the end of the session, Helekūnihi succeeded in having a motion carried “that members, at the end of the Session, take the Law Books furnished them away with them.”<sup>56</sup> Helekūnihi aimed to embark on a career in law, but his poverty necessitated keeping the reference texts supplied to legislators. Despite his education and position in society, like many Hawaiians of his class, he struggled financially all his life, while ambitious *haoles*, some closely associated with the King, acquired immense wealth through sugar. This was poignantly demonstrated at the end of his life when financial hardship led to his betrayal, downfall and death, and these same books were among his few personal possessions listed in probate.<sup>57</sup>

Helekūnihi’s most significant contribution to the legislative session of 1876 was his dogged insistence on the passage of a bill to “Promote the Increase of the People.” Related to this, was his passion for the construction of hospitals and his resolution on 15 July “that the Board of Health furnish members of the House with rules for the avoidance and care of smallpox,” a disease that had devastated his people.<sup>58</sup> The minutes of this session referred to the bill to “Promote the Increase of the People no fewer than ten times, Helekūnihi introducing the bill each time and participating in the committee created to report on the bill and its

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> “Hawai‘i, Wills and Probate Records, 1822-1962 (Honolulu), First Circuit Court, Probate Records, 3093-3120.,” Ancestry.com, accessed October 14, 2020, [https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/9046/images/007659664\\_00006?usePUB=true&\\_phsrc=iMT256&usePUBJs=true&pId=10820](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/9046/images/007659664_00006?usePUB=true&_phsrc=iMT256&usePUBJs=true&pId=10820).

<sup>58</sup> 15 July, “Journal of the Legislative Session, Spring, 1876.”

consequences. On 17 May, representative Thomas Birch of Wailuku offered a motion to “postpone indefinitely the printing of the Bill to provide for the increase of the Hawaiian race.” Several of the *haoles* in the legislature voted “aye” to this motion, including Castle, Green, and Walker, all members of the King’s Cabinet. All those who voted “no” to this motion were Hawaiians, with the exception of an Englishman, E. Preston. Helekūnihi’s select committee reported on the bill on 12 August, though the content of their report is not in the minutes.<sup>59</sup>

The contentious issue for which the legislative session of 1876 is most noted is the Treaty of Reciprocity, linked by many Hawaiians with questions of national sovereignty. On 6 June, a “hot and lengthy debate arose over the adoption of the Treaty of Reciprocity. Helekunihi, Castle and others spoke in favour and Nawahi and others spoke against it. It passed, when opposing members walked out.”<sup>60</sup> The final passage of the treaty came on 23 June, despite considerable opposition in the Hawaiian community. Helekūnihi had thrown in his lot with the “missionary party” and *haole* business interests. That a Hawaiian traditionalist, one who throughout the legislative session had manifested deep concern for the well-being of his people, should support a bill that most of them believed to be a threat to their survival as a nation raises a multitude of questions. Kalākaua was a strong proponent of the Treaty, and though Elia was no supporter of the King, he had determined that a boom in the sugar industry would bring prosperity to the Hawaiian people. The aim of his missionary teachers, after all, was nothing short of “covering those islands with fruitful fields and pleasant dwellings, and schools and churches.”<sup>61</sup> Though for him Kalākaua lacked *pono*, and despite concern over loss of lands and sovereignty, Helekūnihi

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 August.

<sup>60</sup> *Pacific Union Advertiser*, 19 June 1876.

<sup>61</sup> *Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Islands Mission* (Lahaina, 1838), pp. 19-20.

shared the King's desire for closer ties with the U.S. to improve the condition of the Hawaiian people.

### ***Hakakā ma Hāna***

#### **Conflict at Hāna:**

#### **A Stand for the Workers' and Rift with the Hawaiian Leadership**

During Elia's tenure on the Legislature, his concern that "the poor not be burdened" on the growing sugar plantations erupted into a bitter conflict played out in the national press with his old enemies at Hāna: C. Kakani, District Judge and former legislator; J.K. Hanuna, Police Chief and sugar planter; A.P. Waahia, Hāna lawyer and contract labour agent for Hāna Plantation; and August Unna, proprietor of the Plantation. In a letter to the pro-Calvinist *Ka Lahui Hawaii* in June 1876, Helekūnihi accused these men of performing "unjust deeds."<sup>62</sup> While two men were peddling *pa'i'ai* (hardened *poi*) in Hāna, they were confronted by Waahia and told that they would be arrested for dealing in intoxicating spirits unless they agreed to sign a contract labour agreement under August Unna. The men submitted and were forced into labour "with the approval of the District Judge." Elia held that there was a multitude of other things that Waahia, Hanuna, and Kakani were guilty of and that it was "right that those deeds be looked at and quickly suppressed that are sinful and against the law of the land and causing trouble for people."<sup>63</sup> This conflict ultimately precipitated Helekūnihi's desire to leave the land of his birth to find a community more conducive to his moral temperment in the company of the missionary sons at Ha'ikū.

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<sup>62</sup> Deeds that were not *pono*.

<sup>63</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 22 June 1876,



A month later in *Kuokoa* Hanuna offered a bitter and angry response to Elia's accusation.<sup>64</sup> He referred to Elia as "Kekahawalu," a nickname honouring his exalted chiefly ancestor, Kahawalu, one of the wives of King Kekaulike of Kaupō. Elia is the only legislator guilty of "defaming, by speaking evil of my good name," as well as the reputation of the others mentioned. He insisted that the two men, who were said to have been forced into labour against their will, were not "engaged to work as slaves for A. Unna and company," but were not employed at all by the Plantation. He referred to "the jealous thoughts of the dark hearts, which will anger the community leaders of Hāna who care for the industry of the district (sugar)." Hanuna had filed suit against Helekūnihi for libel and chided *Ka Lahui Hawaii* for being "so quick in spreading these words in their paper." Moreover, this behaviour was unbecoming to Elia, a teacher and "distinguished gentleman of exalted rank." He was a *kama 'āina* (native of the district), whose high station Hanuna acknowledged, yet "while he was pastor of our church, he treated with contempt his station and longed for the idea of having government work, which is what we now see him doing...And we are now hearing that he might become District Judge of Kaupō." Elia had angered the prominent leaders of the district, sealing his fate as a political and religious leader in Hāna, which included his home district of Kaupō. While we have no record of the results of this lawsuit, Elia's detractors prevailed, as he was not installed as District Judge and, indeed, departed the district forever soon after this. Though Helekūnihi was champion of the poor *maka 'āinana*, his alienation from the Hawaiian leaders of his own class and his annexationist sympathies rendered him marginalised in Hāna.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 22 July 1876, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Edwin O. Hall, 9 February, 1874, Interior Department, Elections, 1874, AH. Elia stated that his Hawaiian opponents at Hāna were jealous of him because of his friendship with former missionary Edwin Hall and American banker Charles Bishop, both annexationists.

Helekūnihi's response to Hanuna was equally venomous.<sup>66</sup> He claimed that it was an outright lie that Hanuna had questioned the two men as to whether they had been threatened into contract labour. The men had affirmed "with clear voices" that they had been threatened, whereupon Hanuna, "green with rage, had pounded the table" and the men were sent off. Elia claimed that he had been in Hāna at the time and witnessed this event. "Just ask the people of Hāna," he wrote, "The righteous judge should look to decide for what is just." Helekūnihi saw himself as an advocate of the common people against the corruption of their officials and the rising influence of the sugar plantations. This appears ironic, in consideration of his support for Reciprocity and the fact that he ended his days on one of the most powerful plantations in the Kingdom, the Ha'iku Plantation of missionary sons Alexander and Baldwin. Helekūnihi, however, was a man of deep moral conviction rooted in his understanding of *pono*, whose agency was not always determined by conventional categories set by others.

August Unna was a Lutheran Dane, a friend and supporter of the King, and infamous for his harsh treatment of Hawaiian contract labourers.<sup>67</sup> The issue decried by Helekūnihi at Hāna in the mid-1870s persisted into the next decade when in 1881 the San Francisco Chronicle printed a series of articles attacking the labour system in Hawai'i. One of them entitled, "The Hawaiian Hades, A Picture of Human Misery and Degradation," attacked Unna for his use of two cannons to keep his workers in line.<sup>68</sup> Unna, who prided himself in having a good relationship with his contract labourers, was incensed at the accusation of cruelty and wrote a spirited defence of

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<sup>66</sup> *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 3 August 1876. Helekūnihi is writing from Lahaina on his way home from the legislative session.

<sup>67</sup> Christian J. Hedemann, Lynn Ann. Davis, and Nelson Foster, *A Photographer in the Kingdom: Christian J. Hedemann's Early Images of Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1988), p. 31.

<sup>68</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 October, 1881. Cited in Davis and Foster, *A Photographer*, p. 28.

himself as a friend of the workers. “There is certainly nothing that warrants the name of Slavery on the Sandwich Islands,” he wrote. “There are more crushing slaveries on the opposite side of the pond.”<sup>69</sup> Despite his protestations, Unna had a reputation for white supremacist views and for severe treatment of Hawaiian workers confirming Helekūnihi’s criticism. He used humiliating punishments traditionally used for Danish peasants, such as the notorious “Spanish cape,” a barrel worn all day as a poncho, on a Hawaiian worker who violated his contract.<sup>70</sup> Unna wrote, “Autocratic Government is the only suitable one for the native race. The present state of affairs (a democratic system influenced by the missionaries) only hastens them off the face of the earth.”<sup>71</sup> Unna had a particular dislike for Hawaiians educated by the missionaries at Lahainaluna, ridiculing them as “hoodlums” for advising Hawaiians not to work as contract labourers on the plantations, an epithet he undoubtedly laid on Helekūnihi.<sup>72</sup>

Despite their involvement in the sugar industry, some missionaries and their descendants, historically fierce opponents of slavery, like Helekūnihi, viewed the contract labour system of Hawai‘i with its infamous “Act for the Government of Masters and Servants,” as little more than another form of slavery, a condition long detested by the abolitionist New England missionaries. Missionary son Whitney, editor of *Kuokoa* and the *PCA*, was a bitter opponent of contract labour, despite having plantation owners among his friends and family members. He published numerous editorials in the late 1860s and 1870s criticising the practice.<sup>73</sup> Helekūnihi concluded his letter of 3 August 1876 with the stinging words, “J.K.H. is constantly nagging the Honorable

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<sup>69</sup> *Sacramento Daily Record Union*, 3 December, 1881.

<sup>70</sup> Heemann et al, *A Photographer*, p. 28.

<sup>71</sup> August Unna to F.W. Hutchison, 20 March 1870, cited in Davis and Foster, *A Photographer*, p. 28.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> See *Pacific Union Advertiser* 5 September 1868, 12 September, 1868; Beechert, *Working in Hawai‘i, a Labor History*, pp. 75-77.

E. Helekūnihi about this issue, heaping up crap besmirching me, and persisting in the view that these deeds are not evil.” In this case, “evil” was the opposite of the Hawaiian quality of *pono*, which the King lacked for his association with men like Unna.<sup>74</sup>

Helekūnihi had drawn his line in the sand, placing himself in opposition to the men of his own class in Hāna District. They had not supported his election to the Legislature because his efforts to improve the lot of poor labourers put him at odds with other Hawaiian elites. The *pono* chiefs of old Hawai‘i were those who demonstrated *mālama* (care) and *aloha* for the *maka‘āinana*. A Hawaiian traditionalist of *ali‘i* stock, a defender of poor workers, a staunch Calvinist for whom the new *kapu* of Ka‘ahumanu *mā* and her Yankee missionaries represented genuine Hawaiian values, unable to accept the legitimacy of the dynasty of Kalākaua, and yet a proponent of reciprocity and ultimately of annexation, Helekūnihi was an anomaly, a conservative outlier among Hawaiians of his time. He was the exception that proves the rule, one who confronted the invention of Hawaiian tradition in Kalākaua’s reign with another interpretation, that was for him equally valid, of what it meant to be Hawaiian. Though an outlier, he was not entirely *contra mundum*, as he was joined by illustrious men like John William Kalua and Joseph Kawainui, who also resisted the King and supported annexation. They espoused positions that may affront the sensibilities of modern historians, yet the decisions that

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<sup>74</sup> See Queen Liliuokalani and Glen Grant, *Hawaii's Story* (Honolulu, HI: Mutual Publishing, 1972), p. 67. The Unnas were among the Maui families who in 1878 “absolutely vied with each other in making us (Princess Liliuokalani and her husband, John Owen Dominis newly-appointed governor of Maui) welcome, and providing a generous hospitality for our entertainment.” The Queen and her brother, Kalākaua, had great support among some prominent *haole* families. Helekūnihi’s Hāna detractors demonstrated their enthusiasm for Kalākaua by staging an elaborate celebration of the King’s birthday in November 1876. The Hawaiian leaders at Hāna, with Unna, as strong supporters of the King, organized a grand feast at which Kalākaua was lauded “for bringing in foreigners, for opening doors in the Kingdom for trade, hotels to bring in the nations, and for establishing avenues for steamships carrying letters.” Elia Helekūnihi, though legislator for the district, was not listed as one of the attendees at the celebrations. See *Ka Lahui Hawaii*, 30 November 1876.

guided them were rooted in what they understood to be Hawaiian values. The *ancien regime* for Helekūnihi was that of the chiefs associated with Ka‘ahumanu and Calvinism was not something new, but the rearticulation of the old religious system. What was new to him was the reign of an *ali‘i nui* like Kalākaua, whose ambitions he viewed as grandiose, and whose lavish spending and disinterest in Calvinist mores proved he lacked the *pono* of the chiefs of old. Kame‘eleihiwa, succinctly frames the ancient Hawaiian understanding of *pono*: “The universe was pono when the Mo‘ī (king) was pono.”<sup>75</sup> Human beings seldom behave in predictable or consistently heroic or enviable ways. Elia Helekūnihi’s life invites us to take seriously the complex web of relationships, events, and ideologies that determine the choices that underlie genuine agency.

***Ma Ha‘ikū ma waena o nā Haole***  
**In Ha‘ikū Among the *Haole***  
**1879-1887:**  
**Refuge with the Missionary Sons**

By October 1876, Helekūnihi was back in Hāna.<sup>76</sup> Though he had not yet been licensed to practice law, he was legal reporter for the Second District of Maui Circuit Court in December of 1876, and by January of 1877 we find him trying a case in the District Court of Hāna.<sup>77</sup> *Kuokoa* playfully referred to his ability to get cases and penalties for crimes wrapped up swiftly. “In the law,” the paper opined, “there is no one who stands before him in skill.” Sympathising that Elia was dealing with the grave illness of his wife, the author praised his ability to get an old woman accused of assault to be acquitted even without summoning any witnesses. “For some

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<sup>75</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Lands and Foreign Desires*, p. 81.

<sup>76</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 7 October 1876.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December, 1876; *Ibid.*, 8 February 1877.

days now, the arguments of this aforementioned influential man of Hāna have been unlike those of former days.”<sup>78</sup>

Now that he no longer served on the Legislature, the ever-impecunious Helekūnihi sought to supplement the practice of law with some kind of government work.<sup>79</sup> This was common among Hawaiian men of his class, who seldom worked in business or a trade, but took positions like road supervisor, pound operator, or tax agent to subsist between legislative sessions or pastoral assignments. In January 1877, Elia applied to the Interior Office to fill the open position of Road Supervisor for the District of Hāna.<sup>80</sup> The newly appointed Minister of the Interior, American monarchist John Mott-Smith, wrote to his friend, August Unna of Hāna Plantation, who had previously occupied the position, to inform him of this request and to get inside information about this applicant with whom “his excellency is unacquainted.”<sup>81</sup> Though Unna’s response must have been scathing, Helekūnihi was appointed to the coveted position in April and actively engaged in the work for much of 1877. An August letter to J. Mott Smith proudly announced the completion of roadwork in Kahikinui, Kaupō, Kīpahulu and Hāna.<sup>82</sup> Unfortunately, he was relieved “of the responsibility and the tiresome labor connected with the Office of Road Supervisor for the District of Hana, Maui” in October.<sup>83</sup> In a letter written two days prior, the Interior Minister offered the position to Portuguese rancher, Manuel Pico of

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> The Hawaiian Legislature met for one session every two years.

<sup>80</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 17 January 1876.

<sup>81</sup> Minister of the Interior to A. Unna, 8 February 1877, Interior Department, Book 14, p.121, AH.

<sup>82</sup> Elia Helekunihi, Road Supervisor, to J. Mott Smith, Minister of the Interior, 7 August, 1877, Interior Department, Roads, Box 44; Kepā Maly and Onaona Maly, “WAI O KE OLA: HE WAHI MO‘OLELO NO MAUI HIKINA,” Ulukau, accessed October 13, 2020, <http://www.ulukau.org/elib/collect/maly6/index/assoc/D0.dir/book.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> Minister of the Interior to Elia Helekunihi, 26 October 1877, Interior Department, AH.

Kahikinui.<sup>84</sup> Helekūnihi's lack of sympathy for the King and cabinet, and his antagonistic relationship with the King's friend Unna, must have put him out of favour.

Elia Helekūnihi's wife, Luika Keo'ahu, passed away at their home in Lehoula in the *ahupua'a* of Aleamai, Hāna, at 10:30 am on 12 February 1877. The obituary he wrote in the Western style celebrated the life of his "beloved Louisa," yet revealed much more about Helekūnihi's own life and trials. It provides insight into the drama of a life bifurcated between Hawaiian traditionalism and chiefly status on the one hand, and Calvinist Christianity on the other. Though his marriage to Luika flew in the face of Calvinist propriety, it was ironically the ideal Calvinist union because Luika's grandfather, Kamehameha's high priest Hewahewa, was a prominent and vocal early convert to Christianity.<sup>85</sup> As such, their marriage made of one the traditions of old Hawai'i and the new *kapu* of Ka'ahumanu (who was also born in Hāna), a symbol for Elia of the authentically Hawaiian nature of the Calvinist path to which he remained faithful for the balance of his life.

Luika's Western-style obituary is peppered with pious Christian sentiments, not unlike those one reads in white missionary journals of the era. Though his traditionalism is expressed in his use of the names of the old Hawaiian months, such as *Welehu* (approximately November) and *Makali'i* (December), he wrote of "our Heavenly Father sending for" his first-born son,

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<sup>84</sup> Minister of the Interior to Manuel Pico, 24 October 1877, Interior Department, AH.

<sup>85</sup> Hewahewa to Levi Chamberlain, 27 July 1830, HMCS Archives, Awaiaulu, "Hewahewa - Ali'i Letters - 1830.07.29 - to Chamberlain, Levi," *Hawaiian Mission Houses Digital Archive*, accessed October 13, 2020, <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/items/show/2666>: "This is my short message to you. I again testify to you about the grace God bestows upon me as I go on. I walk in fear and awe of God for the wrongs of my heart, for he is the one who knows me. The love of the son of God is true indeed. It is of my own volition that I tell this to you. Regards to all the church members there, Hewahewa;" Maria Loomis, *Journal*, 6 April 1820, cited by Kame'eiehiwa, *Native Land*, p. 82.

Solomona. He was a “fruit cut from the earthly garden for the beautiful garden of heaven.”<sup>86</sup>

When their son Geresoma was born on Kaua‘i in 1863 he was named for Gershom, Moses’ first-born son, whose Hebrew name meant a “sojourner” because, like Moses, Helekūnihi was “a foreigner in the land” on the island of Kaua‘i.<sup>87</sup> He spoke glowingly of his relationships with missionary Edward Johnson and even of the wayward teacher, Nuuhiva, but did not mention Dr. Smith of Kōloa with whom he had differences.

Most pointedly, however, his characterisation of Luika as the ideal Christian wife brought Elia squarely into the Victorian Euro-American domestic world of gendered hierarchy. Despite her higher status in the Hawaiian universe of meaning, Luika was Elia’s unequal and subservient partner. When he made the decision to take the position at Anahola, Luika agreed to this because she had made a promise to, “Accompany me in all the places I go until death.”<sup>88</sup> Indeed, the theme of Luika following Elia wherever he went pervades the obituary. When he went to Honolulu, she “desired to go with me, which was what she always wanted to do.” Moreover, “she truly loved her husband, was modest, humble, like a lamb was her nature, speaking words of kindness at all times, prudent, not quick to speak, humble in her speech, having no heart for being forceful, having within all the attributes of a kind person. I was lucky to get such a good woman, faithful to her husband, not like the majority of women...Not controlled by beautiful things, nor nagging for things, or going frequently to the shops...Her greatest wish was for clean living and prosperity in the home.” Finally, Luika “was a beautiful ornament for the home, a high chief’s diadem for her husband.” Helekūnihi ironically invokes the couple’s high chiefly

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<sup>86</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March 1877.

<sup>87</sup> *Exodus* 2:22.

<sup>88</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March 1877.



status to celebrate Luika's subservience, when in the ancient scheme of things, under the old *kapu* order, a male chief of lower status than his wife prostrated himself before her.<sup>89</sup>

Helekūnihi expressed sincere feeling for Luika's passing, employing cliches of Protestant sentimentality. On the Sabbath day of 11 February, Luika "fainted at dawn, and extending her hand, she whispered to me, 'If the hour of nine passes on this Sabbath, on which God has shown he loves us, I will not die on this day, but tomorrow I will die...and she wept with all those people who came to see her.'" As she lay dying on the following day, Elia told her that God was not allowing her to live on account of her illness and then asked her, "Are you prepared to go and depart from me?" "Yes," she responded, "my spirit is prepared for eternal life...I will be lifted up to the right hand. She departed, and at this time Kunewa entered heaven."<sup>90</sup> The death of a high-ranked granddaughter of Hawai'i last high priest was thus reduced to the cloying sentimentality of the pious Christian death in a Victorian penny novelette.

In contrast, the traditional Hawaiian *kanikau* Elia wrote for Luika in the *Kuokoa* of April 14, suggests that he remained comfortable in the world of pre-Christian Hawai'i. The beautiful verse, written in an archaic style with complex syntax, is full of *kaona* (symbolic language), and stands as a masterpiece of classical Hawaiian poetry. Gone completely is the sentimentality and gendered hierarchy of 19th century Calvinism; instead we have testimony to a strong and capable Hawaiian woman, Elia's equal companion in the journey of a shared life.

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<sup>89</sup> See Malo, *The Mo'olelo Hawai'i*, 18:1-75.

<sup>90</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 14 April 1877 (the obituary continues in this later edition of the paper).

*My beloved wife, my dear departed companion, my sweet companion who sailed the  
ocean currents with me...*

*I was blinded, stricken, by your love, and beloved was the place where we dwelled.*

In typical old Hawaiian style, Elia celebrated the winds and rains of much-loved locales  
invoking pre-Christian metaphors:

*In that sheltered home we called New Goshen,*

*With the trees of the forest wafting the sweet scent of Malula,*

*Beloved is Kalaiea in Anahola,*

*Beloved is Pueo, the source of the rain,*

*Beloved is the rootless tree of Kahikikolo (war club of the pig-god Kamapua‘a),*

*A choice flower here from East Maui,*

*An astonishing woman from Kaiwiopole.<sup>91</sup>*

This *kanikau* reveals the heart of a man rooted in the pre-contact Hawaiian world-view,  
still comfortable celebrating the exploits of the pig-god Kamapua‘a, a fertility deity and lusty  
lover of the volcano goddess Pele. He characterises Luika, not as the pious, subservient and

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<sup>91</sup> “*Kuu wahine kuuhoa hele ho-i,  
Kuu hoa hele moana au kele...  
Pouli maele au i ko aloha,  
Aloha ia wahi a kua i noho ai – e.  
I ka malu hale hoi o New Goshena,  
Ma ka nahele laau aala o Malula – e.  
Aloha Kalaiea i Anahola,  
Aloha Pueo ke kumu o ka ua,  
Aloha ka laau kumu ole o Kahikikolo,  
He pua laha ole nei no Maui Hikina,  
H kamahao ka wahine na Kaiwiopole.*”

dutiful “ornament” to her husband, but as “an astonishing woman from Kaiwiopēle.” Luika’s birthplace at Aleamai in Hāna was by the hill of Kaiwiopēle (“the bones of Pele”), associated with the battle between the goddess Pele and her jealous sister Nāmaka.<sup>92</sup> Pele was defeated and killed and her bones buried on this hill, while her spirit went to dwell in the volcanic crater of Halema‘uma‘u. Traditional Hawaiian religion celebrated powerful women and Elia’s association of Luika with Pele provides a striking contrast to his characterisation of her as “humble, like a lamb.” Helekūnihi remained a Hawaiian traditionalist all his life. The Hawaiian language and the mythic, genealogical, and poetic structures that constituted Hawaiian tradition resonated deeply with him. Because he understood Calvinism as a reframing of the ancient *kāpu* system that itself originated with the high priest Pā‘ao, Luika’s ancestor, he remained true to the new *kāpu* all his days.

Not long after Luika’s passing, at age thirty-eight Elia remarried an eighteen-year-old widow named Abigaila Ahinoama Kahalenoe Kiaaiki (1859-1927) of Kohala, Hawai‘i Island and together they had six children.<sup>93</sup> In consideration of Abigail’s Hawai‘i Island origins in a community close to Kamehameha’s seat at Kamakahonu, it is possible that *mo‘okū‘auhau* considerations led him to marry into another chiefly family with roots in the entourage of the great king.

Helekūnihi received his formal license to practice law in the Kingdom of Hawai‘i in October 1877 and in 1879 relocated to the Hā‘iku Plantation of missionary descendants,

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<sup>92</sup> Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, p. 170.

<sup>93</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 26 June 1896.

Alexander and Baldwin.<sup>94</sup> His obituary tells us that he moved to Hā'iku to "care for a portion of Mr. S.T. Alexander's sugar plantation," a position which he held from 1880 to 1882.<sup>95</sup> As the once populace districts of Kaupō and Hāna had experienced dramatic demographic decline, Helekūnihi knew he might make a better living in the prosperous sugar plantation at Hā'iku, though his conflict with the Hawaiian elites and Unna at Hāna must have been a factor in deciding his move.<sup>96</sup> Hā'iku in the post-Reciprocity years functioned within the new global sugar economy and boasted a diverse population of Hawaiians, Chinese and Portuguese contract labourers, missionary descendants and recent *haole* settlers, from both the U.S. and Europe, who filled the roles of *lunas* (overseers), engineers and mechanics on the plantation.

In May 1879, Nathaniel Emerson wrote a letter to his brother Sam from Samuel Alexander's place at Hā'iku providing a first-hand account of life in that rapidly growing sugar centre.<sup>97</sup> Emerson had recently returned to Hawai'i after spending many years in the U.S. attending college, fighting in the Civil War and qualifying as a physician. His letter to Sam described his two-week visit to East Maui seeing friends at Hā'iku and Makawao, ascending the volcano Haleakala and making a circuit around that side of the island, where he found "the country is wonderfully divided by valleys and well-supplied with water, covered with a rich tropical foliage and the roads up and down."<sup>98</sup> About Hā'ikū, he wrote, "Here at Haiku & Makawao I find a considerable settlement of American Hawaiians who form quite an intelligent

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<sup>94</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 28 June, 1879; 26 June 1896; 22 February 1879.

<sup>95</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 26 June 1896.

<sup>96</sup> The Reciprocity Treaty was finally approved in 1876 and in 1878 Alexander and Baldwin completed the Hamakua Ditch, bringing much-needed water to the thirsty fields of Hā'iku Plantation. In 1879, Hā'iku was a veritable boom town, bringing a multitude of skilled and unskilled workers of many ethnicities, including recently arrived Chinese and Portuguese contract labourers (the Japanese would shortly arrive in even greater numbers). See Kuykendall, *Kingdom vol.2*, pp. 116-141.

<sup>97</sup> Nathaniel Emerson to Samuel Emerson, 3 May 1879, Emerson Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

and interesting community. I have called upon many of the families.”<sup>99</sup> That Helekūnihi chose to relocate to this “intelligent and interesting community” of *haoles* is significant. He found it comfortable taking refuge in the community of missionary descendants, particularly the proprietors of Ha‘iku Plantation, Samuel Alexander (1836-1904), the son of his old teacher William Alexander, and Henry Perrine Baldwin (1842-1911), son of Dwight Baldwin, revered missionary physician of Lahaina. These titans of the burgeoning sugar economy not only provided a means of livelihood for Helekūnihi, but had a shared ideology because, like him, they remained loyal to the Calvinist faith of their parents.

His move to Ha‘ikū placed Elia Helekūnihi in the thick of the economic, cultural, and political movements engulfing the Hawaiian Kingdom in the turbulent years that led to the overthrow of the Queen in 1893 by *haole* oligarchs, many of whom his friends and sons of his teachers and associates. It has been suggested by some that Hawaiian elites, like Helekūnihi, supported annexation by the United States merely out of economic necessity, but as we have seen, fidelity to the old Calvinist religious order and the impact of lineage, education and “tender ties” were likely to have been more significant factors.<sup>100</sup> Their hearts and minds were colonised religiously, intellectually and relationally. When Helekūnihi moved to Ha‘ikū, the American Calvinist tradition and its influence had been waning in the Islands for two decades and the community of missionary descendants there provided him a safe and comforting link to the old

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> See Ronald Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, pp. 223-24. A nuanced perspective is required to do true justice to the complex set of circumstances and ideologies that led these men to support the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. We cannot underestimate the sincere religious and ethical considerations motivating a Hawaiian traditionalist like Helekūnihi to make this decision, nor the importance of relationships with missionaries and their families in determining and defining the stealthy colonisation of hearts and minds.

order of Ka‘ahumanu’s new *kapu*. On the other hand, the King’s invention of Hawaiian tradition and perceived lack of *pono* seemed the betrayal of that order.

Until 1889, Elia resided in the upcountry portion of Ha‘ikū known as Pu‘uomalei, some five miles above Ha‘ikū sugar mill where the core of the American community associated with the plantation lived. This is likely to have been in the vicinity of the unspecified portion of the plantation which Sam Alexander had asked him to manage in 1880.<sup>101</sup> From 1889 until his death in 1896, however, he resided in the heart of the plantation on Kalanikahua Road on the grounds of Henry Perrine Baldwin’s private estate, which indicates that the powerful missionary sons wanted him close within their orbit.<sup>102</sup> Even prior to his relocation to Ha‘ikū early in 1879, he was appointed to the Election Board for the House of Nobles for the Makawao District, where Ha‘iku is located, demonstrating that he had been courted by the *haole* power brokers and groomed for his role as a Hawaiian elite who shared their political and religious views.<sup>103</sup> He was re-appointed to this position for years to come and his supportive presence on the board as a Hawaiian gentleman with chiefly roots made him indispensable to the *haoles*, both missionary sons and settlers, who dominated the Makawao District. They were pleased to promote the fortunes of a man whose roots and pedigree inspired confidence among Native Hawaiians and who provided excellent public relations for their political agenda. However, he was no one’s pet and exercised an independent agency that was not always pleasing to his *haole* friends.

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<sup>101</sup> Tax Assessment and Collection Ledgers, Makawao District, Island of Maui, 1887, Kingdom of Hawai‘i Department of Taxation, vol. 1, 224-19-1887, AH.

<sup>102</sup> Tax Assessment and Collection Ledgers, 1889, Kingdom of Hawai‘i Department of Taxation, vol. 1, 224-19-1889, HA.

<sup>103</sup> In the *Kuokoa* of 1 March 1879, he specifically states that he settled in Ha‘iku on 24 January 1879; *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 4 May, 1878.

By May 1879, Helekūnihi had become active again in the Calvinist Church through the work of the Maui Presbytery of the HEA, to which he was not affiliated as an active pastor, but as a “member at large” alongside missionary William Patterson Alexander and his son James McKinney Alexander.<sup>104</sup> In November 1880, when he engaged in managing a proportion of Sam Alexander’s plantation, he was elected to serve as secretary for the Elders’ Meeting of the Maui Presbytery. At that meeting, Elia continued his advocacy for temperance by reading a paper entitled, “How to End Drunkenness.”<sup>105</sup> The brethren were evidently impressed by Helekūnihi’s address because at a meeting shortly thereafter they determined, at the request of the Reverend Pali, that the association should “carry the address of E. Helekūnihi in its rules and apply them to their churches.”<sup>106</sup> The Calvinist trope of the evils of alcohol in the Native population persisted and fed into the mounting narrative that Hawaiians were incapable of managing their own lives, least of all, the government of a nation.<sup>107</sup>

Though he earned a living, not as a pastor, but as a lawyer, Helekūnihi continued to find meaning in serving the Church.<sup>108</sup> Throughout 1881, he worked tirelessly on the committee to plan the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding by Ka‘ahumanu of his beloved *alma mater* Lahainaluna.<sup>109</sup> His devotion to the old order and to the *haole* missionary teachers who formed his Calvinist world view remained steadfast. That same year, he continued his contributions to the *Nupepa Kuokoa*, serving as a local East Maui correspondent on items of

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<sup>104</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 May 1879.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 November 1880.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 December 1880.

<sup>107</sup> Rev. Adam Pali also emerged as a staunch annexationist alongside Elia and would accompany Helekūnihi to Honolulu in May of 1893 to make a stand for annexation to the American commissioner James Blount.

<sup>108</sup> Elia’s participation in the various committees of the Church grew in intensity during his Ha‘iku years as he established deeper roots far from his home district and served in the leadership of the Church of Kalanikahua (“The Heavenly Doctrine”).

<sup>109</sup> *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* 1 January, 1881.

popular interest, and served as court reporter for the district courts of Makawao and Hāna. He wrote about cases tried at Makawao, enumerating the specific crimes that came before the court and elucidating the dominance of issues relating to contract labour on the plantations. While he wrote that there were twenty cases of abandoning work, there were only four for drunkenness, one for selling intoxicating spirits, one for “mistreatment and mischievousness,” one for house-wrecking, two for inflicting pain, and three for “being accessory to a crime.”<sup>110</sup> Helekūnihi deemed the crime of abandoning work as especially heinous. Though he had shared with journalist Henry Martyn Whitney and other missionary sons opposition to the harsh labour practices of men like the Danish Unna, he was more tolerant of the harsh treatment of Chinese workers on the Yankee plantation at Ha‘iku, demonstrating a bias for the missionary sons.

The election of 1882 saw the triumph of the “King’s Party” and the nativist sentiments that rallied around Walter Murray Gibson, though there were no formal political parties at this time. The *Saturday Press* expressed the anxiety of many *haoles*, as well as some conservative Hawaiians, who shared concerns about the reign of Kalākaua: “The future does not look bright. Clouds are gathering and the waves grow boisterous.”<sup>111</sup> The American Minister, General J.M. Comly, anxiously wrote that “the recent election of Legislative Assembly has not been reassuring...Among other objectionable measures, there will probably be a majority in favor of removing the restrictions upon the sale of intoxicating liquor to the natives.”<sup>112</sup> As a result of this election, Gibson became the administrative head of government, essentially “prime minister” of

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 6 May 1882.

<sup>111</sup> *Saturday Press*, 4 February 1881. The editor is scathing of Gibson’s character: “The observing public can observe behind the gaudy and poetic garb worn by this chosen leader a (*sic*) something dark and ominous.”

<sup>112</sup> General J.M. Comly to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen (U.S. Secretary of State), Number 209, 13 February, 1882, USDS Dispatches, Hawai‘i. Vol. XX, cited in Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 251. It does not take much imagination to consider Elia’s opinion on this issue with his commitment to the principles of temperance.



the Hawaiian Kingdom, and the policies so detested by both *haoles* and many conservative Hawaiians had free rein.

The *haoles* who resisted what they described as the “extravagances” of Kalākaua’s reign, concretely made manifest in the \$340,000 ‘Iolani Palace, completed in 1882 and the \$50,000 coronation of 1883, were largely missionary descendants, but not wholly so. Both this expenditure and the display of what was perceived by some as a reversion to “heathenism” in the display of *hula* and traditional *mele* was disturbing to many *haoles*, who as Osorio points out, “were offended to see the work of their parents and grandparents disparaged.”<sup>113</sup> However, many Christian Hawaiians, raised in the Calvinist Church, were equally offended. *Kuokoa*, though indeed edited by a missionary son, echoed the alarm felt by many Hawaiians of Elia Helekūnihi’s class: “When the feast was over, the ancient pagan *hulas* from the time of this nation’s great darkness were performed...The worthless name chants and the shameful words ought not be uttered in the presence of decent people. The meanings were filthy to the utmost degree, evil and obscene.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 206.

<sup>114</sup> *Kuokoa*, 3 March, 1883, 2: “*Aia a pau ka paina ana, weheia ae la na hula pegana kahiko o ka wa poulu loa o keia lahuikanaka...Na inoa lapuwale loa; na olelo hilahila loa, i hiki ole ke hoopukaia e ka poe maikai; na manao pelapela, aole o kana mai o ke ino a me ka haumia.*”

## *Nā Nūpepa Hawai‘i*

### **Hawaiian Newspapers:**

### **Political Conflict, Hawaiian Identity and the Promotion of Righteousness and Enlightenment in the Written Word**

By 1882, Helekūnihi was supporting his family through legal work, while serving as Ha‘ikū correspondent for *Kuokoa*, dishing up human interest stories, such as the dramatic destruction by fire of the building on Ha‘iku Plantation where the cane begasse was stored.<sup>115</sup> He frequently posted reminders in the columns of the paper for people to pay up their subscriptions.<sup>116</sup> As *haole* domination of the economic and political structures of the Islands intensified in the years after Reciprocity, the voices of Hawaiian intellectuals grew dim in the English-speaking community. Hawaiians, like Helekūnihi, however, continued to use the Hawaiian language press as an outlet for fierce and often acerbic debate on the critical issues that faced their people. Papers representing a broad array of perspectives thrived as never before and no study of the years leading up to annexation is complete without an analysis of the complex political and religious views aired in the Hawaiian language press.

Helekūnihi’s devotion to the printed word as mediated by his missionary teachers and to the oral traditions revered by Hawaiians was revealed in a piece he contributed to *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* in 1883 entitled *He Leo Poloai* (“a Summoning Voice”).<sup>117</sup> He demonstrates the complexity of his dual understanding of Hawaiian tradition, represented by both fidelity to pre-Christian poetic metaphors and to the “sacred” nature of the American political system mediated by the missionaries to the chiefs. He flatters *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* with grandiose sobriquets, “The

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<sup>115</sup> *Ka Nūpepa Kuokoa*, 20 September 1883.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 May, 1885.

<sup>117</sup> *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, 17 November 1883.

Roaring Cannon in the Islands” and “The Delight of the Hawaiian Nation.” Launching into classic Hawaiian metaphoric language of geography drawn from ancient mythology, he addresses the personification of the newspaper in the style of the ancient *kākā‘ōlelo*, declaring, “Please carry this summoning voice to all the places where your material has been spread from Hawai‘i Nui the Verdant to Ni‘ihau and to the Pillars of Tahiti of Kahi-ki-ku, Kahiki-moe, and Kahikipuka-paka-au-a Kane.”<sup>118</sup> Helekūnihi then extols the multiple Hawaiian language newspapers and the American political system of his beloved missionaries soon to be tested in the election of 1884. “Get going!” he writes, “Awaken!”, “Gad About! Carry all the newspapers written in Hawaiian, our mother-tongue. Hurry, Hawai‘i’s own, in the year 1884, the year of great sacredness in which your glorious legislature shall be elected and in which we seek knowledge about the candidates to be elected on the first Thursday in February, 1884.”

*Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* was published by Helekūnihi’s old friends, Henry Whitney and Hāna born Joseph Kawainui. Kawainui was Elia’s contemporary, like him a conservative Calvinist supporter of both the “Bayonet Constitution” of 1887 and the Provisional Government in 1893. “*Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*,” he writes, “is carried equally with helping hands, true heart and accord. Published by your own flesh and blood, O Hawai‘i, following in the progressive works of the literary age, revealing things that our ancestors did not know.” Elia celebrates a Hawai‘i transformed by the literacy of the new age introduced by the missionaries, one wherein “the oil lamp seeks to enlighten the works of our nation, from major deliberations of those placed in positions of glowing honour to those most debased in error. Nothing is left in the corner.”

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<sup>118</sup> Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, p. 44, p. 73. Kahi-ki-ku and Kahiki-moe are West and East Kahiki, mythical terrestrial paradises; Kahikipuka-paka-au-a Kane is the place of origin, spelled by Beckwith Kapakapa-ua-a-Kane, “Splashing Rain of the God Kāne.”

Throughout his life, Elia repeatedly referred to the work of the missionaries as “enlightenment” and the Hawaiian word here, *ho‘omalamalama*, connotes both the sense of “to enlighten” and “to civilise.” For him, the work of the New England Calvinists enlightened and transformed Hawai‘i through the introduction of the *palapala* and Christian Faith, but did not result in a severe break with the old *kapu* order. Instead, the mission reformed that order into Ka‘ahumanu’s new *kapu*, providing a seamless movement from the old system to the new. Elia concluded his piece with the populist slogan, “*I Hawaii no Hawaii*” (“In Hawai‘i for Hawaiians!”), echoing the oft-repeated rallying cry of the King and his premier, Walter Murray Gibson.<sup>119</sup> This slogan seems ironic coming from the pen of an annexationist, but Helekūnihi viewed annexation, not as the loss of his nation, but as a means of restoring *pono* and improving the condition of the Hawaiian people.

Helekūnihi wrote of his beloved *Nupepa Kuokoa* as “prized for its righteousness (*pono*) and freedom, for the perpetuation of Hawai‘i and its life, whose editorials bring delight, and which has brought equal rights to its readers.”<sup>120</sup> The latter comment reveals Elia’s dedication to Western liberal political ideals taught by the missionaries, which he believed Kalākaua had

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<sup>119</sup> Kawainui had used *Hawaii Pae Aina* to support the King against his *haole* detractors in the so-called Celso Moreno affair of 1880, insisting that, “No one has the right to object or criticize no matter what he (the King) does or how he does it.” See Esther K. Mookini, *The Hawaiian Newspapers* (Honolulu, 1974), p. 7. That Helekūnihi could speak so highly of this paper when criticism of Kalākaua’s costly enterprises was mounting in the *haole* community, and despite his own reservations about him, indicates that like Kawainui, Elia’s perspective was complex and evolving.

<sup>120</sup> *Kuokoa* was founded by Whitney in 1861 “to furnish the people a full and interesting record of events transpiring in foreign countries; to disseminate foreign ideas with a view to improve and expand the native mind; to instruct habits of industry; to avoid religious disputations; to be firm and loyal to the King and Queen, obedient to the laws as the duty of every subject; and devoted to local news.” See Esther K. Mookini, *The Hawaiian Newspapers* (Honolulu, HI: Topgallant Pub. Co., 1974), p. 5. Despite Whitney’s insistence that the paper not engage in religious disputes, it manifested strong missionary influence and bias. Nevertheless, for its sixty-six years of service of the Hawaiian people, it provided an important means of recording and publishing priceless treasures of the Hawaiian oral tradition. Its combination of Calvinist perspective, American political views (though not necessarily republican) and Hawaiian traditionalism was especially suited to men of Elia’s class, generation and world view.

thwarted. He writes, “Both *Kuokoa* and *Hawaii Pae Aina* uncover hidden things in the government offices. There are no nooks and crannies.” There was no space in Helekūnihi’s moral universe for the corruption he perceived at Kalākaua’s court and this “moral question” motivated his future political positions.

Walter Murray Gibson, Kalākaua’s controversial and colourful premier, had taken charge of the English language *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* in August of 1880 and shortly thereafter created the Hawaiian *Ka Elele Poakolu* (“The Wednesday Messenger”).<sup>121</sup> Gibson’s role in fomenting the ethnic and political divisions of King Kalākaua’s reign began with his earlier publication of the newspaper *Nuhou* (“News”) in 1873. Prior to Kalākaua’s election, he advanced the slogan “Hawaii for Hawaiians,” opposed Reciprocity and the leasing of Pearl Harbor and fanned the flames of distrust of foreigners, but especially Americans, among Hawaiians. In what Lorrin Thurston described as the “anti-haole campaign,” Gibson provoked Hawaiian resentment at the growing economic, political and cultural dominance of the United States, promoting himself as friend and champion of the Hawaiian people.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> For the *Advertiser*, Gibson promised “to support the Hawaiian Government and its policy, and pursue a line of discussion in said newspaper best calculated to carry out the measures of His Majesty’s Government; to be invariably loyal to His Majesty; and to do all printing and book binding required by the Hawaiian Government at fair and reasonable rates.” See *Hawaiian Gazette*, 6 October, 1880. Having arrived in the Islands in 1861, Gibson had been the self-proclaimed leader, “the Chief President of the Islands of the Sea and of the Hawaiian Islands, for the Church of the Latter Day Saints,” and created a Mormon colony on the island of Lana‘i, which he ruled with an iron hand. When the Mormon leadership became aware of his irregular activities, he was excommunicated from the church and, by 1872, had made his way to Honolulu to pursue a career in journalism. His work, which initially appeared in the columns of the *Advertiser*, focussed on issues which he regarded to be of grave importance to the Hawaiian people. To address concerns about the demographic decline of the Hawaiian nation, particularly in relation to the urgent labour needs of the burgeoning sugar economy, he recommended the immigration of Japanese workers. Japan was “the country to which we must look, that has a surplus of the kind of people that we want, and the one most likely to supply our immediate needs for labor.” See *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 7, 14 September, 1872. Gibson was prescient, for during and after the next decade, Japan would supply the bulk of sugar plantation workers and the Japanese became a dominant demographic element in the population of the Islands.

<sup>122</sup> Mookini, *The Hawaiian Newspapers*, p. 6. When King Lunalilo died in February 1874, Gibson championed the election of Kalākaua, whom he presented as the hope of the Hawaiian Nation, over that of Queen Emma. In 1878, he was elected to the legislature, representing Lahaina District, and subsequently became a dominant voice in the

Helekūnihi was clear in his disdain for Gibson's *Ka Elele Poakolu*. He referred to the paper as "the Watchman for the Government," representing the policies of Gibson and the King. These were under attack by the *haole* establishment and by some Hawaiian elites, particularly those faithful to the Calvinist Church. "Awaken!" Helekūnihi repeated twice, "like those without grumbling, to carry, when you have seen the scales balanced, to wait patiently for the consequences of those things which are gushing forth like lava!" He called Hawaiians to beware of those behind this paper, whose actions would be destructive of the Hawaiian Nation.<sup>123</sup> Helekūnihi had cast his lot in with the American critics of Kalākaua, with whom he shared concern over the "extravagances" of the King and his henchman Gibson. His contempt for the reign was rooted in the view that this dynasty was illegitimate and confirmed by the perception that Kalākaua was incapable of ruling with *pono*. While the majority of the *maka 'āinana* embraced the King's policies aimed at restoring dignity to old Hawaiian traditions, a minority of Hawaiians, often Lahainaluna graduates, shared the scorn of the missionary descendants for what they regarded as back-sliding into "heathenism." Helekūnihi was a conservative for whom the King's "indulgences" did not represent true tradition as defined by the *kapu* order of Ka'ahumanu *mā*, but as dangerous innovations.<sup>124</sup>

In his discussion of the newsprint magazine *Ka Hoku o ke Kai* (Star of the Sea), Helekūnihi linked Hawaiian traditionalism with the "enlightenment" conveyed to his people by

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Hawaiian Government and powerful influence on the King and his policies. In 1880, Gibson was returned to the Legislature by a large majority and appointed to the cabinet in 1882 as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Premier of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

<sup>123</sup> I thank Kapali Lyon for clarification of the rather difficult "archaic" Hawaiian characteristic of Elia Helekunihi's language.

<sup>124</sup> Stacy L. Kamehiro, *The Arts of Kingship* (Honolulu, 2009), p. 128.

the Yankee missionaries through their Calvinist faith. The King himself was one of the editors of this monthly journal, founded by the activist Joseph Poepoe in 1883. It consisted of famous stories, generally from the European tradition, translated into Hawaiian.<sup>125</sup> Kalākaua desired to perpetuate Hawaiian traditions (as he understood them), yet was enamoured of European culture and aimed to transform the culture of the Hawaiian royal court into a blend of Hawaiian and European ritual performance to elicit respect from both Hawaiian subjects and foreigners. Helekūnihi, who like Poepoe and Kalākaua, shared a desire to perpetuate Hawaiian *mo'olelo*, referred to this journal as a “Beautiful *lei* (garland, signifying something deeply cherished) of Hawai‘i.”<sup>126</sup> He called it “the sheep dwelling in peace,” reminiscent of the lines from *Isaiah* 11:6 about the “wolf lying down with the lamb,” a theological reflection on the divisions that beset the Kingdom at the time. In this one journal, the factions of the time found unity in the enjoyment of good stories told in the Hawaiian language. He extolled the journal for being published “by the flesh and blood of the land” (ie., Hawaiians) and for “telling about America, and for bearing fruit from the seeds of *na 'auao* (wisdom, enlightenment) planted by missionary Asa Thurston in the year 1820. Helekūnihi celebrated America as Hawai‘i’s source of enlightenment through Thurston’s labours and it is noteworthy that Asa’s grandson, Lorrin was a chief architect of both the Bayonet Constitution and the overthrow of the Queen in 1893. The arrival of the missionaries, Elia states, was “followed by the progressive era of the office of publishing newspapers, not only in America, but in our own beloved Hawai‘i.” “Here,” he wrote, “is the fruit of that wisdom about which Kauikeaouli (King Kamehameha III) spoke, ‘Mine is a

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<sup>125</sup> Mookini, *The Hawaiian Newspapers*, p. 7. Poepoe later resisted the “Bayonet Constitution” of 1887, yet paradoxically, like Helekūnihi, eventually supported annexation. See Silva, *The Power of the Steel-tipped Pen*, pp. 110,120.

<sup>126</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Rev. Oliver Emerson, 25 February 1893; Silva, *The Power of the Steel-tipped Pen*, p. 110.

kingdom of learning (or literacy).’ And here we have the learning in *Ka Hoku o ke Kai*, and it is truly a beautiful *lei* (garland) for Hawai‘i.”

Though Helekūnihi described the short-lived newspaper *Ke Koo o Hawaii* of 1883 as *Ka Elele Poakolu*’s “little brother,” it was less political in nature and, therefore, elicited his approval. It seems to have been a smaller newspaper version of *Ka Hoku o ke Kai*, published twice a week, and featuring Hawaiian patriotic articles, *mele* and news, both foreign and local.<sup>127</sup> “It is a fine newspaper,” he wrote, “which has brought true stories to its readers, who are many because it has been produced in great quantities.”<sup>128</sup> Helekūnihi, like his ancient Hawaiian predecessors, the *kākā ‘ōlelo*, and the Calvinist missionaries, basked in the glory of the *palapala* in both its oral and its written forms. “Our task,” he wrote, “is to bring all the papers published in our familiar tongue to the people, in order to bring about a turning to the *pono*.” Helekūnihi associated literacy with the old Hawaiian state of *pono*, the virtue he believed the King lacked.

## Conclusion

Kalākaua’s reign saw the denouement of the complex developments that led to the annexation of Hawai‘i by the U.S. The King attempted to revive Hawaiian tradition as a means of inspiring the Hawaiian people with pride for their culture at a time of anxiety over

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<sup>127</sup> Joan Hori, “Nā Nūpepa ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Ma Ka Hale Waihona Puke ‘o Hamilton,” Hawaiian Collection, University of Hawaii at Manoa Library, accessed October 14, 2020, <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~speccoll/hawaiicoll.html>.

<sup>128</sup> Elia himself wrote such “true stories” for this paper, including one detailed account of a fire on the night of 20 September, 1883, in “the cane trash houses of Ha‘iku” adjacent to his own home. “If that night had been windy,” he wrote, “lives would have been lost because there were four houses just below the cane trash house with nineteen people in them, including the person writing this and his family.” He suggested that “a dark heart had done this evil deed. See *Ke Koo Hawaii*, 10 October 1883.



demographic decline, cultural change, and U.S. economic and political expansion. Linnekin asserts that, “Invoking the cultural past to validate and solidify group identity is a common practice in modern nationalism.”<sup>129</sup> A minority of men, however, like Elia Helekūnihi, held a different view of Hawaiian culture, one that was rooted in both the ancient chiefly traditions and the transformation of the Hawaiian *kapu* system orchestrated by Queen Ka‘ahumanu. These men viewed Kalākaua’s programme with suspicion, as dangerous innovation. In the Legislature of 1876, Elia showed that he had both the old chiefs’ *kuleana* and the pastor’s passion for the well-being of the *maka‘āinana*, which had been earlier demonstrated in his concern at Hāna for the plight of Hawaiian contract labourers, a concern he believed was lacking in the King. His opposition to the Unnas of Hāna Plantation and their Hawaiian supporters in the district led him to move to Ha‘ikū, where he lived among the sugar planter missionary sons. Though he found comfort in their support, he never ceased to honour the richness of his *mo‘okū‘auhau* in the tradition of the *kākā‘olelo* and wrote his *Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i*, newspaper articles and beautiful *kanikau* in the finest literary tradition of old Hawai‘i. Utilising *Nā Nūpepa*, literary men of the time engaged in fierce polemic with their adversaries as they navigated the complex divisions in the Kingdom in its last decades of independence. Helekūnihi employed the newspapers to commend the accomplishments of the American missionaries, whom he believed brought to Hawai‘i the blessings of *palapala*, *na‘auao* and *pono*. This would be his manifesto for annexation.

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<sup>129</sup> Linnekin, “The Politics of Culture,” p. 150.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Ka Ho‘āuhuli ‘Ana*

### Revolution

### 1887-1894

The last six years of the Hawaiian Kingdom were a period of constant tension between King Kalākaua and his supporters and the *haole* power brokers, often referred to in the historiography as the “oligarchy” or the “missionary party.” A large majority of the Hawaiian people supported their King, demonstrating the persistence of the tradition of unwavering *aloha* for the chiefs, one of the enduring values of Hawaiian culture. Kalākaua’s expensive production of Hawaiian cultural icons was viewed by many as a means of building up a demoralised nation, while most *haoles* and some Hawaiian Protestants viewed his actions as a dangerous revival of heathenism.<sup>1</sup> As the Kingdom struggled financially, the “extravagances” of the King and his henchman, Walter Murray Gibson, alarmed the *haole* business community, while Kalākaua’s attempts at increasing the power of the monarchy caused deep concern among both *haoles* and Hawaiians educated in the “democratic” traditions of the American missionaries.

This final chapter focusses on Elia Helekūnihi’s return to politics in the controversial legislature of the “Bayonet Constitution,” his efforts to make his way in the political and religious world of Ha‘ikū at the center of the burgeoning sugar industry and his final appointment as District Judge of Wailuku, Maui’s capital. Though lampooned in the monarchist press as a *haole* “pet” during those turbulent years, he was a man who exercised independent agency in the face of opposition from both *haole* annexationists and Hawaiian nationalists. He died a betrayed, impoverished and broken-hearted man, but left a legacy of devotion, integrity

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<sup>1</sup> *Kuokoa*, 3 March, 1883, 2; Kamehiro, *The Arts of Kingship*.

and compassion in service to family, church and the Hawaiian people. He was deeply grounded in the traditions and world-view of old Hawai‘i, saturated in *mo‘okū‘auhau* consciousness and motivated by the ancient virtues of *pono*, *aloha* and *kuleana*. Adherence to traditional Hawaiian categories and metaphors enabled him to confront the challenges that arose among his people through U.S. intervention. His use of tradition to support annexation set him at odds with the majority of his compatriots who viewed him as a turncoat, yet his position, both controversial and costly, was a conscientious act of independent agency rooted in fidelity to what he understood to be true Hawaiian values in the Calvinist *kapu* order of the old chiefs.

### **A Return to Politics: Alliance with the Haole Oligarchy**

As *haole* resistance to the policies and activities of the King intensified in the 1880s, Helekūnihi, a respected Hawaiian leader in both the Calvinist Church and the legal community of the Makawao District, became more engaged in the political life of both district and kingdom. In 1881, his relationship with the Kalākaua Dynasty remained at least superficially eirenic. When the King made his world tour early that year, which he claimed was to obtain suitable immigrants to increase the Kingdom’s declining population, his *haole* and Native detractors scornfully accused him of merely going abroad for “the gratification of his own curiosity.”<sup>2</sup> In his absence, Princess Lili‘uokalani acted as regent, during which time, she “won praise by the prudence and tact of her course and made friends by the simple dignity of her style and by her

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<sup>2</sup> Charles C. Harris to Elisha H. Allen, 12 February 1881, E.H. Allen Papers. Cited in Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 227.

accessibility to the people in public receptions and otherwise.”<sup>3</sup> She toured the Islands, and when she came to Makawao, spoke at Po‘okela Hawaiian Church on the “good results that would come from the King’s tour” at an event hosted by Elia Helekūnihi. She referred to the “fearful mortality occurring among the people at present time” due to a recent smallpox epidemic and to the “great need of a knowledge of the laws of health and the care of ourselves and children in order to preserve the life of the nation.”<sup>4</sup> Helekūnihi gave a speech in response to the Princess “on the part of the people.” Though a relative newcomer to the district, his role as spokesman for Native Hawaiians indicates that he was locally respected.

A significant number of educated Hawaiians, like Helekūnihi, supported the rising “Independent Party” in opposition to the party of Gibson and the King, which came to be called the “National Party.” Joseph Kawainui, editor of *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, a vocal critic of the King, monitored what he regarded as reckless spending by the government through much of 1883. In December, he issued a sharp criticism of those in the legislature who supported these policies: “The representatives who attach themselves to the Ministry and Nobles, who cling to government positions, who take bribes, who fail to execute justly the will of the makaainana, who enact harmful laws that increase the Hawaiian government’s debt, who only spend the government’s money on works that do not stand for the wishes of the nation, are enemies of the nation.”<sup>5</sup> The King’s world tour in 1881, the completion of ‘Iolani Palace in 1882 and the huge

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<sup>3</sup> General J.M. Comly (U.S. Minister to Hawai‘i) to W.M. Evarts (U.S. Secretary of State), 14 February, 1881, USDS, Dispatches, Hawaii, Vol. XX, printed in part in *Foreign Relations.*, 1881, pp. 619-620, cited in Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, p.235.

<sup>4</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 24 September 1881. As in the epidemic of 1853, the government was accused of mishandling the crisis, contributing to the growing dissatisfaction with the reign of Kalākaua among a certain sector of the population. See *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 January 1881; 12 February 1881. The January piece describes a public meeting at Kaumakapili Church in Honolulu accusing the Board of Health of dereliction of duty for allowing a ship from San Francisco with persons infected with smallpox to land in Honolulu.

<sup>5</sup> *Ko Hawai‘i Pae Aina*, 8 December, 1883, cited in Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 213.

sum spent on the coronation of 1883 were expenditures of which both Kawainui and Helekūnihi disapproved. Helekūnihi considered running in the election of 1884 to represent the district of Makawao, the power centre of many of his *haole* friends who shared his alarm at the “extravagances” of Kalākaua’s reign.

However, Elia chose not to put his name in for this election, one in which the divisions that beset the Hawaiian Kingdom came dramatically to the fore. For the first time, political parties formed, which the *PCA*, now owned and edited by Gibson, characterised as the “Hawaiian” and the “Foreign” parties.<sup>6</sup> On 9 February, the day of the momentous 1884 election, Helekūnihi preached a sermon at Kalanikahua Church in Ha‘iku on the text of Deuteronomy (*Kanawailua*) 30:19: “Choose life, that you may live and bear fruit.”<sup>7</sup> He asserted that, “It is an important matter, for life is a gift from God.” The *Kuokoa* concluded by stating that “when the Word was opened, the people stood to go forth to vote, such is the richness of the Word.” When Elia sent his congregation with the admonition “to choose life” as the people went to vote, he invoked Calvinist virtues of thrift and sobriety, while raising the clarion to restore the ancient *pono* of Ka‘ahumanu’s *kapu* order. *Pono* in old Hawai‘i was, after all, life. Helekūnihi had positioned himself among the Hawaiian elites who opposed Gibson and the King for the sake of this beloved virtue that would restore well-being, harmony and order.

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<sup>6</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 9 February 1882. His intention appears to have been to stir up racial tensions with the aim of empowering the Native Hawaiian electorate in support of his “Hawai‘i for the Hawaiians” agenda. Gibson’s desire was to portray the brewing political crisis as rooted in a conflict between Native Hawaiian nationalists and “foreigners” intent on destroying the independence of the Kingdom. The influence of his propaganda machine was such that the issue of racial disharmony emerged as foremost in the minds of both *haoles* and Hawaiians in the months prior to the election. The truth of the situation was much more complex and if we preserve the complex nuances of Hawaiian political drama of the late nineteenth century, we will understand that the divisions were not exclusively racial. Kuykendall puts it well: “There were two groups resembling political parties,” he writes, “one supporting and the other opposing the Gibson administration; each group included both native Hawaiians and *haoles*.” See Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 270

<sup>7</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 9 February 1884.

The election of 1884 was largely a defeat for the “National Party,” except in crucial districts in Honolulu and in a few outlying districts, such as Helekūnihi’s own Makawao, where J. Kamakele defeated the Independent candidate John Kalama.<sup>8</sup> Apart from Honolulu, every *haole* candidate was elected, significant when considering the numerical superiority of the Native Hawaiian electorate and the persuasive efforts of Gibson and the King. Because the House of Nobles was still appointed by the King, Gibson’s “administration” remained in power. American Minister Daggett was pleased with the strength of the opposition because “It will operate as a restraint to extravagance.”<sup>9</sup> Though much was accomplished in building the infrastructure of the Kingdom during this term, the opposition, both *haole* and Hawaiian, remained resistant to the King, Gibson, and sugar tycoon Claus Spreckels, whose political influence in Hawai‘i was widely viewed as self-serving.<sup>10</sup> This opposition acted decisively when the election of 1886 swung the legislature in a nationalist direction, which they viewed as dangerous to their own economic, political and religious interests.

Despite his pleasure in Christian ministry, at the December 1884 meeting of the HEA Elders Association of Maui Helekūnihi “asked before the congregation to have his credentials as

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<sup>8</sup> It was suggested that had Henry Baldwin run on the Independent ticket for Makawao, as he had originally intended, the district would not have elected Kamakele. See Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 217. One might speculate on the results if Elia Helekūnihi had chosen to run, though his landslide victory in 1887 suggests that he would have done well.

<sup>9</sup> Rollin M. Daggett (U.S. Minister to Hawai‘i) to Frelinghuysen, Number 120, 14 February, 1884. Cited in Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 272. During the session of 1884, the finance committee, controlled by the Independents, did, indeed, provide a devastating review of the administration’s misuse of the finances of the Kingdom during the previous session. In particular, it was opined that a \$2,000,000 loan bill had “opened wide the doors to extravagance and speculation.” See Daggett to Frelinghuysen, Number 168, 30 June 1884, USDS, Dispatches, Hawaii, Vol. XXI. Cited in Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 272. Despite criticism by the Independents, the legislature eventually approved an extravagant appropriations bill 58% over anticipated receipts. See Report of the Minister of Finance, 1884, p. 4. Cited in Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 274.

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 25 August 1884.

a pastor cancelled, that is to say, the tradition of calling him ‘Reverend.’”<sup>11</sup> The reasons given are, “that he is properly a lawyer and after that a legislator. And it was decided by the gathering to comply.” The Association went on to say, “In the thinking of this Association, we have decided to permanently end Helekūnihi’s pastorship, with very great *aloha* for him. He shall not be a pastor after this time.” Though many pastors ignored the Hawaiian Constitution’s prohibition on clergy serving in the Legislature, Elia’s ethical sensibility made him honour the spirit of the law. This step hinted that he intended to run for office again, at a time when divisions were mounting over the King’s “extravagances” and “heathenising” programme. Despite this declaration, Helekūnihi’s service to the Church never abated and he, in fact, continued to be addressed as “Reverend.”

Elia Helekūnihi’s formal political career recommenced with his appointment as Chief of Police for Makawao District early in 1886, while the politically sympathetic legislature of 1884 still remained in session.<sup>12</sup> The election of February 1886, however, saw the rise of a more fierce division between the National candidates who supported the King and the Independents. While all but Gibson’s son-in-law were Native Hawaiians among the National candidates, only twelve of the twenty-eight put forward by the Independents were Hawaiians, among whom were the Hawaiian intellectuals, Joseph Nāwahī, George Washington Pilipō and John William Kalua.<sup>13</sup> Nāwahī, though a Queen Emma supporter and opponent of Kalākaua for much of his reign, would resist both the “Bayonet Constitution” of 1887, which limited the King’s power, and the overthrow of the Queen in 1893.<sup>14</sup> Pilipō and Kalua, on the other hand, would share Helekūnihi’s

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<sup>11</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 13 December 1884.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 March 1886.

<sup>13</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, pp. 226-229.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169, 211-213, 238; Silva, *Power*, pp. 126-127.

position in support of the events of 1887, and Kalua, “the fire of Wailuku,” became with Elia a staunch supporter of annexation.<sup>15</sup> The *PCA*, still dominated by Gibson, claimed that “If a single Hawaiian native votes on the Opposition ticket he is attacking the independence of the country and signing away to strangers the graves and bones of his fathers.”<sup>16</sup> The Independents insisted that racial differences were not the real issue, but the “extravagance and maladministration of the Gibson regime.”<sup>17</sup> The campaign was vicious and included insinuations on both sides that their opponents were engaged in corruption, buying votes, and intimidating voters.<sup>18</sup>

The election of February 1886 resulted in victory for the King and Gibson’s party, with men like Nāwahī, Pilipō and Kalua roundly defeated.<sup>19</sup> *Haole* Independent candidate, Charles Dickey, on the other hand, comfortably won the seat for Makawao District.<sup>20</sup> Though the King and Gibson appeared to have won the upper hand, Kuykendall insists that “the advantage of hindsight enables us to see that in the year 1886 Hawaii was on the threshold of revolution.”<sup>21</sup> The *haole* oligarchy and their Native Hawaiian allies made it clear that they would never submit to what they viewed as a corrupt and extravagant regime, while most Hawaiians closed ranks in support of the King.

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<sup>15</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, pp. 212-213; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May 1893.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 January 1886.

<sup>17</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 22 January 1886.

<sup>18</sup> See record of the Macfarlane case in *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 26, 27, 28 April 1888.

<sup>19</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 8 February 1886.

<sup>20</sup> Married to Anne Alexander, sister of Samuel Alexander of Ha‘iku Plantation (a prime mover and shaker in the Independent Party), he was the store keeper on the Plantation and close associate and neighbor of Elia, his staunch ally in opposition to the Gibson administration. Dickey’s son, Charles W. Dickey, became the foremost architect of early 20th century Hawai‘i.

<sup>21</sup> Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 287.



In March, prior to the commencement of the new session of the House of Representatives in April, National Party supporters in Makawao contested the results of the election of Dickey in that district. *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, detailed these events in an article provocatively entitled, “The Cannon Roaring in the Islands, The Racket at Makawao.”<sup>22</sup> It was rumoured that police chief Elia Helekūnihi, the District judge and some police officers were to be terminated by the end of March by the newly emboldened Gibson administration because they were accused by National Party supporters of meddling in the election of 3 February. Dickey and Helekūnihi’s supporters created a clamour in the district “because of the termination of our guardians of the peace...The reason for this is because Kamakele did not win the seat as legislator.” It was rumoured that “the guardians of the peace here in Makawao were meddling on election day for Kalekika (Dickey) to be elected by them and not Kamakele.” The source of the rumour was the malicious gossip of a Honolulu “half-white bowlegged sordid secretary of Kamakele who did not bring *pono* to Kamakele’s name.” As a result of this rumour, the sore losers in Makawao ran to Gibson, demanding that the alleged perpetrators of the meddling be dismissed from their government positions. “Great, indeed, was the clamouring” on behalf of Helekūnihi and the other officials, who as it happens, did not lose their jobs at this time. Gibson maintained his grudge, however, and on 1 January the following year, Helekūnihi was “terminated and will finish on the last day of this month.”<sup>23</sup> Helekūnihi’s old friend Kawainui insisted that “he is not someone who is disgraced, Elia Helekūnihi is his name, nor has his love for country been reduced, but he is separated from his position for having committed no faults.”

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<sup>22</sup> *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, 20 March 1886.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 January 1887.

The Legislature of 1886 began with pomp and ceremony, a grand procession, brilliantly attired in both old Hawaiian style and the British courtly trappings favoured by the King, walking in procession from ‘Iolani Palace to Ali‘iolani Hale, the seat of the legislature. Prayers offered by the Anglican bishop, Alfred Willis, were undoubtedly a provocation to men like Elia Helekūnihi and other defenders of the old Calvinist order.<sup>24</sup> Though the government was in the hands of the National Party, the Independents, under the leadership of missionary sons Lorrin Thurston and Sandford Dole, intended to be a thorn in the side of the administration, using every opportunity to criticise its errors and shortcomings. The contentious atmosphere pervading this legislature led Gibson to refer to these detractors as “common scolds” and Thurston as “a bitter, unscrupulous man.”<sup>25</sup> The preoccupation of the legislature was the financial condition of the Kingdom, the King and National Party generally pushing for loans and higher appropriations for items such as the civil list and salaries of government officials and the Independents resisting what they viewed as unwise or extravagant expenditures.<sup>26</sup> Helekūnihi later understood his mission in getting elected to the “Bayonet” Legislature of 1887 as primarily to support a healthy economy and rein in spending.<sup>27</sup>

Early in 1887, opposition to what was regarded by many *haoles*, as well as some Hawaiian conservatives, as the autocratic and extravagant tendencies of the King and Gibson reached a crescendo. Kuykendall points out that, “the spendthrift policy of Kalakaua was

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<sup>24</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May 1886.

<sup>25</sup> “The Hawaiian Hansard, A Complete Verbatim Report of the Proceedings and Speeches of the Hawaiian Legislative Assembly of 1886 (Honolulu, 1886),” University of Hawai‘i eHauls, accessed October 14, 2020, <https://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/handle/10524/15421/1886092101.pdf?sequence=1>, pp. 187, 324; Entry for 2 June, 1886 in Jacob Adler and Gwynn Barrett, *The Diaries of Walter Murray Gibson* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1973), p. 51.

<sup>26</sup> See Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, pp. 287-304.

<sup>27</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 15 November 1887.

glaringly obvious: between 1880 and 1890, for example, the public debt rose from \$388,900 to \$2,600,000. Extravagance and mismanagement, added to perceived outrageous political and other scandals since 1880, alienated most foreigners, as well as many of the natives.”<sup>28</sup> In January 1887 *haole* opposition to the King, previously organized under the banner of the Independent Party, met clandestinely to form the “Hawaiian League,” whose goal was “Constitutional, representative Government, in fact as well as in form, in the Hawaiian Islands, by all necessary means.”<sup>29</sup>

The League was comprised of two factions: one whose aim was the elimination of the detested Gibson and political reform with retention of the monarchy, while the other smaller faction viewed the end result as nothing less than the elimination of the monarchy, followed by a republic or outright annexation by the United States.<sup>30</sup> Missionary sons, Sanford Dole and William Castle, represented the conservative faction, demonstrating that missionary descendants were not necessarily annexationists. Exclusion of Hawaiians from the League, however, was a glaring indication of the racialised tone of the movement that ultimately led to the overthrow of Native governance. None of the four Native Hawaiian members of the Independent Party were asked to join, nor was Helekūnihi, who had long expressed sympathy for *haole* annexationists.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ralph S. Kuykendall and A. Grove Day, *Hawaii: a History, from Polynesian Kingdom to American Commonwealth* (New York, NY: Prentice-Hall, 1948), p. 169.

<sup>29</sup> Section 2 of the League’s constitution. Cited in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 348. Two years earlier, Helekūnihi’s friend and neighbor, powerful sugar planter and missionary descendant, Henry P. Baldwin, had stated that “more and better work could be done by working privately than by publishing what was to be done,” which explains the secrecy behind the establishment of the League. See Reform Party Minutes, 30 June, 1885, cited in Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 235.

<sup>30</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 236.

<sup>31</sup> Elia Helekunihi to Edwin O. Hall, 9 February 1874, Interior Department, Elections, 1874, AH.

While Osorio notes, “kānaka (Native Hawaiians) would continue to oppose annexation,” Helekūnihi was not alone in his sentiments (Kawainui and Kalua, for example), shared by a significant minority of Hawaiian churchmen and members of the political class who disliked Gibson administration.<sup>32</sup> Why, then, were Hawaiians excluded from the League? Their inclusion might have advanced the mission of the League to reform the Hawaiian government, but the rising tide of Social Darwinism precluded Native Hawaiian participation. When Hawaiians were later needed to win a majority in the legislature, they were welcome, but when it came to establishing the blueprint for the “revolutionary” movement their views were dismissed as irrelevant because the essential work, from the white perspective, could only be accomplished by whites. The *haoles* who met that January subscribed to views regarding the inherent inability of Hawaiians to govern themselves or be trusted with positions of responsibility. In their world-view, the “white races,” in particular, the “Anglo-Saxons” were endowed with gifts that other races did not have. As early as 1862, Sereno Bishop, one of their prominent voices, had referred to Hawaiians as “these weak children of a degraded race.”<sup>33</sup> By 1887, the relative respect the early missionaries had for the Hawaiian people and their chiefs had been reduced at best to viewing them as children requiring the guidance of superiors. At worst, they were regarded as an inferior race to be supplanted by a people more capable of governing and exploiting the Islands’ resources. The perceived mismanagement of the Kalākaua administration was proof-positive of Hawaiian inability to rule by estern standards.

Hawaiians were reluctant to participate in a plot to reduce the power of their *ali‘i nui*, and men like Helekūnihi, who doubted the King’s *pono*, were a minority. Their tragedy lies in the

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<sup>32</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 237.

<sup>33</sup> Sereno Bishop, Hāna Station Report, 1862, HMCS Archives.

fact that they continued to admire the religion, culture and political values of a people who devalued their full humanity. Hawaiians were excluded from the “Hawaiian League” because they no longer had a place at the table for the governance of the Islands. However, the *haole* oligarchy was more than happy to use Hawaiians to advance their “revolutionary” movement, which ultimately led to handing over the Kingdom to the United States. The Social Darwinism of the era made this march of “progress” a necessary result of the evolution of the dominant Anglo-Saxon race toward dominance of the “inferior races” who required tutelage due to their incapability of ruling themselves. Kipling’s “white man’s burden,” which characterised the imperial project of Great Britain and latterly the U.S., was manifested locally in Hawai‘i through the efforts of the League, the Reform government and the subsequent annexation movement.<sup>34</sup> Helekūnihi and other Hawaiians were unwitting pawns in a programme designed to disempower them and silence their voices in government. Helekūnihi was dismissed as police chief of Makawao in January 1887 for his opposition to the Gibson/Kalākaua administration.<sup>35</sup> Having lost his job for the “cause” of his missionary friends in the “League” made his exclusion from the group particularly striking.

## ***‘Ēlau Pū*** **Bayonet**

The “Bayonet Constitution” was perpetrated by members of the Hawaiian League beginning at a mass meeting held on 30 June “in the armory of the [Honolulu] Rifles at Punchbowl and Beretania Streets”<sup>36</sup> The purpose of this meeting was “to take into consideration

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<sup>34</sup> Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization*, pp. 16-17; Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, pp. 225-257.

<sup>35</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 6 March, 1886.

<sup>36</sup> Thurston, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution*, p. 142.

the present mal-administration of Public Affairs, and to consider means of redress.”<sup>37</sup> Though no Native Hawaiians attended, Lorrin Thurston described it as the “largest and most representative held in Hawaii up to that time,” indicating the low status of Hawaiians in the eyes of the oligarchy.<sup>38</sup> As early as June 26th, Gibson noted that “an armed league in opposition to the Government” had been created.<sup>39</sup> By the 28th, the entire Cabinet, including Gibson, resigned and he and the King assumed this was enough to satisfy the League’s demands, but the agitators were not appeased and demanded systemic reform of the government.<sup>40</sup> Under guard of the Honolulu Rifles, at the meeting on the 30th in the packed armory, S.B. Jones, president of Brewer & Co., chaired the meeting and declared, “We have assembled here this afternoon, in a constitutional manner resolved to ask the King for good government, something which we have not had.”<sup>41</sup> Resolutions were adopted, which included the dismissal of the Cabinet, particularly Gibson, restitution of the “bribe” for an opium licence to the estate of Aki, and that the King not interfere with elections or the democratically elected legislature.<sup>42</sup> It was further determined that a new constitution be put in place to reduce the King’s power, reproducing in Hawai‘i elements of Britain’s constitutional monarchy.<sup>43</sup> Henry P. Baldwin of Ha‘ikū opposed the new constitution,

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<sup>37</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 29 June 1887.

<sup>38</sup> Thurston, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution*, p. 142. The “Rifles” were originally a shooting club, begun in 1884, with both a social and paramilitary aim and which, ironically, received the hearty approval of King Kalākaua. As recently as March 1887, the all-*haole* Rifles had given an “exhibition drill and dance” attended by the King and many other notable citizens and foreigner dignitaries. Kuykendall points out that it is unknown how the Rifles became the military arm of the League, but by the summer of that year, the two organisations were clearly working together to bring about a political revolution and constitutional change by brute force. See Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, pp. 350-352.

<sup>39</sup> Entry for 26 June 1887 in Adler and Barrett, *The Diaries*, p. 159.

<sup>40</sup> Thurston, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution*, pp. 149-150

<sup>41</sup> C. Brewer & Co. was one of the largest sugar factors in Hawai‘i. Jones’ chairing this meeting indicates the importance of the sugar industry as a motivating force behind the oligarchy’s demand for greater power in the economy of the Kingdom; Sanford Dole, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution* (Honolulu, 1936), p. 50.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52. One precipitating factor in the revolution was the perception that the King had accepted a “present” from a Chinese bidder named T. Aki for an opium license to the tune of \$75,000. When another Chinese bidder offered the King a higher sum, he, not Aki, won the license and the King kept Aki’s “gift.” The English language press made much ado about what was widely understood to have been a clear case of Kalākaua accepting a bribe. See *Hawaiian Gazette*, 18 January 1887.

<sup>43</sup> Dole, *Memoirs*, pp. 51-52.

which led to a tumultuous “roar of protest,” indicating that not all missionary descendants supported the more radical elements of this “revolution.”<sup>44</sup> While the city was controlled by the Rifles, on 1 July, the King submitted to the resolutions and accepted the new cabinet elected by the League, whose task was to rapidly draw up a new constitution.<sup>45</sup> By the 6th, the infamous “Bayonet Constitution” was ready for the signature of the King.<sup>46</sup>

Elia Helekūnihi was an enthusiastic supporter of this constitution, though the majority of his fellow countrymen regarded it as humiliating the King’s sovereignty and dignity.<sup>47</sup> According to contemporary chronicler Henry Chambers, the so-called “best people of the Islands” (ie. *haoles*) resisted the king’s attempt “to change the character of the government and make it more like a minor Asiatic despotism like Jahore.”<sup>48</sup> The powerful oligarchy of white business interests who perpetrated the Bayonet Constitution viewed themselves as revolutionaries in the tradition of Magna Carta and 1776. Indeed, they referred to the events that

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<sup>44</sup> Thurston, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution*, p. 147.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>47</sup> The American community in the Islands, who had promoted their own version of U.S. constitutional democracy in the constitution of 1852, resisted the “aristocratic” constitution of 1864. After the Reciprocity Treaty of 1876, the growing sugar industry brought many more Americans to the Islands and their enormous wealth and political clout enabled them to overpower the King and the political will of the majority of the Hawaiian people.

<sup>48</sup> Henry Edward Chambers, *Constitutional History of Hawaii* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1896), pp. 21-24: “After 1875, their power and numerical strength enabled them to thwart what they perceived to be the autocratic tendencies of the King and return to the more democratic constitution of 1852...Now was come the period when the iople of the islands, foreign and native born (mostly *haoles*, of course) found it necessary to unite for determined action to resist the encroachments of the Crown that had been multiplying for a number of years. The experiment of carrying on a constitutional government of the Anglo-Saxon type in a country with as mixed a population as these islands possessed was a difficult and doubtful one...Kalakaua, however, seemed blind to the course events were taking, and to the true interests of his people. His ambition was to change the character of government and make it more like a minor Asiatic despotism like Jahore. The citizens of foreign extraction who had done so much towards the upbuilding of civilization and material prosperity of the islands were termed white invaders, and the king determined that they should have no further voice in the administration of affairs...Reviving heathen rites demoralized the natives. He fomented race jealousy and hatred under the guise of promoting national feeling. The king was vain, dishonest, selfish and unscrupulous. Scandal and corruption marked his administration from beginning to end.”

led to the imposed new constitution as “the Revolution of 1887.”<sup>49</sup> Oliver Emerson, Helekūnihi’s correspondent in 1893, referred to the “revolution” as “the noble stand the sons of the mission took.”<sup>50</sup> The Hawaiian League viewed Kalākaua as a Polynesian King John whose blindness required serious intervention to force him, at gunpoint if necessary, “to be decent, and reign, not rule, or take the consequences.”<sup>51</sup>

Recently, scholars have recovered the narrative from the Native Hawaiian perspective. Osorio asserts that, “Certainly, the *haole* and the scholars who memorialized them saw no need to consider the wishes and resentments of the Native subjects whose relationship to the king was complicated, as we have seen, by a very real historical devotion to the Mō‘ī (King).”<sup>52</sup> The testimony of Hawaiian resistance to the “Bayonet Constitution” reveals anger and sorrow over what they regarded as his dishonour at the hands of the *haole* oligarchs. Lawyer and politician, Joseph Poepoe, reacting to politician A.P. Kalaukoa’s support for the constitution, spoke out for most Hawaiians at a rally in July 1887. Calling Kalaukoa “The Angel of Death,” he said, “The Americans have no respect for royalty, for they have no king. Therefore, they want to exercise the same power here as they do in their own country. They are doing it little by little, and it will not be long before Hawai‘i becomes an entire republic. We who cherish our King ought not to allow this to be done.”<sup>53</sup> The complexity and nuance of late nineteenth century Hawai‘i, is such that Poepoe himself supported annexation the following decade.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> W. D. Alexander, *A Brief History of the Hawaiian People* (New York, NY: American Book Company, 1899). p. 308.

<sup>50</sup> Rev. Oliver Pomeroy Emerson to Rev. Judson Smith, 7 August, 1889, ABCFM Hawaii Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, cited in Williams, p. 24.

<sup>51</sup> Words spoken to Lorrin Thurston by Dr. S.G. Tucker 26 December, 1886, cited in Tate, *The United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom*, p. 82.

<sup>52</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 195

<sup>53</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 26 July 1887.

<sup>54</sup> See Silva, *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen* (Durham, 2017), pp. 127f.



The list of members of the Hawaiian League includes sons of Helekūnihi's beloved missionary teachers, as well as his associates in the HEA. Reverend Oliver Emerson's physician brother, Nathaniel, who consulted Helekūnihi for his work on ancient Hawaiian voyaging traditions, was one of the first fourteen members of the Hawaiian League.<sup>55</sup> William De Witt Alexander, historian and promoter of the idea of the events of 1887 as a "Glorious Revolution," was the brother of Samuel of Ha'iku Plantation, for whom Elia worked earlier in the decade, and both were sons of missionary William Patterson Alexander, Elia's teacher at Lāhainaluna. Lorrin Thurston, the most powerful voice in the "revolution" and primary author of the constitution of 1887, regarded the document as not unlike the American Declaration of Independence.<sup>56</sup> He was the grandson of both Asa Thurston, revered member of the First Company of missionaries of 1820 and Lorrin Andrews, member of the Third Company and founder of Lahainaluna.<sup>57</sup> Later, in 1893, Helekūnihi celebrated Thurston and his coreligionists as "men who are counted by me as rising beacons brought here, raised up on the Island of Hawai'i at Kailua, on the sands of Kaiakekua where the obscurity of our dark night was lifted."<sup>58</sup> Sanford Dole, whose biographer claimed that he *was* the revolution, and who subsequently became president of the "Republic of Hawai'i" at its inception in 1894, was also a missionary son, whose father, Daniel Dole, was pastor and teacher of the English congregation at Kōloa during Elia's tenure as pastor of the Hawaiian congregation there.<sup>59</sup> Helekūnihi could boast a lifetime of "tender ties" with the perpetrators of the "revolution" that imposed the Bayonet Constitution.

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<sup>55</sup> Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 347.

<sup>56</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*, p. 194.

<sup>57</sup> See Forbes, Kam and Woods, *Partners in Change*, pp. 598-604, 62-66.

<sup>58</sup> *Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893: *Na Kumu Kuponō e Hookui ai me Amerika, Huipua* ("The Proper Reasons for Joining with the United States of America"). Kailua on Hawai'i Island is where Thurston established the first mission.

<sup>59</sup> Forbes, Kam and Woods, *Partners in Change*, p. 229.

Kame‘eleihiwa’s assertion that “their worlds were too different” is astute in recognising that Hawaiians and *haoles* approached the political and social challenges of this period from very different perspectives. The primary interest of the *haoles* was economic, though they presented their argument for “revolution” in terms of Western democratic ideals, the rights of man, opposition to tyranny and “honest government.” Hawaiians, mostly loyal to their *Mō‘ī*, supported his autocratic tendencies as the prerogative of the *ali‘i nui* and were unconcerned by his peccadillos, which *haoles* viewed through the lens of Calvinist and Victorian propriety. Moreover, they had a valid concern about the loss of their nation, one that became concrete in subsequent years. There is, however, a third group that has been neglected or maligned in the historiography: those Hawaiians, like Elia Helekūnihi, who fell into neither category. English language sources of the time used Hawaiian opponents of Kalākaua to justify the actions of the oligarchy in 1887 and 1893, and from the colonialist perspective, Native support of both “revolutions” confirmed the righteous cause of white supremacy.<sup>60</sup> However, these Hawaiians regarded themselves as patriots who simply could not support the policies of the the King and it would be unjust to label them puppets of the oligarchy or motivated merely by financial reward.<sup>61</sup> Among some elites of lesser *ali‘i* status, like Helekūnihi, dedication to Ka‘ahumanu’s *kapu* of Calvinist Christianity motivated their rationale to support these “revolutions” instituted by men with whom they had long and intimate associations and whose fathers had brought *na‘auao* to Hawai‘i. Educated in mission schools in Anglo-American political ideals, they were unable to accept Kalākaua’s reversion towards autocracy. Convinced of allegations of corruption and *kahunaism* (understood as “witchcraft”) at the royal court, some rejected the legitimacy of

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<sup>60</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 12 July, 1887.

<sup>61</sup> See Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, p. 222-224.

the reigning dynasty and shared *haole* anxiety over the King's "extravagances," thus regarding neither Kalākaua nor his sister and successor, Lili'uokalani, as *pono*.<sup>62</sup>

The King "acceded at once to these demands (of the Hawaiian League) for radical reform and on July 7, signed a new constitution."<sup>63</sup> Gibson wrote that "The King now alarmed – will accept the extreme radicals."<sup>64</sup> The "Bayonet Constitution," is rightly maligned for the manner in which it was promulgated, literally at gun point, and for its effective disenfranchisement of Native Hawaiian voters.<sup>65</sup> Some historians insist that the constitution either directly took the vote away from Hawaiians, or at the very least, made it difficult for them due to property qualifications.<sup>66</sup> The truth is that Thurston and the other framers of the document cynically managed to create the illusion that they were expanding suffrage for Hawaiians by allowing voting for members of the House of Nobles for the first time in Hawaiian history. Prior to this,

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<sup>62</sup> Helekūnihi stated in November 1887 that his purpose in the Legislature was "to support the economy." He did not wish to burden the people with another large salary, in this case, \$4,000 per annum for the President of the Board of Health, *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 15 November 1887. A neglected rationale for annexation among some Native Hawaiians was concern over the rapidly rising Asian population, invited to the Islands as contract labourers on the plantations, who by the 1880's outnumbered *haoles*, eventually outnumbering Hawaiians, as well. In the Legislature of December 1887, Elia Helekūnihi expressed support for the Chinese exclusion act fiercely debated in that session. Annexation would ensure that the racial immigration policies of the US would apply to Hawai'i, an appealing prospect to some Hawaiians, who felt overwhelmed by rapid demographic change. For this same reason, some sugar planters resisted annexation for fear that it would cut off their cheap labour supply. See *Hawaiian Gazette*, 13 December, 1887; see Adam, *Hawaiian Revolution*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>63</sup> Alexander, *A Brief History*, p. 308.

<sup>64</sup> Adler and Barrett, *The Diaries of Walter Murray Gibson, 1886, 1887*, p. 159.

<sup>65</sup> See Adler and Barrett, *The Diaries of Walter Murray Gibson, 1886, 1887*, pp. 159-162, for a clear and concise account of the real and perceived threat of violence toward both the King and Gibson by the "Honolulu Rifles."

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Noenoe Silva, *The Power of the Steel-tipped Pen*, p. 110. She partially quotes Jon Osorio, who wrote, "However, there were extremely high property qualifications placed on both candidates and their electors that for all intents and purposes eliminated Natives from either running or voting for these seats." Osorio, who presents a nuanced understanding of the constitution in Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui* (240-244) was discussing, not elections for the lower House, but for the House of Nobles, which did stipulate property requirements. Elsewhere, too, Silva implies that the property qualification was for voting in both houses of the Legislature: "by creating a 'special electorate' comprised of men of Hawaiian or European descent who could read Hawaiian, English, or any European language, and who also possessed property worth at least three thousand dollars or who had an annual income of at least six hundred dollars...Indeed, it meant that wealthy white foreigners could vote and working-class maka'āinana and Asian immigrants could not." Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, pp. 126-127.

Nobles had been appointed by the King, but now the oligarchy celebrated the “expansion” of democratic rights. By adding high property qualifications for electors and candidates for the House of Nobles they ensured their dominance in the government because *haoles*, though a small minority, held the vast majority of the Kingdom’s wealth.<sup>67</sup> The number of members of both the lower and higher houses was fixed at twenty-four, but the Cabinet members could vote in the House of Nobles, thus making the upper house dominant. Moreover, previously the four-member Cabinet was chosen and dismissed at the will of the King; now, the King appointed the Cabinet, but its dissolution required a majority vote of the Legislature.<sup>68</sup>

To many Hawaiians, the diabolical feature of the new constitution was the provision that “any male resident of the Kingdom, of Hawaiian, American, or European birth or descent...and who shall have been domiciled in the Kingdom for one year immediately preceding the election, and shall have caused his name to be entered on the list of voters of his district...shall be entitled to one vote for the Representative of that district.”<sup>69</sup> In this manner, any *haole*, citizen or not, had the right to vote after residence of just one year and all persons of Asian birth (in 1890 almost

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<sup>67</sup> See Russ, *Hawaiian Revolution*, pp. 32-33. In 1892-92, *haoles* owned 65.77% of the land, while Natives only owned 13.89%. In 1884, the Kingdom had about 44,000 Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians and about 9,000 non-Portuguese (Hawaiian born, American, British, French, German etc) *haoles*, with over 9,000 Portuguese (who occupied a strangely racialised space between whites and non-whites). By 1890, Hawaiians had declined to about 40,600 and *haoles* had increased to 12,500, with 8,600 Portuguese. It is interesting to note that by 1890 there were about 7,500 Hawai‘i-born whites and that British and German citizens outnumbered those from the U.S.

<sup>68</sup> One unique feature of this constitution was that executive power was shared by both King and Cabinet, an arrangement referred to by Thomas Marshall Spaulding as a “Cabinet Government.” See. Thomas Marshall Spaulding, *Cabinet Government in Hawaii, 1887-1893* (Honolulu, HI: Advertiser Publishing Co., Ltd, 1924).

“To the King and the Cabinet belongs the Executive Power,” states the 31st article of the constitution, a provision, Kuykendall claims, had no exact counterpart anywhere else in the world, though it had strong parallels with Britain’s constitutional monarchy. See *Roster Legislatures of Hawaii 1841-1918* (Honolulu, 1918), p. 162; Ralph S. Kuykendall, *Constitutions of the Hawaiian Kingdom* (Honolulu, 1940), p. 50. The first Cabinet was essentially appointed by the “revolutionaries,” and included Thurston as Minister of the Interior, as well as other members of the Hawaiian League and, though their intention had been to stuff the Ministry with *haole* insiders, internal dissension among the Cabinet members actually benefited the King in the few years this form of government existed. After considerable political manoeuvring over the succeeding months, the King won, through a Supreme Court ruling, the right to veto legislation without the consent of the Cabinet. See *Osorio, Dismembering*, p. 241.

<sup>69</sup> *Roster Legislatures of Hawaii 1841-1918*, pp. 167-68.

one third the population) were excluded entirely from the franchise. Osorio opines, “With the franchise so disfigured by the inclusion of any and every Caucasian merely present in the Islands, what could it mean for kānaka to join the haole in a new nation that humiliated and disempowered Natives and their king?”<sup>70</sup>

Elia Helekūnihi was neither “humiliated” nor “disempowered” by the Bayonet Constitution, as he and others of his class viewed it with approbation. To these men, the King was not *pono* and had overstepped his bounds through extravagance and the “recrudescence” of the paganism that Ka‘ahumanu had put to flight. However, the tragedy of these men lies in the fact that, while they continued to adulate the missionaries, the missionary descendants had absorbed the social Darwinism that was sweeping America. The original missionaries, despite their sense of religio-cultural superiority, had a high regard for the humanity of the Native Hawaiians, believing that if the Hawaiians accepted Christianity and submitted to Anglo-American “civilising” influences (and *vice versa*), they would become their equals. This was less true of their sons, whose Social Darwinist hierarchy of races ranked Hawaiians biologically inferior to the “Anglo Saxon” race. Catherine Hall highlights the shift in understanding among British Baptists in Jamaica through the course of the nineteenth century: “By the 1850s, thinking about race shifted from ideas of brotherhood to a racial vocabulary of biological difference.”<sup>71</sup> By the 1860s, she writes, “a new variety of racial thinking was permeating missionary discourse: ‘Why may not the whole world be brought under the influence and into the possession of the dominant race?’”<sup>72</sup> The influential Anglican priest, poet, social reformer, children’s author and

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<sup>70</sup> Osorio, *Dismembering*, p. 245.

<sup>71</sup> Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, p. 21.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397.

close associate of Charles Darwin, Charles Kingsley, considered a “liberal” in his time, shockingly wrote, “There are congenital differences and hereditary tendencies which defy all education.”<sup>73</sup>

Why Elia Helekūnihi and other Hawaiian leaders faithful to the old Calvinist order did not acknowledge the rising tide of racism among the missionaries and their descendants as early as the 1860s, when Elia was struggling to receive recognition as a leader in the church, is difficult to fathom. It is likely that their sense of *kuleana* for the memory of the old chiefs kept them faithful to those chiefs’ beloved missionaries come-what-may. While the missionary sons were not inclined to include these loyal Hawaiians in the Hawaiian League and in the formation of the Bayonet Constitution, they were more than pleased to make use of them as they steered the Kingdom ever closer to the United States.

The 12 July 1887 edition of the *Hawaiian Gazette* referenced an article published in Kawainui’s *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* about several letters from prominent Maui Hawaiians furnishing “evidence that the late ‘popular uprising’ is greeted with delight by the masses.”<sup>74</sup> The heading preceding the letters read, “Hear the Approving Voice. It is unanimous. There is unbounded rejoicing at the dismissal of Gibson and the appointment of a new ministry...Hurrah for the downfall of Gibson the squanderer of the public funds.”<sup>75</sup> Among the letters was one penned by Elia Helekūnihi, “a well-known representative Hawaiian, who approves of all that has been done by the indignant people, who closes with the following, ‘There is one thing more, Mr.

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<sup>73</sup> C. Kingsley, *His Letters*, vol. 3, pp. 248-249, 265, cited in Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, p. 439.

<sup>74</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 12 July 1887, 4.

<sup>75</sup> “*Ka ai kala o ke Aupuni*.”

Editor, that I ask you – send off Gibson out of this Kingdom! Send him to the place where his money bags have gone - to California!’ These expressions from natives will be received with great satisfaction by the readers of the Gazette.” While it is clear from the bulk of evidence that Hawaiians did not support the Bayonet Constitution, men like Helekūnihi were useful to the *haole* oligarchy’s propaganda machine. Positioned as he was between his *kuleana* for the old Calvinist order, of which the missionary sons remained the foremost representatives, and love for God and nation, Elia’s tenuous position made him an unwitting pawn of the *haoles*, while alienating him from many of his own people. However, incapable of taking him seriously because of his race, the men he lionised ultimately betrayed him.

### **Agency and the Pursuit of Pono in the “Bayonet” Legislature**

An election for both the upper and lower houses of the Legislature was set for 12 September 1887.<sup>76</sup> Members of the Hawaiian League organised the Reform Party, which now included Elia Helekūnihi and other Native Hawaiian supporters.<sup>77</sup> The campaign began with a mass meeting of Hawaiian and Asian opponents of the new constitution, focussed largely on its biased and exclusionary voting articles, but the issue of dishonouring the King was a strong undercurrent. Joseph Poepoe, ascended the platform and said, “the country which heretofore had been jubilant was now in mourning” and reiterated that the Hawaiian people “cherished their King.”<sup>78</sup> We can now see two strands of Hawaiian tradition with respect to *kuleana* for the

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<sup>76</sup> Article Eighteen of the Constitution of 1887, *Roster Legislatures of Hawaii, 1841-1918*, p. 170.

<sup>77</sup> *The Daily Herald*, 7 July 1887: the “Reform Party” here is a designation of the Hawaiian League; *The Daily Bulletin*, 1 August 1887: the “Reform Party” is now treated as an organised political party; *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 16 August 1887: Elia Helekūnihi is nominated at the Maui convention of the Reform Party for Makawao District.

<sup>78</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 26 July 1887.

chiefs: one represented by Poepoe and the majority of Hawaiians, which honoured the ruling chief despite his failings, and a minority perspective, represented by Helekūnihi and others, which retained devotion for the chiefs of old, but held that the current chief (Kalākaua) lacked *pono*.

Helekūnihi engaged enthusiastically in the campaign on behalf of the Reform Party and was appointed early in August to the Board of Overseers to supervise the creation of the list of men entitled by property and income to vote for members of the House of Nobles in the District of Makawao.<sup>79</sup> Storekeeper, Charles Dickey, former representative and his neighbour in Haikū, chaired the board.<sup>80</sup> Elia's membership on a board whose implicit aim was to reduce Native Hawaiian influence in government is not without irony, though the Reform Party in Makawao was grooming him for the Legislature. The slate of candidates was announced on 16 August and Helekūnihi was listed as Reform candidate for Makawao and his old friend, editor Joseph Kawainui for Hāna.<sup>81</sup> The result was a landslide victory for Helekūnihi at Makawao, who received 707 votes, and his opponent of the King's party, J. Kamakele, only 83, "an overwhelming majority for the Reform candidate indeed."<sup>82</sup> Though Makawao had a disproportionately large population of *haoles*, they were still greatly outnumbered by Hawaiians, suggesting that the Reform movement had support in the Maui Hawaiian community. In the *Kuokoa* of 24 September, Helekūnihi thanked the citizens of Makawao:

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<sup>79</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 6 and 13 August 1887.

<sup>80</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 23 August 1887.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 August 1887.

<sup>82</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 September 1887; *Daily Bulletin*, 21 September 1887.



“I render thanks to the citizens of the electoral district of Makawao, from the waters of Oopuola in the east to Piikea dipped in the sea to the southwest, the people who have also placed the glorious *lei* (garland) on me, that is, to be representative for Makawao. You have placed on my shoulders responsibility for establishing this work. I am overcome to see the great number of people who voted for me (707) as opposed to my contestor (83). Truly, my motto is ‘To purify the nation’ (*Ka Hoomaemae Aupuni*) and I have set my mind to work for the prosperity (blessing) of the entire nation, not just the few. My impartial judgement shall work on behalf of the Hawaiian nation.”<sup>83</sup>

Your Humble Servant, Elia Helekūnihi”<sup>84</sup>

His motto, “To purify the nation,” echoes the cries of the *haole* oligarchy to cleanse the nation of the moral impurities of the royal court. In the Legislature of 1887, *haole* Reform members dominated the committees and introduced much of the successful legislation. However, Helekūnihi was an active and vocal legislator presenting many motions and petitions revealing again his dedication to the *pono* and his commitment to the welfare of the Hawaiian people. His first petition on 7 November was that “all useless government offices be abolished, salaries reduced, that the government be conducted on an economical basis and that the independence of the country be preserved.”<sup>85</sup> While Elia was dedicated to the reform of the perceived corruption and extravagance of Kalākaua’s regime, his reference to the preservation of Hawai‘i’s independence, in consideration of his annexationist sympathies, points to the complexity of

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<sup>83</sup> O‘opuola is the eastern extremity of the Makawao District, formerly the boundary between Hamakualoa and Ko‘olau. Pi‘ikea is in the Kula District in Kihei.

<sup>84</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 September 1887.

<sup>85</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 7 November 1887.

Hawaiian politics in the troubled times of the 80's and 90's. It may be that he supported some kind of protectorate arrangement as in Tahiti where the Pōmare house ruled under French governance.<sup>86</sup> Another petition Helekūnihi presented, “prohibiting Portuguese and Norwegians from voting,” appears to contradict one of the aims of the Bayonet Constitution, to keep the government in *haole* hands. This may have been an effort on his part to reduce the power of recently arrived European immigrants to ensure a proportionately larger representation of Native Hawaiians.<sup>87</sup>

### ***Ka Ma'i Ho'oka'awale*** **The Separating Sickness**

In 1873, Helekūnihi had signed the draconian petition of the HEA pastors persuading members of the Association “to teach & persuade all people to obey the law of God, and separate the lepers from among us.”<sup>88</sup> The statement characterised the Hawaiian nation as, “on the brink of a horrible pit, full of loathsomeness, into which our feet are rapidly sliding.”<sup>89</sup> This, the pastors claimed, shall result in “the disorganization and total destruction of civilization, property values and industry,” a dire warning that had a ring more American than Hawaiian. As the scourge of Hansen's disease afflicted Hawaiians severely through the 1880s, Elia shifted his perspective to become an advocate for a compassionate approach to the tragedy of separating those afflicted with the disease from their loved ones, and this was reflected in his bills and petitions to the Legislature of 1887-88. His motivation was rooted in both Christian compassion

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<sup>86</sup> Kerry R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall: a New South Sea Islands History from First Settlement to Colonial Rule* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 151.

<sup>87</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 7 November 1887.

<sup>88</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 18 June 1873.

<sup>89</sup> Gavan Daws, *Holy Man, Father Damien of Molokai* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), pp. 63-64.

and the old *ali'i noblesse oblige* requirement that the chiefs had a *kuleana* for the common people, just as the common people had a *kuleana* for their chiefs. His aim also had nationalistic overtones because a disproportionate number of leprosy sufferers were Native Hawaiians and the segregation issue was associated by many with Hawaiian sovereignty.<sup>90</sup>

The government physician, George Fitch, popularised the notion that leprosy was the fourth stage of syphilis, spread because of Hawaiian licentiousness.<sup>91</sup> Many *haole* Protestants were, according to Daws, “morally persuaded by Fitch,” and viewing Hawaiians through a Social Darwinist lens, understood them as congenitally immoral because of their essential state of promiscuity. In the 1880s respectable Hawai‘i Calvinists viewed Hawaiian culture in its entirety as “corrupt and diseased, not only in its systemic and leprous manifestations, but in its very nature, at its very source.” Hawaiian dance, the revered *hula*, rendered one “face to face with a leprous visage.”<sup>92</sup> *Haoles* demanded segregation of the lepers to the remote shores of Moloka‘i to remove this physical and moral contagion from their sight, while Hawaiians, a deeply relational people, resisted separation from their loved ones. Segregation became a contested political issue that put Hawaiians at odds with the rising *haole* oligarchy. The religious dimension to this conflict cannot be ignored, as the *maka‘āinana*, continued to fall away from the American-dominated Calvinist Church and its moralism to take comfort in Catholicism, whose self-effacing priest at Moloka‘i, Fr Damien, became a world symbol of compassion. Elia’s advocacy on behalf of the Hansen’s disease patients revealed that, though he remained a friend

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<sup>90</sup> *Haoles*, especially the missionaries and their descendants, had long decried the so-called “licentiousness” of the Hawaiians, of which they believed Hansen’s disease was a consequence. We may recall that Rev. Sereno Bishop blamed the demographic decline of the Hawaiians on their sexual debauchery, resulting in a variety of diseases which afflicted them, in particular, leprosy. See Sereno Bishop, *Why Hawaiians are Dying Out*, Read to the Honolulu Social Sciences Association, November, 1888; *The Washington Evening Star*, 2 June 1894.

<sup>91</sup> Daws, *Holy Man*, p. 133.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

of the missionary sons and supported the Bayonet Constitution, he was neither their lackey nor their pet, but a man of free agency willing to speak out on behalf of his people in the face of *haole* scorn.

The King and Gibson had championed the plight of the lepers in their “Hawai‘i for the Hawaiians” programme.<sup>93</sup> In 1865, an almost inaccessible tract of land on the north shore of Moloka‘i at Kalawao, Makanalua and Kalaupapa had been acquired to segregate lepers, and the same year a “receiving station” and hospital were built close to Honolulu at Kalihi to examine patients with the aim of shipping off those deemed “incurable” to Moloka‘i. In 1866 began the terrible segregation of Hansen’s disease patients, rounded up throughout the Islands and separated from their loved ones to live out their days in lonely isolation at Kalaupapa. In April 1873 in the *Nuhou* Gibson raised consciousness about the plight of the lepers by embracing the cause of the “poor wretches” and calling on King Lunalilo to go and console them and for a priest to “sacrifice” a life on their behalf.<sup>94</sup> While the King was not persuaded to go, shortly after the appearance of this piece, the famed Fr. Damien, Flemish priest of the French Sacred Hearts Fathers volunteered to give his life to the care of the lepers.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> As early as 1863, Dr. William Hillebrand of Queen’s Hospital brought to the attention of the Hawaiian public “the rapid spread of the new disease, called by the natives *Mai Pake* (Chinese disease),” and recommended that “isolation was the only course by which the spread of the disease could be arrested.” See Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, p. 73.

<sup>94</sup> Daws, *Holy Man*, p. 60. We do not have space here to go into detail about the many layers of political and religious intrigue involving Gibson and the Leper Settlement. For a thorough and riveting account, see Gavan Daws, *Holy Man*. Having come to Hawai‘i as a kind of Mormon prophet to establish a community for the Saints on Lana‘i, Gibson had moved on and was now flirting with Catholicism.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

After his election to the Legislature, Gibson's interest in the lepers became a central pillar of his policy, for which he was cynically accused of being politically motivated.<sup>96</sup> In 1881, he founded a new hospital at Kaka'ako to replace the old receiving station at Kalihi and to provide compassionate care for the patients as an alternative to the more drastic exile to Moloka'i.<sup>97</sup> As president of the Board of Health, Gibson concluded that there should be local centres of detention where patients could receive the care and comfort of their loved ones, an issue of enormous importance to the Hawaiian people. "The practice of herding all the sick in one place of exile is a hardship with doubtful results. If segregation can be carried out in ways, equally beneficial, but more in harmony with the wishes of the people, it should be done."<sup>98</sup> Gibson's *haole* critics were horrified at the prospect of "lepers in their midst" and segregation at the Kaka'ako Hospital was regarded as a profound mockery and "potential source of contagion at the heart of the political and commercial capital of the Kingdom." "Gibson, in that light," they claimed, "appeared to be playing off leprosy against liberty, all for the Hawaiian vote."<sup>99</sup>

In 1887, the King and Walter Murray Gibson's resistance to the segregation of Hansen's disease patients fed into the narrative of corruption and extravagance leading to the Bayonet Constitution. Nathaniel Emerson replaced Gibson as president of the Board of Health after the "revolution" of July.<sup>100</sup> His report to the Legislature of 1888 reflected disdain for the policies of

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<sup>96</sup> Adler and Barrett, *Diary*, p. 60.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> Walter Murray Gibson, *Report to the Board of Health*, cited in Anwei Skinsnes. Law, *Kalaupapa: a Collective Memory* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), p. 190.

<sup>99</sup> Daws, *Holy Man*, p. 128. To make matters worse, he arranged for the arrival of the Catholic Franciscan sisters under the direction of Mother Marianne Kopp to serve the needs of the patients in 1883. Though almost one third of the Hawaiian people had abandoned the Calvinist Church for Catholicism, the Protestant establishment remained staunchly anti-Catholic and Gibson's flirtation with "Popery," especially in a man so close to the King, was viewed with suspicion and disdain.

<sup>100</sup> This followed a short interregnum under royal physican Dr. Georges Philippe Trousseau.

his predecessor: “The work of segregation, which had been practically brought to an end during the administration of Mr. Gibson as President of the Board of Health, had been resumed by the Board under the presidency of Dr. Trousseau and has been continued with rigor until the present time.” He continued, “The greatest obstacle in carrying out the law of segregation is that the Hawaiians themselves do not appreciate, and refuse to be convinced, that leprosy is a communicable disease, that the leper is unclean and should be shunned, as the bearer of a deadly contagion.” Voicing the Social Darwinism of his time, he continued, “If this race is ever to be rescued from the slough into which it is sinking, the fatal lethargy that stupefies them must be dispelled.”<sup>101</sup>

Because the detested Gibson had been president of the Board of Health, which oversaw the management of the “leper settlement,” the Reform Party sought to abolish the Board entirely, while Helekūnihi, despite his affiliation with the party, urged its retention in the interests of the patients.<sup>102</sup> On 11 November, he offered a resolution that “the Minister of the Interior be requested to inform the House of the number of lepers at the Branch Hospital, Kakaako, also at Kalaupapa and Kalawao, Island of Molokai...the disposition of the lepers at Kakaako; and whether advanced cases are kept from others.”<sup>103</sup> We shall see that Helekūnihi supported Gibson’s position on localising care and treatment of Hansen’s disease patients, so this early concern about the “disposition” of the patients at Kaka‘ako placed him in opposition to the *haoles* in the Legislature.

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<sup>101</sup> Kingdom of Hawaii Legislature, *Hoike a Ke Komite Wae No Ke Kahua Mai Lepera Ma Kalawao, Molokai ...* 1888, (Honolulu, HI: Gazette Pub. Co., 1888), pp. 8, 17.

<sup>102</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 11 November 1887.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 November 1887.

On 12 November, “Representative Helekunihi presented a petition from lepers at Kakaako Branch Hospital containing the following prayer: ‘That Dr. Webb be reinstated; that Dr. Iwai be allowed to make the selection of those who are sent to Moloka‘i; that no more be sent to Kalawao until after the special session of the Legislature; that the kokuas (helpers) of the patients be allowed to accompany them; that the Sisters of Charity who administer to the lepers be retained.’”<sup>104</sup> Back in 1860, Helekūnihi had towed the line on the primacy of Western medicine as taught by his missionary teachers. Now, he defended alternative forms of medicine, and affirmed the validity of traditional Hawaiian medicine. Dr. E. Cook Webb, a homeopathic physician who came to Hawai‘i in 1880, was a friend of Gibson, who appointed him to Kaka‘ako Hospital.<sup>105</sup> Evidently, the new Board of Health did not approve of his unconventional practices. Dr. Iwai was successor to Dr. Goto, physician in charge of Kaka‘ako, who resigned after the Bayonet Constitution.<sup>106</sup> Helekūnihi’s belief that a doctor trained in Japanese medicine was capable of making the agonising decision as to who should be sent into exile suggests that he was willing to oppose the views of his old teachers and *haole* associates. Emerson was pleased to announce that on 1 December, Dr. Iwai resigned and Dr. C.B. Wood replaced him as physician in charge. He wrote that Dr. Wood, “intends to use remedies recommended by Dr. Unna of Hamburg,” assuring his readers that the medical situation was once again back in the hands of Western practitioners.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 14 November 1887.

<sup>105</sup> Adler and Barrett, *Diary*, p.8.

<sup>106</sup> *Biennial Report of the President of the Board of Health to the Legislative Assembly of 1888* (Honolulu, HI: Gazette Pub. Co., 1888), pp. 23. Both men were practitioners of traditional Japanese medicine and Dr. Goto’s hot bath remedies for Hansen’s disease patients were touted as beneficial by Fr. Damien, himself a victim of the disease.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

Helekūnihi's heart-rending plea that "*kokuas* of the patients be allowed to accompany them" refers to healthy individuals, often spouses, who went into exile with their loved ones to nurse them and be their companions in segregation. Emerson viewed the Hawaiian devotion to the *kokuas* as "a fatal sentimentality." He insisted that "One of the most embarrassing questions that the Board is called upon to decide is, how many of the non-leper friends and relatives of the afflicted ones shall be allowed to go and live with them at the Leper Settlement as helpers, or *kokuas*? There are always more applicants than needed. It begs the question: do they wish to live at the public expense?"<sup>108</sup> That Emerson, missionary son and devout Christian, should suggest that the loved ones of Hansen's disease patients would risk contracting a horrifying disease just for a free ride is shocking. He insisted that the interests of the nation must be considered above those of the individual, "and these demand that not a single life...should be squandered in obedience to a false sentimentality."<sup>109</sup> By contrast, Elia's advocacy for *aloha* for the exiles made him stand out both as the model Hawaiian chief and a compassionate Christian.

When Helekūnihi pleaded to retain the Sisters of Charity, we are reminded of when the Board of the HEA remonstrated him for associating with the Catholic priests at Hāna in defence of the rights of contract labourers. The denominational divisions, so important to *haole* Christians, mattered little to Hawaiians. Though Elia was a devoted Calvinist, what mattered most was serving the needs of the patients at Kaka'ako. Because Kaka'ako was associated with the detested Gibson, *haoles* demanded closure of the hospital and the patients removed to Moloka'i. Fr. Damien and others wanted the sisters moved to Moloka'i, which the Board of Health objected to on the grounds that they were healthy women who should not be subjected to

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.



the “contagion.”<sup>110</sup> There was also growing anxiety that the sisters would be required to return to America.<sup>111</sup> *Haole* Protestants objected to Gibson’s Kaka‘ako project, but Emerson provided a clear rationale for its dissolution: “The Board feels that it is not favorable to the best repute and interests of the town of Honolulu, and of this country and nation, that an institution for the segregation and cure of lepers should be conspicuously placed in the foreground in the view of every visitor who enters our port.”<sup>112</sup> This stunning testimony to Victorian propriety speaks for itself, but Helekūnihi parted from the missionary sons when conscience demanded. He was by no means a “*haole* pet.”

On 14 November, Helekūnihi’s resistance to Emerson became more pronounced when he opposed the Board of Health president’s extravagant salary of \$4,000 per annum: “Representative Helekunihi did not believe in burdening the people with another salary. He was in the House to support economy. By paying the President, he did not think they would get any more efficient services.”<sup>113</sup> The *haole* oligarchy had staged the Bayonet Constitution “revolution” to address the dire economic condition of the Kingdom due to the King’s “extravagance.” Elia had been elected from a district that contained some of the most powerful members of the oligarchy, but he demonstrated an independent agency that put him at odds with these men. By exposing their hypocrisy, he undoubtedly made enemies, though just six years later Nathaniel Emerson cited Helekūnihi’s *Mo‘olelo* in his work on the Voyaging Chiefs and his brother Oliver remained Elia’s friend and confidante. Lorrin Thurston, leader of the “revolution,”

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<sup>110</sup> Jacks, L. V. *Mother Marianne of Molokai*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1935, pp. 60-61.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* Gibson had a romantic attachment to Mother Marianne and the prospect of her departure caused him much anguish. See Adler and Barrett, *Diary*, p.112, 113, 137.

<sup>112</sup> *Biennial Report*, p. 23.

<sup>113</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 15 November 1887.

responded to his resolution, insisting “that the task of dealing with leprosy was so critical for the nation that it required an excellent President, who should be paid.”<sup>114</sup> Helekūnihi’s resolution failed, but he made it clear that he did not walk lock-step with the *haole* oligarchy.

15 November, Helekūnihi presented a petition, “praying that a hospital be erected in each district; that the friends of lepers take care of them; that lepers who have been cured at Kakaako be released; that no lepers be sent to Molokai who have been sick 10 years etc.” This petition, which framed precisely the position of the detested Gibson, was vigourously opposed by his *haole* colleagues in the Legislature, who summarily “Referred it to the Sanitary Committee.”<sup>115</sup> One week later, Noble Henry Waterhouse rejected Helekūnihi’s petition in swift order: the first point, to establish district hospitals, “is too expensive,” while the second, that lepers cured at Kakaako be released, “is contrary to the commitment to segregate.”<sup>116</sup> A few days earlier, Helekūnihi had made it clear that he objected strongly to, “an appropriation to pay the President of the Board of Health \$2,000,” half the originally proposed salary, stating that, “He did not believe in paying the President.”<sup>117</sup> It is difficult to imagine that the missionary sons were not enraged by both his opposition to Emerson and independent stand on the treatment of Hawaiian lepers. Helekūnihi, no friend of Kalākaua and Gibson, now appeared to champion their cause, while alienating Emerson, prominent missionary son.

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 16 November 1887.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 November 1887. Noble Henry Waterhouse (1845-1904) was a British businessman, who participated in creating the constitution of 1887 and later became a member of the “Committee of Safety” instrumental in overthrowing the Queen in 1893. See Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, n.p. 367.

<sup>117</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 21 November 1887.

On 22 November, Helekūnihi persevered in his passion for the plight of the lepers by presenting yet another petition almost identical to his last, with the additional recommendation “that the government furnish medical aid.”<sup>118</sup> He insisted that the President of the Board not receive a salary because “Dr. Emerson was not popular...Helekunihi said he had talked with the lepers at Kakaako and the present president did not have their confidence.”<sup>119</sup> Helekūnihi was courageous in his willingness to criticise these powerful *haoles* so overtly. He had long demonstrated that his conscience led him to take positions unpopular with both his own people and the *haoles*; now he was at odds with the men who, having supported him in the election, assumed he would be their lackey. In this politically fraught Legislature, Elia proved himself a man of integrity, faithful to his *kuleana* rooted in both his *mo ‘okū ‘auhau* and Christian faith.

Related to the issue of treatment of Hansen’s disease patients was the debate on the merits of Hawaiian medicine, another issue pitting westernisers against Hawaiian traditionalists in the contentious year of 1887.<sup>120</sup> As a natural expression of his Hawaiianising programme, Kalākaua supported the *Papa Ola Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian Board of Health), so it is not surprising that it was another target of the perpetrators of the Bayonet Constitution. Knowing this, Helekūnihi, who had supported Hawaiian medicine in the Legislature of 1876, baited his *haole* colleagues further by presenting a petition, “praying (1) that 10 leper patients, 5 bad cases and 5 not bad, be turned over to Meekapu (a Hawaiian medicine practitioner) to try to cure them & that he commence on the first of December and continue to the first of May, (2) that the laws relating to

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<sup>118</sup> “Journal of the Legislative Assembly, Special Session, 1887,” 22 November 1887.

<sup>119</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 24 November 1887.

<sup>120</sup> King Kamehameha V had promoted the welfare of the Hawaiian people by supporting traditional practices, including the establishment of the *Papa Ola Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian Board of Health) in 1868 to licence *kāhuna lapa ‘au*, practitioners of Hawaiian medicine. See Kerri A. Inglis, *Ma‘i Lepera: Disease and Displacement in Nineteenth-Century Hawai‘i* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2013), pp. 79, 147.

the Hawaiian Board of Health be not repealed.”<sup>121</sup> Despite the dismissive referral of these petitions to the Sanitary Committee, the Legislature, worn down by Helekūnihi’s incessant badgering on the leprosy issue, decided to form a committee of nine, of which he was a member, “to determine if anything can be done for the cure and prevention of the disease...and to obtain written opinions of physicians at home and abroad.”<sup>122</sup>

Ten days earlier, the *Hawaiian Gazette* had published a scathing editorial ridiculing Helekūnihi and another Hawaiian legislator from Moloka‘i, J. Nakaleka, for their support of traditional Hawaiian medicine. “Messrs. Nakaleka & Helekunihi,” the editor opines, “seem to be possessed of the notion that it is alright to give their countrymen over as prey to empirical practitioners so long as the quacks are native Hawaiians. It will take much hard and patient work to undo the results of the Prime Adventurer’s (Gibson) humoring of the native people for his own crafty ends.” A month earlier, the *Gazette* had celebrated Elia’s detestation of Gibson, but now associated him with the fallen premier’s Hawaiianising policies. The *haole* establishment, observing his opposition to the King and Gibson, had hoped to secure Helekūnihi as a pawn to promote their agenda, underestimating both his independence and his dedication, not to *their* “cause,” but to the welfare of his people. Men and women who exercise a refined and complex agency when faced with highly nuanced issues perplex observers (historians included) seeking simplistic characterisations.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 29 November 1887; *Extraordinary Session*, 25 November 1887. Representative John Kalaukoa, like Elia, a strong supporter of the Bayonet Constitution, also presented a petition to allow Meekapu to treat the lepers. See *Extraordinary Session*, 25 November 1887.

<sup>122</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 29 November 1887.

<sup>123</sup> Despite the creation of the committee to investigate the disease, Elia doggedly continued to submit petitions on behalf of the lepers. On 3 December, he “presented a petition from Makawao relating to persons in the different stages of leprosy, and that Dr. Iwai be the physician at Kakaako. Representative Deacon moved that it be referred to the Board of Health.” See “Journal of the Legislative Assembly, Special Session, 1887,” 3 December, 1887. It is hard to imagine that the *haoles* in the Legislature were not thoroughly irritated by Helekūnihi’s continued insistence

The “Extraordinary Session” of the Legislature was prorogued following a motion by Helekūnihi early in January 1888 and reconvened 28 May.<sup>124</sup> On that occasion, “The Chaplain being absent, Rep. Helekunihi at the call of the President (Hon. W.R. Castle), opened with prayer.” Despite Helekūnihi’s intention to cease to be regarded as clergy to enter politics, he was still regarded by his colleagues in the Legislature as a pastor. Immediately, he recommenced his advocacy on behalf of the Hawaiian lepers, offering a motion on 30 May demanding information about the number and location of lepers and improvement in their treatment.<sup>125</sup> This dogged advocacy made him a thorn in the flesh of his *haole* co-legislators, whose primary aim was to deconstruct the legacy of Gibson and the King. Lorrin Thurston, Minister of the Interior, responded curtly with numbers that demonstrated that the Bayonet Constitution *haoles*, and notably Emerson, had achieved their goal of ensuring that the lepers not “be placed conspicuously in the foreground.”<sup>126</sup> These statistics had tragic significance for Native Hawaiians, as they indicated a massive increase in the segregation of their people since the previous year, revealing that in the first six months of 1887 only ten people had been removed to Kalaupapa, together with three from Kakaako, but in the six months following the “revolution,” 210 were sent, and in 1888 the number reached 558.<sup>127</sup>

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on the recognition of alternative forms of medicine, as Emerson had already announced triumphantly that Iwai had been dismissed two days earlier, that a *haole* doctor had superceded him, and that, in any case, they hoped that Kaka’ako would soon be shut down.

<sup>124</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 3 January 1888.

<sup>125</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 31 May 1888: “that the Minister of the Interior inform the House (1) how many lepers have been removed from the different islands since Jan. 1, 1888, and how many from Kakaako to Kalawao, (2) how many lepers are now at Kakaako and Kalawao, (3) has any change in the treatment of leprosy patients been introduced, and (4) have light cases received medical treatment.”

<sup>126</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 June 1888: “the number of lepers collected from Jan. 1 – May 30 is 239; Number sent from Kakaako to Kalawao, 220; Number at Kakaako, 55; numbers at Kalawao on May 22, 863.”

<sup>127</sup> Law, *Kalaupapa*, pp. 190-92.

The Legislature determined that the committee on leprosy, to which Helekūnihi had been appointed in the autumn session, should make a fact-finding visit to Kakaako, as well as one to Kalaupapa itself on 23-24 June.<sup>128</sup> Of the seven members of the legislative committee who sailed to Moloka‘i, three were Native Hawaiians, including Helekūnihi.<sup>129</sup> The committee interviewed numerous patients, asking them how they felt about the move from Kaka‘ako, what they thought about the care of the patients, the quality of the food, cooking utensils, housing, the availability of firewood and so on. Several of the committee members, including Helekūnihi, reported honestly about the conditions of the settlement in response to concerns expressed by the patients.<sup>130</sup> Elia was particularly critical of the Board’s inability to hold and keep good doctors due to their refusal to honour the work of Hawaiian and Japanese practitioners: “There is revealed in your faces the same thought that I have...Wise people are those who cannot comprehend how the Board has not tried to get doctors of any kind, and the members of the Board of Health have slept on account of this major concern of the lepers.” Once again, Helekūnihi was emboldened to criticise powerful men in the *haole* oligarchy, notably Nathaniel Emerson, which did not endear him to these “strongmen” of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

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<sup>128</sup> “Report of the Special Committee to Visit the Kakaako Leper Settlement to the Legislature of 1888 - NLM Catalog - NCBI,” National Center for Biotechnology Information (U.S. National Library of Medicine), accessed October 14, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/101593886>. It is noteworthy that most of the Native Hawaiian legislators were excluded from the tour of Kakaako, which resulted in a report that echoed almost verbatim the sentiments of Dr. Emerson. The committee determined that the hospital should be shut down, leaving only a receiving station to “process” lepers prior to shipping them off to Moloka‘i. The reasons for the shut-down were that it was “an unhealthy locality;” “being so near to town, it constantly attracted idle people and others to it; it was a “menace to the health of the town;” and was “by its prominence at the entrance of the harbor it becomes a standing advertisement to strangers and tourists of the prevalence of a menacing, loathsome and often insanely dreaded disease.” The racist trope of the “licentiousness” of the Hawaiian patients was reinforced by the report, which suggested that carousing took place between them and outsiders: “Notwithstanding all precautions, your Committee feel satisfied that lepers get out and persons get into the Hospital grounds during the night.” See pp. 5-8. *Haole* Protestant sensibilities were deeply offended at the visual evidence of “the slough” into which the nation they had invested so much was “sinking.”

<sup>129</sup> *Hoi ke a ke Komite Wae no ke Kahua Mai Lepera ma Kalawao, Molokai, i ka Ahaolelo o 1888* (Honolulu, 1888).

<sup>130</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 7 July 1888.

## **An Advocate on Behalf of His People**

The majority of Hawaiians in the Legislature, perhaps under pressure, voted with the *haole* oligarchy to “recognize the unselfish and indispensable services in this Kingdom of the Honolulu Rifles (who held the infamous “bayonets”) in assisting to bring about the recent changes; that all outstanding claims against them be paid by the Government.”<sup>131</sup>

Notwithstanding his support of the oligarchic “revolution,” Helekūnihi made a vocal defence of Native Hawaiian police officers when a police bill debated by the Legislature intended to cut their numbers in the force. “If the police bill passes,” he asked, “what nationality will the police be selected from? Are all Native Hawaiian police in Honolulu to be removed?” Attorney General, Clarence Ashford, responded that “the bill contemplated no removals – that when vacancies occur those most proper for the places will be appointed...About 95% of the policeman are natives and from 80-85% only ought to be Native Hawaiians.”<sup>132</sup> Helekūnihi was aware of a back-room decision by the oligarchy to diminish the presence and influence of Hawaiians in the police force at a time when they all anticipated a violent reaction to the “Bayonet Constitution.”<sup>133</sup> Helekūnihi took a firm stand for justice for Hawaiian police who were likely not to have been sympathetic to the coup, another example of exercise of independent agency to claim justice for his people. Unsurprisingly, Noble Smith moved that Elia’s defence of Hawaiian police “be laid on the table.”<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 24 November 1887.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*; “Journal of the Legislative Assembly, Special Session, 1887,” 23 November 1887.

<sup>133</sup> The abortive “Wilcox Insurrection” did occur 30 July 1889.

<sup>134</sup> *Extraordinary Session*, 23 November 1887.

Another contentious issue in the post-Bayonet period was whether the King had constitutional power to veto legislation.<sup>135</sup> On 9 and 19 December, the King vetoed five of the key legislative acts of the “extraordinary session:” 1) to abolish the office of governor; 2) to assign to other officials previous duties of governor; 3) restriction of liquor license to Honolulu; 4) provision to give the attorney general control over the police force; 5) transferring supervision of the military from the minister of foreign affairs to the minister of the interior. While Helekūnihi supported these bills (he later presented a petition to abolish the office of Governor), when the King vetoes all of them, he joined other Native Hawaiian legislators to vote “no” on a resolution to ignore his vetoes.<sup>136</sup> He had earlier voted to increase the King’s “Privy Purse” and “Royal State” (the civil list) from \$5,000 to \$6,000, despite the opposition from *haole* legislators to any reward for the King’s recent “extravagances.”<sup>137</sup> Helekūnihi opposed the economic policies of the King, supported annexation and did not regard the King as *pono*, yet as a Hawaiian traditionalist, he retained a deep respect, *kuleana* and *aloha* for the office of the *ali‘i nui*.

The veto issue came to an ugly head at the end of the year when two Native Hawaiian legislators, including Helekūnihi, were cynically accused by some, “both inside and outside this Assembly,” of accepting a bribe to support the King’s right to veto legislation. The *haole*

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<sup>135</sup> Though the perpetrators of the new constitution had established the unusual form of government whereby the executive branch consisted of the King acting in consort with the Cabinet (which was comprised of members of the *haole* oligarchy), it appeared that a loophole for royal power remained by not providing for legislative action should the King veto a bill. As Spaulding states, “It would appear...that the legal power of the King was completely exhausted when he had selected his Cabinet. But there was one great exception. The veto power still remained in his hands, to be exercised without regard to the advice of his ministers. Such a thing was never contemplated by the makers of the constitution.” See Spaulding, *Cabinet Government*, pp. 15-17; *Hawaiian Gazette*, 29 November 1887. A month later, the Supreme Court offered the King a major victory by affirming his constitutional right to a veto without the consent of the Cabinet.

<sup>136</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 27 December 1887.

<sup>137</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 16 November 1887.



oligarchy could not fathom the possibility that Hawaiians, like Elia, could critique the King's policies, yet remain bound by tradition to honour their chief's prerogatives. The accusation was "that certain emissaries were sent to certain members of this assembly for the purpose of inducing them to change their votes, so as to support the King's absolute power of vetoing certain bills returned to this Assembly..."<sup>138</sup> Elia Helekūnini presented a resolution aimed at defending his honour:

"Whereas, If such rumors are correct, the transaction referred to would be a return to the corrupt methods of the past, and if they are not true, it is due to the members of the Assembly, (that) they should be cleared of all suspicion of their character involved therein; therefore, be it resolved that the Hons. W.A. Kinney, H.S. Townsend and H. Waterhouse be appointed a committee to examine and inquire into the truth of these reports (concerning the Hons. D.L. Naone and E. Helekunihi), and to inquire of any other members as they may see fit, and to report the result of their investigation to this Assembly at its next meeting."

The Legislature adopted Helekūnini's resolution, with an amendment by "Noble Baldwin," his friend and supporter from Ha'ikū, that Kawainui, Elia's trusted associate from Hāna, replace Townsend on the committee. Elia had strong friends among the more "moderate" members of the oligarchy, but this accusation demonstrated that he also had enemies in the Legislature, probably for his opposition to Emerson and their position on the segregation of lepers. Any suggestion of ethical impropriety was deeply painful to a man dedicated to the *pono*

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<sup>138</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 3 January 1888.

of Calvinist Christianity. Shortly thereafter, Helekūnihi moved for the King to prorogue the Legislature until 28 May.<sup>139</sup>

Helekūnihi was exonerated for the bribery accusation and opened the new session on 28 May with prayer.<sup>140</sup> His first action was to move “that each member be furnished with 150 one cent and 50 two cent stamps.”<sup>141</sup> This motion, which lost, demonstrated again the financial hardship that plagued him and most Hawaiians of his class, who had access to very little of the wealth generated by sugar in the Kingdom. Tax records for Ha‘ikū poignantly show that Helekūnihi possessed no assets except “one dog” in the years 1888-1890 and the record for 1891 simply states, “The dog died before the 1st of July.”<sup>142</sup>

Helekūnihi continued to demonstrate that he was a man of conscience and conviction, refusing to stand predictably with either the *haole* oligarchy or Hawaiian nationalists. When Hawaiian legislators Kamauoha and Luhiau proposed “to amend the Constitution to give more power back to the King,” he voted with the majority to reject the bill.<sup>143</sup> Noble Castle objected to this amendment because “it was going back to the old order of things and meant an abridgement of the power of the people and vesting the greater power in the King” and “is contrary to the spirit of the age.”<sup>144</sup> Castle invoked the rationale behind the the Bayonet Constitution, justified because the King’s attempts to increase his authority were seen as rolling back the clock to a less enlightened age. Kamauoha and Luhiau were accused of standing for a position “contrary to the

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<sup>139</sup> Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 414.

<sup>140</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 29 May 1888.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 May, 1888.

<sup>142</sup> Tax Assessment and Collection Ledgers. Makawao District, Island of Maui, Vol. 1, 224-19-1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, AH.

<sup>143</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 5 June 1888.

<sup>144</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 12 June 1888.

principles which they had been elected to support.” Later, when the King vetoed the Military bill, which took command of the armed forces away from the monarch, Thurston gave a fiery speech on the theme of “representative constitutional government, as opposed to personal despotic government as expressed by the irresponsible will of one man...This is the principle for which we were striving during the Gibson era...This day will go down to posterity as a turning point in the history of this country.”<sup>145</sup> When the motion to override the King’s veto came to the floor, Helekūnihi voted with the *haole* oligarchy and five other Hawaiians in favour.

Helekūnihi always voted with the Calvinists to restrict alcohol and opium sales and use among Hawaiians and on 14 August approved a bill “restricting liquor traffic, especially for the good of Native Hawaiians.”<sup>146</sup> Speaking passionately on this theme he had long championed, he asserted that he “favored the bill because he wished to preserve the small remnant still existing of the Hawaiian race.” Later, he appeared to contradict the *kāpus* of Calvinism by proposing an act to relax penalties for sexual intercourse outside marriage, particularly in relation to a married man consorting with an unmarried woman, and remove the clause stating that “illicit cohabitation” shall be punished as adultery.<sup>147</sup> He also supported a bill to liberalise the divorce law.<sup>148</sup> Helekūnihi was willing to stick his neck out on issues that did not make him popular with either *haoles* or Hawaiians, but which he felt were for the benefit of “the small remnant” of his people.

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<sup>145</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 25 July 1888.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 August, 1888.

<sup>147</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 5 June 1888.

<sup>148</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* 14 August 1888.

When the renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty was approved by the “Bayonet” Cabinet and signed by the King on 7 October 1887, it included the detested cession of Pearl Harbor.<sup>149</sup> Hawaiian opposition to this perceived loss of sovereignty, coupled with resentment over the newly enforced leprosy segregation policy, led to the abortive Wilcox Insurrection of July, 1889.<sup>150</sup> A group of legislators in support of both Reciprocity and the cession, both *haole* and Hawaiian, went on a pleasant excursion for a picnic on the shores of Pu‘uloa (Pearl Harbor) and Helekūnihi was among them. The *Daily Bulletin* of 12 June, 1888 described how the picnickers dined “ala Hawaiian on the ground under large shade trees at Mr. Mark Robinson’s Ranch...After all had satisfied the inner man, the spacious verandahs of the house were sought and in reclining chairs, a majority of the party enjoyed the fragrant weed, and indulged in social converse.”<sup>151</sup> Helekūnihi’s presence on this occasion, a public relations stunt by the *haole* oligarchy to promote the Pearl Harbor cession, cannot have made him popular among many of his compatriots.

Another contentious issue was that of continued education in the Hawaiian language. Helekūnihi’s is nuanced perspective appears contradictory, as he had long been an advocate for the preservation of Hawaiian tradition. In fact, there is no evidence that Elia ever learned English. He was, however, a member of the Education Committee of the Legislature, which supported the oligarchs’ desire to supplant Hawaiian with English. It was assumed that a move to English would aid in the “civilising” process of the Islands and draw them within the orbit of the

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<sup>149</sup> For the rationale not to renew because the treaty “has been more of a curse than a blessing to the islands” see *Daily Bulletin*, 17 November 1886. For a thorough narrative of the events that led to the renewal of the treaty, including the Pearl Harbor cession, see Kuykendall, *Kingdom* vol. 3, pp. 391-397. For the perspective of the Hawaiian press, see *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 5 November 1887.

<sup>150</sup> See below.

<sup>151</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 12 June, 1888. Mark Robinson was a prominent and wealthy part-Hawaiian member of the House of Nobles under Kalākaua. He supported the “Bayonet Constitution” and played a role in its creation.

United States. When the committee reported to the Legislature, Helekūnihi presented eight petitions, one of which read, “that parents sending children to Government English schools be not required to pay tuition fees.”<sup>152</sup> The committee urged the passage of a bill to do away with all tuition for ordinary English schools. As a result of this, it was anticipated that half the children in Hawaiian schools would enter schools offering instruction in English. Though families were not forced to make the shift, most did, resulting in the near-demise of Hawaiian-medium education in the years prior to the infamous Education Act of the Republic of Hawai‘i in 1896, which stipulated English as the only medium of instruction.<sup>153</sup>

The rapid increase of the sugar industry demanded more labour and, though Portuguese and Japanese workers were entering the country in increasing numbers, the demand for Chinese labour was greater than ever after the renewal of Reciprocity in 1887. Hawaiians had long expressed anxiety that few Chinese women came to the Islands, while both Hawaiian men and *haole* “mechanics” were concerned about competition for jobs from enterprising Chinese.<sup>154</sup> “More Chinese,” the *Daily Bulletin* in February, 1886, opined, “every steamer and many vessels increase the tale. The more sorrier for the native race and white traders and merchants.”<sup>155</sup> In November of 1887, Elia Helekūnihi supported “An Act to Regulate Chinese Immigration,” which due to Chamber of Commerce opposition, passed only with limited scope.<sup>156</sup> Though it is unlikely that Helekūnihi shared the Social Darwinist sentiments of Hawai‘i’s *haoles*, he may have supported Chinese exclusion because Hawaiians were anxious that their nation was overrun

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<sup>152</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 17 July 1888.

<sup>153</sup> *Report of the Committee on Education. Bill No. 1* (Honolulu, 1888), cited in David W. Forbes, *Hawaiian National Bibliography, 1780-1900* (Honolulu, 2001), 3997.

<sup>154</sup> For a comprehensive survey of this complex issue, see Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, pp. 135-141; 145-153; 173-185.

<sup>155</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 12 February 1886, cited in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, p.175.

<sup>156</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 13 December 1887; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 12 December 1887.

by foreigners, which included the *haoles*, who were growing in numbers and influence.<sup>157</sup> Most *haole* settlers, however, employed the notion of a hierarchy of races and viewed the Chinese as an “inferior race.” A. Marques, leader of the “Hawaiian Anti-Asiatic League,” criticised the Legislature for not going far enough in excluding the Chinese, as “Asiatic immigration must be stopped so as to keep the white population and to prevent the poor kanaka from being driven to the wall.”<sup>158</sup> When an amendment to the Constitution was proposed in September 1888 to limit opportunities for Chinese to work in the Kingdom, to register them and to legally exclude or deport them, some members of the Legislature seriously examined the moral implications of placing such a blatantly racist principle in the Constitution.<sup>159</sup> The amendment failed at this time, but Elia Helekūnihi was one of its strong supporters.

One negative outcome of this legislative action, which compounded its racism, was the accusation that four Hawaiian legislators had received bribes from Chinese to vote against the Chinese exclusion amendment. On 11 September, Helekūnihi, convinced of their guilt, voted to have Kauhi and Kamauoha removed from the Legislature, but to exonerate Luhiau and censure Nawahine.<sup>160</sup> This theme of bribery, which Elia had claimed was “a return to the corrupt methods of the past,” was a sore issue for him, as it offended his deepest understanding of the principles of *pono* behaviour. It was, however, one that *haole* critics of Hawaiian integrity and

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<sup>157</sup> See my discussion of the petitions of 1845 in Chapter Three, p. 80: “If the nation is ours, what good can result from filling it with foreigners? Let us consider, lest the land pass entirely into the hands of the foreigners.” (*The Friend*, 1 August, 1845, 118-119; and Elia’s petition from Hāna in 1876, p. 143: “That Hawaiians be forbidden from leaving their lands to White People for longer than two years,” and “That they be forbidden to to sell their lands to White People.” (“Journal of the Legislative Assembly, Spring, 1876.”)

<sup>158</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 26 January 1888.

<sup>159</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 6 September 1888. Truthfully, it is likely that most *haole* opponents were motivated by the economic need for cheap plantation labour.

<sup>160</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 12 September 1888.

capability to govern themselves could gleefully point to when justifying white supremicism and the theft of Hawaiian land. It would also lead to the betrayal and undoing of Elia Helekūnihi.

### ***Ka Loio ma Ha'ikū*** **The Lawyer at Ha'ikū**

After the “Extraordinary Legislature” of 1887-88 was prorogued by the King on 11 September, Helekūnihi returned home to Ha'ikū and resumed his law practice, community service, church work and writing for the *Kuokoa*. By 1889, his home was close to the Baldwin residence and a stone's throw from Kalanikahua Church, where he remained active for the duration of his life.<sup>161</sup> The year following the close of the session was a quiet one for him, during which he practiced law, advertising frequently in Kawainui's newspaper *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*.<sup>162</sup> This was not, however, a quiet time in the Kingdom, as forces of resistance to the Bayonet Constitution built in the first half of 1889 and culminated in the “Wilcox Rebellion” of 30 June, 1889.<sup>163</sup> At the end of November 1889, Helekūnihi wrote a descriptive account of a journey back

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<sup>161</sup> Tax Assessment and Collection Ledgers, 1889, Kingdom of Hawai'i Department of Taxation, vol. 1, 224-19-1889, HA; *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 21 April, 1899. This is a fascinating account of the journey of a former resident of Kaupō, now residing in Honolulu, who visited Elia Helekūnihi's home, situated between the “beautiful home of H. Baldwin and the church of Ha'iku.” The author goes on to write poignantly, “*Auwe!* (Woe!) I remember my dear friends, born like him *i ka ua pee pa pohaku o Kaupo* (in the rain that causes one to hide behind the stone walls of Kaupō), and *i ka makani honihoni papalina o ka aina maua* (in the wind that kisses the cheeks of our land).”

<sup>162</sup> These advertisements ran continuously in *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* from 29 September 1888 to 20 April 1889.

<sup>163</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 3 August 1889; *Daily Bulletin*, 2 August 1889. The aim of this armed rebellion, instigated by the enigmatic *hapa-haole* Robert Wilcox, was to restore the Constitution of 1864 and eliminate the Reform Cabinet. There was also some talk of deposing Kalākaua and placing his sister, Lili'uokalani, on the throne. The response of the ruling oligarchy when they learned that Wilcox and his forces were marching on 'Iolani Palce was swift and decisive. The government volunteer corps rapidly put down the uprising, which left seven dead and a dozen injured among the insurgents. The King, clearly displeased with the events of the day (as he did not fancy being replaced by his sister), called the American minister, who in turn called for a squad of American marines to come ashore and protect U.S. interests. Though the insurrection is often billed as a Native Hawaiian rebellion, Kuykendall relates the curious fact that the movement began with meetings to which Wilcox only invited *haoles*. Later, Chinese were included, but only to the fifth meeting were Native Hawaiians invited.<sup>163</sup> It appears that the racialised assumptions of Native Hawaiian ability pervaded the mind of a Europeanised part-Hawaiian like Wilcox (he had been sent to military school in Italy) to such a degree that he would not trust the inclusion Hawaiians in the early stages of a plot designed to redress wrongs perpetrated against Hawaiians. A detailed examination of the events surrounding the rebellion can be found in Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, pp. 424-434.

to Hāna. The editor introduced Elia Helekūnihi as “active in litigating cases at Hāna,” working in the district for seven days with Judge George Richardson (1850-1892), which gave him an opportunity to see for himself the remarkable changes that had taken place since his departure ten years before.<sup>164</sup> He was most impressed by the “progress” the sugar industry had brought to his home district.

On 14 December, Helekūnihi wrote of another visit to “the land of my birth.”<sup>165</sup> He glowingly described the schools and the Protestant Church of Wananalua, where he had served so many years before.<sup>166</sup> Mentioning a local candidate for Hāna for the upcoming legislative elections, Ezekiel Minamina Hanuna, he speaks highly of him (son of his old nemesis) as “one who has not heard of the *Hui Kalaiaina*.” This new party was formed by Native Hawaiians to resist the actions of the Bayonet Constitution in the summer of 1888, with John Ailuene Bush as president.<sup>167</sup> The party stood for the preservation of the monarchy, guarding the rights of the Hawaiian people, amending the constitution of 1887, and reducing the property qualifications for electing members of the House of Nobles.<sup>168</sup> Hanuna, like Helekūnihi, was a member of the governing Reform Party and, like him, a conservative Calvinist pastor. Hāna-born and Lahainaluna educated, he was pastor of Kīpahulu, Kaupō and Hāna, elected to represent Hāna,

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<sup>164</sup> *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, 30 November 1889. The piece is entitled, “Seven Days in Hāna of the Low-lying Rain.” Elia wrote, “The sugar plantation of Mokae is very large and if you go from Puuoninau to Muolea, you will see the growth of the maturing cane, and the fresh growth of cane. Travellers going there are ever thankful for the great height of the cane and even Fr. Lauter (Catholic priest at Puuiki) offers great news that they may get as much as 2000 tons of mature cane from the plantation at Puuiki where Peter Rooney is manager. The road from Wananalua is now excellent. It is a good thing that you did not see it as it was when I was a child, when all you would have encountered were two-wheeled carts.” We may recall that Elia was a pupil at the boarding school at Wananalua church from 1849 to 1853 and served as pastor there in the early 1870s.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 December 1889.

<sup>166</sup> “The church is in good hands with a lively congregation, who want to do what is required to put the church building in good shape.”

<sup>167</sup> Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, p. 127.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*



supported annexation and, with Helekūnihi, a fierce advocate for temperance.<sup>169</sup> Helekūnihi's aim in promoting Hanuna to the readers of Kawainui's *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* was to show that he was not alone among Hawaiian Calvinist elites in support of the Reform Party's agenda. Elia departed his beloved "Hāna of the Low-lying Rain" aboard the *Likeli* "on a calm and peaceful night, the Night of Mahealani."<sup>170</sup>

On 20 December 1889, a meeting was held in Makawao to nominate a candidate for the Reform Party for the February election. Helekūnihi presented himself as a candidate on the party ticket, but suffered a humiliating defeat, receiving but one vote to William H.M. Halstead's twenty-nine.<sup>171</sup> Halstead, son of early *haole* Maui settler, John Joseph Halstead and Kauwaikiikilani Davis, daughter of Kamehameha's renowned Welsh retainer, Isaac Davis, was a *hapa haole* lawyer practicing in Makawao.<sup>172</sup> Helekūnihi did not stand a chance against such a rival in a district where so many prominent *haoles* lived. It is likely that the oligarchy was disappointed in his performance in the last legislative session, where he demonstrated more independent thinking than they had anticipated from their "Native" candidate. His constant attention to the plight of the Hawaiian lepers, his criticism of Emerson, and his support of the King's right to veto would have made him unpopular. The Native Hawaiian *Hui Kalaiaina*

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<sup>169</sup> Morris and Benedetto, *Nā Kahu*, p. 72. Poignantly, he contracted Hansen's disease and served as pastor of Kalaupapa until his death.

<sup>170</sup> Helekūnihi continued to use the ancient Hawaiian calendar, an indication of his traditionalism. *Meahealani* is the full-moon on the sixteenth day of the lunar month. *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina*, 14 December 1889; Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, p. 219.

<sup>171</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 26 December 1889; *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 28 December 1889.

<sup>172</sup> *Polk Directory and Handbook of the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1890*, "Polk 1890: Directory and Hand-Book of the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1890." Ulukau. Accessed October 14, 2020. <http://www.ulukau.org/elib/cgi-bin/library?e=d-0polk1890-000Sec--11en-50-20-frameset-book--1-010escapewin>, p.603; "William H.M. Halstead," Ancestry.com. Accessed October 14, 2020.

<https://www.ancestry.com/familytree/person/tree/113689423/person/292062301025/facts>. from the Forsythe Family Tree, *Ancestry.com*, accessed 30 July 2020.

united in 1888 with the largely white working class Mechanics' and Workingmen's Protective Union to create a new "National Reform Party," a formidable and well-organised opposition, and the oligarchy could take no chances with a Hawaiian who refused to tow the line in that important plantation district.<sup>173</sup> The National Reform Party elected almost all its candidates on O'ahu (Honolulu) for both houses, despite the property requirement for electors of Nobles.<sup>174</sup> At Makawao, William H. Halstead was elected, but Hawaiian nationalist Pilipo Kamai of Kaupō, trounced Elia's friend Hanuna in Hāna district. Neither party was able to claim a majority in the Legislature, creating the political crisis that led ultimately to the overthrow of the monarchy.

Helekūnihi did, however, share in the spoils of the election, as the *haole* political and economic power brokers in Makawao needed Hawaiians loyal to their cause more than ever to advance their hegemonic designs. After the election, the papers reported that, "Mr. E. Helekūnihi of Ha'ikū has just been appointed road commissioner, commissioner of water rights, notary public for the Second District Court and an agent for giving marriage licenses."<sup>175</sup> Collectively, these small duties provided a decent and welcome supplement to fees received for his legal services, as Elia struggled to meet the needs of his growing family of five children.<sup>176</sup> That very month, *Kuokoa* congratulated the fifty-one year-old, "our true friend, E. Helekūnihi," for whom

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<sup>173</sup> For the organisational meeting of the combined parties, see *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 23 November 1888. Over one thousand Hawaiians gathered at the Honolulu Rifles armory to discuss the party platform. The meeting was dominated by Hawaiian *Hui Kalaiaina* to such a degree that "there were some audible murmurings against Mr. (Daniel) Lyons, a foreigner, being a prominent part in a representative Hawaiian assembly." The *Hawaiian Gazette* of 27 November 1888 reports that the press was not allowed at the meeting, an indication that Hawaiian nationalists wanted to control their own narrative.

<sup>174</sup> *Hawaiian Bulletin*, 14 February 1890.

<sup>175</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 11 February 1890; *Ahailono o ka Lahui*, 11 February 1890. It may be noted that this paper, published only the first two months of the year 1890, was the official organ of the National Reform Party. See Helen Geracimos. Chapin, "Guide to Newspapers of Hawai'i, 1834-2000," Amazon (Hawaiian Historical Society, 2003), <https://www.amazon.com/Guide-Newspapers-Hawaii-1834-2000/dp/B000V5WUH0>, p. 5.

<sup>176</sup> See the letter composed by his wife, Abigail, to Henry Perrine Baldwin, after his death, thanking the missionary son and neighbour of the Helekūnihis at Ha'ikū for providing food, medical care and moving expenses for the impoverished family, *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 17 July 1896.

his wife, Abigail Kahalenoe, had given birth to “a nice little girl (Mary Kahaoohanohano Maunaolu) in accord with “the era of increasing the nation of his Majesty King Kalākaua.”<sup>177</sup>

## ***Ka Ho‘okahuli*** **The Overthrow of the Queen**

The manifestations of grief at news of the death of King Kalākaua in San Francisco in January 1891 testified to both the reverence for their *ali‘i* on the part of Hawaiians of all classes and the respect for authority and tradition among some *haoles*, even those who detested the King’s reputed “corruption” and “extravagance.”<sup>178</sup> Ironically, Elia Helekūnihi was invited to deliver a eulogy in the Makawao courthouse and appointed to a committee of six to draft resolutions expressing, “grief at our national loss and our heart-felt sympathy with the Royal Family in their great sorrow” and “to express our allegiance, as loyal subjects, to our new Queen, Her Majesty Liliuokalani. Le Roi est Mort. Vive La Reine!”<sup>179</sup> The choice of Helekūnihi to

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<sup>177</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 22 February 1890. For the remainder of that year, Elia Helekūnihi remained at work on his legal, community, literary and church duties in Ha‘ikū. The only documentary evidence we have for this period is a brief mention of his services as attorney in the administration of the estate of Kekai and her husband Kailianu of Kula in the Makawao district. See *Hawaiian Gazette*, 27 May 1890.

<sup>178</sup> King Kalākaua made the determination to travel to California for the treatment of what sources describe as “Bright’s disease” in the late autumn of 1890. Prior to his departure, the people of Hawai‘i celebrated his fifty-fourth birthday with church services, torchlight celebrations, banquets, speeches and presentation of *ho‘okupu* (tribute offered to high chiefs). See Ing, *Reclaiming Kalākaua*, pp. 184-190. Arriving in California 4 December, he was feted by people all over the state, and was “received everywhere with the eminent respect due his royal rank.” See *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 23 January 1891. However, as he headed back to San Francisco after a tour of Southern California, his health declined and on 20 January he died at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. In his last hours he received pastoral care from Anglican clergy and funeral rites were conducted at the historic Trinity Church on the 22nd. See *The San Francisco Call*, 23 January 1891. When the ship *Charleston* entered Honolulu harbour on the 29th bearing his remains, the people of the city knew their King was dead because the “American and Hawaiian flags were at half mast” on board “and the ship appeared off the harbor dressed in mourning.” See *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 30 January 1891; *Ka Leo O Ka Lahui*, 30 January 1891. Both English and Hawaiian language newspapers detailed the lavish expressions of grief and *aloha* for the departed sovereign, his coffin in the throne room of the palace filled with flowers and attended by numerous foreign dignitaries and thousands of grieving citizens lining the streets of Honolulu as the funeral procession solemnly marched to the royal mausoleum at Mauna ‘Ala. See Ing, *Reclaiming Kalākaua*, p. 190-196.

<sup>179</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, 3 February 1891; *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 7 February 1891. The *Kuokoa* concluded by stating that “the congregation agreed unanimously” on these petitions and “the friends” donated a sufficient amount of cash to provide \$5.00 each for the writers of the petitions in both English and in Hawaiian.

present a eulogy revealed the degree to which he remained respected in the community. His sincere expression of grief for the King with whom he had many political and ethical differences demonstrated his own sense of *kuleana* for the *ali ʻi nui*, rooted in his chiefly *mo ʻokū ʻauhau*. The Hawaiian language text of the resolutions mixed Protestant sentimentality with poetry reminiscent of ancient Hawaiian *kanikau*. After the speeches, the writer tells us, “great was the pathos of the words spoken and the deep pain felt, for the love of the chief was in all their hearts.”<sup>180</sup>

In April 1891, Elia returned with Judge Richardson to Hāna on the steamboat *Waila* “to hear cases tried in the district court. His account, published in the *Kuokoa*, provides a vivid account of the journey, every portion of which is described in detail: his train journey from Haʻikū to Kahului, sailing out to the steamboat *Waila* in a small sailboat, getting seasick on deck and arriving at the foot of Kauiki Hill, rising above the bay of Hāna where he burst into verses of classic Hawaiian poetry:

“Thundering sea in the face of Kauiki,  
High is Kauiki rising toward Kapueokahi,  
Kapueokahi also holds Ponahakeone like a child,  
Let us bathe in the waters of Punahoa.”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 25 April 1891. Kauiki is the great hill that dominates the bay at Hāna; Kapueokahi is the beach that fringes the bay; Ponahakeone (“protruding eyeball sands”) may refer to a *ko ʻa*, an area out at sea prized for its fishing; Punahoa is a spring on the beach of Kaupekahī.

With Judge Richardson, Helekūnihi was entertained by the dignitaries of Hāna. There was a grand *lū'au* (feast) with speeches in the Hawaiian style in a banqueting hall overlooking the sea at Hāmoa (close by Luika's birthplace).<sup>182</sup> After waxing lyrical in the poetic tradition of old Hawai'i, Elia described the transformation of the familiar landscape of Hāna into a truly *haole* style economic miracle. "Here, the sugar plantations of Hāna have a good reputation and are progressive. Hāna Plantation seeks to accomplish the production of four thousand tonnes of sugar when this crop of cane matures, says the manager, Dr. Carter..., while the rocky land of Kīpahulu will demonstrate the strength and fortitude of Oscar Unna (August's brother) in digging that soil in the midst of the 'a'ā lava, where the "gold" is to be found. Elia Helekūnihi was a man who truly had his feet in both worlds.

Before concluding his account of the journey to Hāna, he extolled the virtues of Judge George Richardson, who "is kind to all people of whatever station in life, caring for what is right, not only in his own conduct, but for the righteousness of God and for standing for what is just in court...The land is blessed by the service of such upstanding men in this office. Even when critically ill and weakened in his body, he remains steadfast in his duties, though he has pains in his head. Just a little massaging makes him comfortable in the evening just before going to sleep and in the morning before arising. I am reminded of the words of the Psalmist: 'Crying in the night until morning when happiness returns.' For me as well, this is, indeed, so." Richardson was the just judge and a "righteous" Calvinist man of faith, who though suffering much through the dark night, found joy in the dawning of a new day - a *pono* model for Elia's own life.

Richardson, part-Hawaiian son of an earlier Maui circuit judge, died the following year and the

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

*PCA* mourned his death with the racially charged words, “The death of such men is a public loss. Would that we had more young Hawaiians possessed of their noble traits and sterling integrity.”<sup>183</sup>

In the following months, Helekūnihi continued to pursue his legal career with his other responsibilities.<sup>184</sup> For the election of February 1892, he was appointed an “election inspector” with *haoles* Charles Dickey, his neighbour at Ha’ikū, and H.Laws.<sup>185</sup> Though this last election of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was highly contested, with four parties representing the complex political scene on the eve of the overthrow of the Queen, Helekūnihi was not a major player in the election. The *haole* power brokers in Makawao district had too much at stake economically to risk having a Native Hawaiian with an independent mind represent them in the Legislature. The *PCA* of 2 January tells us that the sugar magnate H.P. Baldwin “put forward” J. Kaluna, about whom we know close to nothing, for the Reform Party ticket.<sup>186</sup> There can be little doubt that Kaluna, who was easily elected, was a “*haole* pet.” Helekūnihi’s sole political appointment after the election was to continue as “Commissioner of Fences” for Makawao.<sup>187</sup> The results of the election in February strengthened the Reform Party in the Legislature, which led to tumultuous clashes with the Queen over royal prerogatives in this last year of her reign.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 18 April 1892.

<sup>184</sup> He served as executor of the estates of several prominent men and continued to be the bookkeeper of Pauwela store. See *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 22 May, 1891; *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 11 July 1891. At the end of July, the *Kuokoa* correspondent attended a meeting at Makawao of “the courteous guardians of *Aha Kale Kopa*,” which appears to have been some kind of court where cases were tried by Elia with several other Hawaiian lawyers of Makawao, with the police of the district present. See *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 27 July, 1891. Perhaps there is a typo and *kale* is, in fact, *hale* (“house”) and *kopa* could be from the English “cop,” so could mean a court proceeding at the police station. The observer commented favourably on the outcome of the proceedings: “the head of the court gave the right decision on the side of those who sued – it was a big and weighty case.”

<sup>185</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 30 January 1892.

<sup>186</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 2 January 1892.

<sup>187</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 14 May 1892.

<sup>188</sup> Lorrin Thurston asserted in a conversation with the U.S. Secretary of State W.Q. Gresham that, “As early as January, 1892, myself and several others had a consultation upon the subject of Hawaiian affairs, and after an

In November 1892, when Queen Lili‘uokalani struggled with the Legislature over Cabinet appointments in the final two months of the Hawaiian Kingdom, Elia Helekūnihi focussed on increasing the readership of *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*.<sup>189</sup> His almost shrill promotion of the paper can be understood in light of the fact that the newspaper, which had long represented the “missionary” perspective, as well as supporting annexation, had suffered reduced readership. Helen Geracimos Chapin suggests that Native Hawaiians, “no longer were willing to overlook its pro-Americanism, or as John Sheldon, editor of the nationalist *Holomua* expressed it, *Kuokoa* had to be ‘given away free’ to Islanders who used it to start morning cooking fires.”<sup>190</sup> It remained the newspaper of choice for the dwindling class of Hawaiians, like Helekūnihi, who retained fidelity to the Calvinist Church, the legacy of the New England mission and the politically and socially “enlightened” views it represented.<sup>191</sup> The power brokers of Makawao

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interchange of views we agreed that it was only a question of time when the Islands would have to be annexed to the United States, and we formed an annexation league for that purpose...we were satisfied that the Queen meditated evil designs which threatened the liberties of the Country, or at least of part of the people; and that we would have to do something for our protection.” USDS, “Memoranda of Conversations with the Secretary of State 1893-1898,” conversation on 14 June, 1893, cited in Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, p. 532. From the perspective of this “part of the people,” meaning the *haole* oligarchy, the Queen was following the path of her brother in asserting royal prerogatives. From the Native Hawaiian majority perspective, particularly among the *maka‘āinana*, this meant honouring both Hawaiian sovereignty and the dignity of the *ali‘i nui*, but for the *haoles*, especially those of American origin, it was a dangerous declaration of autocratic rule, a defiance of the democratic principles the New England missionaries had inculcated among the Hawaiians in their attempt to “raise them up” out of barbarism to enlightened “civilisation.” Moreover, resisting the movement of the Kingdom into the American sphere was bad for the sugar industry, which was of paramount importance to these men. For a detailed account of this complex period of Hawaiian history, see Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, pp. 523-581.

<sup>189</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 12 November 1892.

<sup>190</sup> Chapin, *Shaping History, the Role of Newspapers in Hawa‘i*, p. 93. Founder, missionary son Henry Martyn Whitney, still retained control of the paper, which had merged with Kawainui’s *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* in 1891, the two men serving as joint editors.

<sup>191</sup> “Awaken! Arise! Make ready!” Elia wrote, “for the united *Nupepa Kuokoa* and *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* for the year 1893.” Employing classic Hawaiian geographical poetic references that he seldom resisted, Elia continued, “O friends and intimates of the famed rain of the land, the gentle rain of Makawao and the red-yellow rain of Pi‘iholo, from the waters of O‘opu and the *kukui* of Pi‘ikea and the whisps of Kula mist that creep low across the plain. O friends and intimates, take heed to the prayerful voice of your prophet (the *Kuokoa*)!” Pi‘iholo is above Makawao on the slopes of Haleakalā; the “red-yellow rain,” the ‘Ulalena, is a reddish rain associated with Ha‘ikū and a wind at Pi‘iholo; O‘opuola is the eastern boundary of the Makawao District; *kukui* is the candlenut tree; Pi‘ikea is a place name at the other end of the district in what is now Kihei, but means “to turn grey” and could applied poetically here to refer to the silvery leaves of the *kukui*; Kula is the district in the grassy plains on the west slopes of Haleakalā.

had not invited Elia to participate directly in making the crucial political decisions of the time, but his voice was more than welcome in promoting their cause to the Hawaiian people in the Hawaiian language press. At this time, Noble W.H. Cornwell, resigned to join the Queen's Cabinet and Helekūnihi was appointed as precinct inspector at Makawao to ensure that voters had the detested property qualifications of the Bayonet Constitution, which excluded most Hawaiians, including himself.<sup>192</sup>

Queen Lili'uokalani was overthrown by the *haole* oligarchs on 17 January 1893 and the Hawaiian Kingdom came to an end.<sup>193</sup> The Queen surrendered to what she described as “the superior force of the United States” and a *haole* “Provisional Government” was instituted.<sup>194</sup> Elia Helekūnihi played no direct role in any of these momentous events. Indeed, his record goes curiously silent on his political views through this period, though we learn that he is, prosaically, elected as auditor of Pauwela Store just nine days after the illegal overthrow.<sup>195</sup> We also know from the passenger list for the steamship *Likeli* that “Mrs. Helekunihi arrived in Honolulu from Maui” in the company of W.H. Cornwell, the Queen's former cabinet member, and E.H. Bailey, prominent missionary son and future member with Elia of the Maui Annexation Club.<sup>196</sup> Kahalenoe was on that visit to Honolulu to deliver Elia's manuscript of his *Mo'olelo Hawai'i* to Oliver Emerson, which she described in a letter to her husband back in Ha'ikū as such a “joyful” meeting.<sup>197</sup> In Helekūnihi's letter to the arch annexationist Emerson there is curiously no mention of the Queen's overthrow just one week after the event. Elia was a historian of Hawai'i,

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<sup>192</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 4 November 1892; *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 19 November 1892.

<sup>193</sup> See Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, pp. 581-650 for a highly detailed account of these events.

<sup>194</sup> *The Daily Bulletin*, 18 January 1893.

<sup>195</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 27 February 1893.

<sup>196</sup> *Daily Bulletin*, 13 February 1893.

<sup>197</sup> Letter to Rev. Oliver Emerson from Elia Helekunihi, February 25 1893, Ms. Group 284, Bishop Museum Archives.



who would shortly deliver “a lengthy and very interesting address dealing with the history of the past Hawaiian sovereigns” at an annexation rally at Pa‘ia, yet never once in multiple recorded speeches and newspaper contributions mentioned the overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani.<sup>198</sup>

The letter, however, provides a clue to Helekūnihi’s state of mind in this tumultuous time when most Hawaiians felt their traditional universe crashing down around them. He wrote with clear emotion, “The reason for my writing is because of my grief that the History of Hawai‘i *Nei* may be lost.”<sup>199</sup> Later in the letter, he poignantly writes, “My joints are stiff and as for my pen, I write with it between my third and fourth fingers...I will be fifty-four this coming April. I am an old man left with great regret and having heard that the Hawaiian History is being published in the *Kuokoa*, the idea came to me to send this to you to examine so it will not become trash after my death.” His feelings (his “grief”) about the overthrow were simply too raw to discuss with this *haole* friend who could never comprehend their depth. Helekūnihi had an intense compulsion to tell the great story of Hawai‘i before it passed, and before his own passing, painfully aware that without intervention the oral tradition of which he was a guardian in the lineage of the *kākā‘olelo* would be lost. Though there is no clear evidence about his position on the overthrow, it is difficult to accept that a man with such *aloha* and *kuleana* for the Hawaiian chiefs supported the overthrow of the ancient Hawaiian system. It is likely that, like monarchist/annexationist Joseph Poepoe, Helekūnihi held the two opposites in an awkward tension: honouring tradition while pursuing a goal that he viewed to be of benefit to the Hawaiian people. They may have looked to

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<sup>198</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May 1893.

<sup>199</sup> Letter to Rev. Oliver Emerson: *O ke kumu o ko ‘u kakau ana no kuu minamina i ka Moolelo of Hawaii Nei o nalowale ia*. *Nei* literally means “here,” but poetically has the sense of “beloved.”

Tahiti as a model, where the Pōmare dynasty continued under a French protectorate from 1842 to 1880.<sup>200</sup>

All his life Helekūnihi cherished Hawai‘i, its rich traditions, its poetry and its *mo‘olelo*. He was a man possessing *mo‘okū‘auhau* consciousness, proud of his own lineal descent from the most sacred kings of Maui. He was grounded in the traditions of the great *ali‘i* of the past and, though he may not have approved of Kalākaua’s dynasty for genealogical reasons and for their perceived lack of *pono*, he supported Kalākaua’s right to veto legislation because he was, despite years of tutoring in the religious and legal traditions of the *haole*, a Hawaiian and Hawaiians, above all things, revere their *ali‘i*. His *haole* friends, missionary sons, valued his support for annexation, but could not count on his support for betraying the *ali‘i nui*, even if she had not behaved in a manner perceived as *pono*. The prevailing Social Darwinism contributed to the idea that no Hawaiian could be trusted in leadership. Helekūnihi secured the distrust of the *haole* oligarchy by demonstrating respect for the King in the Legislature of 1887-88, resisting *haole* demands to segregate poor Hawaiian “lepers” and criticising missionary son Nathaniel Emerson, thus sealing his fate for future legislative positions. He was rejected as a candidate in Makawao in 1890, and in 1892, even his friend and neighbour, Henry P. Baldwin chose to “put forward” for the nomination the unknown J. Kaluna, who was evidently more maleable than Elia.<sup>201</sup> Despite his dedication to annexation, Elia Helekūnihi was not the “pet” his *haole* friends hoped him to be. He was a complex man with integrity, whose agency led him to make seemingly perplexing choices that made him unpopular with many on both sides.

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<sup>200</sup> Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, p. 151.

<sup>201</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 2 January 1892.

Elia Helekūnihi was a fervent participant in the Annexation Club of Maui in April 1893, just two months after writing the letter to Oliver Emerson.<sup>202</sup> We may recall that he was one of twenty speakers at Paihihi Church in Pa‘ia, where he gave his “lengthy and very interesting address dealing with the history of the past Hawaiian sovereigns.” Though the *PCA* reporter did not provide the content of his speech, *Ka Nupepa Puka La Kuokoa*, published in Hawaiian, provided some details:

“He explained how the coming of the missionaries, their works, their love, their civilisation (“enlightenment”) and their giving encouragement to the Hawaiian people was for our *pono*. We began to live without strife, in peace, and have received many blessings of prosperity. Therefore, it is a *pono* thing for us to go forward, not to return again to ‘gird the *malo*.<sup>203</sup> He said that it was, indeed, a pity that his friend John Kalama has chosen the path of misunderstanding, but he (for one) prefers to follow the path of annexation.”<sup>204</sup>

This does not specify “the past Hawaiian sovereigns,” but it is likely that Helekūnihi focussed on the *pono* of former kings and queens, most notably Ka‘ahumanu, in promoting Calvinist Christianity, the *na‘auao* from America. It is also possible, in consideration of the *mo‘okū‘auahau* of Luika from the high priest Pa‘ao from Kahiki, that he referenced the theme of new religious truth emanating from Kahiki. Elia Helekūnihi was a Hawaiian traditionalist who

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<sup>202</sup> See Introduction, pp. 1-2; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May 1893, 6.

<sup>203</sup> This may be both a plea not to return to the ways of the past and a call for peace, as *E hume i ka malo, e ho‘okala i ka ihe* (“Gird the malo and sharpen the spear”) means “prepare for war”. See Pukui, *‘Ōlelo No‘eau*, 299. The *malo* is the loin cloth worn by Hawaiian men in earlier times.

<sup>204</sup> *Nupepa Puka La Kuokoa*, 4 May 1893. John Kalama had, at that same meeting on 27 April, extolled “the *aloha* of Hawaiians for their Queen.”

wished to show that affiliation with America was not inimical to the bedrock of Hawaiian tradition. In him, Hawaiian tradition persisted in new patterns of articulation, demonstrating that “Culture is precisely the organization of the current situation in the terms of the past.”<sup>205</sup>

Maui Sheriff, Lorrin A. Andrews, son of Claudius Andrews, Helekūnihi’s teacher at Lahainaluna, and key player in his future betrayal, felt constrained at this same meeting to elucidate the theme of Hawaiian love for their *ali ‘i*: “The Kamehameha dynasty was extinct,” he said; “that it was right for the Hawaiians to revere their true chiefs; but that the Kalakaua branch did not possess chief blood and were placed in power by the foreigners against the wish of the natives, who revolted against his election, and were only grieved by force of foreign bayonets.” It is significant that those who specifically referenced the overthrow of the Queen at this meeting were *haoles*, not Hawaiians. Andrews was building on Gulick’s earlier comments about “the immorality of the former Hawaiian court. As we may recall, he “had a moral view of the situation.”<sup>206</sup>

The short-lived *Nupepa Puka La Kuokoa*, like *Kuokoa*, edited by annexationists Whitney and Kawainui, published a curiously sarcastic piece on 1 May about Helekūnihi’s arrival with the Maui Annexation Club in Honolulu.<sup>207</sup> “The Annexation Club of Maui has sent their delegates to go and see the American Commissioner Blount,” the correspondent writes:

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<sup>205</sup> Sahlins, *Islands of History*, p. 155.

<sup>206</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 1 May 1893.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*.

“and here they are at the *Eagle House* of Honolulu where they are staying. The reason for Hawaiians going into a *haole* Hotel was questioned, and their chairman, Kalua, responded, ‘Because we want to become accustomed to fraternise and live with the *haoles* when we join with the United States.’ Maui is, indeed, lost!”

It appeared that even this paper, whose editors were generally sympathetic to the annexationist cause, found the sympathy of this group of Hawaiians for all things American distasteful.

The staunchly pro-monarchist *Hawaii Holomua*, published by Joseph Poepoe and T.P. Spencer, with fire brand Edward Norrie as sometime editor, was much less forgiving of the Hawaiian annexationists and lampooned them mercilessly in a 2 May article.<sup>208</sup> T.P. Spencer was the same publisher to whom Elia had taken his manuscript of *La ‘au Lapa ‘au* in 1887 and who published Elia’s work in his own name.<sup>209</sup> The 2 May article is entitled “Hunger:”

“The Rev. A. Pali and Elia Helekūnihi, some erring delegates of the Annexationist Club, have arrived and have been given hospitality at the Eagle Hotel of the *Haoles*. When dinner time arrived, they sat down at table and the waiter came and asked, ‘What do you want?’ ‘*Poi*,’ answered the two delegates. The waiter scratched his head, because there wasn’t any *poi*. Some Irish potatoes were brought instead, but the delegates couldn’t eat it. He asked again, ‘What would you like?’ ‘Beef,’ they answered, but the beef was

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<sup>208</sup> *Hawaii Holomua*, 2 May 1893. Edmund Norrie was cited for libel in 1894 when he claimed that the Anglican bishop, Alfred Willis, refused to pray for Dole, president of the Republic. He declared that Dole had become President through treason, fraud and might. See Russ, *Hawaiian Republic*, p. 53.

<sup>209</sup> Letter to Rev. Oliver Emerson from Elia Helekunihi, February 25 1893, Ms. Group 284, Bishop Museum Archives.

completely finished. Some hard pieces of mutton were brought instead. The delegates sniffed, elevating their noses. ‘*Hu!*’ they said, ‘What’s this? Goat! Amen!’ But it may as well have been cougar, leopard, or fox! Give the country to the Eagle and go to your Eagle House and eat heartily!”

The pro-monarchy *Ka Leo o ka Lahui*, publisher John Bush, was scathing in its attacks on the pro-annexationist Hawaiians. On 2 May, it referred to the *haole* members of the annexationist team as “*haoles* with white skin” and the Hawaiian members as “*haoles* with brown skin.” On 4 May, the editor wrote, “Beloved are the Hawaiian people who glory in following behind in the shadow of the dollar. Such vanity of the worthless!” (Helekūnihi is specifically named).<sup>210</sup> James Blount was inimpressed by the annexationist arguments, and his report to Walter Q. Gresham, Secretary of State for President Cleveland, came down solidly in favour of restoring the Queen to her throne. “The undoubted sentiment of the people is for the Queen, against the Provisional Government and against annexation. The native vote is generally against the annexation whites.”<sup>211</sup> As a result of the Blount Report, Cleveland made the determination to restore the Queen, an endeavour that failed due to Liliuokalani’s unwillingness to grant amnesty to the “revolutionaries” and the latter’s brute strength and determination to carry their project of annexation through to fruition, despite the U.S. president’s resistance.<sup>212</sup>

A confusing and somewhat salacious article in *Ka Leo o ka Lahui* on 5 May, suggests that Kahalenoe Helekūnihi did not support her husband’s annexationist views, but tried to stop

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<sup>210</sup> *Ka Leo o ka Lahui*, 2 May 1893.

<sup>211</sup> *Report of U.S. Special Commissioner James H. Blount to U.S. Secretary of State Walter Q. Gresham Concerning the Hawaiian Kingdom Investigation* (Honolulu, 17 July, 1893), *Hawaiian Kingdom.org*, accessed 4 August, 2020.

<sup>212</sup> Loomis, *For Whom are the Stars?* pp. 71-84.

him from going to Honolulu with the committee for fear that they would be “banished from the land” by their compatriots.<sup>213</sup> Helekūnihi, the author opines, “has turned away from the will of God and pursues Mammon, the Scorpion, who will swallow him and heap upon him many misfortunes.” The author insults Elia’s ability to keep his wife loyal to his cause and employs Calvinist language to critique his religiosity. “The Newspaper offers you thanks, O wife, and we ask God to help you!”

The most complete and revealing testimonial by Elia Helekūnihi to his rationale for annexation is found in a lengthy piece in the *Kuokoa* of 1 July 1893.<sup>214</sup> The article entitled, “The Proper Reasons for Joining with the United States” is his response to the scathing criticism he had endured for his position from many in the Native Hawaiian community:

“Mr Chief Editor, Love to you...It is agreeable to me to present my thoughts concerning the great question of our time, ‘Annexation,’ the thing which the whole nation is pondering. Perhaps it has become a pill taken to end the nausea of the royalists. Below are the reasons which I have thought of to explain my thoughts:

- 1) Americans civilised (educated, enlightened) this nation.
- 2) America has not been unethical (destructive, harmful) towards Hawai‘i.
- 3) America is our friend, and a good friend.
- 4) Hawai‘i is tiny among the nations of the world.
- 5) It is *pono* (the right thing) for Hawai‘i to pursue safe options.

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<sup>213</sup> *Ka Leo o Ka Lahui*, 5 May 1893.

<sup>214</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 1 July 1893. *Na Kumu Kupono e Hoohui ai me Amerika Huipua*.

Helekūnihi discussed in detail the arrival of the 1820 missionaries, whom he calls “beacons of light brought here and raised up.”<sup>215</sup> He insists that, “one cannot find within the programme of America anything harmful to Hawai‘i. No! No! Not at all!” While other so-called “enlightened” nations attempted to seize Hawai‘i, America did not. Moreover, he writes, “the missionaries and right-thinking *haoles* like William Richards” helped the Hawaiians during the reign of the Kamehamehas and “they stood on the side of the chiefs during both peaceful and troubled times, and their teaching was heeded... and their treasured words were praised.”

Significantly, Helekūnihi claims that the sons of the missionaries were loyal to Kalākaua and Liliuokalani, standing with “other righteous” *haoles* on the side of the King, demonstrating what was *pono* to keep the peace, but they were not heeded. Quoting the Hawaiian motto, spoken by Kamehameha III at the time of restoration of sovereignty after the brief annexation by Great Britain in 1843, *Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono* (“The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness”), Helekūnihi asserts that under Kalākaua, “the teachings of righteous people were deserted, and shiftless people were heeded, and what is the consequence?” Utilising a biblical metaphor, he claimed that the Hawaiian monarchy had become “Ichabod,” whose name means “the glory has departed” because he was born on the day the Philistines seized the Israelite Ark of the Covenant.<sup>216</sup> “The glory has departed from the Kingdom of Israel” because of the lack of

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<sup>215</sup> “To me these men can be counted as beacons of light brought here and raised up. They came to Hawai‘i Island, to Kailua on the Sands of Kiakakua where the obscurity of the dark night was first scattered...At that time, the men and women were naked and darkness thickly veiled the land from Hawai‘i to Kaua‘i and the nation worshipped the hosts of heaven, the earth, and the water (is it not so that the people of this so-called “enlightened age” are returning again to this?). The Bible and the wisdom which they first brought are not money or gold, and their great work was in demonstrating that the only True God who is in heaven, and that God is known as Trinity – this is enlightenment. And the first school was examined at Honolulu in September, 1820...On 11 August, 1822, 102 images were burnt at the command of the exalted chief Ka‘ahumanu, who is the one who spread the wings of enlightenment...The chiefs and the people knew the true God and had faith. The gods they worshipped before departed from them. In the month of September, 1831, the high school of Lāhainaluna opened, the place that has become famous as ‘The Light that cannot be extinguished by the Kauaula Wind.’ They (the missionaries) continued the enlightenment until 1866 and the Hawaiians became preachers and pastors.”

<sup>216</sup> *I Samuel* 4:19-22.



*pono* in Kalākaua and Liliuokalani. Helekūnihi mourned that the Kingdom of Hawai‘i had also been torn asunder and had become like another place, unrecognisable. Invoking Scripture again, he suggests that Hawai‘i had become like Israel under Rehoboam, who lost the Northern tribes and ruled a diminished kingdom. “Hawai‘i is now divided,” he wrote, “and all that stands is the Provisional Government.”

For Helekūnihi, “the monarchy and its former righteous deeds had changed completely... Beloved indeed was Kamehameha who conquered the Islands and who encompassed them. The great King had said, ‘You must endeavour to achieve only my *pono* and nothing else.’<sup>217</sup> Now, it has ended because of the return to disobedience (deafness). Helekūnihi insisted that the Americans have helped the Hawaiian people, who as a result have become “a precious pearl, nourished like a child, cared for well, and Hawai‘i has become a defence and shield warding off trouble, a city of refuge” because of the affection the missionaries had for the Hawaiians. “Their help perpetuates this *pono* for you, O Hawai‘i.” It is clear that, for Elia Helekūnihi, at issue was not the institution of monarchy itself, nor the time-honoured sacred authority of the *ali‘i*, but with two monarchs who did not exhibit *pono* behaviour. In traditional Hawaiian culture, the action known as *‘imihaku* (a chief or priest seeking a new master) on the part of the people would occur because a chief was no longer regarded as *pono*, demonstrating appropriate *aloha* for his people.<sup>218</sup> Once again, we see a new manifestation of Sahlins’ “structures of the long run,” whereby “Hawaiian culture reproduces itself.”<sup>219</sup> Because of the perceived lack of *pono* on the

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<sup>217</sup> Because the great Kamehameha had “ceded” Hawai‘i Island to King George of Britain through Vancouver in 1794, Helekūnihi and other Hawaiian annexationists may have viewed this as precedent for the annexation of the Islands by the U.S. a century later. See Archer, *Sharks*, p. 86.

<sup>218</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land*, pp. 81, 83, 85, 154.

<sup>219</sup> Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, p. 33.

part of Kalākaua and Liliuokalani, the conservative Helekūnihi was exercising *‘imihaku*, a search for a new path to *pono* and *mana* and this time the new “chief” was the United States.<sup>220</sup>

Elia Helekūnihi grieved the loss of the old order, the alienation of Hawaiian lands and the fall of the monarchy, yet he embarked on a process of *‘imihaku* towards the United States for the sake of the future of his people. He wrote, “Hawai‘i diminishes in every respect. What *pono* can be done?” He continued, “It is *pono* for Hawaiians to pursue a secure position and that is with America, the land that has not troubled Hawai‘i..., the land that has enlightened us. We must aid the Provisional Government in seeking annexation by the United States...Let us set aside personal jealousy and degrading defamation of character by men who are not enlightened, like the *Holomua* newspaper, which is always publishing reviling words in its columns...as if the heart of its editor was full of evil.” He concluded by exhorting Hawaiians to join the Annexation Clubs that, he claimed, were proliferating from one end of the Islands to the other, and for all to “heed the fact that for the peace of Hawai‘i, for her prosperity and her stability, all should choose, like him, the side of annexation.”

*Hawai‘i Holomua*, published a scathing attack on the Hawaiian annexationists in their 28 October 1893 edition.<sup>221</sup> “Those who have watered down the nation are, yet again, being

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<sup>220</sup> The remainder of Elia’s “treatise” on annexation included an anxious reference to the decline of the Hawaiian population and the loss of land to the *haoles* “who now occupy positions of power in our land,” a suggestion that he was not necessarily entirely at peace with the *haoles* takeover of his country. He also mourned that “the chiefs no longer exist at all,” and “of the *ali‘i* born in this land, they are gone forever.” Curiously, he writes of the “chief-destroying sands of Kakuihewa,” invoking a legend whereby a priest was put to death by a chief for warning him against oppressing his people. This resulted in a curse, that “the land would someday go to the sea,” meaning that it would go into the possession of a people from across the sea. According to cultural specialist Mary Kawena Pukui, “When Kamehameha III was persuaded by a missionary friend to move the capital from Lahaina to O‘ahu, a *kahuna*, remembering the curse, warned him not to, lest the monarchy perish. The warning was ignored, and before the century passed, the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was no more.” See Pukui, *‘Ōlelo No‘eau*, 1772.

<sup>221</sup> *Hawaii Holomua*, 28 October 1893.

deceitful towards the people who love their land and are telling lies,” the editor wrote. “The nation despises men like Kivini (American minister John Stevens), A. Pali (associate of Helekūnihi in the Annexation Club), Kauhi (former legislator), Helekūnihi etc...Maui people are truly famous for trying to scale an octopus.”<sup>222</sup> The editor, John Sheldon, referred to these men, again, as “those watered down men,” the annexationists who read *Kuokoa*, whose editor, Elia’s old friend Kawainui’s name literally means “a large flow of water,” or “excessive saliva.” This kind of rhetoric certainly represented the perspective of most Hawaiians, but it is erroneous to suggest that there was not a significant minority in favour of annexation.<sup>223</sup> The *Hui Aloha ‘Āina*, who presented their plea to Commissioner Blount for the restoration of the Queen, consisted of 7,500 Hawaiian electors out of a total of 13,000, suggesting that in mid-1893 a significant proportion of Hawaiians were not supporters of the petition.<sup>224</sup> Ronald Williams testifies to the men of Helekūnihi’s class, pastors in the HEA, who, like him, supported the Provisional Government, the Republic of Hawai‘i and annexation. Like Elia, they did so in the face of considerable resistance, rejection and ridicule by their own people.<sup>225</sup>

Since the Queen had refused to accept President Cleveland’s conditions for her restoration, she was informed “that the President will cease interposition on her behalf.”<sup>226</sup> His administration did not support annexation, at least for the time being, which led the Provisional Government leaders to plan for a permanent government in the form of a republic. In February

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<sup>222</sup> Pukui, *‘Ōlelo No ‘eau*, 1911: *Kula unahi pikapika he ‘e*. The people of inland Maui (like Elia Helekūnihi) are ridiculed because they are so far from the sea that they think an octopus can be scaled like a fish.

<sup>223</sup> The work of Silva accurately and appropriately recovers the widespread resistance of the majority of Hawaiians to U.S. colonial rule, a necessary correction of the traditional historiography based solely on English language texts. However, few historians have attempted to understand the motivation of those like Elia who supported annexation.

<sup>224</sup> Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, p. 131.

<sup>225</sup> Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, pp. 132-143.

<sup>226</sup> Loomis, *For Whom are the Stars?*, p. 77.

1894 the nineteen men of the executive and advisory councils of the P.G. determined to hold an election on 2 May to elect eighteen delegates from all the districts of the islands to a constitutional convention. These delegates would sit with the nineteen to ratify a new constitution for the “Republic of Hawai‘i” to be inaugurated, fortuitously, on 4 July.<sup>227</sup> To vote in the election, one had to be Native Hawaiian or of European descent (Asians were excluded) and swear allegiance to the P.G. and forswear the monarchy. Elia Helekūnihi took both oaths and was appointed “election” supervisor with Dickey and Laws for Makawao.<sup>228</sup> The Maui Central Committee of the Annexationist Club met at the Wailuku courthouse on 9 March and changed its name to the “Maui Union Club.”<sup>229</sup> Though Elia was not chosen as a candidate (these were *haoles* H.P. Baldwin, Kalua and W. Hosmer), he was elected vice president of the club. Undeniably, Helekūnihi was at the very core of the annexation movement.

In late March 1894, as the date of the election approached, emotions on both sides of the issue were feverish. The staunchly nationalist *Ka Makaainana*, “thorn in the side of the annexationists,” published an article entitled, “The Hawaiians with Redskins Who Opposed the Monarchy.”<sup>230</sup> It referred to a citizen’s meeting on 19 March “conducted by the *haoles* in Hamakuapoko at the Paihihi Church, under the direction of H.P. Baldwin and chaired by Mr. Laws.” The correspondent saw at this meeting “*Haoles* of the Hamakuapoko and Pa‘ia plantations and the Portuguese children of Kawaapae, and a few who appear to be *kanakas* (Hawaiians), who are insignificant parasites on the *haoles*, Elia Helekūnihi etc. (he lists fourteen

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<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>228</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 March 1894.

<sup>229</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 22 March 1894.

<sup>230</sup> *Ka Makaainana*, 2 April, 1894.

Hawaiians, including Rev. J.P.Kuia, pastor of Pā‘ia and Ha‘ikū).”<sup>231</sup> “These are the *kanakas* who signed their names at this meeting to oppose the monarchy and love of their homeland and support the Kingdom of the Filthy Hands (‘Pegana’). Those who truly love the land (*aloha ‘aina*) no longer exist in Makawao.” The writer continued with ridiculous comments: “...a bald Portuguese was seen frolicking in the pulpit dangling his posterior over it” and “the mouth of the lying preacher (Kuia) was twisted as he deliberated.” He concluded with an exhortation to those who “love their homeland and the Queen, not to be deceived and sign that document in the district of Makawao.” Sentiments on both sides of the annexation debate were raw, but the invective directed at those in favour was particularly harsh and magnified by the Yellow Press journalism of the day. As inheritors of Hawai‘i’s treasured traditions, the isolation and rejection of these men, many with *mo‘okū‘auahu* in the lineages of the most esteemed *ali‘i* of old, by their compatriots was deeply painful.

## Conclusion

Despite Elia Helekūnihi’s support for their broad agenda, the *haole* oligarchs refused to include him and other Native Hawaiians in the “Hawaiian League,” whose aim was to “ask the King for good government, something which we have not had.”<sup>232</sup> The mostly-American whites saw no use for Hawaiians, no matter how acquiescent, as they regarded themselves as “the best people of the Islands” and true Hawaiian patriots. The Social Darwinist trope of Native incapability rendered it impossible for Hawaiians to have a role in this “revolution” to force the

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<sup>231</sup> The recent Portuguese immigrants, who had been granted the vote quickly in the Bayonet Constitution of 1887, supported annexation. Rev. John Paulo Kuia was pastor at both Ha‘ikū and Pā‘ia churches who supported the Provisional Government. See Morris and Benedetto, *Nā Haku*, p. 179.

<sup>232</sup> Dole, *Memoirs*, p. 50.

King to submit to *haole* demands. When they achieved their goal, Hawaiians like Helekūnihi were courted to serve in government as symbols of Native compliance. However, when Elia Helekūnihi sat in the Legislature of 1887-1888, he proved to be no puppet of the *haole* Reform Party, but a man willing to exercise independent agency on issues of grave importance for the Hawaiian people, in particular the segregation of lepers. He proved on multiple occasions capable of speaking truth to power and of offending powerful missionary sons. His legislative service demonstrated that he was motivated by ancient Hawaiian values rooted in his chiefly *mo'okū'ahuahu: aloha, kuleana* and *pono*, not by political expediency.

Helekūnihi's silence after the Queen's overthrow masked deep apprehension over the catalysmic end to Native *ali'i* governance. Despite ambivalence over the dynasty of Kalākaua, which he regarded as lacking *pono*, his letter to Oliver Emerson demonstrated the discomfort of an old man of chiefly lineage "left with great anxiety that something precious may be lost." Thereafter, Helekūnihi vigorously sought annexation by the United States, which he regarded as the source of *na'auao*, enlightenment and civilisation, brought by the New England missionaries. Having lost the Native chiefs, Hawai'i was in the state of *'imihaku*, seeking a new chief to bring the condition of *pono* back to the people. For men like Helekūnihi, that new chief was the United States.

## ***PANINA MANA‘O*** **CONCLUSION (1894-1896)**

Known by his peers as “a devout man,” “faithful in *pono* deeds for the Kingdom of God, Elia Helekūnihi was a child of the mission, who honoured the missionary “fathers” who helped form his world view.<sup>1</sup> More importantly, he was a son of Hawai‘i, an *ali‘i* saturated with *mo‘okū‘auhao* consciousness, steeped in the traditions of old Hawai‘i, to which he ever remained faithful. He was a man of dignity, intelligence and compassion, with the old chiefs’ profound sense of *aloha* and *kuleana* for the *maka‘āinana*. Elia was a true Christian, not a Calvinist created in the image of a New Englander, but a Hawaiian Christian formed in the crucible of Ka‘ahumanu’s new *kapu*. Concepts of *kapu*, *pono*, *aloha* and *kuleana*, uniquely Hawaiian, but rearticulated through a Calvinist Christian lens, motivated him all his life and he never ceased to be saturated in the Hawaiian poetic universe. He exercised a courageous agency formed by tradition, his *mo‘okū‘auhahu*, “tender ties” and Calvinist faith that exhibited great integrity. It is, however, no wonder that in the final analysis he pleased neither the *haole* missionary sons nor many of his fellow countrymen who viewed him as a traitor for his support of annexation.

### ***Kumakaia*** **Betrayal**

Since the 1870s, Elia Helekūnihi had desired to be appointed to a judgeship, an honour to which many Hawaiians of his class aspired. At the end of May 1894, his dream achieved fruition when he was appointed District Judge for Wailuku in place of W.H. Daniels, who had refused to take the oath of loyalty to the P.O. The *Kuokoa* announced triumphantly, “We have heard that E.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 July 1896.

Helekūnihi of Makawao has been appointed District Judge of Wailuku, in place of W.H. Daniels, who finished his time acting as a spy for the royalist kingdom.”<sup>2</sup> Daniels’ dismissal was due to anxiety in the P.O. over disloyalty in the ranks of monarchist government officials that might lead to an uprising of Native Hawaiians, which did, indeed, occur in January, 1895.<sup>3</sup> Though Daniels had supported the Bayonet Constitution and served with Helekūnihi as a Reform Party member of the Legislature, he ended his life a firm royalist.<sup>4</sup> At Wailuku, during the days of the formal establishment of the “Republic of Hawai‘i” Helekūnihi began work as District Judge, ably trying numerous cases.<sup>5</sup>

The anti-annexationists’ insinuation that Elia was given this honour because he was a “*haole* pet” does not adequately address his long service to all Hawai‘i’s people as teacher, pastor, lawyer, and in legislator – a man eminently qualified for the position. *Ka Makaainana* reported on 4 June, “On 30 May, the District Judge for the District of Wailuku, was terminated and Elia Helekūnihi has been appointed to fill his place – that erring, whitewashed loser of Ha‘ikū, because Daniela refused to take that poisonous oath.” The author mentioned that a petition had been presented to the Government “to ease the pain of Daniela,” but that “it is a plea that has not been heard...The sighing of this nation cannot be fully comprehended.”<sup>6</sup> Though Helekūnihi viewed his promotion as a natural step in his service to the community, many of his compatriots believed he was set up by the *haole* oligarchs as a token Hawaiian complicit in their

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 June 1894.

<sup>3</sup> William Adam Russ, *The Hawaiian Republic (1894-98): and Its Struggle to Win Annexation* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1992), pp. 4-8.

<sup>4</sup> Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, p. 160.

<sup>5</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 30 June, 7 July, 14 July, 28 July 1894. The “Republic” was inaugurated 4 July 1894.

<sup>6</sup> *Ka Makaainana*, 4 June 1894.



goal of annexation. He was, however, a man with a strong will, unwilling and incapable of fulfilling *haole* expectations that he would remain their “pet.”

Helekūnihi had devoted Hawaiian supporters in the communities of Ha‘ikū and Makawao, who congratulated him on his appointment, while lamenting his departure from their community. Respected for his faith, integrity and long service to the church and nation, there is no hint that he had lost respect due to his annexationist position. “The friends of the Church of Ha‘ikū” contributed a glowing letter of praise for the gifts and virtues of their “father,” Elia Helekūnihi:

“Love to you! On Wednesday, 30 May, the appointment of Elia Helekūnihi as District Judge of Wailuku took place. On Monday, he dedicated himself to proceed and established a prestigious residence in Wailuku...From us, the friends of the church here in Ha‘ikū, our strong voices have appealed to the Lord of Lords for you to continue (successfully) in this station. Though your advanced years have arrived, with love and great sorrow (for us) you have become father to a district far away...But we cannot hold you back, as this task is laid on your shoulders by our All-powerful Father...E. Helekūnihi is a father for the Church, a support, a prophet, a lamp that shines for the people who don’t know the good word of God. And great are the blessings in this church through E. Helekūnihi’s re-organisation; he was treasurer for the Sabbath school of this church; he was pure in caring for many kinds of funds.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 9 June 1894.

In August, the anti-annexationist press began their attack on Helekūnihi's credibility as judge. Norrie's monarchist *Hawai 'i Holomua* published a piece entitled, "A Republican Judge," in which Elia was described as a "so-called Judge," who "is a pet of the present government, more especially of H.P. Baldwin."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, "he has never been very brilliant as a lawyer or a man." E.H. Bailey, prominent missionary son, had been arrested on a charge of embezzlement, but according to the paper, Bailey belonged to "the family compact" (missionaries) and "the obedient judge refused to issue the warrant." The Circuit Court was petitioned to appoint a temporary magistrate to circumvent Elia, and Bailey was arraigned. "The appointment of a man like Helekūnihi has created great dissatisfaction in Wailuku and the government has not made friends there by the importation to the Wailuku District of an ignoramus like the judge in question." It is not credible to characterise a man as well-educated, accomplished and ethically grounded as Elia Helekūnihi in these terms, but the politics of the time were tightly wrought and the Yellow Press was the vehicle for expressing this.

*Ka Leo o ka Lahui* published an article entitled "The Pagan Judge," a title hardly fitting for a man who spent his entire life devoted to Christian service.<sup>9</sup> He was sarcastically lampooned as a "heathen judge" because of his refusal to provide a warrant for Bailey. The editor opined, "It is amazing that there are Hawaiians who are willing to support someone in the wrong." Making a play on words about the meaning of Helekūnihi's name, he wrote, "He stands, therefore, in the manner of his name: "One who walks crookedly;" "One who goes with difficulty, as through a

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<sup>8</sup> *Hawaii Holomua*, 7 August 1894.

<sup>9</sup> *Ka Leo ka Lahui*, 9 August 1894. Chapin (*Hawaiian Newspapers*, p. 54), refers to this as a foremost nationalist paper, published by John Bush: "Devoted to the best interests of the Hawaiian nation and maintenance of its autonomy. Bush, theoretician of Hawaiian sovereignty, advocated a free press and a republican form of government." Here is an example of a Hawaiian dedicated to independence, yet not a monarchist.

tight opening;” “One who goes ineffectively;” “One who goes for the Pagan” (Bailey was hardly a “pagan!”).

In September, *Holomua* again tore into Helekūnihi’s reputation as a judge.<sup>10</sup> Referring to him as one of “Judd’s pets,” the paper chided him for requiring plaintiffs in any case to sign the oath to the Republic.<sup>11</sup> The writer continued, “It is hardly possible to believe the truth of such an assertion, but we are ready to believe any accusations against Judd and Smith because we have cause enough to know the unparalleled unscrupulousness of these men.”<sup>12</sup> Helekūnihi appears to have been blamed for a policy that was dictated from his superiors. It is not, however, surprising that Hawaiian nationalists attacked other Hawaiians perceived to be complicit in implementing policies considered unjust.

In October 1894, Helekūnihi adjudicated a case involving a “certain Chinese man,” who brought suit against the prominent royalist lawyer, John Richardson (1853-1917), brother of Judge George Richardson, for the crime of “*pakapio*,” obstructing an officer in the line of duty.”<sup>13</sup> The editor of *Kuokoa* gloated over the prospect of this Royalist thorn in the side of the annexationsists being tried publicly for this crime and it is ironic that the brother of the judge

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<sup>10</sup> *Hawaii Holomua*, 13 September 1894.

<sup>11</sup> Albert Francis Judd (1838-1900) was Chief Justice of the Hawaiian Supreme Court from 1881-1900 (see *Hawaiian Gazette*, 22 May, 1900). He was son of early missionary physician Gerrit Parmele Judd, who offered useful service to several Hawaiian kings. A.F. Judd appears to have been a sophisticated man, noted for being fair and just, disapproved of the manner in which the Bayonet Constitution was promulgated and sided with the King on the issue of his right to veto (See Kuykendall, *Kingdom*, vol. 3, pp. 414). While Elia Helekūnihi would not have appreciated being called Judd’s pet, he most certainly would have respected him highly.

<sup>12</sup> William Owen Smith (1848-1929) was missionary son (his father was James William Smith with whom Elia served at Kōloa), a prominent lawyer, member of the “Hawaiian League,” and key player in both the Bayonet Constitution and overthrow of the Queen. He was Attorney General of both the P.G. and the Republic of Hawai’i. One can well understand why the monarchists despised him. (See Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3.)

<sup>13</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 20 October 1894. In the English language article of the *PCA* it is “obstruction of justice.”

who was Elia's mentor should come before him. The case, involving such a prominent member of the opposition to the Republic, was much followed in the Islands and Judge Helekūnihi repeatedly postponed the trial.<sup>14</sup>

In December 1894, the first of a series of cases involving Chinese gambling and opium trafficking came before Helekūnihi.<sup>15</sup> On the night of the 23rd, deputy sheriffs Dickey and King raided a Chinese gambling den and “twenty-two Celestials were lodged in Wailuku jail” and Judge Helekūnihi laid on them stiff fines.” In March 1895, the premises of Young Hee, “the most prominent, as well as the most wealthy Chinaman on Maui,” were raided and police found sixty-five tins of opium, as well as twenty-five pipes. Young Hee pleaded guilty and Helekūnihi fined him \$250.<sup>16</sup> Shortly thereafter, the case that led to his betrayal came before Helekūnihi.<sup>17</sup> Hee was again brought before him on a bribery charge. Deputy Sheriff C.W. Dickey (Elia's old neighbour) and police captain, R. Lindsay, had contrived an elaborate sting operation to catch another Chinese man, Young Long, in the act of trafficking in opium and running gaming establishments. Young Long was told that if he paid certain sums of money to the officers, then he “should remain unmolested” in his illicit traffic. The police, it was said, then called in Hee to act as interpreter for the transaction. “The naughty officers had right along been pulling the poor Celestial's leg” and both men were arrested on charges of bribery. After a three day trial, in which Dickey and Lindsay presented what they thought was conclusive evidence against Young Hee, Helekūnihi convicted Long, but released Hee, claiming that there was not enough evidence

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<sup>14</sup> See also *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 29 October 1894.

<sup>15</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 31 December 1894.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March 1895.

<sup>17</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 16 March, 1895; *The Hawaiian Star* 21 March, 1895.

to warrant a conviction.<sup>18</sup> This decision displeased the *haole* establishment on Maui, particularly Sheriff Lorrin A. Andrews (son of Helekūnihi's teacher at Lahainaluna, Claudius Andrews). Again, Elia Helekūnihi demonstrated that he was not their "pet," but a man of independent agency. Sheriff Andrews appeared "to be determined to further prosecute" Young Hee, so it was decided to re-try him before Circuit Judge Kalua, the arch-annexationist.<sup>19</sup> Kalua was more pliable in the hands of the *haole* power brokers than Helekūnihi, and Young Hee was convicted.<sup>20</sup>

The anti-Republic English language *Independent*, also edited by Norrie, had hardly got off the ground when it began its vituperative attacks on Elia Helekūnihi.<sup>21</sup> In September 1895, Norrie wrote of "the capers which some of the petty magistrates in the country districts cut, when vested with the judicial powers of the bench." "Under the monarchy," he opined, "the district judges were generally of an average decency and ability...Since taking the oath to the republic was made a necessary condition to obtain office, the material from which judges could be selected was diminished very largely, and the magistrates in many instances are men of no intelligence." He referred to Elia Helekūnihi, as being "for certain reasons a protégé of the powerful Alexander-Baldwin faction," who is "a constant source of amazement and amusement to the Wailukuites." According to Norrie, Helekūnihi acquitted a "Chinaman" charged with selling liquor without a licence, though the charge was "clearly proven," because when he went home to lunch his Chinese cook told him the man was innocent. Norrie did not explain why

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<sup>18</sup> See English language version of the case in *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 20 March 1895.

<sup>19</sup> *Hawaiian Star*, 9 April 1895.

<sup>20</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 15 April 1895.

<sup>21</sup> *The Independent*, 17 September 1895. Edited by Edmund Norrie, previously editor of *Holomua* (see note 250 above).

Helekūnihi was lenient towards a member of a minority disliked by both Hawaiians and *haoles*, which would not have ingratiated him with the “Alexander-Baldwin faction.” Helekūnihi exhibited a rare independence of judicial deliberation surprising to both his Hawaiian and his *haole* detractors.

After the 23 October 1895 death of Joseph Kawainui, “esteemed child of the White Rain of Hāna,” passed away and stalwart editor of both *Ko Hawaii Pae Aina* and *Kuokoa* Helekūnihi lost an important friend and ally. Kawainui had served the Kingdom of Hawai‘i as member of Kalākaua’s Privy Council, Board of Education, Board of Health, Tax Collector, Bureau of Immigration and Legislature of 1887-88, and was a strong supporter of both the Republic and Annexation.<sup>22</sup> He was so universally respected that among his pall bearers were luminaries of the Native Hawaiian resistance such as Joseph Nawāhī and John Bush, and prominent members of the *haole* oligarchy, like William Alexander and Nathaniel Emerson, attended his funeral. *Kuokoa* published a long and heart-felt letter to Mrs. Kawainui from “Mr. and Mrs. Helekūnihi.”<sup>23</sup> Helekūnihi was increasingly isolated, as the old guard of missionary educated Hawaiian Calvinist Christians was passing, the remaining Hawaiian leadership opposed him and Hawai‘i was now governed by men who had little time or space for any Hawaiian.

The *Independent* continued its relentless attacks on Helekūnihi’s professionalism and integrity as judge.<sup>24</sup> Norrie’s sarcasm knew no bounds: “We have had occasion to mention the peculiarities of the virtuous gentleman who, under the aegis of Henry Baldwin, presides at the

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<sup>22</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 24 October 1895; *Joseph Kawainui, Government Office Holders*, H.A., accessed 10 August, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 2 November 1895.

<sup>24</sup> *The Independent*, 4 November 1895

judicial organ in the Wailuku courthouse. We mean the learned district judge, Mr. Helekūnihi.” Norrie claimed that both Helekūnihi and Sheriff Andrews were “pets” of Baldwin – one “does the executive business, while Helekūnihi attends to the judicial affairs.” “The two branches, in fact the two pets, quarrel occasionally, and then the rest of King Baldwin’s subjects lie back and watch the fur fly.” One day in court Andrews called Elia “an imbecile, that he was esteemed in that category by the whole government, and that any five-year-old boy knew more law than the gentleman in the judiciary chair of Wailuku.” Helekūnihi had not accepted the Sheriff’s evidence in some cases of illicit distilling of sweet potato beer and had acquitted the defendants. In this instance, the paper appeared to favour Elia, who listened patiently to Andrews’ rant that he would never prosecute cases before him again, to which Elia responded with a smile, ignoring “the insults offered to him by the autocrat of Wailuku.” The next day, however, Andrews did appear in court to prosecute a man charged with assault. “With a sarcastic smile, the judge reminded the Sheriff of his avowed intentions not to prosecute before the ‘imbecile court,’ but Andrews did the old trick, and as the Hawaiians say, ‘*Ho’i hou ka pa’akai i Waimea*’ (“The salt has gone back to Waimea”), which means, “someone who starts out on a journey and then comes back again.”<sup>25</sup> The die was cast and Andrews, one of the most powerful men in the *haole* oligarchy on Maui, became Helekūnihi’s dangerous adversary.<sup>26</sup> He was now isolated, almost alone and expendable to those he had once trusted as friends due to his “tender ties” with their missionary parents.

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<sup>25</sup> Pukui, ‘*Ōlelo No ‘eau*, 1028.

<sup>26</sup> The office of island governor had been replaced by that of sheriff, undoubtedly because the governorships had been associated with royal privilege.

## ***Ke Kīpē*** **The Bribe**

According to the court record of 14 May 1896, Elia Helekūnihi:

“on the 18th of November last, in Wailuku, Maui, corruptly accepted a bribe of twenty-four dollars from one Lum Pak, under an agreement and understanding that in the exercise of the respondent’s function as District Magistrate he would acquit and discharge certain defendants in the case of the Republic of Hawaii vs. Lum Pak and others, charged with gaming, which case was then and there pending before him. The Attorney General prays that on proof of the charge the respondent be dismissed from office.”<sup>27</sup>

On 17 November 1895, several Chinese were arrested in Kahului for gaming.

“Information came to Sheriff of Maui, L.A. Andrews, that the District Magistrate was willing to take a bribe of 20 dollars in order to acquit these parties who were to be tried the following day.” Andrews went through the trouble of marking twenty Hawaiian Kalākaua silver dollars “by making a shallow hole in the ball surmounting the crown over the coat of arms” and gave them to Lum Pak, “a Chinaman” to offer to Helekūnihi as a bribe.<sup>28</sup> Helekūnihi refused the bribe, but Pak and Andrews persisted and, having heard from “Lee Long, a washerman,” that he might

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<sup>27</sup> *Hawaii Reports, Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of the Territory of Hawaii, 1895-97*, Hawaii, Supreme Court, “Hawaii Reports: Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of the Territory of Hawaii, Volume 24,” Google Books (Honolulu star-bulletin, Limited), accessed October 14, 2020, [https://books.google.com/books/about/Hawaii\\_Reports.html?id=vsoDAAAAYAAJ](https://books.google.com/books/about/Hawaii_Reports.html?id=vsoDAAAAYAAJ). Submitted 30 March 1896, Decided 14 May 1896.

<sup>28</sup> It is not without irony that the attempt to take down this man who had struggled for years to address perceived “corruption” and “extravagance” at the court of Kalākaua should be accomplished through the use of a coin bearing his likeness and displaying the pretentious European symbols of royal dominion that would have been offensive to him.



accept \$24, Pak went the next evening to try again. Captain Lindsay hid “in the yard some 25 feet distant under a mango tree.” On this occasion, Elia and his wife accepted the bribe and Lum Pak methodically counted the twenty-four dollars into Kahalenoe’s hands. It seems inconceivable that a man with a life-long dedication to all that is *pono* would accept a petty bribe, but we know from Kahalenoe’s dire straights after his death that Helekūnihi was penniless, despite his illustrious *mo‘okū‘auahau* and faithful service to church and nation for many years. Though Hawaiians had been diminished, displaced and impoverished by white settler colonialism, men like Helekūnihi supported annexation because they believed that annexation would lift the Hawaiian people out of poverty. The tragedy of Elia Helekūnihi is that a man rooted in the ancient chiefly traditions of Hawai‘i, whose life exemplified the model Hawaiian to his missionary mentors, was reduced to accept a petty bribe. His notion that America was the source of *na‘auao*, enlightenment, blinded him to the hard fact that the missionary sons could never see Hawaiians as their equals and would ensure that they never had economic, political or cultural currency in the emerging American Hawai‘i. Feeling powerless and overwhelmed at their inability to meet the basic needs of their family, Elia and Kahalenoe took the bribe.

Lorrin A. Andrews bore a deep grudge against Elia Helekūnihi, one that seemed unimaginably harsh. Ironically, he was the son of Elia’s teacher at Lahainaluna, Claudius Andrews, and was born during Elia’s third year at the school.”<sup>29</sup> According to Andrews’ obituary, he frequently said, “The greatest inheritance one can have is that of being born of Christian parents.” He was said to have “inherited strong principles and a strong will to stand by the right as he saw the right.” He had “quick judgement, and cares little for the opinions of others

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<sup>29</sup> Lorrin A. Andrews, Obituary, *The Friend*, Vol.LXIX, no. 3, 1 March 1911.

when he believes himself to be in the right.” Surprisingly, we are told that “his love for the Hawaiians secured the respect of all who wished to do right.” Despite these accolades, he was later dismissed as Sheriff of Hawai‘i Island because “he was personally unpopular on account of his alleged arbitrariness, and it is also stated that the illicit sale of liquor flourished in his bailiwick.”<sup>30</sup> This is the man who destroyed Elia Helekūnihi.

The next day, his old annexationist friend, Judge Kalua, issue a warrant for Elia’s arrest.<sup>31</sup> Kalua, in fact, joined Andrews in making the arrest. “Mr. and Mrs. Helekunihi denied all knowledge of the matter,” and when the Sheriff searched the house and found the marked dollars at the back of a drawer, the couple feigned ignorance. “The Helekunihis claimed that the money was perchance money for a lot of dried fish that had come to Mrs. Helekunihi for sale.” It is significant that the court record stated, “We should hesitate before condemning a man of such good standing as Mr. Helekunihi on the evidence of a Chinese witness who was apparently acting as an informer and had a strong motive to ensare the magistrate and win the favor of the police.” Notwithstanding attacks on his character in the opposition press, Elia Helekūnihi remained a highly respected man with a spotless record, in so many ways the ideal product of the New England Mission: a devout Christian, a highly educated literary man and a partisan for American democratic values. We may recall multiple occasions when he was moved by injustice, as in his defence of contract labourers and Hansens’ disease patients, or his outrage at perceived corruption at the court of Kalākaua and when fellow legislators accepted a bribe. Now, he was being taken down by the sons of the mission. A Hawaiian, no matter how obedient

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<sup>30</sup> *San Francisco Call*, 22 June 1905.

<sup>31</sup> *Hawaii Reports, Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of the Territory of Hawaii, 1895-97*.

to the doctrines and political principles of the *haoles*, could never advance and thrive in the Social Darwinist world of white supremacy.

The court stressed that “it is a painful duty to have to pass condemnation upon the respondent, a man who has held many offices for a long series of years, and has had the confidence of several successive administrations. Men of good intentions but not very strong wills sometimes yield to temptations when they feel confident that detection will not follow.” The thinly veiled racism of this characterisation of an otherwise compliant Hawaiian is reminiscent of Charles Kingsley’s infamous line, “There are congenital differences and hereditary tendencies which defy all education.”<sup>32</sup> The court was not impressed with Elia’s argument that he was “on such terms of hostility with the Sheriff that he did not feel called upon to make any explanation.” He was found guilty and deposed as District Judge of Wailuku. Unsurprisingly, he was replaced by *haole* deputy sheriff, A.W. Carter, nephew of Henry P. Carter, prominent businessman and politician in the Kingdom of Hawai‘i and son of an early American settler in the islands.<sup>33</sup>

The English language press showed minimal interest in the trial of Elia Helekūnihi, though it was covered thoroughly by the Hawaiian press. The editors who had taken such delight in mocking and lampooning him as judge in Wailuku did not gloat over his fall. The *Makaainana* reported that Kahalenoe was also tried, possibly because of her “demonstrations on the side of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i,” then coolly announced Elia’s arrival in Honolulu, described

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<sup>32</sup> C. Kingsley, *His Letters*, vol. 3, pp. 248-249, 265, cited in Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, p. 439.

<sup>33</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 23 May 1896; *Ka Oiaio*, 25 May, 1896; *Ka Makaainana*, 15 June, 1896.

the business of the trial and finally questioned why “he was inspired to commit this crime.”<sup>34</sup> *Ka Oiaio* reported the surprising fact that the powerful royalist lawyer, John Richardson, brother of Elia’s colleague, judge George Richardson, led the defence team, another example of the complex nuances of political allegiance in late 19th century Hawai‘i.<sup>35</sup> The verdict and termination of Helekūnihi were coolly reported without embellishment or criticism: “The Supreme Court has delivered the verdict in the case of E. Helekūnihi, who was accused of taking a bribe and he was convicted and his punishment is to have his position as District Judge of Wailuku terminated.”<sup>36</sup> It is noteworthy that both the monarchist and the annexationist press in Hawaiian covered the trial of this prominent Hawaiian annexationist in the same clear manner, seemingly without bias or judgement. It appeared that Hawaiians of all political persuasions mourned the fall of one of their own.

### ***Walohia wale Ho‘i* So Very Touching<sup>37</sup>**

Two weeks after the verdict, Elia Helekūnihi fell ill at his home in Wailuku, a broken and desperate man. Because he heard of the illness of one of his children in Ha‘ikū, he hurried back to the family home “because of this troubling news.” There, on the windward side of the island, he encountered “both rain and intense cold,” which exacerbated his illness. “Against this, he resisted like a fighter for his last hours and then he passed. He was given strong medicine by Dr.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ka Makaainana*, 25 November, 1895, 9 December, 1895, 23 December 1895, 6 April 1896.

<sup>35</sup> *Ka Oiaio*, 2 April 1896. This paper was published by fiercely anti oligarchy editor John Bush (See Chapin, *Newspapers*, p. 82.

<sup>36</sup> *Ka Makaainana*, 18 May 1896; *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 22 May 1896.

<sup>37</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 26 June 1896. The title of Elia Helekūnihi’s obituary. The tribute to his life and the description of his funeral service are taken from this article.

Egan and was watched vigilantly, however, the illness did not diminish.” According to one source, he “had a fever and vomited blood,” while his obituary simply states that he had “a powerful pain in his chest and, associated with this, there was a fever and pain in his windpipe, and they realised he had pneumonia.”<sup>38</sup> He passed away at 10:30pm on 16 June 1896. His obituary reported that he “left six living children, two grandchildren, one younger brother and one sister, as well as the wife of the deceased.”

With respect to the character of Elia Helekūnihi, his obituary informs us that “he had a modest disposition and was humble, pleasant and agreeable, seeing both sides of an equation. He was helpful to his friends, bearing to completion things of importance for his children and precious ones who have gone before him. He was a strong supporter of Christian work and a truly devout man.” Finally, it says poignantly, “The *haole* fathers above him truly trusted and relied on him.”<sup>39</sup>

In another piece, published in the *Kuokoa* much later, on 24 July, Joseph P. Kapihe, Police officer of Makawao, offered a fitting tribute to Elia’s life:

“Our Father, E. Helekūnihi,” Kapihe wrote, “was a man who could be greatly relied on by the people of the District of Makawao. He was also a man who was faithful in *pono* deeds for the Kingdom of God...Many were his helpful deeds for the churches, Sunday Schools and his friends and beloved companions. His very best work was his loving

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<sup>38</sup> *Ka Oiaio*, 22 June 1896.

<sup>39</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 26 June, 1896: “*He kulana akahai kona me ka haahaa. He oluolu me ka heaheha, he ike i kela ame keia, he kokua i kona mau hoaloha, e hapai an a hiki i ke ko ana a he mea nui na keiki a me he lei momi la imua ona, he koo ikaika no na hana Kristiano a he haipule oiaio. Ua kilinai mai hoi na makua haole maluna ona.*”

assistance when the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was deeply troubled, and he led his beloved companions to support the new government without looking to cling to the monarchy. All the while, his friends supported him. He was made strong without despairing and was able to do his assigned work despite the criticism he received. And here, his friends serving in the government up until now, express our affection...I am thinking that we are a people with an unpaid debt for the kindness of our Father...I am praying with a powerful voice to the Heavenly Powers, to lighten all our heavy hearts. The word of God is spoken thus: ‘Man who is born of woman is bitter all his days.’ Thus, it was for our Father E. Helekūnihi, and a similar lesson applies to all people and it is my confidence that Elia Helekūnihi died the death of a devout man.”<sup>40</sup>

His respect in the Hawaiian community was such that, despite previous animosity, the opposition newspapers reported his death in a sober and dignified manner. *Ka Makaainana* simply stated that “E. Helekūnihi died in Ha‘ikū. He was 58 years old and served as a lawyer and district judge of Wailuku. He left a wife and family behind him.”<sup>41</sup> *Ka Oiaio* respectfully referred to him as “The Reverend” and stated that “many knew his name throughout the Kingdom of Hawai‘i” and “great is the grief for this man, who is beloved...There were many reasons why he was burdened in his tenure in government service.”<sup>42</sup>

His funeral at Kalanikahua Church in Ha‘ikū was attended by a very large crowd. The ministers who conducted his service included Samuel Kapu, accomplished musician and hymn-

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<sup>40</sup> *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa*, 24 July 1896.

<sup>41</sup> *Ka Makaainana*, 22 June 1896.

<sup>42</sup> *Ka Oiaio*, 22 June 1896.

writer, who was at this time pastor of Wailuku and Waikapū where Elia would have attended church while he served as judge. Kapu was another Hawaiian pastor who supported annexation and, in the days after the overthrow of the Queen assisted the HEA in dealing with the rejection of annexationist clergy by the congregations that supported her.<sup>43</sup> Henry Perrine Baldwin, the “sugar king” of Maui and Mr. and Mrs. Dickey, Ha‘ikū Plantation storekeepers and Elia’s neighbours, were among the mourners at his funeral. According to his probate record from May 1897, Elia Helekūnihi was buried on the hill then known as “Puuoumi,” now known as “Haiku Hill,” and his grave site is unknown.<sup>44</sup> He left 2.5 acres of land leased to Hāna Plantation (possibly from Luika’s estate), a small share in a piece of land in Wailuku and six law texts, all in the Hawaiian language. The sale of all his property was ordered to cover his debts and the family was left destitute, with the sale of the Hāna land to satisfy his creditors taking place 22 November 1897.<sup>45</sup>

### **An Authentic Hawaiian Life**

The life of Elia Helekūnihi confirms Sahlins’ view that “structures of the long run shadow forth in historic change.” Through the cataclysmic changes that Hawaiians confronted in the nineteenth century as they faced missionisation, demographic decline and U.S. colonial intervention, the traditional categories of *pono*, *aloha* and *kuleana* persisted, enabling them to endure as a people. Many Hawaiians employed these values to resist the “colonisation by stealth” that characterised the U.S. imperial programme, Kramer’s “low overhead” empire,

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<sup>43</sup> Williams, *Claiming Christianity*, 142.

<sup>44</sup> “Hawai‘i, Wills and Probate Records, 1822-1962 (Honolulu), First Circuit Court, Probate Records, 3093-3120.,” Ancestry.com, accessed October 14, 2020, [https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/9046/images/007659664\\_00006?usePUB=true&\\_phsrc=iMT256&usePUBJs=true&pId=10820](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/9046/images/007659664_00006?usePUB=true&_phsrc=iMT256&usePUBJs=true&pId=10820).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 22 November 1897.

whereby the Kingdom was gradually infiltrated by American religious, legal, cultural and economic norms.<sup>46</sup>

Other Native Hawaiians accommodated the arrival of Westerners by redefining Western values in accordance with Hawaiian tradition. When the Ka‘ahumanu chiefs adopted Christianity and sponsored the evangelisation of their people, they articulated the new faith as an expression of the traditional Hawaiian *kapu* religious system. Their Calvinism was authentically Hawaiian and employed multiple elements of ancient practice. This thesis defends Hawaiian agency in opposition to the view that Hawaiians were victims of missionaries or Anglo-American settler colonists. The family of Elia Helekūnihi joined other *kaukauali* ‘i as foot soldiers for the high chiefs in spreading literacy and Christian faith to the *maka ‘āinana*. After the passing of the old chiefs, the latter abandoned the Calvinist Church as a Trojan horse for U.S. imperial designs.

Helekūnihi and other Hawaiian elites of his class defined their *kuleana* for the old chiefs in terms of fidelity to their Church, to the missionaries and to the United States, perceived as the source of *na ‘auao* and *pono*. Despite the Social Darwinism of the *haole* oligarchs who resisted and thwarted Hawaiian leadership in church and government, Helekūnihi achieved a high degree of influence. He was motivated by traditional Hawaiian categories of meaning, which ironically led to his decision to support annexation. Like some other ardent annexationists, Helekūnihi, was a conservative outlier, retaining a *kuleana* for the old Calvinist chiefs, and thereby defending what he understood to be the old and more authentic Hawaiian traditional order.

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<sup>46</sup> Paul A. Kramer, “Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,” *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011): pp. 1348-1391, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.116.5.1348>.



This thesis also defends the integrity of men like Elia Helekūnihi, whose respect for the missionary sons and support for their imperialist agenda might be construed as sycophantic or motivated by personal gain. The *haoli* oligarchy had hoped to use him as a model Hawaiian, a pawn to achieve their goal of annexation, but could not comprehend that his goal differed qualitatively from theirs. He desired to retrieve the balance and harmony of *pono* for his people, oppressed by poverty, injustice and disease, that once constituted the *kapu* order of righteous chiefs, the last of whom were in the circle of Ka‘ahumanu. That he believed *pono* could be achieved through union with the United States set him at odds with most Hawaiians, but his authenticity as a Hawaiian traditionalist cannot be denied. His integrity was demonstrated in his consistent stand for justice for Hawaiians in the Legislatures of 1876 and 1887, which at times set him at odds with the missionary sons. It was shown in his willingness to oppose his own compatriots, whether other elites or the King himself, in pursuit of *pono*, earning their disapprobation. Helekūnihi’s *mo‘okū‘auhau* in the lineage of the sacred Maui chiefs and his vocation as a Christian motivated him all his life and, though his fall was a tragic consequence of colonial dispossession and betrayal, it did not define him. He was a *pono* man who lived an authentic Hawaiian life. We may view his behaviour and that of other Hawaiian elites who accommodated U.S. colonial desire as naïve and perplexing, but where they faithfully demonstrated the *kuleana* and *aloha* of the ancient *ali‘i* for the *maka‘āinana*, in them the chiefly traditions of old Hawai‘i persisted.

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