DIARCHY AND HISTORY IN HAWAII AND TONGA

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For Tancredi, my sacred junior.

Kings on the chessboard

The chessboard fascinates the king: He plays on it military metaphors of all the battles that he fights; he can see himself in a piece that is their almost immobile centre, but whose continuous existence keeps the game going. In the relationship between king and bishops, knights or pawns he finds an equivalent of the social system that multiplies his power through the powers of all others, and thus makes him uniquely active while removing him from most particular actions. The *primum mobile* is also a *primum immobile:* it is by contemplating and enacting this paradox on all chessboards, literal and metaphorical, that kings become good chess players.

I know only one major exception to the royal reputation for good chess playing: Charles XII of Sweden. But it is a classical case of the exception confirming the rule. Charles never won a chess game because he played almost only with one single piece: the king (Voltaire 1957: 173). A champion of royal absolutism, he dreamed on the chessboard of being a king so absolute that he did not need his subjects' support to win, so intrinsically powerful that he did not have to stay behind the lines. This is how he ended up a solitary crowned piece on the chessboard of Europe, until a cannonball put an end to his life and to his fantasies.

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Charles' chess playing is thus a good metaphor of the dangers a king runs when he forgets the intrinsically paradoxical nature of his person: a concentrate of absolute, divinely ordained power, he nevertheless cannot act as if this power were really autonomous. Indeed, if he attempts to act on this premise, as Charles did on his chessboards, he usually reveals his individual powerlessness, and thus that the power supposed to reside in his body resides in fact in the social body. Kings beware not to take your metaphoric identification with society too seriously! Beware of the hybris of absolute power! For their own good, kings have always had to cut through the rhetoric of their position: It is not only to their servants that kings fail to appear as gods, but also, to some extent at least, to themselves. Indeed what familiarity breeds more contempt than familiarity with oneself?

But kings have protected themselves against the perverse consequences of royal ideology not only by realizing, in the privacy of their consciousness or half-consciousness, that their absolute power is a matter of representation and thus ultimately of appearance (see, for instance, Hopkins 1978, 1: 216). They have also had recourse to their usual method of divide and rule: They have applied it to royal power itself.

It is possible to separate various and equally necessary aspects of royal power to avoid their contradictory or conflictual coexistence in the same person. The easiest way to achieve this is to associate two princes: One narcissistically preoccupied with representing the absoluteness of royal power, but never confronted with the task of literally demonstrating it on the chessboard of history; the other, a true chess player, a man conscious of the fact that royal power does not exist by internal virtue alone, but only through the actions and reactions of other men. Of course the intrinsic heteronomy of power is demonstrated by his colleague as well, whose representation of absolute power would have no power if it did not powerfully affect his subjects; but it would have no power, also, if it indicated this fact.

The tragedy of Charles XII was that of a general with the mentality of a god; it seems that sometimes such tragedies can be avoided by separating the general from the god, the man who plays chess with all the pieces from the man who plays it with only one piece: himself. Indeed diarchy appears to be a perennial temptation of kingship: a temptation to be resisted as much as yielded to, because in resolving one tension it may create another — rivalry between the two rulers. This paper treats a well documented case of tension between diarchic and monarchic tendencies — that of ancient Hawaii. The instability of diarchy in Hawaii is contrasted with its stability, until the late eighteenth century, in another Polynesian society, Tonga. These different solutions correlate with the different place that a properly historical representation of kingship — that is one that recognizes discontinuities in time, that does not abolish time by making the present identical to the past — have in the two societies. In Tonga, this historical representation was removed to the ideological periphery of kingship after its explicit or implicit subject matter, the contingencies of political negotiation and armed struggle, were removed from the sacred center and left to the care of a second, inferior ruler. At this point a ruler without history combined with a "historical" one.

In Hawaii, in contrast, where diarchy was never institutionalized, history remained — both as practice and as representation — at the center of kingship. There were rulers who approximated to the type of the historyless sovereign, but this type was realized in its purest form not so much by a separate person, as by the *representation* of the royal person in ritual contexts, that is in the temples and in the formal chanting of royal genealogical chants (see Valeri 1985, 1990). In sum, rather than a structural diarchy combining two separate offices, we find in Hawaii a polarity between the king as a fact (or perhaps an effect) of representation, existing by virtue of the "magical" powers of ritual representation, and the king as existing "on the chessboard", that is by virtue of his involvement in the entire range of social action. Furthermore, the relationship between these two poles of kingship was conceived more in dialectical and transformational terms than in terms of complementarity (cf. Valeri 1982). In sum, the realization of kingship into two separate princes was contingent in Hawaii; only its realization in "the king's two bodies" (cf. Kantorowicz 1957; Giesey 1987) was structural.

Sacred juniors and sacred seniors

"We noble ones, we good, beautiful, happy ones!" Few aristocracies illustrate better than the Polynesian Nietzsche's "noble mode of evaluation", for which vitality is the good, lifelessness the bad (Nietzsche 1969: 37). Nowhere else has the supreme good been identified to such an extent with the noble as the embodiment of life: a life that in the fullness of its strength is beautiful and takes pleasure in itself.

A corollary of this cult of the fullness of life is the importance given to the generative act. This importance is evident above all in Hawaii, where praise chants were composed for the aristocratic genitalia (Handy and Pukui 1972: 84; Pukui 1949: 257–58). Genital chants and genealogical chants were closely related, as they should be, since genealogies demonstrate the generative potency of a founding ancestor and of all his descendants, and thus a life so full that it triumphs over time by continuing and developing. This is precisely why the possession of genealogies is the principal sign of noble status, that is a status indicating fullness of life (cf. Valeri 1990). Yet this genealogical view of what is noble is not without ambiguities. The most striking one, perhaps, concerns the relative evaluation of past and present and thus of ancestors and descendants.

On the one hand, since all life comes from the ancestors, the past is superior to the present and time is viewed as a process of decay, of loss of an original potency. But on the other hand, this potency is manifested by continuity and proliferation in the course of time: the latter can thus be viewed as progress, as adding rather than subtracting potency to a line. The first view underlies the "status lineage" system with its characteristic "sinking status" effect: the further away in time (and thus genealogically) one is from the ultimate ancestor, the lower in status (and thus, ideologically, in fullness of life) one is (cf. Valeri 1990). This ideology is exemplified by the Tongan title system (see below).

The second view is implicit in those Polynesian systems in which rank is supposed to grow with the passage of generations. Such growth may occur because of the idea that the combined ranks of father and mother inevitably produce a higher rank in their children (particularly in the firstborn). The increase in rank may be obtained by a marriage that is either a combination of identicals (as in endogamous marriage) or a combination of different terms (as in the exogamous marriage of two high ranking nobles of different lines, cf. Valeri 1972). In both cases what comes after is superior to what comes before: parents are hierarchically subordinated to their children or at least to their firstborn.

But the idea that what comes after is superior to what comes before often exists independently of such mechanisms for the increase of rank through marriage: indeed in a number of cases youth seems to be closer than maturity or old age to the divine sources of life and to be raised accordingly in status. The most extreme manifestations of what could be called "the spiritual superiority of the child", by analogy with the famous "spiritual superiority of the sister" in Western Polynesia, are found in the Marquesas and in Tahiti.

In the Marquesas "the first born son of a chief, the exemplar of genealogical succession, brought about at once, from the moment of his birth, the demotion of his father" (Goldman 1970: 139). This resulted, however, in the formation of a diarchy, inasmuch as the father became his son's regent. Something analogous existed in Tahiti not only among the chiefs, but at almost all social levels. There, "the child from the moment of its birth [became] the head of the family" (Wilson 1799: 326; cf. Morrison 1935: 187), but his father retained the actual powers that went with the title he transmitted to him (Ellis 1829, 2: 346–47). These powers were then handed down piecemeal in the course of time until chiefly installation proper completed the process (Henry 1928: 185; Oliver 1974, 2: 644).

There are some similarities between the birth rite for the firstborn and the rite for welcoming a god in a temple. Furthermore the arrival of the child is explicitly referred to as the epiphany of a god (Oliver 1974, 1: 415, 416). Oliver speculates that the child received from both parents "a divine quality" which was "a portion of god himself" (Oliver 1974, 1: 443). Bligh (1789, 2: 24) reports a belief that the first born was sired by a god (presumably an ancestral one), not by his father directly. But can these beliefs really explain why the child was more divine than his parents? Supposing these to be themselves firstborns, are they not also sired by the god and have not they themselves received "a portion" of this god from their parents?

It seems to me that what makes the child more divine than his parents is partly that his birth signifies a further increase in the duration of their line, and thus embodies the increased prestige (that is reputation for vitality) that goes with it; partly the idea that by generating a child his parents lose to him some of their own divinely originated life. We thus confront the basic axiom that underlies these practices and beliefs: all other things (particularly first born status) being equal, youth is viewed as intrinsically superior to adulthood because it is richer in life and thus more divine for a religious thought that worships life.

This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that, although the firstborn is the most divine of children, his junior siblings are also in certain respects "mystically" superior to the members of their parents' generation. Morrison (1935: 184) reports that "a Child may curse its Father, Mother, Uncle or Aunt but it would be Blasphemy for them to curse it". We have here another remarkable parallel between the sacred child of Tahiti and the sacred sister (and paternal aunt) of Western Polynesia. For in both cases superior sanctity is associated with dangerous and in certain respects negative powers, such as those of cursing. In Tahiti, however, this dangerousness is much greater and must be neutralized by ritual means. Oliver thinks that it has a composite origin: the child is both polluted by its mother's blood and in possession of a "divine part". He thus interprets some of the rites for eliminating the child's dangerousness as purifications and some (the āmoʻa rites) as having the purpose of "either neutralizing or reducing the divinity of the child" (Oliver 1974, 1: 443). I am not convinced by this distinction. I think that the child is dangerous and thus polluting to his parents precisely because, being a child, he is superior to them in "raw" vitality.

If a ferdydurkian quotation may be forgiven here, the child's vitality makes it evident by contrast that his parents are "already poisoned by death". Furthermore, although this vitality is highly valued and thus divinized, its "rawness", the immaturity of the child, implies that it is in conflict with the cultural order represented by the parents. Thus the new "god" who has manifested himself at birth will have to lose some of his potency (and in time to become inferior to his own firstborn) to acquire a cultural form. He will have to be dedivinized or, rather, he will have to become a different kind of god: from a god outside culture, a polluting god superior in terms of raw vitality, he will have to become a god inside culture, a pure god superior in terms of order. This is, after all, the transformation undergone in ritual by all royal gods, in Tahiti as in Hawaii (cf. Valeri 1985a).

In less dramatic form, the sacred sister of Western Polynesia manifests an ambiguity similar to that of the sacred child of Tahiti. She is superior to her brother in the rank obtained at birth — the "natural" rank called "of the body" in Tonga (Biersack 1987) — and her powers are "black" (Rogers 1977), dangerous to her brothers and their agnatic descendants (cf. Valeri 1988). Are these similarities explained by the fact that the female members of the lineage incorporate, in their reproductive powers, the vital but "raw" aspect of the divine?[1] Is not the dangerous sacredness of the sister, like that of the child, an expression of the ambivalences involved in the Polynesian cult of vitality? Finally, are these ambivalences not at the bottom of the sister/brother diarchy in Tonga and elsewhere as they are at the bottom of the firstborn/ father diarchy in Tahiti and the Marquesas?

Instead of attempting to answer these questions here, I want to concentrate on another, much more widespread and significant diarchic outcome of the relationship between immaturity and maturity, present and past, vitality and precedence, in Polynesian societies. I am alluding to the extremely widespread elder brother/ younger brother diarchy (which, incidentally, may coexist with the forms discussed above). This diarchy is usually misconstrued as the association of the younger brother's "secular" power with the elder brother's "spiritual" power. But I follow Hocart (1970: 163) in rejecting this contrast as inapplicable to traditional Polynesian thought. All chiefly power, in fact, is ultimately derived from or made possible by the gods in the Polynesian view (cf. Valeri 1989). Whatever its surface manifestations, the diarchic association of two brothers (real or classificatory) must therefore be recognized for what it actually is: the association of two complementary (but also partly contradictory) manifestations of what is most worshipped — life's plenitude (Valeri 1985a, 1990).

The elder brother manifests plenitude by his inertia. Being full of life he does not have to work to obtain life. Being axiomatically potent, he does not have to force people into subjection. They voluntarily yield to him, they find him irresistible. Food and service seem to flow effortlessly to him. No woman is supposed to resist him. Between his desire and satisfaction the interval is so minimal that the torment of desire, the undermining of being that goes with it, seems unknown to this supposedly happy being. The Tu'i Tonga, the sacred king of Tonga, is one of the Polynesian rulers who better approximate this ideal type, which finds its most perfect expression in myth. It represents the ideal of an established order that effortlessly sustains itself, the paradox of a person who activates the world without himself being active.

The younger brother, in contrast, manifests the plenitude of his life through *his own* activity. More precisely: he can make other people act for him only by himself acting on them. They support him less because of his position than because he successfully influences or constrains them. He is a "working king" — one of the definitions of the *Hau,* that is the active counterpart of the Tu'i Tonga (Gifford 1929: 55; Bott 1982: 123). That the *Hau* is considered junior and the Tu'i Tonga senior (they descend from an actual pair of brothers, cf. Thomson 1894: 304–05; Gifford 1929: 83, 87) clearly indicates that the "inactive" aspect of the divine is viewed as superior to the active one. This hierarchy is probably explained by the identification of activity with a lack (that of the thing or state that must be sought) and thus with an imperfection (cf. Valeri 1982, 1985a, 1985b). A corollary of this view is that the senior is ontologically fuller than the junior.

The Tu'i Tonga and similar "otiose kings" owe their fuller being to their greater genealogical closeness to the supreme gods that are the sources of life (see above my remarks on the status lineage). Their actions, then, are mostly aimed at preserving the purity of this connection, obtained exclusively by birth. However, as those among men who are closest to the gods, they are also the principal ritual intermediaries between the divine and human realms. They are thus inevitably involved with society's most encompassing ritual. This gives them a "sacerdotal" identity. But it is illegitimate to conclude from this that, by contrast, the junior ruler is purely "secular". In fact, because there is hardly any activity that does not have ritual correlates and its presiding gods, the *Hau* and analogous active rulers have their own sacerdotal functions (cf. Valeri 1989 and below). The superior ruler is "sacerdotal", then, only in a relative sense: in the sense that he is in charge of the most encompassing rituals, and more generally, in the sense that his tasks, contrary to those of his active counterpart, are *only* sacerdotal.

However, there are cases in which the younger brother is entrusted with the ritual tasks and taboos that paradigmatically go to the elder (cf. Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 328). While these cases may theoretically be explained by the idea that, a bit like the sacred child of Tahiti, the younger brother is closer to the divine precisely because his birth is more recent, they are better explained, in my opinion, by his genealogical inferiority, which forces him to accept the servitudes and often intolerable constraints of the cult as a mere representative of his elder brother. This delegation of ritual servitudes to an inferior, without corresponding transfer of rights, is a common phenomenon. In certain parts of Indonesia, for instance, priestly duties go to junior lines (cf. Forth 1981: 254) or even to household slaves who act as representatives of their masters (cf. Forth 1981: 220; Hoskins 1987: 200).

A true reversal of the younger brother/elder brother hierarchy seems to be clearly attested only at the mythical level, where it is usually connected with the creation of some fundamental political institution. In these creations, which always imply the transcendence of an older order, and thus being for a while *outside* order, the superiority of the active type of vitality embodied by the younger brother is emphasized. Take, for instance, the origin of the Tuʻi Tonga title. The first Tuʻi Tonga is a man named ʻAhoʻeitu. As a small boy he goes to heaven in search of his father, the god ʻEitumatupua. When the god sees his son he is so overwhelmed by his beauty and strength, that he collapses to the ground (a sign of inferiority). Later ʻAhoʻeitu defeats his elder brothers at various games and, moreover, he is recognized as the most handsome by the spectators. In revenge, the brothers kill and eat him, but their father forces them to vomit and miraculously resuscitates ʻAhoʻeitu, sending him to earth as king of Tonga, Tuʻi Tonga. The elder brothers are forced to follow him as his servants and are thus transformed into his juniors (Gifford 1924: 25–29, 38–43; Rutherford 1977; Bott 1982: 90–91).

This myth demonstrates the superiority not only of the younger brother over his elder brothers, but also of the son over his father. Indeed ʻAhoʻeitu is the condensation of a sacred son and of a sacred younger brother: he demonstrates the superiority of youth, which is close to the creative sources of life, over established adulthood, even when the latter is represented by gods. But although the myth asserts the hierarchical superiority of the "immature" junior in the creation of order, that is *outside* it, it also reasserts the superiority of the senior *inside* the order. Indeed, once this order has been created, ʻAhoʻeitu ceases to be a younger brother, and exchanges his original hierarchical place with that of his defeated elder brothers (for a more detailed analysis see Valeri 1989).

We find something analogous in the creation of the Tuʻi Kanokupolu title, historically the most important of the *Hau* titles. The myth tells that the superiority of this originally junior title over two originally senior titles is due to what happened during a kava ceremony. Ngata, the founder of the title, was such a little child that he did not know the proper ritual procedures and as a consequence he kept for himself a cup of kava which should have gone to his elder brothers, as a sign of their superior rank. Amused and impressed by this infantile transgression, Ngata's father decides to leave the privilege of the cup to him, thereby transforming his seniors into juniors (Gifford 1929: 102, for a more detailed analysis see Valeri 1989). Here again the father bows to a child whose very youth seems to give him the privilege of being above hierarchy. But once this transcendent youth has effected a change in the established order, the principle that the senior is superior to the junior is reasserted by transforming the junior into senior and the seniors into juniors. No hierarchical ambiguity is allowed to creep into the system: the reversal of the junior/senior hierarchy is only tolerated, indeed required, before the system and so that the system can be generated.[2]

This Tongan refusal to tolerate (or perhaps acknowledge) hierarchical ambiguities in the elder/younger relationship contrasts with a greater tolerance in Hawaii. Correlatively, the contrast between what counts as superior in the constituting moments of history and what counts as superior in the constituted system is not as sharp in Hawaiian traditions. This contrast between the two cultures can be illustrated by comparing the outcome of ʻAhoʻeitu's story with the outcome of a very similar story in Hawaii. Like ʻAhoʻeitu, ʻUmi is born from the union of a father who comes from heaven and a terrestrial mother. Only, what appears as literal in the Tongan myth is openly metaphorical in the Hawaiian one: the "heaven" from which ʻUmi's father comes is that of high rank — he is a king (called *lani* "heaven" in Hawaiian); the "earthly" character of the mother is her commoner rank, which makes her a *maka'āinana,"* a person who takes care of the land". As in the Tongan myth, the father separates from the mother and returns to "heaven", where the son eventually follows him in search of his heritage. Like 'Aho'eitu, 'Umi forces himself on his father and is superior to Hākau, his elder brother, in every game of skill, in every sport and in popularity. A final parallel is that the younger brother is first attacked by the elder brother, then triumphs over him. But the parallels between the Tongan hero and the Hawaiian cease when we come to the resolution of the conflict with the elder brother. For 'Umi does not exchange places, by paternal order, with Hākau: he defeats him with his own force and, moreover, sacrifices him to his own god (Kamakau 1961: 1–21; Fornander 1916–1920, 4: 178–235; Valeri 1985b).[3]

Thus in the Hawaiian transformation of this myth the junior takes power as junior and not because he has transformed into a senior by an authority, that of the father, which is itself senior. 'Aho'eitu's usurpation is made to appear as an act of filial piety; it reconfirms the primacy of seniority and therefore does not constitute a charter for perennially questioning it. As a result, the ontological contrast between founding or "epic" past (cf. Bakhtin 1981) and subsequent time is much greater in Tonga than in Hawaii. In fact, one could argue that no such contrast really exists between 'Umi's time and subsequent times precisely because he furnishes a much followed precedent (see *infra,* and Valeri 1982, 1990).

A further proof of this ideological contrast between Tonga and Hawaii can be found in another feature of the legend of 'Umi, one that makes it comparable, this time, to the origin myth of the Tu'i Tonga/Hau diarchy. Seeing the impending conflict between 'Umi and Hākau, their father, Līloa, attempts to avert it by associating them in his succession, each with a separate function. Hākau, as *keiki hiapo,* the eldest child from the highest ranking wife, inherits *ka 'āina,* "the land", whereas 'Umi, who is inferior in rank, but strong and active, inherits *o ka hale akua a me ke akua,* "the house of the god and the god" (Fornander 1916–1920, 4: 183).

At first sight, it would seem that the younger brother is given here the function of priestly king. Indeed some have interpreted the 'Umi/Hākau diarchy as one in which the elder brother holds the "secular" control of "the land" while the younger brother holds the "sacerdotal" functions of kingship (Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 75). It is easy to show, however, that this interpretation is wrong. Hākau's control of the land has nothing secular about it, since it is a function of his superior sacredness, that is to say of his closer connection (genealogically given but validated through the performance of the appropriate temple rituals) with the gods, through whom land is controlled. As for ʻUmi's control of "the god", it is in fact the control of one god only: Kūkāʻilimoku. This is the active, warlike, conquering form of Kū, who is the supreme god of royalty in the island of Hawaiʻi. Indeed Kūkāʻilimoku's name means "Kū that snatches the island". This "land-grabbing god" is thus the perfect ritual counterpart of the younger brother as active, warlike figure. There is every indication that the elder brother, in contrast, is matched with Kū "in repose": Kūnuiākea, "Kū of the vast expanse", the god of inert encompassment (Valeri 1982, 1985b). We do not have here, then, a secular/spiritual (or sacerdotal) diarchy, but one in which the senior embodies the inert aspect of kingly power, while the junior is associated with its active aspect. Both these aspects have ritual correlates, so that in fact both rulers have "sacerdotal" functions (for Hākau's see Fornander 1916–1920, 4: 202–03).

As characterized in the legends, the Hākau/ʻUmi diarchy is strongly reminiscent of the Tuʻi Tonga/Hau diarchy in Tonga. As Hākau's authority is said to have consisted of the supreme control of the land and of the temple sacrifices, so the Tuʻi Tonga is said, in the origin myth of diarchy, to have been the "supreme lord of the soil only, and of the offerings" (Thomson 1894: 305). The same myth defines the Hau as a "chief over the people to govern it", which is reminiscent of ʻUmi's characterization as "popular" king. This control of the people implies, in Hawaii as in Tonga (Hau means "champion, conqueror", Churchward 1959: 213), superiority in military force and the control of its divine correlates (such as Kūkāʻilimoku in Hawaii and Taliai Tupou in Tonga).

Where Tonga differs from Hawaii is in emphasizing that the relationship between the two rulers must be one of complementary opposition rather than one of rivalry. The Hau does not dream of taking the Tuʻi Tonga's place: he is simply viewed as "working" for him, as having to furnish him with food and with his principal wife. Indeed, the origin myth of diarchy makes it clear that the Hau was introduced to protect the Tuʻi Tonga and to remove him from the destabilizing effects of involvement in everyday political and military struggle (Thomson 1894: 304–05; Bott 1982: 109, 113). The instability of the Hau is thus the counterpart of the stability of the Tuʻi Tonga.[4] A sign of this contrast is that while the Tuʻi Tongaship is rigorously hereditary from father to son, the Hauship is not, but goes to the strongest, most successful chief (Thomson 1894: 207). Thus the structural diarchy of Tonga also includes a complementary (and strongly hierarchical — except, as I have indicated, in some founding moments) opposition between two forms of temporality: time as eternal, identical repetition, as backward-oriented (of the "past in the present" type); and time as contingent, heterogeneous, forward-oriented. Continuity and discontinuity as two inevitable aspects of power are thus associated more than mediated in Tonga: continuity at the core of kingship is achieved by emptying it of anything that can threaten it, by expelling the very possibility of history into an institutionalized, if ideologically peripheral, position.

That this is not the Hawaiian solution of the continuity/ discontinuity contradiction is indicated by the contingent, non structural character of diarchy in the ʻUmi myth as in all other Hawaiian traditions. Hākau is so hostile to ʻUmi that the latter must flee the court: he returns to eliminate his half-brother and to reestablish the monarchic character of rule. He does not assume a higher rank than the one he is born to, but lays the grounds for reestablishing the dynastic continuity of kingship by marrying Kapukini, the high ranking full sister of Hākau and his own half-sister. Indeed, because rank is bilaterally transmitted and maternal rank is more important than paternal rank for a child born of an hypogamous union (Valeri 1972), ʻUmi's marriage with Kapukini allows him to obtain children of higher rank than himself and thus closer, in intrinsic worth, to the senior whom he has displaced. Senior and junior, inactive and active aspects of power are thus mediated in a temporal process (the full reconstitution of the highest rank by the patrilineal descendants of the usurper requires that they marry hypogamously for a certain number of generations — the greater the lower his rank was, cf. Valeri 1972) thanks to marriage. History is not removed from the sacred center and focused on an achieved position by an institutionalized diarchy; it is not, by the same token, devalued by the hierarchical inferiority of that position: it remains at the core of an ideologically unitary power for which diarchy can never be structural, but only a contingent moment in the process of reconstituting monarchy.

These differences in the relationship of power and temporality, and in the very status, contingent or necessary, of diarchy, appear to correlate with other institutional differences. In Tonga, rank was bilateral (and thus dependent on marriage) as in Hawaii, but title was in theory transmitted patrilineally and very often did not harmonize with rank (sisters, for ones, ranked higher than their brothers but could not inherit their patrilineage's title, Kaeppler 1971: 178). Furthermore, there was a system of "positional succession" which, by identifying all incumbents with the first possessor of the title, explicitly negated temporality (Bott 1981: 23; Valeri 1989). Tongan social structure thus generated a number of dichotomies that often remained unmediated: between title and rank, between title (or rank) and power built on clientship and military prowess, etc. Diarchy at the top, then, was the most visible manifestation of a tendency to unmediated duality that existed at every level.

In Hawaii the normative patrilineal title system of Tonga, with its ideology of positional succession, did not occur. There were named ranks and these would ideally be matched by corresponding political titles which were granted by the ruling king, not inherited. The hierarchy of titles corresponded to a quasi-feudal hierarchy of seigneurial rights. Rank and title, however, often became disconnected because certain contractual and power (military and clientelary) relations among nobles could override their relations in terms of rank (Valeri 1985b). But the bilateral nature of rank offered, as I have mentioned, the possibility of mediating rank and power through hypogamous marriage and thus of insuring that the successor of whoever had acquired political title because of his power would be legitimate in terms of genealogical seniority. The disconnection of rank and power, of rank and title was thus always provisional in Hawaii; but by the same token their connection could be equally provisional. The reproduction of the authority structure was thus intrinsically historical.

Of course, a dialectics of rank, power and title, where marriage played a mediating role, also existed in Tonga, as Bott (1981: 40 ff.) has shown. Nevertheless the system was made much less flexible there by the rule of patrilineal succession to title.[5] Moreover it seems that this rule had more chances to be violated at the hierarchical and spatial periphery of the Tongan "Empire" than at its center. The junior siblings in a political center (that is the sons of mothers coming from lower titled groups) were encouraged to move away from it and to try their luck in their maternal districts. There, it could happen that they or their children were able to succeed to the title-holder, exploiting their superior rank as sister's sons (as Queen Sālote put it: "half commoner at court, half king in the bush", Bott 1981: 41). The next possible stage, when the power acquired at the periphery was used to obtain higher rank (and eventually higher title) by "marrying up" (Bott 1981: 43), was a much rarer option in Tonga than in Hawaii (cf. Gifford 1929: 99; Leach 1972: 246–47; Biersack 1982: 201). At the very center (or top) of Tongan society, hypogamous marriage was discouraged and thus the very opportunity of succeeding to a title through a maternal connection was removed. At best, a powerful holder of an inferior title might support in the succession a son of a sister hypergamously married to the incumbent against the latter's sons with other wives or against the incumbent's brothers.

Ultimately, we have here another manifestation of the Tongan propensity to resolve a conflict of principles more by hierarchically polarizing them than by mediating them. There is a tendency to push the most disruptive (from the point of view of patrilineal continuity) forms of the dialectics of power, rank and title to the periphery, in order to perpetuate the integrity of the center as much as it is possible. The most visible manifestation of this tendency was the creation of a diarchic system in which an often non-hereditary Hauship was the condition of possibility of a Tuʻi Tongaship rigorously hereditary in the paternal line. No such radical contrast between the core and the outer part of society existed in Hawaii. Correlatively, a Tongan-type diarchy was never institutionalized but only existed as a provisional arrangement, a necessary compromise adopted by kingship in its constant, if often unsuccessful, striving for unity. Diarchy in Hawaii was thus a manifestation of monarchy's openness to history, not an attempt to limit history's impact by expelling it from society's core. To illustrate this point, let us now turn to the history of succession from ʻUmi to Kamehameha.

History to the core

A dual system of rule based on a sharp differentiation between ritual and "political-military" duties was found in Hawaii only at the administrative level, where a high priest was delegated by the king to take care of his religious duties and a functionary called *kālaimoku* ("island manager" Pukui and Elbert 1971: 112) was in charge of genealogical claims, land matters, tribute and the army — all on behalf of the king (Malo 1951: 187–89, 191–98). Kingship itself, although characterized by a duality of aspects (genealogical rank and control of clients and lands, ritual supremacy and military hegemony), was conceived as unitary. Thus these contrasting aspects tended to be articulated by a transformational scheme rather than by one in which they retained their separateness as complementary terms in a static opposition (cf. Valeri 1982, 1985a, 1985b). Furthermore these transformations were usually oriented: control of clients and land was transformed into genealogical rank, military hegemony into ritual one, more often than the other way round. The result was not only that any diarchic distribution of powers as might occur was unstable, but that its usual outcome was the unification of kingship by the lower ranking diarch, who typically was the "popular" military champion. To speak like Weber, charismatic militarism appears to have been of paramount importance.

The precedent both for the dual monarchy and for its transcendence by the inferior but heroic ruler, was given by ʻUmi, as we have seen. Let us now consider how this precedent was used or transformed or ignored by his descendants and successors to the rule of Hawaiʻi, the largest island of the Hawaiian archipelago. This dynastic history is the best known, because it belongs to the dynasty that, under Kamehameha and his successors, eliminated all others in the process of unifying the archipelago.[6]

According to the version followed by Fornander (1878–1880, 2: 103, 106) ʻUmi was succeeded by Kealiʻiokāloa, his eldest son by Kapukini, who was Hākau's sacred sister. Kealiʻiokāloa was in turn succeeded by his younger brother, Keawenuiaʻumi, a succession represented as an usurpation of the rights of Kealiʻiokāloa's son (Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 114).

According to the more complex account of ʻUmi's succession given by a nineteenth century Hawaiian historian, Kamakau (1961: 34), ʻUmi created a new diarchic arrangement to settle his succession: he divided the rule between his wife Kapukini and their two sons (she seems to have reigned over the whole kingdom, while they ruled over one half of it each). This diarchy was in a sense a transformation of the ʻUmi/Hākau diarchy, because Kapukini was the highest ranking living noble of the line issued

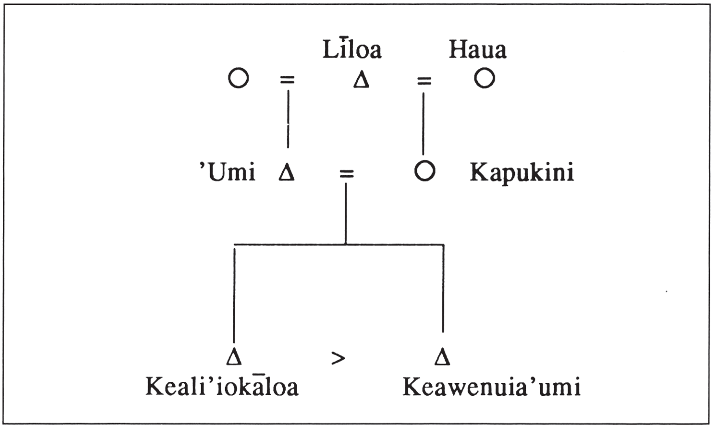

Figure 1. Genealogy of Keawenuiaʻumi and Kealiʻiokāloa.

from Līloa, while her sons by ʻUmi were hierarchically inferior to her. Moreover she represented, like her brother Hākau, the superior but politically and militarily inactive or less active pole of kingship, whereas her sons were actively concerned with ruling. But there was an important difference between this diarchic arrangement and its antecedent. The Hākau/ʻUmi diarchy combined two individuals of the same sex; this made them too similar and as a result rivals (cf. Valeri 1985a: 168). In contrast, the other diarchy was characterized by the solidarity existing between consanguines of the opposite sex, particularly between mother and son. However, while this diarchic arrangement was stable with regard to the mother/son relationship, it was made unstable by the relationship between the two sons. Kealiʻiokāloa and Keawenuiaʻumi are characterized respectively like Hākau and ʻUmi: the former was excessively proud of his seniority and cruelly abused it, while Keawenuiaʻumi was a popular and prolific ruler just like ʻUmi. He "was a kind ruler who looked after the welfare of chiefs and commoners, and increased the number of chiefly children" (Kamakau, *ibid.*). He is said to have taken pity on his brother's subjects and to have defeated him in war. Thus, after all, the story of Hākau and ʻUmi was exactly replicated: the younger popular brother became the only ruler by defeating the elder "unpopular" (Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 106) brother.

According to a tradition followed by Fornander (1878, 2: 114–15), Keawenuiaʻumi acknowledged on his deathbed his usurpation of the rights of the elder line issued from Kealiʻiokāloa, but instead of transferring the kingdom to Kūkaʻilani, Kealiʻiokāloa's son, he transferred it to Kaikilani, Kūkaʻilani's daughter and at the same time the joint wife of Kanaloakuaʻana and Lonoikamakahiki, Keawenuiaʻumi's sons. A new diarchic arrangement was thus created, constituted by the complementary opposition between a wife and her two husbands: the wife embodied the genealogically superior but inactive aspect, while her husbands embodied the genealogically inferior but active aspect. This arrangement was clearly meant to offer a solution to the conflicts that preceded it: the conflict between elder and younger line and the conflict between elder and younger brother. Indeed this marriage reunited the two rival lines and made the two brothers solidary, since it allowed them to share the high ranking woman who was the fountainhead of genealogical legitimacy.

Kamakau's account (1961: 45–46) of this succession is again different and more complex than Fornander's. He says that the kingdom was divided by Keawenuiaʻumi into three parts:

(1) The districts of Kona and Kohala were associated under two

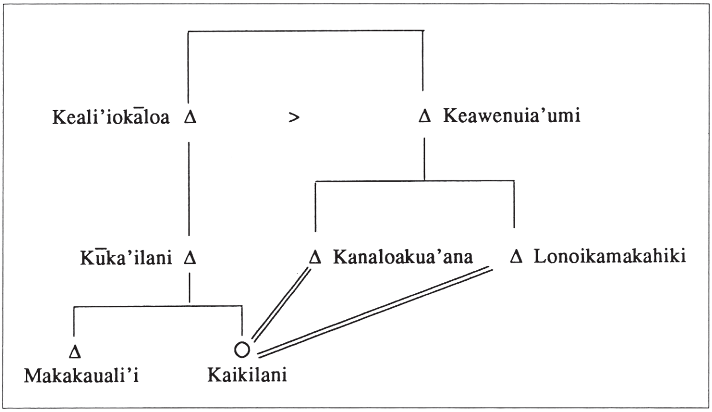

Figure 2. Genealogy of Kanaloakuaʻana and Lonoikamakahiki.

sons of Keawenuiaʻumi: ʻUmiokalani was supreme ruler and Kanaloakuaʻana was his subordinate co-ruler. Incited by his priests, Kanaloakuaʻana brought war to his brother, defeated him, and usurped his place. This was again a repetition of the Hākau/ʻUmi model: the inferior, but more active ruler, unified kingship by defeating the genealogically superior but less powerful ruler (Kamakau 1961: 45–46).

(2) The districts of Hilo and Hāmākua went to Keawenuiaʻumi's daughter Kapōhelemai and to her husband, Makua (to whom his father Kūmālaʻe was associated). This kingdom was thus jointly ruled by an inactive Queen of superior rank and her active, but inferior as to rank, husband.

(3) The districts of Kaʻū and Puna were ruled by Lonoikamakahiki, another son of Keawenuiaʻumi, as we have seen.

According to Fornander (1878–1880, 2: 127), Kaikilani and Lonoikamakahiki were succeeded by Keakealanikāne, her son with Kanaloakuaʻana. Keakealanikāne married his full sister Kealiʻiokalani and ruled over the districts of Kona, Kohala and Kaʻu in the Western half of Hawaiʻi (Kamakau 1961: 61).

Keakealanikāne's and Kealiʻiokalani's daughter Keakamahana ruled those districts after her father's death (Kamakau 1961: 61; Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 127). But her reckless and ambitious husband, Iwikauikaua, who belonged to the line issued from Kaikilani's junior brother, became her warlike co-ruler for a time. After his departure from Hawaiʻi, a period of intense, but unresolved, war between male chiefs began.

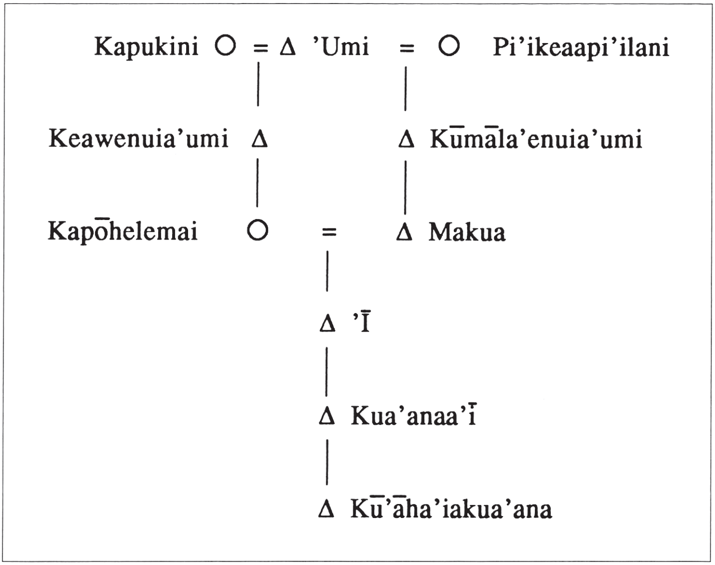
Kapukini
'Umi
Pi'ikeaapi'ilani
Keawenuia'umi
Kūmāla'enuia'umi
Kapōhelemai
Makua
'Ī
Kua'anaa'ī
Kū'āha'iakua'ana

Figure 3. Genealogy of Kapōhelemaʻi and her ʻĪ descendants.

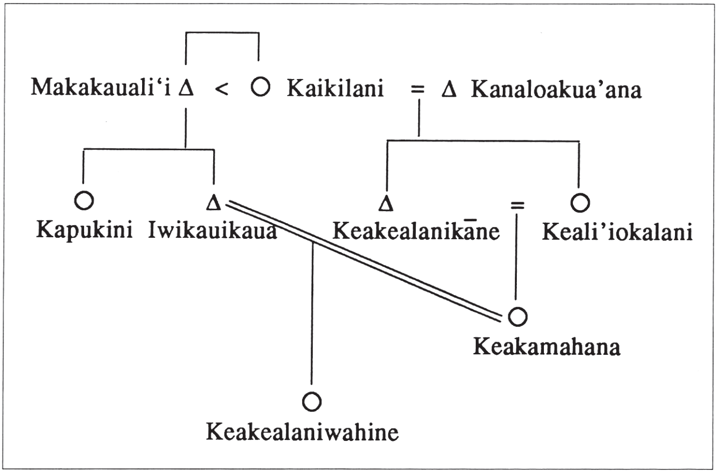
Makakaualiʻi
Kaikilani
Kanaloakua'ana
Kapukini
Iwikauikaua
Keakealanikāne
Keali'iokalani
Keakamahana
Keakealaniwahine

Figure 4. Genealogy of Keakealaniwahine.

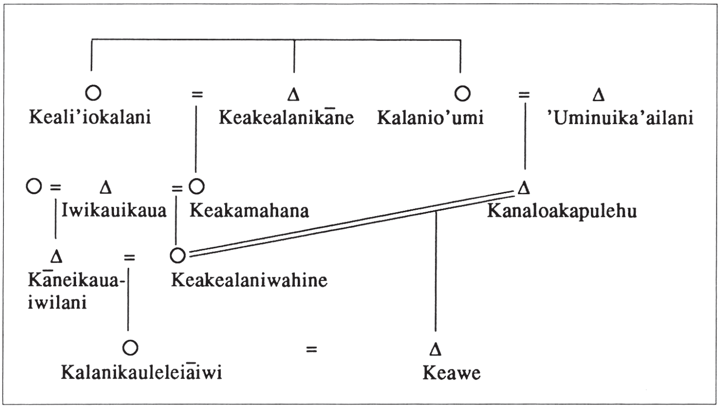

Figure 5. Genealogy of Keawe.

This war continued under Keakealaniwahine, who was Keakamahana's successor and her daughter by Iwikauikaua. Nothing is known of the prerogatives of this queen's two husbands, her half-brother Kāneikauaiwilani (Kāneikaiwilani according to Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 128) and her classificatory mother's brother Kanaloakapulehu. But it was Mahiʻololī, the father of Kauauanuiamahi, a husband of Kalanikauleleiāiwi, the queen's daughter (Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 129), who was the most influential chief. He was the *kuhina kaua nui* "general in chief" of Keakealaniwahine and the founder of a dynasty (the Mahi) which was able to control the district of Kohala for several generations (Kamakau 1961: 63, 76).

Keawe, Keakealaniwahine's son by Kanaloakapulehu, and Kalanikauleleiāiwi, her daughter by Kāneikauaiwilani, married and became another example of diarchic couple, with the wife in the usual genealogically superior position and the husband as administrator (Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 130). The two also contracted unions with members of the two most powerful dynasties of the island of Hawaiʻi after theirs. Keawe married a woman from the ʻĪ dynasty, which controlled the districts of Hilo and Hamakua. As mentioned, Kalanikauleleiāiwi married a man from the Mahi dynasty, which controlled the district of Kohala.

Kalaninuiʻīamao (also called Kaʻīimamao or Lonoikamakahiki), the son of Keawe and of the ʻĪ chiefess, became king after his father. He was defeated and replaced by Alapaʻi, the son of Kalanikauleleiāiwi and Kauauanuiamahi. It is probable that the

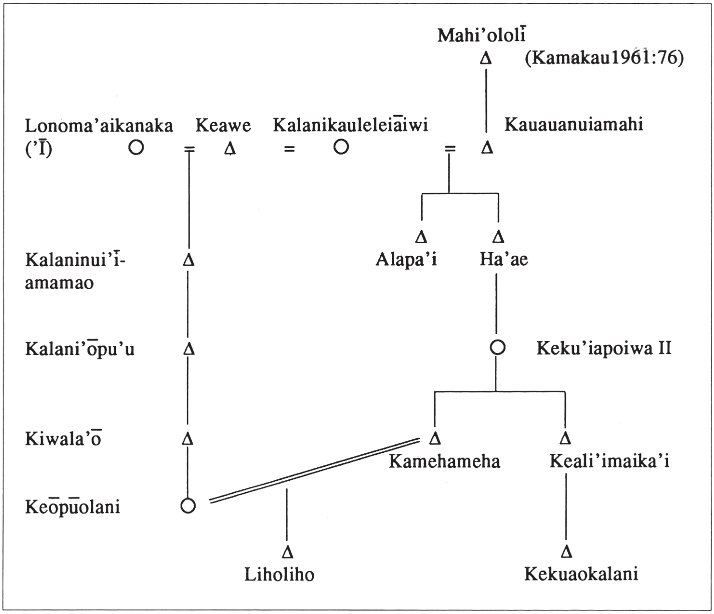
Mahi'ololī
(Kamakau1961:76)
Lonoma'aikanaka
('Ī)
Keawe
Kalanikauleleiāiwi
Kauauanuiamahi
Alapa'i
Ha'ae
Kalaninui'ī-amamao
Kalani'ōpu'u
Keku'iapoiwa II
Kiwala'ō
Kamehameha
Keali'imaika'i
Keōpūolani
Liholiho
Kekuaokalani

Figure 6. The ʻĪ and Mahi lines.

rule of the son of the ʻĪ princess corresponded to a period of political hegemony for the ʻĪ and that the ascendancy of Alapaʻi translated the ascendancy of his paternal line, the Mahi. After Alapaʻi the rule went to Kalaniʻōpuʻu, the son of Kalaninuiʻīamamao: it thus reverted to a descendant of the ʻĪ princess. This was the ruling prince at the time of Captain Cook's visit in 1778–1779.

The period of successorial history that spanned from Keawe to Kalaniʻōpuʻu appears to have ignored diarchy altogether. But kingship seems to have alternatively fallen to men who, while descending from the royal line of Keawe, nevertheless identified with either the ʻĪ or he Mahi dynasties, which theoretically had vassal status. Thus Kalaninuiʻīamamao's genealogical chant, the *Kumulipo,* identifies him by his connection with his mother's patriline rather than with his father Keawe's, although he was his successor to kingship (Beckwith 1951; Valeri 1990). Presumably Kalaniʻōpuʻu used the same chant and the same identification with the ʻĪ, as his son Kiwalaʻō clearly did after him. Alapaʻi and later Kamehameha, on the other hand, identified with the Mahi and the

Mahi-controlled district of Kohala (cf. Ii 1963: 4–6; Kamakau 1961: 117). Therefore it appears that, to some extent at least, the succession from Keawe to Kalaniʻōpuʻu was seen by the protagonists themselves as the alternation of the two most influential dynasties of district chiefs in the rule of the island of Hawaiʻi as a whole. This situation was the culmination of the unresolved conflict for influence between the two groups that had gone on since the time of Keakamahana. It seems as if this conflict allowed the two dynasties to graft, through marriages, onto the royal line, and to become identified with competing candidates to kingship.

The regular alternation of rulers identified with either Mahi of ʻĪ strongly suggests an at least tacit sharing agreement between the two dynasties. If this interpretation is correct, then the period from Keawe to Kalaniʻōpuʻu (and to some extent, as we shall see in a moment, to the end of the traditional system in 1819) appears to have been characterized by a diarchic formula of its own. Indeed the Mahi and the ʻĪ dynasties that alternated in power were characterized as, respectively, ʻUmi-like and Hākau-like. The ʻĪ were undoubtedly superior in genealogical rank, while the Mahi, a dynasty founded by a general in chief and with such strong men in his history as Alapaʻi, Kamehameha and Kekuaokalani, were inferior in rank but superior in military prowess. Although the political importance of both dynasties was in fact steeped in military muscle, the ʻĪ attempted legitimation (as their chant *Kumulipo* suggests) by claiming to instantiate the ideal of the ruler whose exalted rank is sufficient to bring people to submission. Indeed his rank reflects the fact that he instantiates the ordering power of the cosmos to its highest degree at the human level. The Mahi, in contrast, seem to have emphasized conquest, and thus military prowess as a legitimating device (cf. Ii 1963: 4). The two aspects of royal power, the genealogical-inactive and the military- active seem thus to have become at this time incarnate in two dynasties.

The interesting fact which requires some comment is the very existence of such named dynasties. The Hawaiian system was bilateral and the main principle of classification was personal rank. Genealogical lines were a posteriori constructs to justify the rank of individual nobles. A genealogical line identified a descent group only if it corresponded to a name (such as Mahi or ʻĪ) transmitted, preferably, from father to son. Since such name went with seigneurial rights over some lands and their inhabitants, we may suppose (although our information is very scanty) that the genealogically related successors to it formed a core around which a group of followers cristallized by using siblingship and marriage as links. Such groups would then be comparable to the famous Tongan *haʻa* (cf. Bott 1981).

However, contrary to what happens in Tonga, such groups are rare and contingent on a purely political fact: the ability to retain the control of the same lands (and thus people) under different kings. As a rule, there is no permanent tenure of land in Hawaii. Land is redistributed at each kingly succession. Each ruler gives land to his own clients and supporters and title to it is contingent upon the relation between individual ruler and individual beneficiary. The transfer of such relationships together with land to the children of their contractors is never automatic and indeed is exceptional (cf. Valeri 1985b). To be able to retain control of a piece of land and, moreover, to transmit it to a son or other kinsman, one must enjoy considerable pressure power on the rulers and even substantial autonomy. This power and autonomy, in turn, depend on the ability to retain control of a large group of clients and other subordinates. Since the continuity of such "lines" (so they are called in the literature) depends on the precarious continuity of their power position in between higher and lower hierarchical levels, which translates in the continuous control of a land, I prefer to call them "dynasties", accentuating the etymological meaning of the term (from Greek *dynastes,* "ruler", "dynast").

Clearly the Mahi and ʻĪ dynasties could emerge as a consequence of the weakness of the royal dynasty (theoretically the only line that exists as a continuous social group rather than as a mere genealogical construct) since the time of Queen Keakamahana and her daughter Keakealaniwahine (who was even made a prisoner by the ʻĪ. Kamakau 1961: 63). As a result of this weakness the royal line became unable to reproduce itself endogamously, and the rule passed to children by spouses from the ʻĪ and Mahi lines. In a sense, these lines completed the consolidation of their power by "devouring", so to speak, the royal line through their alliance policy.

In deciding his succession, Kalaniʻōpuʻu took into account the ʻĪ/Mahi rivalry while reverting to the Hākau/ʻUmi diarchy. He left "the land", with the supreme prerogatives of kingship, to his sacred son Kiwalaʻō, who identified with the ʻĪ and their ideology of legitimation, and the war god Kūkāʻilimoku to his nephew Kamehameha, inferior from the point of view of rank but a member of the warlike Mahi line. This diarchic arrangement was perhaps created to overcome the endemic conflict between the two lines, but it did so in the manner of its legendary prototype: Kamehameha, an ʻUmi figure, defeated Kiwalaʻō and unified the kingship. But later

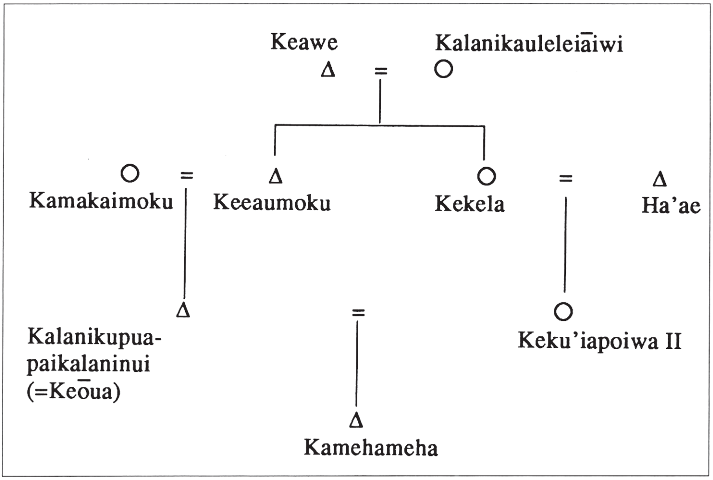

Figure 7. Kamehameha's paternal line (Source: *Mooolelo Hawai'i* 1838).

he reproduced the same diarchic model by giving his sacred son Liholiho, whose mother was Kiwalaʻō's daughter, the supreme religious prerogatives of kingship. He retained for himself the cult of the war god Kūkāʻilimoku and the effective administration of the kingdom (Valeri 1982). At his death he left these remaining prerogatives to his nephew Kekuaokalani, who was genealogically inferior to Liholiho but another representative of the Mahi line. The two co-rulers ended up making war to each other, but this time the original model was inverted: Liholiho, the genealogically superior king, thanks to the decisive help of Western firepower managed to defeat the genealogically inferior king associated with the war god Kūkāʻilimoku and became the only ruler.

To sum up: The narrative traditions summarized above depict a very complex concatenation of successorial events which cannot be defined by any single rule, The history began with the Hākau/ʻUmi diarchy, with its characteristic "monarchic" outcome. This formula was to some extent repeated, but also progressively weakened, in successive generations, when the wife/husband diarchy became frequent. This new diarchic arrangement gave way, in turn, to the one in which two lines alternated to kingship. Finally, the initial diarchic solution was repeated three times (Kamehameha/Kiwalaʻō, Kamehameha/Liholiho, Kekuaokalani/Liholiho).

It is not my purpose here to attempt an explanation of these changes and recursions. I only want to point out that their representation in the chronicles indicates that Hawaiians did not conceive of their history as mere stereotyped reproduction, but saw in the past potentialities for the present that could be actualized in many different forms. Because some at least of the types from the past were connected sequentially, the past did not appear simply as a timeless repertory of rules (which of course it also was) but as a process which invited and legitimated its creative continuation. To a certain institutionalization of kingly-originated change, then, corresponded a global image of history as a process that involves change and not simply repetition. This global image was certainly less evident than the images of its parts; but the use of the latter as precedents was ultimately inscribed in the use of the former. Indeed, to the extent that the past as a whole suggested the idea of change, it was possible to creatively select those precedents that best fitted changing situations in the present, instead of slavishly following an immediate past or an eternally repetitive, depthless one. Thus Kalaniʻōpuʻu could break with the system of succession that had been used for some time before him and go back to a much older model. But he could do so precisely because history taught him that the system had often changed.

All particular narratives, then, are inscribed in a global process which is defined in fundamentally processual terms. History is at the core of kingship and kingship is, in a sense, the condition of possibility, the source of legitimacy and acceptability, of history.

Kings and queens

Among the many problems raised by the diarchic forms that we have passed in review two stand out. We have seen that the junior brother/senior brother diarchy was the most unstable form because it was the one that involved the least differentiation and thus the most rivalry (cf. Valeri 1985a: 166). But why was it always the junior diarch who, until Western intervention, was able to displace the senior one, never the other way round?

We have also seen that, since the husband/wife relation implied a greater difference and complementarity than the relationship between two male siblings, it was associated with a stabler form of diarchy. But why in this form was the genealogically superior ruler always the wife, never the husband?

Let me briefly answer the first question first. In part the answer lies in a fact that I have already noted: the inferiority in rank of the junior implied that he was freer to act in pragmatically effective ways because he was less constrained by taboo and established precedent. But this greater freedom constituted a decisive advantage in the first place because interest seems to have had the last word in Hawaii. However great the respect, and thus the power, that accrued to high rank, it often yielded to interest in land, largesses, support against enemies, which the stronger and freer junior ruler was better able to satisfy. It is also obvious that the discontents and the hopefuls (always more numerous than those who have something to hold on to) tended to enlist with the junior ruler who, being less favoured, had more to gain from a change in the status quo.

In order to answer the second question, let us answer first another one: to what an extent was the higher ranking female ruler in a husband/wife diarchy equivalent to the higher ranking male ruler in all-male diarchy? Because genealogically determined rank was independent of gender (cf. Valeri 1972, 1985a: 113–14) it would seem that the case in which the superior ruler was female was not different from the case in which he was male: they both made it possible to associate the genealogical legitimacy they represented with the forms of legitimacy represented by the junior co-ruler. And since high genealogical rank was protected but also imprisoned by taboos that impeded action, another similarity between female and male supreme rulers was that both were condemned to relative inertia.[7]

The similarities between male and female supreme ruler ended here, however. A major difference was that, women being excluded, irrespective of rank, from royal sacrificial ritual, supreme female dynasts did not, as a rule, assume sacerdotal functions like their male equivalents. This had ambiguous consequences for their exercise of power. On the one hand, their exclusion freed them from additional constraints and made them somewhat better able to act pragmatically, in the manner of male junior rulers. But on the other hand, this exclusion was a political disadvantage which should not be underestimated. Not only did the role of supreme sacerdotal mediator between the gods and the people give an important supplement of sanctity and legitimacy not available to women rulers (who could only count on their rank and their political acumen), but participation in the temple ritual (which was also open to male junior rulers) gave access to the context in which the most important political decisions were taken. Indeed councils of state were held (four times a month for eight months a year) during the sacrificial meals taken in the temples by men of noble rank (cf. Valeri 1985a: 196; Wilkes 1845, 4: 508). While women could participate in councils held outside this ritual context, it remains true that, however high-ranking and powerful they might be, they had no way of directly controlling what went on in these purely male occasions.

Even Keakealaniwahine, the only queen who is explicitly reported to have been given the prerogative of entering temples in order to consecrate human sacrifices like a male ruler, was excluded from participating in the sacrificial meals together with men and thus from the political discussions that took place there (Ii 1962: 159–69). That this exclusion was a serious political handicap for women, is moreover indicated by the fact that the most powerful Hawaiian women who ever existed, Kaʻahumanu and Keōpūolani, were extremely keen on abolishing the traditional system of temple cults in order to suffer no limitation in their political control of the situation that arose after their husband Kamehameha's death (cf. Daws 1974: 56). Keōpūolani, as mother of the extremely reluctant but young and weak king Liholiho, was able (with Kaʻahumanu's help) to persuade him to abolish an already undermined system of beliefs and practices that sanctioned male political, not merely "ritual", supremacy.[8]

While it is a fact that Hawaiian women of high rank could play important political roles even before 1819, there is little evidence that the four female rulers whom we have encountered in the dynastic history from ʻUmi to Kamehameha were more than figureheads. Of Keakealaniwahine Kamakau explicitly says that she ruled "in name only" (Kamakau 1961: 63). Such political impotence is all the more striking because this queen was the only one reported to have enjoyed the usually male privilege of consecrating human sacrifices. Of Kalanikauleleiāiwi we are told that "she is not known to have been actively occupied in any matters of government" (Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 130). On the other hand her numerous and politically significant unions may suggest that she was quite active in alliance politics. But we should be wary to view all these alliances as due to her own decisions. For instance, we have seen that her union with Kauauanuiamahi was probably due to his father's strong political and military grip on her mother: it was an important step in the Mahi's climbing to the top (Fornander 1878–1880, 2: 128–29; Kamakau 1961: 76).

Perhaps only Keakamahana was able to exercise some autonomous power for a while, if the fact that she had her husband's mother and his daughter from a previous marriage killed "and their bones mistreated" is any indication (Kamakau 1961: 62). But this act had the effect of revealing her fundamental weakness in a world characterized by male militarism. Having lost her husband’s support (his “mind became possessed with a desire to desert his wife and betray her government to the chiefs of Hilo [i.e. the ‘Ī]”, Kamakau 1961: 62), she became entangled in the interminable conflict which eventually reinforced the nominally subordinated lines of the Mahi and of the ‘Ī at the expense of the royal line. Indeed, the existence of relatively powerless women at the top for three generations after the rule of King Keakealanikāne can be interpreted as a consequence of the weakening of the royal line, which was allowed to persist in the nominal form best insured by female rule, simply because neither of the two lines contending for kingship, the Mahi and the ‘Ī, achieved a definite advantage over the other (cf. Kamakau 1961: 63). Neither was weak enough to let the other become king: thus they seem to have agreed to have queens “rule” over them as a compromise.

Even the earlier case of Kaikilani demonstrates that a woman in the position of superior ruler often was a creature of the inferior ruler. At least, this seems one reason why the actual holder of power preferred to have her, rather than her brother, as diarchic associate: contrary to him, she constituted no political threat or a lesser one (see above, section 3). In sum, it seems that the reason why women became queens was either that there were no clear male winners to take the throne, or that the winner, after having eliminated or neutralized the male incumbent, needed the rank embodied by the incumbent’s sister or daughter in order to fully legitimate his rule and, as we have seen, in order to produce a heir whose rank would match his power. Thus, it is the fact that a queen was a queen only as a carrier of rank that explains why no woman who was inferior in rank to her husband was ever associated to him as a co-ruler. This would be incomprehensible if women had the same political power of men and if they became queens because of that. The dynastic history that we have considered seems to suggest, to the contrary, that female rule was a function of male antagonism and male competition for women as sources of the reproduction of rank. This opened to women opportunities for power perhaps unequaled elsewhere in Polynesia, but also created structural limits for it which were overcome only with the abolition of the traditional political-ritual system in 1819.

Rituals and annals

In a famous chapter of *La cite antique* Fustel de Coulanges (1905: 194–202) noted that the Ancients related to the sacred through two equivalent means: rituals and annals. Ritual put in contact with a divine that revealed itself in past events, and the continuous efficacy of formulas that had proved successful at one point depended on their correct transmission over time. Narrating the past was thus establishing a contact with the divine which was both an equivalent and a condition of felicitous ritual action.

The equivalence of rituals and annals is rooted in the analogy between the synchronic transcendence of the gods, and more generally of the sacred, and the diachronic transcendence of the past. The connection is made explicit when gods and ancestors who continue to exist in the present appear as protagonists in the narratives about the transcendent past, or when the sphere of the divine is explicitly situated in a distant space which is also a distant time. In archaic Greece, for instance, Memory (Mnemosyne) gave access to primordial realities (say Gaia or Uranus), which continued to be the divine foundations of the present world:

> Le passé ainsi dévoilé est beaucoup plus que l'antécédent du présent: il en est la source. En remontant jusqu'à lui, la remémoration cherche non à situer les événements dans un cadre temporel, mais à atteindre le fond de l'être, à découvriz l'originel, la réalité primordiale dont est issu le cosmos et qui permet de comprende le devenir dans son ensemble (Vernant 1974, 1: 86).

That "*le passé apparait comme une dimension de I'au-delà*" (*ibid.* 87) could be said not only of Hesiod's *Theogony,* but also of the Hawaiian *Kumulipo,* the cosmogonic account which, by going back in time to the primordial *Pō,* the "night" (and therefore the "unseen" [Handy and Pukui 1972: 131], the "realm of the gods" [Pukui and Elbert 1971: 307]), connects with a realm that still coexists synchronically with that of the human present. The ordering power of history is thus analogous to the ordering power of ritual: both are based on making a transcendent reality metonymically present, one by connecting with it through time, the other through space. Or more exactly, both in sacred history and in ritual, time and space become one and the same: "*Zum Raum wird hierdie Zeit*" (Wagner 1888, 10: 339).

But Hawaiian annals were not all sacred history. Besides a text like the *Kumulipo* which was equivalent to ritual to such an extent that it was itself performed ritually and had ritual effects, there was a different kind of annalistic tradition. In this prose (and prosaic) tradition the gods were largely absent (unless one considers the rulers as gods) and human action was described in its complexity, sometimes to the point of irreducibility to structural scheme (cf. Valeri 1989). It is in this non-ritualistic relationship with the past that we have found information on the dynastic history of Hawaiʻi.

The difference between the two types of tradition can be easily grasped when we compare the accounts of succession contained in the prose chronicles with the accounts of chanted, ritually significant texts such as the *Kumulipo.* The latter reduce the history of succession to the almost exclusively patrilinear form it should ideally have had. Women, who played a crucial role in the transmission of rank and rule according to the prose versions, are present in the genealogical annals almost exclusively as unrelated spouses of patrilineally related males. Indeed, it is only in these texts that they are reduced to the ideological status of mere appendixes of male power: to the mothers of their husband's male successor.[9]

By masking the complexities of actual history (or what appears as such in the prose annals), chanted genealogies attempted to suggest the idea that the ruler drew on the divine potency of the past[10] through the most direct, most unquestionable (because seemingly "natural": given, not chosen) channel: continuous descent (cf. Beckwith 1951: 143) along the supreme line or several prestigious lines converging on him. In thus inverting the true process by which they were constructed, namely by ascent from a political winner back to the apical ancestors through the most prestigious links available at each generation, these genealogical texts transformed the Hawaiian ruler into the equivalent of a Tuʻi Tonga. But it was an equivalence valid only in the fictitious, ritual contexts in which the chants were performed. The apparent similarity between Tonga and Hawaii reveals a profound difference. For the continuity of patrilineal succession to the Tuʻitongaship was real, it was valid in every context and relative to each piece of historical evidence available, whereas the same kind of continuity in Hawaiian kingship was not infrequently acceptable only in the framed and self-validating context of genealogies' ritual performance and was contradicted in other contexts and by other evidence known to at least part of the audience (cf. Valeri 1990).

One may say that in Tonga the supreme kingship was made perfectly stable at the price of making the king transcendent, of turning him away from the instability of social history (left to the Hau) to the stability of natural history, of reproduction through mere descent: the Tuʻi Tonga's great task was, in the end, to make love, not war.[11] In contrast, the historical immanence, and thus unstability, of Hawaiian kingship implied that true genealogical continuity and stability could only be represented by a fictitious ritual double of the king's person. There were in fact two ritual realizations of the king's transcendent double: his genealogical body, that is his person as represented in the genealogical chants, and his effigy as god in the *luakini* temple. Indeed, the successful conqueror was metonymically associated with his predecessors by ritually reciting a royal genealogy with his name inserted at the end and by performing the temple ritual, which consisted of the production of his effigy in divine form (Valeri 1985a, 1985b, 1990).

The two methods of legitimation were partly redundant, partly complementary or even alternative. The most powerful was ultimately the temple ritual because it did not need to refer to descent in order to insert the king in the long line of his predecessors: it merely converted him into an effigy analogous to those constructed by them before his time. The basis for the analogy was that all effigies represented the king *as his species* — the god Kū: all kings were identical in Kū, a god representative of their kingship as generated in the temple, rather than "in the womb" (Kamakau 1964: 9) as implied by the genealogical justification of their legitimacy. Effigies were thus the "currency" of kingship, and as coins may be guaranteed by the image of a god imprinted on them, so royal effigies in Hawaii were guaranteed and made efficacious as a means of conversion by being in the image of the sovereign god.

Above and beyond the "immanent" (diarchic and matrimonial) means of reestablishing continuity in kingship, then, we find means that were "transcendent" (ritual), even when they deceptively do not look so, as in the case of genealogical chants. Indeed the latter counted less for their propositional content than for their status as regalia, more as repositories of accumulated *mam* than as texts. This *mana* went to those who were able to use the chants, either as birthright or as spoils of war (Valeri 1990).

One could say, in the end, that while the Tongan Hau ruled as the representative of a person, the Tuʻi Tonga, precious as the embodiment of a genealogy that connected society with the gods of heaven, the Hawaiian king ruled as the representative of two objects that, because they embodied the connection with the divine, were implicitly the true rulers: the royal genealogy and the divine effigy.[12]

In sum, the Tuʻi Tonga, as living effigy of kingship's connection with the supreme divine, is best compared, not with the impermanent high ranking associates of Hawaiian strong men, but with a wooden effigy and a speech icon (the genealogical person of the king). That these visual and verbal icons could be transferred, with the divine qualities which they embodied, to whomever succeeded in controlling the land and the people, explains why Hawaiian kingship, contrary to the Tongan one, was frequently able to assume the monarchic form it strove for, although it often yielded to diarchy because it always yielded to history.

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For lack of space, I have kept references and discussion of sources to a minimum. References to my own previous work on Hawaii and Tonga have to be considered as indirect references to the sources discussed and interpreted there. "Hawaii" refers to the Hawaiian archipelago as a whole; "Hawai'i" refers to its largest island. The reader will find it interesting to refer to the comparison between Tongan and Hawaiian societies in Kirch 1984.

Notes

1. Cf. the somewhat different view of Meleisea, who refers to Samoa: "As the conduits of the *mam* of their descent groups women represent the sacred moral attributes of their *'āiga* and control over their procreative powers was essential" (Meleisea 1979: 542).
2. Although the reversal is commemorated in the course of the kava ritual, as I have shown elsewhere (Valeri 1989).
3. The usurpation and violence components are even stronger — as should be expected — in the Fijian transformation of this mythological scheme (Fison 1904: 49–57).
4. This correlation is demonstrated by the events of Tongan history: while before diarchy was instituted the Tu'itongaship was the focus of

conflict, afterwards and particularly after the creation of the second and more powerful Hau title (the Tuʻi Kanokupolu) "the life of the Tuʻi Tonga was much more peaceful and settled. There was unbroken succession from father to son for seven generations down to the time of Paulaho [the Tuʻi Tonga at the time of Captain Cook's visit]. There were no murders of Tuʻi Tonga" (Bott 1982: 99).

5. "Succession was usually to a younger brother or a son of the previous title-holder" (Bott 1982: 72).
6. I shall consider the history of succession only until 1819, the year of Kamehameha's death and of the abolition of the traditional form of kingship. This does not mean that the subsequent history of the allocation of powers is not relevant for my analysis. Suffice it to say that a non-sexual male/female diarchy (associating the *Moʻi* "king" and a *kuhina nui,* a term referring to an authority "more active than the king" Kuykendall 1938: 64) existed for several decades. This new male/ female diarchy was the exact inverse of the traditional one, in which, as we shall see, the categorically more active ruler was always male and the higher ranking one was female.
7. Is it necessary to stress that this statement is no more a "denigration" of women than it is of high-ranking men? Indeed, as I have mentioned, inertia is highly valued in Polynesian ideology as a sign of plenitude. We should not superimpose our Western view of inertia to the Polynesian one.
8. Some critics have argued that this supremacy might have been true at the "categorical" level but not at the level of "action" (Linnekin 1986: 219–20), as if action were divorced from categories (or what they call "action" had not its own legitimating categories) and as if the categorical exclusion of women from certain crucial rituals did not have important consequences for political action! But they have also suggested that in fact women played an important "symbolic" role in the main royal cults, which took place in the *luakini* temple. They have adduced as proof the extent to. which barkcloth, which was produced by women, was used for consecrating the images of gods in rituals (Linnekin 1986: 220; Weiner 1987: 159–60). With all due respect to these well-intentioned people, this is like arguing that bakers and vintners play an important symbolic role in the Catholic Mass because wafers and wine are used in the Eucharist. I must remind my critics that an object can be alienated from the producer and thus does not necessarily represent him or her: it may represent instead the person to whom it is destined or who consumes it (for a striking Polynesian example of the latter cases, see Thomas 1987: 137). Moreover, if the argument of Weiner and Linnekin were valid it should be extended, a *fortiori,* to commoners, since most of the offerings (pigs, plumes etc.) used in the temple were produced by them. But even if it were established that indeed barkcloth had female values in certain contexts, this would reinforce, rather than undermine, my interpretation that the *luakini* temple ritual symbolically excluded women. It will be recalled that this ritual consisted in the purely male creation of new instantiations of the gods

and of the god Kū in particular (Valeri 1985a). Most explicitly in Malo's version, this creation used the imagery of reproduction: the gods were given birth as children and transformed until, as adults, they became full instantiations of their prototypes. The ritual thus implied a male usurpation of the generative powers of women and it is possible that the generative use of barkcloth was part of the usurpation. The important point is that, whether the ritual generation of the godchildren by men involved the use of original male powers (such as prayers, the offerings of animals and humans) or the use of powers possibly alienated from women (such as those of barkcloth), it was conceived as a purely masculine affair and it was conceptually contrasted, as "pure reproduction" to the "impure reproduction" which combines men and women. Thus the use of barkcloth in the royal temples hardly justifies the optimistic view that there was a "critical and positive symbolic relation between women, sacrifice and divine rulers" (Weiner 1987: 160), whatever that might have been. Moreover Weiner's claim that cloth "became the ultimate object sacrificed by divine rulers" is not supported by the evidence. The most important object sacrificed was the body of a male human. Even if we wish to interpret Weiner's statement as referring to inanimate objects only, it cannot be accepted as true, since feathers were much more important than cloth.

9. See, for instance, the *Kumulipo* genealogy (Beckwith 1951), the genealogy published in *Kumu Hawaii* in 1835 (reprinted in McKinzie 1983), the *Mooolelo Hawaii* (1838) genealogy, and the genealogies published by Kamakau (1961: 391–92; 433–36) and Fornander (1878–1880, 1: 181–96). I have discussed some of the discrepancies between purely genealogical texts and prose annals in Valeri 1990. Because a systematic comparison would take too much space, I must regrettably leave it out of the present paper.

10. "The mere recitation of names form a chain along which the accumulated *mana* of ages untold may be moved into the recipient shell" (Stokes 1930: 12–13).

11. "The Tuʻi Tonga could command the person of any woman of lower rank" (Gifford 1929: 72, cf. 54–55); "so far as Tongan tradition goes there seems to be no record of a Tuʻi Tonga engaging in warfare while in office" (Gifford 1929: 205).

12. The king's — or any high-ranking noble's — connection with his genealogy was effected ritually even when he was actually born from an individual listed in it: indeed he was not considered part of it until it was ritually performed with his name inserted in it. Hence the recitation of the genealogy had an illocutionary force: better than birth itself and sometimes in its stead, it made one a member of a line. It was generative to the point of substituting for the generative act proper (Valeri 1990). Genealogical chants are thus another instance of the Hawaiian propensity to complement the natural generative act with ritual, artificial (and thus politically manipulable) substitutes.

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