

Polynesian Oral Traditions

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CREATION

Creation traditions explain the origins of all things, including the universe, heavens and earth, the gods of nature, all things animate and inanimate in the phenomenological world, male and female forms, and life and death. These mythologies reflect deep-seated philosophical, religious, cultural and social beliefs about the nature of reality and the unknown, being and non-being and the relationship between all things; hence they are regarded as the most sacred of all traditions.

MAORI SPEECHMAKING

New Zealand Maori celebrated Rangi (Skyfather) and Papa (Earthmother) in whakatauki (aphorisms), waiata (songs) and whaikorero (formal speechmaking) as the following example shows:

*E mihi atu ki Te Matua, ki a Ranginui, ki a Rangiroa,
Tawhirirangi, Te Hauwhakaora,*

Te Hau e pangia nga kiri o te tangata.

E mihi atu ki a Papatuanuku, ki a Papatuarangi

Te Papa i takatakahia e nga matua tupuna,

Te Papa i waihotia e ratou ma

Te Papa e maroro ki te itinga, e maroro ki te opunga

Te Papaawhi, e awhi ana i a tatou, o tena, o tena,

o tena o nga whakatupuranga e tupu ake nei

Te Ukaipo, Te Ukaiiao mo tatou katoa.

*Greetings to the Skyfather, the Great Heavens,
the Expansive Heavens*

*The Heavenly Winds, the Life Giving Winds,
the Winds that caress the skin of all people.*

Greetings to the Earthmother,

extending beyond the visible land,

extending beyond the visible heavens

*The Earthmother trampled by our ancestors,
the Earthmother left in heritage by them*

*The Earthmother that stretches unto the sunrise,
that stretches unto the sunset*

*The Embracing Earthmother that embraces each
of us from all generations*

*She that sustains us in the night, that sustains us
in the day.²*

Skyfather And Earthmother

The ancestors of the Polynesians transported and relocated their oral traditions as they migrated across the Pacific Ocean. A marriage between a Skyfather and Earthmother, from who are born the gods of nature, sun, moon, planets, stars and all life, is the most common theme in Polynesian creation traditions. Both were revered as a source of life and knowledge. New Zealand Maori traditions say that Rangi (Skyfather) and Papa (Earthmother) existed in a close

¹ Editor's Note: Minor editorial changes have been made for this publication; footnotes have been renumbered, pictures have been omitted; Hawaiian diacritical marks have been inserted when necessary. Moreover, this article is written in the London English variety of the English language in which the spelling of certain words differs from the American English variety. Except for these changes, the article appears as originally published.

² Taonui, R., Recording from Maori Elder, Hokianga, New Zealand, 20 Oct 1994.

embrace that prevented light entering between them to where their progeny lay in darkness. One of their children, Tane, the god of the forests, pushed his parents apart, thereby allowing light to enter into the world.

Samoa tradition says that Tagaloalagi (Tangaroarangi to Maori) created the islands of Samoa by throwing rocks down from the heavens, after which Papatu (the Father) married Papa'ele (the Mother). From this union came the gods of nature and from them human life. One account says that Papa'ele was born without a vagina and that her husband fashioned one using a shark's tooth. She gave birth to Ulu, who married Sina, who gave birth to twins Taema and Tilafaiga, and the twins introduced the art of tattoo before becoming goddesses.³ Similar Tongan versions say Papalimu married Papakele. Their child, Touiafutuna, born in the form of a large metallic stone, belched forth four sets of twins, who in turn gave birth to further generations of deities.⁴

The Nanaulu genealogies of Hawai'i say Wākea (Skyfather) married Papa, who existed in the form of a gourd, from which Wākea moulded the universe. Wākea fashioned Papa into a drinking vessel and this became Papahānaumoku, the Earthmother. The lid of the gourd he used to form the heavens. The juices of the gourd became the rain and clouds. The seeds of the gourd were implanted into the heavens as the sun, moon and stars. Wākea and Papa then created the island of Kahiki (Tahiti), the ancestral homeland of the Hawaiians. Wākea and Papahānaumoku wed, and their descendants became the high chiefs of each of the Hawaiian islands.⁵

In Tahiti, Atea (Skyfather) was born between Rumia, the encompassing heavens, and Tumura'ifenua the foundation of the earth, and was sometimes masculine and sometimes feminine. Atea married Papatu'oi, the Earthmother. Their child Tumunui, the great foundation, married Paparaharaha, the life-giving earth. Their child was Te Fatu, the lord of the heavens and ancestor of all life.⁶

Tuamotuan creation myths contain similar themes. One is that Tutumu and Tupapa created the first human beings, Hoatea and Hoatu.⁷ Marquesan creation mythology names the primordial pairing as Papa'una or Papauka (the world above) and Papa'a'o or Papa-ao (the world below). They pressed against each other and brought forth the gods Atea, Tokohiti and Tane.⁸

Rarotonga has a particularly beautiful Skyfather and Earthmother tradition saying that the heavens were created when Varima-te-takere, a goddess, plucked Atea, the Skyfather, from her side. Atea moved about changing shape and increasing in size to form the heavens. Atea then married Paparaoa-i-te-itinga (the Earthmother stretching unto the sunrise) who gave birth to Te Tumu. Te Tumu married Paparaoa-i-te-opunga, the Earthmother stretching unto the sunrise, and from this union came human life.⁹

³ Kramer, A. F., *Samoa*. Stuttgart: E. Schweizerbart, 1902, 45, 89-90, 394; Fraser, J., 'Some folk songs and myths from Samoa', *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, 24 (1890), 195-217.

⁴ Gifford, E. W., *Tongan Myths and Tales*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1924, 19; Collocott, E. E. V., 'Notes on Tongan religion', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 30 (1921), 152-163, 227-240.

⁵ Beckwith, M., *Hawaiian Mythology*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1940, 293-306.

⁶ Henry, Teuira, *Ancient Tahiti*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1928, 355-356.

⁷ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 347-349.

⁸ Handy, E. S. C., *The Native Culture in the Marquesas*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1923, 244-245.

⁹ Buck, Peter, *Mangaian Society*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1934, 162; Gill, W. W., *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific*. London: Henry S. King, 1876, 3.

The Gods

Tangaroa, Tane, Rongo and Tu are the most well known first-order gods in the Polynesian pantheon of deities. To New Zealand Maori, Rongo is the god of peace and cultivated foods, and in Mangaia and Rarotonga he is the god of cultivated foods and harvested sea food. Ro‘o is a messenger god in Tahiti, as are ‘Ono and ‘Oko in the Marquesas. Lono is the god of rain and weather in Hawai‘i. Tane is a god of the forests, birds, insects and a myriad of other forms of life throughout East Polynesia, a god of artisans in Tahiti and known as Kāne in Hawai‘i. Tu is a god of war throughout East Polynesia and known as Kū in Hawai‘i.¹⁰

Tane

Tane is the most widely known god in East Polynesia. In Tahiti, Tane is the son of Atea (Skyfather) and Papa (Earthmother) and is a god who travelled between the heavens and the earth. Tane was born without shape. Ta‘aroa (Tangaroa) sent spirits, who assisted Atea in making skin for Tane, eventually making him whole. Tane became the god of all beautiful things, life-forms, artisans and birds. When war broke out among the gods, Te Tumu and Tane fought. Te Tumu fought by conjuring up darkness. Tane pressed back, striving to bring light into the world. Eventually their tumultuous battles caused the heavens and earth to separate.¹¹

In Tuamotu, Tane, the son of Te Hau (winds and peace) and Metua (parent), lived in one of the higher heavens and waged war against his brother Atea who lived in the lowest heaven. Tane lost the first battle and went to live upon the earth, where he became an important human god before returning to again battle Atea, killing him with a lightning bolt. Tane then returned to earth and went to live on the large cliff-bound atoll named Fakarava.¹²

In Aorearoa, Tane is the god who separated the heavens and earth and held them apart with posts or trees. He is also the ancestor of birds, trees and other forms of life. In other traditions, he is a progenitor of human life.

Many of the Tane images stem from the earliest Austronesian cultures; for example, the sky-lifting Tane image is found among the Dyak people of Borneo, where the daughter of a deity, Tanacompta, is said to have separated the heavens and earth, and held them apart with supporting props.¹³ Key images in the Tane tradition are 6000 years old or older, as they appear to date from before the time of the Lapita people in the Bismarck Archipelago.

Tangaroa

Tangaroa is the most widely known god in East and West Polynesia and associated with the sea, heavens and creation. In New Zealand, Tangaroa is the son of Rangi (Skyfather) and Papa (Earthmother) and is the god of the sea and the progenitor of fish, canoes and carving. This accords with other East Polynesian versions. Mangaian traditions say Tangaroa was the son of

¹⁰ Tregear, E., *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*. Wellington: Lyon and Blair, 1891, 253-254; Craig, R. D., *Dictionary of Polynesian Mythology*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1989.

¹¹ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 353-354, 364-369.

¹² Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 349-352.

¹³ Tregear, *The Maori -Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, 315

Vatea (Skyfather) and Papa (Earthmother) and was a god of agriculture, food, trees and fish.¹⁴ In the Tuamotus, Takaroa, the son of Te Tumu and Te Papa, also set fire to the heavens.¹⁵ The Marquesans say Tanao'a dwelt in the night of creation from whence came Atea (Light) who married Te Ata (Dawn). Te Ata gave birth to Ono, the first sound, which moved, grew and developed into the different forms of life.¹⁶ Kanaloa was a minor god in Hawaiian traditions, a deity of fish life and the underworld.¹⁷

West Polynesian accounts associate Tagaloa more directly with the creation. In Samoan lore, Tagaloa was a god born in human form who lived in the heavens or moon. When Tagaloa reached adulthood he created the lowest heaven, Lalolagi, from where he sent his daughter, Sina, to earth in the form of a bird, Tuli, to find dry land. She returned and reported that the ocean was barren. Tagaloa threw stones to the sea below, thereby forming the islands of Savai'i, Te Tihi-o-Manono, 'Upolu, Manu'a, 'Olosega, Tutuila and so on, until the entire Samoan archipelago was created. Tagaloa also founded a dynasty of chiefs, according to a tradition that says a woman named Sina-a-laua (the First Sound at the Dawn of Life) agreed to an affair with Tagaloa on condition he bestow his name as a title upon her husband and family.¹⁸ Tongan accounts are very similar—Tagaloa is a great god who dwelt in the heavens, commanded thunder and lightning, and was the originator of the art of carving, carpentry and invention. Tagaloa also fished up the Tongan islands from the sea. His son Tubo became an ancestor of the Tongan people.¹⁹

The images in the Tangaroa traditions date from early Austronesian ancestors. For instance, in the Philippines the Austronesian language is known as Tagalog, from a bird of the same name (Tagalog—a kite) that soared between the heavens and the sea during creation, This stirred up the sea, which crashed against the heavens and caused the sky to shower the oceans with the myriad islands of the Philippines.²⁰ Using the dating technique outlined page 29, we can say that parts of the Tangaroa traditions are probably more than 6000 years old.

The Origin Of Human Life

The most usual Polynesian traditions about the origin of human life conceive the idea of an original incest within a first human family, in the belief that this is how the human race must have begun, while at the same time outlining a prohibition against any continuing incest. The incest is usually between the first man, Tiki, and his daughter or granddaughter (usually made from red sand), although sometimes it may be between a brother and sister or a grandmother and grandson. In these traditions, the Tiki image represents fertility, the human libido, coitus, a loincloth and pubic hair. These traditions also often explain how death came into the world.

In the Tuamotuan islands, Tiki, the son of Ahuroa and Onerua, witnesses his parents making love. He heaps up sand on the beach and tries to copy them, but suffers skin abrasions. His mother concludes he has reached puberty and goes to Hawaiki to fetch Onekura (red sand) as

¹⁴ Gill, *Myths and Songs*, 10-11.

¹⁵ Handy, E. S. C., *Polynesian Religion*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1927, 377.

¹⁶ Williamson, R. W., *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs of Central Polynesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933, 74-75.

¹⁷ Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, 60-66.

¹⁸ Kramer, Samoa, 392-292 [sic].

¹⁹ Collocott, 'Notes on Tongan religion', 152-153; Gifford, *Tongan Myths and Tales*, 14-15.

²⁰ Cole, M. C., *Philippine Folk Tales*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1916.

a wife for him. Onekura gives birth to a daughter, Hina, and shortly thereafter passes away. Tiki goes to visit his daughter, who is raised by her maternal grandparents. He asks that she sleep in the same house as he, but the grandparents object. Later, Hina goes for a walk and picks up a stick pointing out of the sand only to find that it is Tiki. She is appalled but becomes Tiki's mistress, giving birth to three children, the ancestors of the human race. Hina becomes sick and on her deathbed teaches Tiki incantations to restore her to life, which he duly performs, saving her life. Later, Tiki becomes sick, but Hina refuses to perform the same prayers over him as punishment for his transgression. He dies, and thus all humans must experience death.²¹

THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY

The introduction of Christianity during colonisation had a significant impact on Polynesian creation traditions as Polynesians incorporated new Christian ideas into their ancient traditions. This incorporation particularly included the idea of a monotheistic Supreme Being and themes from Genesis about the creation of the earth and human life. New Supreme Beings appeared in several places. In some instances, pre-European traditional gods were elevated to this position; Ta'aroa became 'God' in Tahiti, Tane or Atea (Rangi) became God in Tuamotu and Tangaroa their Devil, Kane (Tane), Kū (Tu) and Lono (Rongo) were melded into the Holy Trinity in Hawai'i. In other places, supreme beings were fabricated. Ihoiho was created in Tahiti, Kiho in Tuamotu, and in Aotearoa (New Zealand) Maori created Io, a tradition that was adopted in Hawai'i after a visit there by Maori in 1920. These traditions began as reactions against the hypocrisy of European Christians who, while preaching conversion and peace to Polynesians, often marginalised them politically, economically, socially and culturally. The practice of claiming that these new beliefs dated from pre-European times became integral to justifying their existence. Many of these constructs are still widely accepted as pre-European.²²

In Tahiti, Ti'i married Hina, the daughter of the god Te Fatua and his wife Fa'ahotu. Their children married with the gods and their offspring became the ancestors of the high royal families of Tahiti, entitled to wear red feathered girdles, the symbol of chiefs, while their other children became the ancestors of commoners.²³ In another account, Ta'aroa produces gods and then wishes to produce humankind. He creates a brother and sister, Hina and Ti'imaratai, who marry. Their son and daughter also marry and Ta'ata is born. His grandmother, Hina, transforms herself into a beautiful and youthful woman and marries her grandson, and Ouru and Fana are born, from whom the human race are descended.²⁴

Two Marquesan traditions relate the story of Tiki. In the first account, Tiki-tapu married Kahuone (sand cloak). Their son, also named Tiki, made the first woman, Hinemataone, from sand at a beach in Havai'i and she gave birth to a daughter who became the ancestor of all humans. In the second account, Tiki lay on a mound of sand on the beach, which suddenly took the form of a girl, Hina. He took this girl home to his wife, Hinamataone. Hina said, 'Do not bring my daughter here; you will sleep with her.' Tiki built a house for her deep in a valley and told her to climb a mountain to another house where there lived a man who looked like him. As

²¹ Stimson, F., *Tuamotuan Legends (Island of Anaa). Part 1, The Demigods*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1937, 1-10.

²² Barerre, D., 'Revisions and adulterations in Polynesian creation myths', in *Polynesian Culture History: Essays in honor of Kenneth P. Emory*. Genevieve A. Highland, Roland W. Force, Alan Howard, Marion Kelly & Yoshiko H. Sinoto (eds.), Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1967, 103-119.

²³ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 402-403.

²⁴ Ellis, W., *Polynesian Researches, during a residence of nearly Six years in the South Sea Islands; including descriptions of the Natural History and Scenery of the Islands, with remarks on the History, Mythology, Traditions, Government, Arts, Manners, and Customs of the inhabitant*, Vol. 2. London: Fisher, Son & Jackson, 1829, 40-42.

Hina climbed the mountain Tiki ran to the house at the top by another route to await her. When she arrived he asked her to marry him. She refused because she suspected he was her father. Tiki persuaded her by saying he only looked like her father. They married. One morning she painted his face red as he slept. When Tiki left to return to Hinamataone, the girl ran by another route to his house and confronted him. Tiki died as penance for his crime, thus death came into the world.²⁵

New Zealand Maori traditions often say Tane or Tiki created the first woman Hineonekura (Earth formed woman) at a beach named Kurawaka. In the Tane traditions, he sleeps with their daughter Hinetitama (Dawn woman). She flees into the underworld to become the guardian of departed souls, while he remains in the world of light as a guardian of their living descendants.

In Pukapuka, human life began when Te Awuawu and Ngaliyeyeu competed to seduce a woman Mulitauyakana 'a difficult woman of surpassing beauty'. Te Awuawu won but loaned his tikitiki (loincloth) to Ngaliyeyeu so he could seduce her while she was bathing. The tikitiki pecked at her kilt, which fell off and as she rushed from the water to retrieve it Ngaliyeyeu was waiting for her.²⁶

Many of these images stem from early Austronesian cultures. For instance, a deity of the Dyak people of Borneo, Tanacompta, said to have been the first the man, made the first woman from red clay. His daughter is the ancestress of humankind.²⁷

CULTURE HEROES

Culture heroes can be based on real figures whose histories have been transmuted over time in great mythological cycles, so much so, that original historical details have become too obscured to deduce. In these traditions, culture heroes act as intermediaries between the gods and humans. They also test the parameters of existence and the boundaries between reality and the supernatural, and between life and death, in stories about heroic journeys back and forth across these thresholds conveying the bounties of creation for the benefit of humans. Typically, one demigod will test the darkness of creation and death by attempting to gain immortality. Another demigod will revisit the origins of creation by attempting to ascend into the heavens. In the Polynesian pantheon of culture heroes, Maui is the figure who challenges death and Tawhaki the one who ascends into the heavens.

Maui

The Maui traditions, which span the breadth of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia, are the most widely known and oldest culture hero traditions in the Pacific, the geographic distribution suggesting that they date from the early Lapita period between 4000 to 6000 years ago. Cognates (words similar in sound and meaning because of common ancestry) of the name Mauitikitiki-a-Taranga are found throughout East Polynesia, Northern West Polynesia (Samoa and Tokelau) and Micronesia and Melanesia. On Yap in the Caroline Islands at the far eastern

²⁵ Handy, E. S. C., *Marquesan Legends*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1930, 122-123.

²⁶ Beaglehole, E. & P., *Ethnology of Pukapuka*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1938, 315-317.

²⁷ Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, 315.

end of Micronesia he is called Mo-tik-e-tik, 8000 km away to the west in Mangareva he is called Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga, on Hawai'i at the northern pinnacle of the Polynesian triangle he is called Maui-ki'iki'i and to the far south in New Zealand his names are Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga, Maui-mohio, Maui-atamai and Mauinukurau-tangata.

Maui's adventures and journeys always involve risk. The most well known tell of the fishing up of islands, ensnaring the sun, obtaining fire and struggling to gain immortality for humankind. Maui is always intelligent, resourceful and ever-striving against the odds to achieve the seemingly impossible; hence he represents the human struggle to command and utilise the bounty and forces of nature across the threshold between creation and the terrestrial world.²⁸

DATING ORAL TRADITIONS

Older oral traditions can be dated by comparing the location of figures and images in the tradition with archaeological and linguistic estimations for the date at which Pacific peoples separated as they migrated. Proper names and images that are specifically East Polynesian may be as old as 2000 years. Those that are also found in West Polynesia may be as old as 4000 years, and those that are also found in Melanesia and Micronesia up to 6000 years old on the basis that they possibly derive from the time the Lapita ancestors settled the Bismarck Archipelago. Polynesian traditions that are also found in West Austronesian islands, such as Borneo or the Philippines, can be aged at more than 6000 years old if they seem to derive from pre-Lapita times. Time estimations need to be conservative to allow for later diffusion between islands and island groups. One must also be careful with sources, as there is substantial evidence of post-European diffusion through errant literature.

MAUI NAMES

<i>Micronesia</i>	<i>Melanesia/Polynesia Outliers</i>	<i>Melanesia/Polynesia Outliers</i>
<i>Caroline Is.:</i>	Santa Cruz Mo-sigsig	Vanuatu:
Yap Motik-e-tik Mo-tgitgi	Tikopia Me-tikitiki	Nguna Maui-tikitiki
Feis Mo-tik-e-tik	Vanuatu:	Tanna Maui-tikitiki Ma-tikitiki Mo-tikitiki
Lamorek Mo-tik	Aneiteum Maui-tikitiki Ma-tikitiki Moi-tikitiki Maui-tukketukke	Futunna Ma-tikitiki Mo-shikishi Amo-shishiki Moshi Mo-skishiki Mai-siki
Mogmog Mo-thik-e-thik Mai-tik	Efate Maui-tikitiki Maui-tukituki	Aniwa Ma-tikitiki Mo-shikishi Ma-tshiktshiki
Ponape Mai-tik		
Kiribati Matuarangi		
<i>West Polynesia</i>	<i>East Polynesia</i>	
Tonga Maui-kijikiji	Hawai'i Maui-ki'iki'i	
Fiji Maui-kisikisi	Tahiti Maui-ti'iti'i	
Uvea Maui-a-Talanga	Tuamotu Maui-a-Ataranga Maui-tikitiki Maui-tikatika	
Rotuma Moea-tikitiki	Vahitahi (Tuamotus) Rarotonga Maui-tikitiki Mangareva Maui-tikitiki New Zealand Maui-tikitiki Maui-tikitiki-a-Taranga Maui-mohio Maui-nukurau-tangata Maui-potiki Rekohu (Chatham Is.) Maui-tikitiki	

²⁸ Based upon Luomala, K., *Maui-Of-A-Thousand-Tricks: His Oceanic and European Biographers*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1949.

MAUI THE FISHER OF LANDS

The most common theme in the Maui traditions is that he fished up land. Motik-e-tik in Yap (Micronesia) was the son of Lorop. Each day she disappeared, Mo decided to follow her. Lorop went to the sea and counted to four before diving in. Mo counted to three, dived into the sea and hit his head on a rock. He returned ashore, counted again, this time to four, and dived in again, and taking the form of a bird, he soared into the underworld. Lorop recognised Mo and predicted her death. She was later buried in the underworld. Mo returned to the upper world, where he found his brothers were without food. They went fishing. Mo made a hook and stole fish from his brothers for bait. First he caught a banana, then a coconut, a taro and then cooked breadfruit. Mo threw his line again. This time the hook snagged on a tree, He dragged and heaved until part of the underworld came to the surface. The brothers found a grave, knocked on the entrance and asked who owned the land. Lorop replied that the land belonged to them.²⁹

The elements of this tradition repeat across Polynesia. Tongan traditions say Maui-atalanga, the son of Vele and her husband Tonga-fusifonua, fished up the islands of that archipelago.³⁰ Further east, narratives say Maui pulled the multiple Tuamotu islands from beneath the sea, including the legendary land of Havaiki.³¹ New Zealand Maori have an account of Maui very similar to that of the Yapese. One day Maui, adopting the form of a pigeon, followed his mother into the underworld, where his father prayed over him, making a mistake during the recital, for which Maui would later die.

Maui obtained a jawbone, which he used to make a hook. The hook caught on a house in the underworld while Maui was fishing with his brothers and he fished up the North island. The repeating images tells us something of the power of ancient traditions to endure over several centuries and how traditions are transposed onto new landscapes as ancestors migrated from one island to the next.

Rata

Rata is the second most well-known demigod in the Pacific after Maui. Traditions about him are 3000 years old or more. Rata is mostly known as a great canoe builder, which suggests that the original ancestor was an important figure in navigation and migration when the first ancestors of the Polynesians arrived in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

Samoan narratives say Lata was a Fijian canoe builder who taught the Samoans and Tongans how to construct large double-hulled canoes.³² Tongan traditions say the guardians of the forest prevented Lasa from felling a tree to build a great canoe. During a subsequent struggle, Lasa caught the chief guardian, Ha-ele-feke, who agreed to help Lasa build the canoe and navigate it to Fiji.³³

The Hawaiians say Laka was a daring voyager and a god who wished to build a canoe to voyage to retrieve the bones of his father, Wahieloa, who had been murdered. Guardians of the forest interrupted his canoe building each evening, but relented upon his making offerings to the gods and rewarded him with two hulls, from which Laka built the first waka-houlua (double-

²⁹ Luomala, *Maui-Of-A-Thousand-Tricks*, 221-226.

³⁰ Collocort, 'Notes on Tongan religion', 45-58.

³¹ Stimson, *Tuamotuan Legends (Island of Anaa)*, 11-60.

³² Kramer, *Samoa*, 455-457.

³³ Collocott, E. E. V., *Tales and Poems of Tonga*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1928, 15-16.

hulled canoe). Laka was later deified as a god of fertility and procreation associated with the hula and the red lehua blossom.³⁴

In Tahiti, Rata inherits leadership when a giant clam swallows his father Vahieroa, and uncle, Tumunui. Rata, who is a powerfully built young man, then accidentally kills several people while playing a game of 'catch the slippery pig'. However, because he is also humble and contrite his people forgive him, and support his decision to enter the forest and cut down the last great tree in order to build a canoe to avenge his father and uncle. The guardians of the forest protect the tree, but after being captured by Rata they agree to assist him. The following morning the canoe is complete, and Rata sails forth to combat the giant clam. During a fierce battle several of Rata's crew perish before Rata finally kills the clam and retrieves the bones of his father and uncle.³⁵

In Maori narratives, Rata is the son of Wahieroa, who is killed by Matuku-takotako. Rata's adventures in building the canoe are essentially the same as those in Hawai'i and Tahiti. Rata goes into the forest to cut down a tree with which to build a canoe and sail away to avenge the death of his father. Forest guardians re-erect the tree. Rata hides in the forest and captures the guardians, who inform him that their actions were due to his failure to perform appropriate rites. Rata apologises and the guardians assist him to build the canoe. Rata sails forth, and ambushes and kills Matuku at a bathing pool before retrieving the bones of his father.

DATING AND LOCATING CULTURE HEROES

The world's pre-eminent mythologist Joseph Campbell argued that culture hero traditions, such as those of Achilles and Odysseus in Greek mythology, may be based on original figures who lived some time in the remote past. Campbell also pointed out that such traditions accrue so much symbolism over time to fulfill their role as mediators between reality and the gods that original historical details, such as where and when the original figures actually lived, can be difficult, if not impossible, to deduce. This is particularly so with Polynesian culture hero traditions, which were transported and relocated from island to island during successive migrations over several generations.

THE NATURAL WORLD AND CUSTOMARY LORE

Lore pertaining to the natural world emanates from the creation and demigod traditions to describe, trace and define the origin, existence and characteristics of natural phenomena. It does this through both simple and complex allegorical and etiological poetry that reflects the deep-seated, intimate and sophisticated understanding of the natural world that oral cultures developed over several centuries. This lore permeates all other traditions: demigods are said to have created birds and sunsets, navigators follow stars, and tribal histories are intimately linked to nature.

Customary lore also emanates from the creation and demigod traditions. Its purpose is to establish and invoke moral codes, and reinforce the legitimacy of existing social institutions and customary practices by projecting current beliefs, practices and institutions back onto the creation and demigod traditions. This lore also permeates every level of oral tradition, forming

³⁴ Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, 263-275.

³⁵ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 468-515.

an overlapping lattice of philosophical codes.

Passages, Rivers, Mountains, Harbours And Islands

The ancestors of the Polynesians relocated ancient place names as they migrated from island to island. Ancestors used generic names to describe the places, such as awa for reef, passage or river, whanga for harbours, motu for islands and maunga for mountains. The names Awanui (large passage, river, reef), Awaiti (small passage, river, reef), Awaroa (long or broad passage, river, reef), Awarua (twin passage, river, reef) and Awatoru (triple passage, river, reef) are among the most common names throughout Polynesia. Large mountains were called Maunganui, broad mountains Maungaroa and sacred ones Maungatapu. The ancestors named long harbours Whangaroa—like the harbour north of Kerikeri in Te Tai Tokerau (Northland), New Zealand—and broad ones were named Whanganui. Other long harbours are Fagaloa on the island of ‘Upolu in Samoa, Fa‘aroa on the island of Ra‘iatea in Tahiti, Hangaroa in Rapa Nui and Hanalua, which is now called Pearl Harbour; on the island of O‘ahu in Hawai‘i.

THE MOTUTAPU ISLANDS

Some of the names that were transferred around Polynesia as ancestors migrated held particular meaning. Small islands named Motutapu (Sacred Island), standing at the entrances to great harbours, were sanctuaries where voyagers would rest until they knew it was safe to go onto the mainland. This pattern can be found throughout Polynesia. Motutapu islands stand at the entrances of the main harbour of Tongatabu in Tonga and of Te Avaniu passage in Borabora in Tahiti, as an offshore point to the Te Areatahi passage between Ra‘iatea and Taha‘a in Tahiti, at the entrance to Nga Tangi‘ia Harbour in Rarotonga, and at the entrance to the Wai-te-mata Harbour in New Zealand. Also in New Zealand, Motutapu was the first name of Mokoia Island in Te Rotoruanui-a-Kahumatamomoe—an island that was the bastion sanctuary of the Te Arawa tribe.

MIGRATORY TRADITIONS

The fifth and sixth bodies of oral tradition, migratory and tribal traditions, relate mainly to the historical deeds of ancestors. Migratory or canoe traditions tell of the departure from islands of origin and the arrival, exploration and settlement in new locales. Tribal traditions relate the deeds of ancestors and their descendants from after the time of arrival to the present. The latter are not considered here because this chapter is about the linkages between islands rather than the histories of each one.

Migratory traditions, which stand midway along a continuum between creation and the present, contain the greatest mix of history and symbolism of all traditions. This mixture also means that the migratory traditions are the most difficult to interpret and understand, and it has led to much distortion in publications as writers often overemphasised either the historical or symbolic content without due regard for the other. Migratory traditions have been the subject of much attention and speculation by European explorers, missionaries, and colonial administrators and also by academic archaeologists, linguists, literalists, anthropologists, ethnographers and others since first contact between Europeans and Polynesians. Unfortunately, a fundamental failure to understand the internal historical and symbolic dynamics of these traditions, literal misinterpretation and the fact that there is a significant amount of deliberately invented material

(a lot of which is still accepted as authentic traditions) has led to much unscholarly publication of these traditions.

The most notorious examples of errant historical analysis are from Hawai'i, Rarotonga and New Zealand. These include A. Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race* (1878-1885), E. Tregear, *The Aryan Maori* (1885), S. P. Smith and Te Arikitarā-are (edited by S. P. Smith), 'History and Traditions of Rarotonga', in *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (1899-1921), and S. P. Smith, *Hawaiki* (1898, 1906, 1910, 1921) and *The Lore of the Whare Wananga: Kauwae Raro* (1915 Vol. 2).³⁶ These writers misinterpreted, embellished with their own ideas or manipulated existing authentic oral traditions to make extravagant claims purporting to trace the migrations of the Polynesians through Asia, India and the Middle East. Smith concocted a still widely held paradigm that Maori had arrived in New Zealand as part of a seven-canoe fleet. Unfortunately, these accounts were often perpetuated in publications by indigenous writers such as P. Buck, *Vikings of the Sunrise* (1937) and *The Coming of the Maori* (1949), which unfortunately added the impression of indigenous authenticity. The ideas of Fornander, Tregear and Smith remain widely accepted particularly through populist non-academic writers such as J. Evans, *Nga Waka-o-Nehera* (1996) and *The Discovery of Aotearoa* (1997).³⁷

Other writers, such as M. Orbell, *Hawaiki: A New Approach to Maori Oral Tradition* (1987) and M. P. K. Sorrenson, *Maori Origins and Migrations* (1979), made the opposite but equal mistake of assuming the migratory traditions are purely symbolic constructs composed for religious purposes and therefore dismissed them as devoid of historical content.³⁸ What both approaches miss is that migratory traditions contain both historical and symbolic elements. The task of scholars, therefore, is to be able to identify one from the other. The following paragraphs outline some of these dynamics.

One striking feature of Polynesian oral tradition is that as ancestors migrated they transported much mythological lore about the creation, gods and culture heroes, because of their cultural, religious and philosophical importance, but very little historical lore concerning the places they originated from. In fact, large parts of the 'old homeland' histories were discarded as migrants focused on building histories in new homelands. This process created a gap or synchronic rupture in the continuity of ongoing diachronic histories, the importance of new homeland histories clearly outweighing that of old ones. These gaps were sealed with creation and demigod traditions, in a process here termed 'capping'. Capping can be detected in traditions

³⁶ Fornander, A., *An Account of the Polynesian race, its Origins and Migrations, and the Ancient History of the Hawaiian People to the times of Kamehameha I*. London: Trubner, 1878, 1880, 1885; Tregear, E., *The Aryan Maori*. Wellington: George Didsbury Government Printer, 1885; Smith, S. P., & Te Arikitarā-are, 'History and traditions of Rarotonga', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 8 (1899), 61-88, 171-178; 1919, Vol. 28, pp. 61-78, 134-151, 183-208; 1920, Vol. 29, pp. 1-19, 45-69, 107-127, 165-188; 1921, Vol. 30, pp. 1-15, 53-70, 201-206; 28 (1919) 29 (1920), 30 (1921); Smith, S. P., *Hawaiki. The Original Homeland of The Maori: With a sketch of Polynesian History*. Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1898, 1904, 1910, 1921; Smith, S. P., *The Lore of the Whare Wananga: or, Teachings of the Maori College on Religion, Cosmogony, and History; Written down by H. T Whatahoro for the Teachings of Te Matorohanga and Nepia Pohuhu, Priests of the Whare Wananga of the East Coast, New Zealand*, Vol. 2. New Plymouth: Polynesian Society, 1915,

³⁷ Buck, Peter, *Vikings of the Sunrise*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1938; Buck, Peter, *The Coming of the Maori*. Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1949; Evans, J., *Nga Waka-o-Nehera: The First Voyaging Canoes*. Auckland: Reed, 1997; Evans, J., *The Discovery of Aotearoa*. Auckland: Reed, 1998.

³⁸ Orbell, M., *Hawaiki: A New Approach to Maori Oral Tradition*. Christchurch: University of Canterbury Press, 1985; Sorrenson, M. P. K., *Maori Origins and Migrations: The Genesis of some Pakeha Myths and Legends*. Auckland: University of Auckland Press, 1979.

saying that well known and often very ancient gods or demigods, such as Maui and Rata, carved canoes or initiated voyages. Thus, every migratory event connects a new history to the demigods, gods and creation.

Migratory traditions about real human arrivals need to be distinguished from ones about 'etiological creators', mythological figures whose names were transferred from island to island through multiple migrations and who are said to have fished up the land from the sea or otherwise created the land. Maui, the fisher of islands, is the most widespread of these traditions. The cultural import of these traditions is to explain the existence of land as opposed to its discovery. The existence of these traditions alongside human migratory accounts (they often exist side-by-side) may obscure the identities of the earliest arrivals. In some instances the culture heroes, where they are of much significance, may have replaced memory about earlier arrivals altogether.

Traditions that purport humans to have originated *in situ* rather than arrived from elsewhere are another type of origin narrative that can obscure the record of human ancestors. These accounts include representations of the environment personified as ancestors said to have come out of the ground, descended from the sky or otherwise emerged from the natural world in some way and to have married real human ancestors. These traditions reflect a technique in prose that enhances intimacy with the environment, while reinforcing ownership rights by transposing the environment as an ancestor in such a way that the presence of autochthons obscures the identities of actual first or early arrivals. Further analytic difficulty occurs where the name of an environmental feature has replaced that of an ancient ancestor in a real human migratory history.

Traditions that are more certainly about human arrivals are also subject to a number of dynamics that demand care in analysis. Older traditions, particularly about very important explorers and navigators, were often transported as part of cultural lore in much the same manner as traditions about cultural heroes such as Maui were. This probably goes some way to explaining why some figures such as Whiro, the most widely known East Polynesian navigator, is in fact known in so many places. It could also explain how ancestors such as Kupe are known around much of New Zealand, as groups broke off from an original settlement they carried the traditions about their first arrival to new locations within the same country.

A technique in oral prose, here termed 'shadowing', may also obscure the identities and order of arrivals. Shadowing occurs when more recent and dominant arrivals marginalise the histories and identities of early inhabitants by describing them as mystical beings, ogres, denizens or spirits. In a culture that honours the presence of ancestors, this technique recognises former occupants while twilighting them in the mists of time.

Traditions naming 'first arrivals' and 'first discoverers' usually more often speak of the founders of particular communities rather than first discoverers. This explains why the genealogical date of 'first arrivals' in oral traditions is usually more recent than archaeological dates for first occupation, why most first arrivals actually meet and sometimes marry prior inhabitants and why many traditions name several first arrivals or discoverers. The idea of 'founders rather than discoverers' has parallels in European traditions; for instance, New Zealanders often say Captain James Cook discovered New Zealand, rather than earlier explorer Abel Tasman. The reason for this is because English rather than Dutch settlers colonised New Zealand.

Traditions about the most recent arrivals dominate remembrance. These traditions usually

contain few details about prior homelands, because new arrivals and their descendants concentrated remembrance on exploration, settlement and dispersal in their new homelands. Nevertheless, these traditions often contain cumulative information about multiple migrations across time and between several islands compressed into singular accounts. For instance, a New Zealand Maori tradition may contain remnant information about migrations from West Polynesia to East Polynesia, from East Polynesia to New Zealand and from original settlements to other places within New Zealand. Such traditions are particularly difficult to decode. These cumulative singular accounts typically retain more information about the most recent migration. They also display significant flexibility in proper names, particularly in older accounts, with the names of ancient dynasties, natural features, canoes and ancestors becoming increasingly interchangeable over time.

The following summary of migratory traditions shows that the largest proportion of any body of tradition refers mainly to voyages between nearby islands within distinguishable zones of contact. Longer distance voyagers are remembered but were generally the exception rather than the rule.

Polynesian Outliers

The Polynesian outliers span 10,000 km of ocean from Sikaiana, Tikopia and Anuta on the windward fringe of Vanuatu and the Santa Cruz Islands in the east through Ontong Java, Nukumanu and Tauto to Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi in the west. The traditions here speak of frequent voyaging within localised island groups and intermittent longer voyages, sometimes over thousands of kilometres.

Kapingamarangi

The tiny atoll of Kapingamarangi (actually 33 small islets) lies midway between Nukuoro in the Caroline Islands, 300 km to the north, and the Bismarck Archipelago 350 km to the south. According to the traditions, the people descend from Utamatua and his wife Roua who came from a land called 'Tamana', which is unidentified. These first arrivals found Kapingamarangi already inhabited by other beings. Traditions also speak of a zone of contact with the western Caroline and Marshall Islands. Two arrival canoes came from the West Carolines, others from Lukunor and Nukuoro, and five from the Marshall Islands.³⁹

Rennell and Bellona

Rennell and Bellona lie between the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (the New Hebrides). Their traditions say Ngatonga-boibangu and his son Ngatongamatu'a settled the islands first. These navigators are also attributed with making multiple voyages to 'Ubea (possibly Uvea in Western Polynesia) from where the Rennellese and Bellonians obtained turmeric for use in rituals. Rennellese and Bellonese adventurers also raided Tikopia, the Solomon and Duff Islands and perhaps even Rotuma nearly 1600 km to the east.⁴⁰

³⁹ Emory, K. P., *Kapingamarangi: Social and Religious Life of a Polynesian Atoll*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1965, 1-5, 12-18, 28-30, 37-41, 46-54.

⁴⁰ Roberts, R., 'The children of Kaitu'u: the legend of the first Polynesian adventurers to settle on the islands of Rennell and Bellona', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 67:1 (1958), 3-10; Elbert, S. H. & Monberg, T., *From Two Canoes. Oral Traditions of Rennell and Bellona Islands*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1965, 257-259; T.

Anuta and Tikopia

Anuta and Tikopia are small islands east of the Solomon Islands and Santa Cruz. Anutan genealogical records trace descent from the West Polynesian voyagers Kaurave from Tonga and Pu Taupare from Uvea. Tikopia was settled by Pu Lasi from Anuta. Both islands recite waves of outside arrivals from Tonga, Samoa, Uvea, Tuvalu and Rotuma.⁴¹

West Polynesia

West Polynesian traditions indicate a central contact region around Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, describing frequent voyaging for trade, warfare, intermarriage and alliance. Voyaging was more frequent between close-by islands, with the longest routes about 500 km over open water. Longer voyages did occur, but as an exception rather than a rule. The islands on the periphery of this zone have their own contact spheres extending into Micronesia, northern East Polynesia, and, through a mix of frequent accidental voyaging and less frequent deliberate voyaging, across to Melanesia, Vanuatu, Santa Cruz and the islands of the Bismarck Archipelago. The central region overlaps with a Northern West Polynesian zone including Tuvalu (Ellice Islands), Kiribati (Phoenix Islands), Tokelau (Union Islands), Rotuma, Uvea (Wallis Island) and Futuna.

Samoa

Samoa comprises the main islands of Manu'a, Savai'i, Olosega, Tutuila and 'Upolu. There are several accounts about the first arrivals on Manu'a. One is that the first settler was the Tu'i Manu'a, a descendant of the god Tagaloa-a-lagi who created Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Another is that the Tu'i Manu'a was the descendant of Galeai, a high chief from 'Fitiuta'. A third says Samoa was settled by descendants of the Tu'i Atafu from Tokelau whose granddaughter, Luau, married the Tu'i Manu'a. Their son, Luotagaloa, became the first chief of 'Upolu. Another first arrival tradition holds that Faga settled both Savai'i and 'Upolu. Faga was from 'Pago', which is unidentified, although there is a place of that name on Fate in Vanuatu. Another early settler, Pili, landed on Savai'i and found both that island and 'Upolu already settled.

Traditions concerning the history of ruling dynasties reflect frequent contact throughout West Polynesia. The Tu'i Manu'a, for instance, once ruled over Samoa, Tonga, Uvea and several other islands. The first Tu'i Tonga, Ahoeitu, who many claim was originally from Samoa (known to them as Asoaitu), dominated Tonga, Samoa, Niue, Uvea, Futuna and Rotuma. The Tu'i Tonga dynasty ruled Samoa for nearly 300 years. Other traditions describe contact with Niue and Fiji. A married couple expelled from Manu'a escaped to Niue. Their son Fitiaumua later conquered Fiji and Tonga and his foster brother Laufoli conquered Manu'a, Tutuila and 'Upolu in Samoa. Recorded intermarriages reinforce this idea. One Tu'i Tonga married a daughter of the Tu'i Fiti (Fiji). His daughter, Laufafaetoga, married Tupainatuna, a Samoan. She

Monberg, *The Religion of Bellona Island. A study of the place of Beliefs and Rites in the Social Life of Pre-Christian Bellona*. Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 1966, 32-92.

⁴¹ Firth, R., 'Anuta and Tikopia', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 63(1954), 102, 121-123; Yen, D., Kirch, P., & Rosenthal, P., 'Anuta: An Introduction', in *Anuta: A Polynesian Outlier in the Solomon Islands*. D. E. Yen & Janet Gordon (eds), Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1973, 6-8; Freinberg, R., 'Possible pre-historic contacts between Anuta and Tikopia', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 98 (1989), 304-305.

later gave birth to her son in Fiji, with whom she returned to Samoa. In another story, Taumatamu, whose great-grandfather was Fijian, had a son, Samoanagalo, who was kidnapped and taken to Tonga where he was adopted by the Tu'i Tonga. He later had an affair with Fitimaupologa, the daughter of the Tu'i Tonga and fled with her to Samoa.

Samoa traditions retain some aspects of canoe building and navigation. Amonga (Orion's Belt) was the usual star guide to Tonga. Ocean going canoes called 'va'a-tele', or great canoes, were said to be able to carry two large fishing canoes. Special leaves were chewed which enabled mariners to drink seawater.⁴²

Tonga

Three great dynasties, the Tu'i Tonga, Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua and Tu'i Kanokupolu (the latter two arise from the first), dominate the traditional histories of the main Tongan island groups of Tongatabu, Ha'apai and Vava'u. There are few traditions about original settlement. The main one is the story about Ahoeitu, the son of a Tongan woman and Eitumatupua, who became the first Tu'i Tonga. Some accounts say he was from Samoa and found Tonga already populated.

Tonga tradition mentions much ongoing contact with other islands. Two important influxes from Fiji are recorded, the first led by the Tu'i Motuliki and the second from the island of Lakemba on the occasion of the marriage of Tapuosi, the Tu'i Leka of Lakemba, to the female Tu'i Tonga Sinaitakala. Four sisters of Tu'i Tonga also married Tu'i Lameka from Fiji. Migrations from Samoa, Rotuma and Tokelau are also recorded. Tongan castaways may also have settled Ontong Java and Tikopia 1600 km to the west.

Other Tongan traditions declaring that at various times they held sovereignty over Samoa, Futuna, Rotuma, Niue and Uvea indirectly indicate they were expansive and capable voyagers. The traditions of other islands testify to this. Tuvalu and Tarawa in Tunganu speak of Tongan raiders, the Fijians are also said to have known of their power and dreaded it. The tenth and eleventh Tu'i Tonga once dominated much of Samoa. The twentieth Tu'i Tonga, Tatafueikimeimua, is known to have married the Samoan woman Hina. The sixth Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua also married a Samoan woman and installed their son, Ngata, as first Tu'i Kanokupolu. The sons of the twenty-third Tu'i Tonga Takalaua, who was murdered, avenged his death by raiding Niue, Samoa, Futuna, Fiji and Uvea. The twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh Tu'i Tonga, Piupiufatu and Tu'i Tonga Kauulufonua, had Samoan mothers. The twenty-ninth Tu'i Tonga, Uluakimata I, is attributed with the transportation of huge stone blocks from Uvea to Tongatabu on board the great canoe, Lomipeau, for the construction of his royal tomb. This legendary canoe

⁴² Fraser, J., 'The Samoan story of Creation', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1(1892), 181; 'Folk songs and myths from Samoa', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 6(1897), 20-33, 68-75, 117-134; Stair, J. B., 'Samoa: whence peopled', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 4 (1895), 47-53; Stair, J. B., 'Old Samoa: or floatsam and jetsam from the Great Ocean', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 4(1895), 108-112; Mead, M., *Social Organisation of Manua*, Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1930, 171-196; Meleisea, M., & Schoeffel, P., *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*. Suva: The University of the South Pacific, 1987, 2-6, 31, 203; Henry, F., *History of Samoa*. Apia: Commercial Printers, 1979, 21-41; Turner, G., *Samoa a Hundred Years Ago and Long Before, together with notes on the Cults and Customs of Twenty-Three other Islands in the Pacific*. London: Macmillan, 1884, 5, 224-265; Ella, S., 'The war of Tonga and Samoa and the origin of the name Malietoa', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 8(1899), 231-233; Nelson, O. F., 'Legends of Samoa', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 34(1925), 130-141.

is also mentioned in the Uvean traditions.

In support of the proposal that land was discovered by following migratory birds, Tongan traditions instruct in sailing directions between Samoa and Tonga to follow the migratory path of the pigeons (*Globicera pacifica*) which migrate between the islands in October and March. In another interesting tradition, the Tu'i Ha'amea Loau from Tongatabu made a famous voyage to 'beyond the horizon' while spending much time lying on the deck of his vessel.⁴³

The Lau Islands

The Lau Islands are a chain of 100 small islands and reefs lying about 240 km east of Fiji and 400 km west of Tonga. The islands of Lakemba, Naiau, Kambara, Mothe, Oneata and Thithia are the main chiefdoms. The traditions say Ndaunisai settled and conquered the islands with his sons. The traditions also tell of much trade with Fiji and Tonga. The Tongans initiated trade because of the hardwood found in Southern Lau, which they used to build superior large double canoes. The construction of the largest type of double hulled canoe took up to two years, and only a chief could command the resources and labour necessary to build one. Gradually colonies of Tongans grew up in Lau, Vanua Levu and the islands of the Koro Sea. Trade continued on a frequent basis, except during the northwest monsoon.⁴⁴

Niue

Niue lies 400 km east of Vava'u in Tonga. According to the traditions there were several migrations to Niue. Huanaki and Fao are said to have been 'first arrivals' from Samoa. A second and third migration were from Tonga—one was led by Mutalau, whose mother was Niuean, and another by a Tongan woman named Ninifale. Niueans [*sic*] also sailed to other islands in West Polynesia. Laufoli went to Tonga in order to test his martial skill, where he married the daughter of a Tongan chief and later returned to Niue. Raids by Tongans were still occurring when European contact was first established. The Niuean traditions contain little about contact with islands outside of Tonga and Samoa. This is probably due to its isolation in the southeast corner of the West Polynesian archipelago.⁴⁵

Northern West Polynesia

Tuvalu

The low-lying islands of Nanumea, Nukufetau, Nanumaga, Niutao, Nui, Vaitupu and

⁴³ Gifford, *Tongan Myths and Tales*, 25-38, 140-141; Gifford, E. W., *Tongan Society*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1929, 12-15, 48-71, 80-81; Collocott, E. E. V., 'An experiment in Tongan history', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 33(1924), 168-170, 180-182; Bott, E., *Tongan Society at the time of Captain Cook's visits: Discussions with her Majesty Queen Salote Tupou*. Wellington: Polynesian Society, 1982, 90-92.

⁴⁴ Thompson, L., *Southern Lau: Fiji, An Ethnography*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1940, 1-37.

⁴⁵ Loeb, E. M., *History and Traditions of Niue*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1926, 3-5, 30-43, 24-67, 146-223; Smith, S. P., 'Niue Island and its people', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 11(1902), 98-99; Cowan, J., 'The story of Niue', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 32(1923), 238-243.

Funafuti make up the long archipelago of Tuvalu, whose traditions describe a voyaging corridor 2200 km long from; Tonga, Samoa, Uvea, Futuna and Rotuma in the south to Tungaru (the Gilbert Islands), Kiribati (the Phoenix Islands) and the Marshal Islands in the north.

Tefolaha, the founding ancestor for the island of Nanumea, is said to have sailed from Samoa 1500 km away. Tefolaha also made a return voyage to Samoa and Tonga. Tongan, Kiribatian and Tungaruan marauders (from the Gilbert Islands) raided Nanumea several times, including one party in an armada of eleven canoes. Other Tongan ancestors settled the islands of Nukufetau and Nanumaga while Kiribatian and Samoan adventurers settled Niutao and Nui. One canoe reached Nui from Beru in the Gilbert Islands.

The Samoan navigator Telemarua settled Vaitupu and Funafuti, from where his grandson, Silaga, made a return trip to Tonga. Samoan traditions say two sons of the high chief Malietoa La'uli also settled Vaitupu. Funafuti traditions record that raiders from Kiribati frequently stopped there while on their way south to raid Samoa. Tuvaluan tradition says the canoe of another famous voyager, Nei Ruruobu, was navigated by two women.⁴⁶

Tokelau

The four reef-bounded atolls Olosenga, Fakaofu, Nukunono and Atafu of Tokelau lie to the east of Tuvalu. Tradition records a broad contact zone extending westward to Tuvalu, Uvea and Futuna and southward to Tonga, Fiji and Samoa. First founder traditions say Kava and Pi'o, two navigators from Samoa, landed on Fakaofu and drove out the original inhabitants of Atafu, Nukuono and Olosenga islands. Other accounts say that Kulu and Ona, a man and a woman, led the Samoan settlers. Some of the defeated peoples escaped to Tuvalu and Samoa, others went further west to Tikopia, Sikaiana and Ontong Java. Other Samoan migrants were known to have landed in Tokelau. One tradition says that the navigator Lekena left two settlers, Folinga and Latu. Tongan raiders also arrived there.

Tokelauan navigators were famous for other voyages to Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Sailors from Fakaofu also ventured eastward to Pukapuka, Manihiki and Tongareva. A Tokelauan tradition preserves the names of several navigating stars. Fetu Ao, also called Kui Salimona (probably Venus rising in the morning), was used for easterly bearings, and Famau Malanga (probably Venus setting in the evening) was used for westerly bearings. Na Tangata (the Pointers) was used for the voyage to Samoa. Tolu, the three stars in Orion's Belt, guided voyagers between Nukunono and Atafu.⁴⁷

Rotuma, Uvea, Futuna and Alofi

Rotuma, Uvea, Futuna and Alofi are a small group of islands north of Fiji. Their traditions describe frequent return voyaging to Tonga, and contact with Tokelau and Fiji along a contact zone up to 1600 km across at its broadest point. Rotuman tradition says invaders from Samoa overran the earliest population, whose origins are uncertain. Other invasions followed,

⁴⁶ Faaniu, S., et al. *Tuvalu: A History*. Hugh Laracy (ed.), Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1983, 14-16, 48-52, 58-59, 66-67, 71-76, 86-87.

⁴⁷ Newell, J. E., 'Notes on Rev. J.B. Stair's paper on early Samoan voyages and settlement', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 4(1895), 238-239; Burrows, W., 'Some notes and legends of a South Sea island: Fakaofu of the Tokelau or Union Group', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 32(1923), 148-152; MacGregor, G., *Ethnology of the Tokelau Islands*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1937, 12-32; Tutuila, 'The Line Islanders (notes on the races known as the Tokelaus, or the Line Islanders)', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1(1892), 262-263.

including one from Tonga led by Ma'afu. Other arrivals appear to have been from either Tikopia or Ontong Java to the west.⁴⁸

Uvean accounts say several waves of Tongans settled Uvea. Tauloko was the leader of the first migration, and another, led by Nga'asialili, went to both Uvea and Futuna. During the time of the third king of Uvea, Havea Fakahau, a large canoe called the Lomipeau was used to transport stone to Tonga to be used for constructing monuments. In the time of the sixth Uvean king, Fakahenga, the Tongans, with the help of some Tokelauans, invaded Uvea. These forces were met and defeated by a combined force of Uveans, Fijians and Futunans. The story of this war describes the extent of voyaging in the West Polynesian archipelago. Tupavaitupu was the most renowned Uvean navigator, traditions saying that he retained the ability to navigate in his old age even after becoming blind. Uveans may also have settled Rennell and Bellona, and Rotuma. In fact, the Uveans were so good at sailing that missionaries later complained that the frequency with which they got up and sailed off disrupted conversion.⁴⁹

The traditions of Futuna and Alofi describe a similar pattern of contact to those of Rotuma and Uvea. The hereditary kings of Futuna descend from Samoan immigrants, Tongans often raided the islands, and frequent arrivals from Uvea are recorded. The Futunans were themselves accomplished voyagers, who sailed to Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and Uvea. Several accounts also suggest voyages 1000 and 2000 km to the west, where Futunans may have settled on Sikaiana and the island of Futunalalo in southern Vanuatu.⁵⁰

East Polynesia: The Northern Cook Islands

Pukapuka

The Northern Cook Islands include Pukapuka, Rakahanga, Manihiki, Tongareva, Suvarrow and Nassau. The traditions of these islands form a unique link between East and West Polynesia, describing limited voyaging east and south to Tahiti and Rarotonga and frequent voyaging westward to Samoa, Tonga and Niue.

Pukapukan accounts of the earliest inhabitants are embellished with much that is mythical. Three obscure figures are mentioned, Tamayei, Mataliki and his wife Te Vaopupu. Mataliki is described as a god, the creator of the land and the first settler. Some traditions claim all three were from Tonga, while others associate them with 'Tongaleleva' (Tongareva). Traditions talk of much contact within the Northern Cook Group. One says that 300 men sailed to Tongaleleva (Tongareva) on a single canoe commanded by Luaivaipapa. The Pukapukans at one time controlled Nassau through a chief named Ngalewu.

The traditions also indicate frequent contact with West Polynesia. The ancestor Kui is said to have drifted to Samoa, where he died and was eaten. Yawau was a priest of the Yamaunga lineage who fled Pukapuka because of a religious indiscretion and sailed to Tokelau,

⁴⁸ Russell, W. E., 'Rotuma: its history, traditions and customs', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 51(1942), 229-255; Irava, I., 'History, Superstition and Religion', in *Rotuma: Hanua Pumue*. Anselmo Fatiaki (ed.), Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1991, 7-12.

⁴⁹ Burrows, W., *Ethnology of Uvea (Wallis Island)*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1937, 3-8, 18-37, 49-50; Priday, H. E. L., 'A Polynesian migration circa 1765', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 59(1950), 245-248.

⁵⁰ Smith, S. P., 'Futuna or Horne Island and its people', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1(1892), 33-34; Burrows, E.G., *Ethnology of Futuna*. New York: Kraus, 1971, 4-56, 230-231.

Samoa and Fiji. Te Nana and Yi are said to have sailed to Tonga and Niue, where they fought Te Palo. Te Nana was killed in Niue. Their foe, Te Palo, later arrived in Pukapuka, where he is remembered for his amorous adventures with Pukapukan women and the speed of his canoe. Two Pukapukan fleets of between seven to ten canoes are said to have sailed to Tonga. Te Mutui arrived from Tokelau. Other Tokelauans, led by Te Amu, also visited Pukapuka.

Pukapukan traditions retain much about sailing directions and star courses. Alpha and Beta Centauri were used to sail to Niue. Easterly trade winds and the star Melemele (Antares) and Orion's Belt were used to navigate to Olosega and Manu'a in Samoa and monsoonal westerlies were used for the return home.⁵¹

Rakahanga and Tongareva

There are few traditions about the earliest settlement of Rakahanga. One account says Huku brought the first people from Rarotonga, another says Whakahotu was the first arrival, a third says Wheatu followed Huku to Manihiki and then to Rakahanga, but Huku drove him away. Traditions say Huku returned to Rarotonga, where he left his sister Tapairu and her husband Toa. Both Huku and Toa are widely known in Atiu, Aitutaki and Rarotonga. Many other voyages are mentioned but few are clear, except for one about a young man who is said to have sailed to Samoa, Pukapuka and several other western islands.⁵²

Tongarevan traditions list three main early immigrants, Takatu, Taruia and Mahuta. The origins of Takatu are fairly unclear. Taruia and Mahuta are said to be from Savaiki in Samoa or from Aitutaki in the Southern Cooks. An Aitutaki tradition states that Taruia was a chief from that island who was deceived by Ruatapu into making a journey while Ruatapu supplanted him as leader. Mahuta is said to have followed Taruia to Tongareva before going on to Tahiti. The Tongarevans are descended from his daughter by his first wife and from the children of his second wife Hotio.⁵³

East Polynesia: The Southern Cook Islands

Rarotonga

The Southern Cook Islands include Atiu, Aitutaki, Rarotonga, Mangaia, Mitiaro, Mauke and Manuae. Unfortunately, several Rarotongan traditions have been substantially altered since first contact with Europeans. Many traditions that make reference to voyaging to and from West Polynesia are questionable because many of the events said to have occurred there do not appear in the traditions of any of the islands or island groups in that region.

Many place-name traditions were borrowed from other islands by wide-ranging

⁵¹ Hutchin, J.J.K., 'Traditions and some words of the language of Danger or Pukapuka Island', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 13(1904), 173-176; Beaglehole, E. & P., *Ethnology of Pukapuka*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1938, 351-353, 375-393, 402-409; Gill, W.W., 'Extracts from papers of the late Rev. W. Wyatt Gill', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 20(1912), 122-123; Finney, B., Frost, P., Rhodes, R., & Thompson, N., 'Wait for the west wind', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 98(1989), 295.

⁵² W.W. Gill, 'Extracts from the papers of the late Rev. W. Wyatt Gill', 144-151; Buck, Peter, *Ethnology of Manihiki and Rakahanga*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1932, 14-23; Smith, S.P., 'An Old Tradition from Rakahanga Island (by Banapa)', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 29(1920), 88-90.
⁵³ Buck, Peter, *Ethnology of Tongareva*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1932, 17-20.

Rarotongan missionaries who incorporated them back into their own traditions in an attempt to construct a comprehensive Polynesian history. One tendency was to exaggerate the voyaging range of ancestors. For example, Tutarangi supposedly conquered Fiji, Tonga, Uvea and islands of Western Polynesia, and Ui-te-rangiora is claimed to have visited more than 80 islands ranging from Indonesia, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Hawai'i, the Marquesas, Society, Austral and Cook Islands, and New Zealand (mentioned as 'Avaiki-tautau). It is also said that he voyaged into sub-Antarctic waters. Te Arutanganuku is said to have retraced his voyages several generations later, including his venture to the deep south.⁵⁴

Authentic traditions are consistent about continual contact within the group, waves of migration from Tahiti and less frequent contact with the Northern Cooks. Traditions attribute first discovery to Tongafiti, whose West Polynesian origin is generally assumed. The great road Te Ara-nui-o-Toi, that runs around Rarotonga, is associated with another early arrival, Toi. Other very early East Polynesian navigators, such as Ui-te-rangiora, Te Arutanganuku, Tutarangi, Ka'ukura, Maru, Paa and Apa, are known, although invented traditions about these ancestors are now difficult to separate from authentic ones.

The best remembered, most influential and widely celebrated ancestors are Tangi'ia or Uenga and Karika. There is strong evidence that Tangi'ia came from the Society Islands. Karika is said to have arrived from Manu'a in Samoa. Tangi'ia had a dispute in Tahiti with his cousin Tutapu, also known as Tutapuaruroa (Tutapu the relentless pursuer), which led to war. At one point, Tutapu went to 'Iva (possibly the Marquesas) whilst Tangi'ia sailed from Tahiti to the Southern Cooks and other islands.

Later, Tutapu drove Tangi'ia out of Tahiti. Fleeing south Tangi'ia met Karika near Mauke with whom he formed an alliance on Rarotonga. Some time later Tutapu arrived, a battle ensued and Tangi'ia killed Tutapu and a great number of his men. 'Ironui, the most famous of East Polynesian navigators, is also known in Rarotonga.⁵⁵ 'Iro's son Tai-te-ariki is said to have been adopted by Tangi'ia. 'Iro's parents are said to be from Vava'u and Kuporu, probably islands of the same name found in the Societies.⁵⁶

Aitu, Aitutaki and Mangaia

Atiuan traditions say the earliest ancestor was Utatakienna (also known in Aitutaki), who came from the sea, killed many of the earliest occupants and forced their ruler, Tutuaiva, to flee to Rarotonga. The grandson of Tukuata, the tenth ariki (supreme ruler) after Utatakienna, reputedly led a fleet of 80 canoes to Mauke to make war. Years later, another punitive expedition was organised and Mauke re-conquered. In another tradition, Rongomatane conquered Mitiaro, which, along with Atiu and Mauke, became known jointly as Ngaputoru. According to Atiuan

54 Nicholas, H., 'Genealogies and historical notes from Rarotonga, Part 1', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1(1892), 20-25; Stair, 'Samoa: whence peopled', 100-103; Smith, S.P., *Hawaiki: The Original Home of the Maori; with a sketch of Polynesian History*. Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1910, 155-235; Te Ariki Tataare, 'History and traditions of Rarotonga', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 28 (1919), 63-67, 137-143.

55 Whiro in New Zealand, Hilo in Hawai'i, Hiro in Tahiti, 'Iro in Rarotonga.

56 Te Aia, Tamarua 'Genealogies and historical notes from Rarotonga', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 2(1893), 273-277; Manuiri, 'The story of the visit of Tongaiti to Rarotonga', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 5(1896), 142-144; Duff, R., 'Introduction and Summary', in *Prehistory of the Southern Cook Islands*, Christchurch: Canterbury Museum, 1974, 9-10; Nicholas 'Genealogies', 25-29; Stair, 'Samoa: whence peopled', 103-106; Smith, *Hawaiki*, 188-253; Gill, W.W., 'Remarks on the legend of Honoura', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 20 (1911), 203-209; Te Atiki Taraare, 'History', 186-197; Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 115.

tradition, they were also in contact with Rarotonga and with Tahiti. Tangi'ia, the noted Rarotongan navigator, is known to the Atiuans.⁵⁷

Tradition says that Araura, the original name for Aitutaki, was given by Ru, the first settler, said to be from 'Avaiki (the old name for Rarotonga). Later settlers, Te Erui and his brother, were also from 'Avaiki. Te Erui displaced the people of Ru and took possession of the land. 'Iro, the famous East Polynesian navigator, is very well known on Aitutaki, where they say that his parents were Moeterauri and Akimanokiatu from Enuamanu or Atiu. 'Ito grew up on Aitutaki. Tangi'ia the Rarotongan ancestor is also known.

Ruatapu is the most famous navigator on Aitutaki. He arrived first at Rarotonga and Mauke, where he made war and exterminated the people for killing one of his sons. He then went on to Atiu, Manuae and finally to Aitutaki, where he married Tutunoa. Their son was Kirikava. Ruatapu removed the ariki Taruia and installed himself as ruler. Kirikava voyaged to Tahiti, where he challenged the champion Tutakura to a wrestling match and lost. Years later his nephew Te Aunui also went to Tahiti, where he successfully avenged the defeat of Kirikava.⁵⁸

According to Mangaian tradition Rangi, Te Akatauiria and Mokoiro were the first settlers. No canoes are mentioned in these traditions, although it is assumed that Rangi and his people were part of the Tangi'ia migration from Tahiti to Rarotonga. The Rarotongan ancestor Tongaiti is also known, the traditions saying that people of this name landed in a fleet of canoes during the period of Rangi. A series of wars followed. Eventually the new arrivals were allowed to stay. Another group arrived from Iti (Tahiti) after the Tongaiti. Several other invasions are recorded. One says Tangi'ia of Rarotonga sent his sons Motoro, Ruanuku, Kereteki and Utakea to Mangaia. Tamatapu wiped these invaders out. On another occasion, a fleet carrying 200 warriors from Rarotonga also invaded Mangaia. Invasions from Aitu and Aitutaki are also recorded.⁵⁹

East Polynesia: The Central Eastern Islands And Hawai'i

Tahiti

The traditions of Tahiti, Tuamotu, the Marquesas and Hawai'i speak of Tahiti as a centre of voyaging. The Society Islands comprise Tahiti, Mo'orea, Huahinenui, Huahineiti, Ra'iatea, Taha'a, Borabora, Tupai and Maupiti. Early traditions speak of a maritime dynasty called Hui Ari'i conquering an older population called Manahune. Contact within the archipelago was extensive. Borabora's ancient name was Vava'u and was known for its great maritime tradition, including conquests over Rai'atea, Taha'a and Maupiti. An alliance between Tahiti, Huahine, Ra'iatea, Maupiti and other islands later superseded the power of Borabora, with the great marae of Taputapuatea on Ra'iatea becoming a main cultural and political centre.

Contact with the Tuamotu Islands was also extensive. One famous ancient navigator, Hono'ura, led an expedition into the Tuamotus seeking vengeance for a previous raid by Tuamotuans led by

57 Large, J. T., 'Some notes on Atiu Island', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 22(1913), 67-76.

58 Large, J. T., 'The Aitutaki version of the story of Iro', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 12(1903), 133-146; Large, J. T., 'Ruatapu, a celebrated Maori Ancestor. His Cook Island descendants.' *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 15(1906), 209-219; Pakoti, J., 'The first inhabitants of Aitutaki', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 4(1895), 65-70; 'Extracts from Papers of the late Rev. W. Wyatt Gill', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 20 (1911), 149-151.

59 Buck, *Mangaian Society*, 19-21, 31-40.

A'uroa. Hono'ura originally fought and defeated the Tuamotuans at Rai'atea. Te A'uroa escaped. However, the Tahitians voyaged throughout the Tuamotuan islands and eventually caught and killed him.

Contact with Mangareva is recorded in a tradition saying four brothers sailed to Mangareva seeking the hand of Huri-te-monoï, the daughter of Mahu and Toaehau. The canoe returned to Tahiti and Huri was married to the youngest brother, Tui.

The most famous of East Polynesian voyagers, Hiro, is well known throughout the Tahitian islands. They say he was born on Uporu (now Taha'a), the son of Moeterauri from Borabora. As an adult, Hiro is said to have acquired a passion for stealing, womanising and sailing. Traditions say he sailed to the Marquesas, Hawai'i, the Austral islands and as far as Rapa. Hiro is said to have built the first large canoes with planks sewn together. His most famous canoe, the Hohoïo (interloper), was provisioned with bamboo baskets of fish attached to the outside of the canoe.⁶⁰

Tuamotu

The 78 islands of the Tuamotu chain form a 1600-km-long by 500-km-wide voyaging corridor. Traditions about the earliest inhabitants are generally obscure. In contrast, there are a number of accounts of voyages between islands within the archipelago and beyond.

Traditions from Napuka say that the first navigators to land were Kiore, Mahinui, Tutavake and Te Uhi. Pere, from Fakarava, an island formally called Havaiki, is said to have voyaged to Tahiti.

Fakahina traditions retain much about voyaging. Te Maputeagiagi, a Mangarevan, was the first settler on Fakahina. Other arrivals from Mangareva are also recorded. One Fakahina navigator, Makere, was famous for his liaisons with women on Takume and Fagatau. Another figure, Te Fakahira, was known for his love of long and dangerous voyaging, and visited many islands within the group, such as Takoto, Reao and Hao, and other islands outside of the group. Te Fakahira's son, Te Mauri, was also a romantic adventurer known in many islands. Faruia, remembered as an athlete and a colossus, voyaged to Vairatea (Ra'iatea) where he was eventually killed. Maruake, a more recent navigator, went to Takoto and tried to seize the wife of Porutu, who struck him down. He returned to Fakahina wounded and bleeding, and later formed an alliance with people from Takume and Rairoa before returning to Takoto and killing Porutu, whose wife he took back to Fakahina.

Moeava was a navigator from Takaroa who systematically attacked several islands within the group after his home island was attacked by a confederation from the western and central islands, including Rangiora, Fakarava and Anaa. Many of the islands were brought under his dominion.⁶¹

60 Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 106-113, 128-131, 247-267, 515-552, 607-611; Handy, E. S. C., *History and Culture in the Society Islands*. New York: Kraus, 1971, 75-100; Williams, J., 'The legend of Honoura', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 4(1895), 256-294; Gill, *Myths and Songs*, 125.

61 Audran, P. H. , 'Traditions of and notes on the Paumotu (or Tuomotu Islands)', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 29 (1920), 132-133, 161-165; Stimson, F., 'Songs of the Polynesian Navigators', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 41(1932), 190; Emory, K. P., 'Tuamotuan concepts of creation', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 49(1940), 69; Young, J. L., 'The origin of the name Tahiti, as related by Marerenui, a native of Faaiti Island, Paumotu Group', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 7(1898), 109.

The Marquesas

Hiva Oa, Tahu Ata, Fatu Hiva, Ua Huka, Ua Pou and Nuku Hiva comprise the principal islands in the Marquesas. There are several traditions about early occupants. One is that when the first people arrived they found and conquered the earliest inhabitants, who were spirits. Another is that the earliest tribe, the Fitinui, departed on bamboo rafts after defeat by new arrivals. Early settlers mentioned throughout the group include Nuku, Tiu, Mo'ota, Mohuta and Taupo. There is a suggestion that these figures may have first landed in Hiva Oa from where they settled other islands. Famous navigators who voyaged throughout the archipelago include Putio, Tutona, Tupa, Tanaoa and Ono. Ono is also said to have sailed to the Tuamotus. Another navigator, Te Heiva, is said to have sailed to Te Fiti (Tahiti). The Marquesans reputedly travelled as far as Rarotonga in search of *kura* (red feathers worn by chiefs).⁶²

Hawai'i

Hawaiian traditions also link to Tahiti. There are several first arrival traditions. An earlier Hawaiian population are sometimes referred to as the Menehune, a term also known in the Tuamotus, Tahiti and Rarotonga. The chiefs of Maui and Hawai'i trace their ancestry to Ulu, and the chiefs of Kaua'i and O'ahu to Nanaulu, but both may be mythological figures. Two other traditions, one that a canoe named Hawai'inui from Kahiki carried the first settlers and another that Hawai'iloa was the first settler, may be post-European constructs.

More authentic arrival traditions trace a sequence of migrations from Tahiti, of which Kapawa led the first and Pā'ao and Makuakaumana followed some sixteen generations later. Pā'ao initially remained in Kohala while Makuakaumana returned to Tahiti. Later Pao made a return voyage to Tahiti before again sailing to Hawai'i with Pili who became one of the kings of Hawai'i. Maweke led a later voyage, and his son, Mulieleali'i, and his grandsons, Kumuhonua, Mō'ikeha and Olopana, also made voyages between Hawai'i and Tahiti. Mō'ikeha's sons Kila and La'amaikahiki also sailed between Hawai'i and Tahiti, the latter introducing the use of the drum. Kaha'i is said to have been the last voyager to Tahiti.⁶³

The Southern Islands

Raivavae, Tubuai and Rurutu

The Austral Islands, Rapa, Mangareva and Rapa Nui (Easter Island) comprise a belt of islands several thousand kilometres long. Traditions from Raivavae, Tubuai and Rurutu speak of multiple voyages between the islands. The ancestor Eva'ari'i sailed to Tubuai where he married two women, and to Raivavae where he married Hairitemarama Vahine. In another story, Te Uahau, Te Ahia and Moeava sailed from Raivavae to Rurutu. Te Uahau settled at Tubuai while Moeava departed there and was not heard of again. In another important account, Matauira from

62 Christian, F. W., 'Notes on the Marquesas', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 4(1895), 191-192; Smith, S. P., 'A review of Les Polynesiens Orientaux by Eugene Calliot', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 20(1911), 152-154; Handy, *The Native Culture*, 10-23, 26-33, 74-131; Elbert, H. S., 'Chants and love songs of the Marquesas', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 50(1941), 74-83; Steinen, Karl Von Den, *Von Den Steinen's Marquesan Myths*. Jennifer Terrell (ed.), Canberra: Australian National University 1988, 12-29.

63 Lyons, C. J. & Alexander, W. D., 'The song of Kualii'i', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 2(1893), 161-166; Malo, D., *Hawaiian Antiquities (Moolelo Hawai'i)*. Honolulu: Hawaiian Gazette Co. Ltd., 1903, 14-28; Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, 58-76, 293-373.

Tubuai recruited Ha'atauhi, originally from Borabora in the Society Islands, and sailed to Rurutu to challenge the warrior Ututoa to single combat, but was subsequently killed. Tute is the most famous navigator from Rurutu. He is said to have voyaged throughout the Society Islands, Tuamotus, Mangareva and even to Easter Island (which the Austral Islanders called Raparahi).⁶⁴

Mangareva and Rapa

Rapans sometimes called their island called Rapaiti. Traditions record recurring contact with Rarotonga, Mangareva and Rapa Nui (Easter Island). In one tradition, the ancestor Hoturapa fled Rapa with three canoes, one of which landed on Rapa Nui. Mangareva has four habitable islands, Mangareva, Taravai, Akamaru and Aukena. One origin story mentions Miru and Moa arriving and finding the islands uninhabited. Another has Tagaroahurupapa as the first settler and a third names Tururei. Frequent voyages to and from Mangareva are recorded. A generation after Tururei, Te Tupua and Hua arrived from Rarotonga where they had been driven out by Epopo. Later Te Tupua returned to Rarotonga with others, who assisted him to regain his lands. Keke arrived from the west followed by Taratahi. The latter was forced back out to sea for his tyrannical behaviour. Canoes are also recorded arriving from the Tuamotu Islands to trade in *kura* (red feathers). Another arrival, Tukairoa, left with a cargo of basalt rock. Auamotua and his son Te Agiagi sailed to Te Mata-ki-te-ragi (Pitcairn) with Puniga and Marokura as navigators. The canoe ventured too far south and was nearly overcome by cold before Te Agiagi took over the navigating and successfully located the island where his grandfather Taratahi was living. The expedition got into conflict and fled back to Mangareva. Traditions record many exiles leaving Mangareva. Rogo, for instance, took his people and settled in the Tuamotu Islands.⁶⁵

Rapa Nui (Easter Island,)

The names Te Pito-te-henua and Hitiairangi were probably the original names of Easter Island, the more generally used name Rapa Nui first appearing in 1864. Traditions say that the first inhabitants came from Maraerenga or from Maretoehau. These names are not locatable. Contact with Mangareva is suggested. Rapa Nui traditions say the chief Hotumatua, along with Tukoihu, left that island in two large canoes, each 30 m long, because of a dispute with his brother. Some traditions say that other people were already present on the island when Hotumatua arrived. Traditions describe a war between two peoples or tribes known as the 'long-ears' and the 'short-ears'. There are no clear explanations about the identities of these tribes. Some say both the long-ears and short-ears may have arrived with Hotumatua, although others claim the two were separate races who divided the island among themselves. The wars may have been between Hotumatua's descendants and those of Tukoihu.⁶⁶

Aotearoa-Te Waipounamu (New Zealand)

64 Aitken, R., *Ethnology of Tubuai*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1930, 5-6, 110-113; Gill, 1911, 136-143.

65 Smith, S. P., 'Easter Island (Rapa Nui) and Rapa (Rapaiti Island)', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 19(1910), 171-175; Buck, Peter, *Ethnology of Mangareva*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1938, 18-82, 287-289.

66 Metraux, A., 'The kings of Easter Island', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 46(1937), 41-61; Metraux, A., *Ethnology of Easter Island*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1940, 9-44, 55-64, 69-74.

More is retained in Maori oral tradition about arrival canoes than in any other place in Polynesia. Unfortunately, many of these traditions have been distorted by the misinformation given in the books mentioned earlier. These books claim that Kupe discovered Aotearoa-Te Waipounamu in AD 925 and that later Toi and then a fleet of seven canoes followed his navigational directions to migrate there in AD 1150 and AD 1350 respectively.

Fortunately, much good work has been done to debunk these ideas, particularly by D. R. Simmons in *The Great New Zealand Myth* (1976).

Authentic Maori traditions refer to several 'first arrivals'. Each large tribal ramage or region has one or more such ancestors. Mythological traditions about early arrivals frequently interweave with human ones. Maui is the most well known mythological first ancestor, the tradition that he fished up the North Island of New Zealand having been transferred from Polynesia. Other mythological ancestors include Tumutumuhenua, who northern tribes say came out of the ground, and Te Maunga, a mountain in the Bay of Plenty. More than 40 human first arrival traditions are known. Traditions about Kupe are found in Northland, the West Coast and the lower East Coast of the North Island and the top of the South Island. Toi is known mainly in the Bay of Plenty and East Coast. Ngahue is a main first arrival among Te Arawa. Others include Tiwaiwaka, Maku and Tarawa in the Bay of Plenty; Ruataranaki, Taikehu and Kokako in the Taranaki; Raka in the lower North Island and Rakaihautu in the South Island.⁶⁷

Maori tribal traditions name over 300 other canoes. Northern traditions claim Kui, Tutumaiao, Turehu and Kupe as early peoples. Nukutawhiti and Ruanui were important ancestors who arrived on the Ngatokimatawhaorua and Mamari. Kurahaupo, Takitimu, Mata-atua, Tinana, Mamaru, Moekakara, Mahuhu-ki-te-rangi and others are further important northern canoes.⁶⁸

Bay of Plenty Mata-atua traditions say the first people were descendants of Maui. Other figures, Tiwaiwaka or Tiwakawaka and Maku, are named as first arrivals. Toi is another early important ancestor who commissioned the canoe Te Aratawhao, captained by Tama-kihikurangi, to fetch the kumara from Hawaiki. The kumara was returned on a new canoe, the Mata-atua, captained by Toroa. Later, his brother Puhikaiariki took the canoe to the Far North.⁶⁹

The Patupaiarehe and Ngati Kahupungapunga feature as early peoples in the traditions of the Waikato region. Their main canoe is the Tainui, variously said to have arrived at North Cape, Whangaparaoa or on the East Cape. The Tainui is said to have carried the kumara (sweet potato), gourd, taro and karaka tree (an indigenous species).⁷⁰

67 Taonui, R., 'Nga Tatai-whakapapa: Dynamics in Maori Oral Tradition', PhD Thesis, Department of Maori Studies, University of Auckland, 2005, 407-423.

68 Gudgeon, W. F., 'The whence of the Maori', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 12(1903), 176-177; Taonui, R., 'Te Haerenga Waka: Polynesian Origins, Migrations and Navigation', MA Thesis, Department of Maori Studies, University of Auckland, 1994, 267-268; Simmons, D. R., *The Great New Zealand Myth: A Study of the Discovery and Origin Traditions of the Maori*. Wellington: Reed, 1976, 208-234.

69 Simmons, *The Great New Zealand Myth*, 148-157, 271, 309; Best, E., *Tuhoe, the Children of the Mist: a sketch of the Origin, History, Myths and Beliefs of the Tuhoe tribe of the Maori of New Zealand, with some account of other early tribes of the Bay of Plenty district*. Wellington: Polynesian Society, 1925.

70 Gudgeon, 'The whence of the Maori', 17; Simmons, *The Great New Zealand Myth*, 165-181, 286, 310; Cowan, J., 'The Patupai-a-rehe' *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 30(1921), 142-149; Kelly, L. G., *Tainui: The story of Hoturoa and his Descendants*. Wellington: Polynesian Society, 1949; Biggs, B., & Te Hurinui-Jones, P., *Nga Iwi o Tainui: The Traditional History of the Tainui People*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1995.

Bay of Plenty Te Arawa traditions are closely associated with those of the Tainui. They say that the captain of their canoe, Te Arawa, was Tama-te-kapua and that he kidnapped the navigator of the Tainui, Nga Toro-i-rangi. The Arawa canoe landed at Whangaparaoa Peninsula. Several crewmembers went on to become famous inland explorers, including Kahumatamomoe, Ihenga, Tia and Nga Toro-i-rangi. The latter climbed the central volcanic mountains of the North Island and when nearly overcome by cold is said to have called to his relations in Hawaiki, who sent fire in the form of volcanic activity to warm him.⁷¹

Taranaki traditions list over 40 canoe arrivals. Several first arrivals are named, including Kupe, Kokako, Taikehu, Ruataranaki, Ruatamore and Maruiwi. The Tokomaru, Kurahaupo and Aotea are the most important post-first arrival canoes. There are two accounts of the Tokomaru, one is that Manaia was captain and another that the captain was Whata. An ancestor on this canoe, Rakeiora, is said to have brought the kumara and been deified after his death. There are also two versions of the Kurahaupo canoe, one that Ruatea was the captain and a second that Te Moungaroa was captain. One of the crew, Hau, explored the lower West Coast of the North Island, naming all the rivers between Wanganui and Wellington. The Aotea landed at Aotea Harbour from where the captain, Turi, walked southward naming rivers to the Patea River, where he settled.⁷²

East Coast traditions, like the Bay of Plenty tribes, usually name Maui as the first arrival although the Whakatohea tribe name Tarawa and Te Whanau-a-Apanui name Motataumaitawhiti. Other main canoes and arrivals are Nukutere, Paikea, Horouta and Takitumu. Whiro, the well known East Polynesian navigator, was captain of the Nukutere. His daughter Hukurangi married Paikea, the ancestor who is said to have arrived on a whale. The Horouta canoe traditions are very similar to those of the Aratawhao in Mata-atua. The Horouta, captained by Paoa and Kiwa, returned from Hawaiki after being sent there by Toi to retrieve the kumara. Tamatea and his son, Kahungunu, are the main ancestors associated with the Takitumu canoe. Tamatea is said to have explored much of the North and South Islands.⁷³

Traditions from the South Island name several early inhabitants, including Te Ruapounamu, Kahui Roko, Te Rapuwai and Kahui Tipua. The Uruao canoe captained by Rakaihautu is named as a first arrival. Other canoes include the Manuka and Arai-te-uru, said to have brought the kumara, the taro and the gourd. The Araia-te-uru is said to have wrecked; in most narratives this occurred at Moeraki, where the distinctive boulders along that beach are said to be the petrified remains of its kumara cargo.⁷⁴

Rekohu (Chatham Islands)

Rekohu lies 800 km east of New Zealand. First arrival traditions say the earliest arrivals

⁷¹ Simmons, *The Great New Zealand Myth*, 156-168, 281; Stafford, D., *Te Arawa: A History of the Arawa People*. Wellington: Reed, 1967; Grace, J. T., *Tuwharetoa: The History of the Maori People of the Taupo district*. Auckland: Reed, 1959.

⁷² Simmons, *The Great New Zealand Myth*, 182-200, 296; Smith, S. P., *History and traditions of the Maoris of the West Coast, North Island of New Zealand, prior to 1840*. New Plymouth: Polynesian Society, 1910.

⁷³ Simmons, *The Great New Zealand Myth*, 140, 17; Lyall, A. C., *Whakatohea of Opotiki*. Wellington: Reed, 1979; Mitchell, J. H., *Takitimu*. Wellington: Reed, 1944.

⁷⁴ Simmons, *The Great New Zealand Myth*, 204-227; Beattie, H., *Tikao Talks: Traditions and Tales*. Dunedin: Reed, 1939.

landed on the canoe Tane captained by Kahu, who found the island already occupied by the descendants of cosmological beings. One of those descendants was Kahuti, who lived at Kaingaroa. Kahu was said to have come from Aotea and Hawaiki. Later two other canoes, the Rangimata and Rangihoua, reached the Chathams after a war between Tumoana and Rauru. The captains of those canoes were Te Rakiroa and Mihiti. Several years later the Oropuke, under Moe of the Rauru tribe, arrived.⁷⁵

THE HAWAIKI CONCEPT

‘Hawaiki’ is both a historical-geographic and religious-symbolic concept. Cognates of the name appear throughout East and West Polynesia, both as a geographic place of origin and as the name of a spiritual place, threshold or passage between creation and reality. Current scholarship argues that migrants named new places Hawaiki one after another and then transmuted the name into a spiritual concept once the location of their original island of origin was forgotten.⁷⁶ However, this argument assumes a sequence of naming, forgetting and transmutation of a geographic name into a spiritual concept, which is too linear, repetitive and coincidental to have occurred in multiple islands across several centuries. It also ignores that the ancestors of the Polynesians probably conceived of the idea of geographic and spiritual origin simultaneously and regarded the two ideas as conceptually similar.

A more likely proposition is that as ancestors migrated across the Pacific they named one place after another, and while doing so used the names as labels for the spiritual threshold between creation and reality because they regarded the ideas of geographic and spiritual origin as mutually similar. If many island names were used, such as relocating the names of several islands from within an original archipelago, then one name probably emerged as more important than the others and thereby became more frequently used as the name for the spiritual threshold. New place names might also replace old ones.

Pulotu was the most common name given to this duality in West Polynesia. As the ancestors moved eastward across the Pacific they replaced this name with the names of several islands in the West Polynesian archipelagos and relocated them in East Polynesia both as the names of newly discovered places and as labels for the spiritual threshold. These included Ha‘apai, Vava‘u, and Tongatabu in Tonga, and Manono, Savai‘i (Hawaiki), ‘Upolu, Olosega and Manu‘a in Samoa.⁷⁷ Of these, the Hawaiki cognates emerged as the most important and therefore most frequently used. New names were added as migrations went back and forth within East Polynesia.

The Traditions

Tahitian traditions use the West Polynesia cluster of homeland names both geographically and spiritually. Traditions say that Havai‘i (Savai‘i) was the original homeland of

⁷⁵ *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, 253-254; Shand, A., ‘The Moriori people of the Chatham Islands’, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 4(1895), 36-40; ‘The Moriori people of the Chatham Islands’, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 5(1896), 13-32; Buck, *The Coming of the Maori*, 13-18.

⁷⁶ See Orbell, *Hawaiki: A New Approach*.

⁷⁷ Williamson, *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs*, 300; Handy, *The Native Culture*, 251; Henry *Ancient Tahiti*, 115.

the ancestors.⁷⁸ Havai‘i was also formerly the name of the island of Ra‘iatea,⁷⁹ Taha‘a was once named ‘Uporu (‘Upolu),⁸⁰ and Vavau (Vava‘u)† was formerly the name for the island of Borabora (or Porapora).⁸¹ ‘Uporu (‘Upolu) and Ha‘apai (Ha‘apai) are also the names of districts on the island of Tahiti.⁸² The Tahitians named Havai‘i (Savai‘i) as the spiritual birthplace of land, gods and people:

<i>No Havai‘i fanaura‘a fenua</i>	<i>Havai‘i is the birthplace of land</i>
<i>No Havai‘i fanaura‘a atua</i>	<i>Havai‘i is the birthplace of the gods</i>
<i>No Havai‘i fanaura‘a ta‘ata.</i>	<i>Havai‘i is the birthplace of people.⁸³</i>

The chant continues ‘and all things, the sun, the moon, stars, seasons, weather and all life came from Havai‘i’. The Tahitians believed that Havai‘i was the destination place of the spirits of the deceased.⁸⁴

This pattern repeats in Rarotonga. One tradition says that the ancestors came from ‘Avaiki (Savai‘i), Manuka (Manu‘a), Tutuira (Tutuila), Kuporu (‘Upolu), Tonga (Tongatabu) and Vavau (Vava‘u).⁸⁵ The harbour at Avarua on Rarotonga was known as Avarua-o-‘Avaiki. The island of Manuae was also known as ‘Avaiki.⁸⁶ Savaiki (Savai‘i) is a place in Tongareva.⁸⁷ Other West Polynesian names also recur in the Rarotongan islands including Manuka (Manu‘a), Tutuila or Tutuira (Tutuila), Ukupolu (‘Upolu), Vavau (Vava‘u) and Tonga (Tongatabu).⁸⁸ A Rarotongan song, recorded in 1790, said that spiritual beings travelled between ‘Avaiki and this world to aid humans.⁸⁹ ‘Avaiki as a threshold or portal between creation and this world, through which all life, lands, and bounty originated, was also the gateway through which the spirits of the dead returned to creation.⁹⁰ The Rarotongans believed that in death the ancestors returned to Manuka (Manu‘a), Tutu‘ira (Tutuila), Kuporu (‘Upolu), Vavau (Vava‘u), Tonga (Tongatabu) and Tahiti (*Tahiti)† which lay in ‘Avaiki toward the sunset.⁹¹

⁷⁸ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 115-116.

⁷⁹ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 98.

⁸⁰ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 102.

† Brackets denote West Polynesian cognates.

⁸¹ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 74.

⁸² Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 394.

⁸³ Williamson, *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs*, 300; Handy, *The Native Culture*, 251; Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 115.

⁸⁴ Williamson, *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs*, 299-300.

⁸⁵ Gill, *Myths and Songs*, 107.

⁸⁶ Smith, *Hawaiki*, 43.

⁸⁷ Gill, *Myths and Songs*, 167.

⁸⁸ Gill, *Myths and Songs*, 244-250.

⁸⁹ Williamson, *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs*, 299-300; Gill, *Myths and Songs*, 194-199.

⁹⁰ Williamson, *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs*, 299-300; Gill, *Myths and Songs*, 194-199.

† An asterisk denotes East Polynesian cognates.

⁹¹ Gill *Myths and Songs*, 217-220.

HIKURANGI AND AORANGI

East Polynesian ancestors from Tahiti carried the names of two of their tallest mountains southward across the Pacific to New Zealand. Aora'i is the highest peak in Tahiti, and Hi'ura'i stands almost opposite this ancient volcano. These names were taken and transplanted in Rarotonga as 'Ikurangi and Arorangi. The two names were also transported and relocated to New Zealand, where they have become an integral part of Maori historical and religious lore.

Hikurangi is the most common mountain name in the North Island. Hikurangi mountains are important as symbols of guardianship. They are not always the highest mountains, but they are always visible to the people who live beneath them. There are 40 Hikurangi place names in a giant arc from Kaitaia, Tamaki, Coromandel, the Bay of Plenty, the East Coast, inland to Taihape and Taumarunui. The highest six Hikurangi are found near Kaikohe, Coromandel, Murupara, Ruatoria, Taihape and Taumarunui.

The idea of guardianship meant that Hikurangi mountains took on great religious significance. Te Hokuwai, an 1850s elder of the Whanganui tribes, said that the first light of creation shone upon Hikurangi:

Ka tau te rangi

The heavens settled

Te ata tuhi

The dawn began to glow

Te ata rapa

The dawn began to flash

Te ata ka mahina

Ka mahina te ata i Hikurangi

The early morning light shone on Hikurangi

The Aorangi name was also important and, as in Tahiti, the two names Aorangi and Hikurangi often appear side-by-side. Hikurangi and Aorangi mountains stand close together on the East Coast and in the Ruahine Ranges. The names were also transferred into the South Island, probably along trade routes. Hikuraki is found in Pelorus Sound, the Wairau River, and was a name on Banks Peninsula and a small lake in Southland. Aoraki is the tallest mountain in Aotearoa.

The Mangaian also believed that their ancestors came from 'Avaiki, a spiritual world in the West sometimes called 'Avaiki-te-po ('Avaiki the Night of Creation),⁹² and that Vavau was the destination place of spirits located in 'Avaiki, a spiritual abode lying to the west.⁹³ A song recorded in 1860 confirms this as a threshold between creation and reality. The dead were farewelled to 'Avaiki where they lingered to feast on the offerings of their descendants.⁹⁴

'Avaiki (Savai'i) defined the spiritual and geographic boundaries of the world in Manihiki tradition; the heavens were avaiiki-runga, the earth was Havaiki-raro, islands to windward were 'Avaiki-raro and those to leeward 'Avaiki-runga. 'Avaiki was also a collective spiritual name for the islands of the Rarotongan archipelago.⁹⁵

Hawaiian traditions say that the navigator Mō'ikeha named the big island Hawai'i (Savai'i), uttering 'Eia Hawai'i, he moku, he kanaka' ('Here is Hawai'i, the island, the person').⁹⁶ Another tradition says that Hawai'iloa gave the island this name.⁹⁷ Wawau (Vava'u)

⁹² Gill, *Myths and Songs*, 152; Smith, 1921, 43.

⁹³ Gill, *Myths and Songs*, 217-220.

⁹⁴ Smith, *Hawaiki*, 43.

⁹⁵ Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, 58; Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 568.

⁹⁶ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 565.

and 'Upolo ('Upolu) are also named as the landing places of the navigator Ka-ulu-a-ka-lama, at the northern end of Hawai'i.⁹⁸ Hawaiian traditions say that the island of Hawai'i (Savai'i) was born from the gods Atea and Kāne who, as gods, stand at a mid-point between creation and reality.⁹⁹ They also say that Wawao (Vava'u) was a place where Pele, the deity of the Kīlauea caldera, was said to live amongst the gods.¹⁰⁰

Marquesans celebrated Havaiki (Savaii), Vavau (Vava'u), Tonganui (Tongatabu) and Upo'u ('Upolu) as the origin place of humans and gods. Their traditions also include other names from within East Polynesia as labels for the duality, including Fitinui (*Tahitinui) and Po'apo'a (*Borabora or *Porapora in Tahiti).¹⁰¹ Marquesans also say that the sea and winds from Havaiki and Vevau (Vava'u) defined the boundaries between the world and creation.¹⁰²

New Zealand Place Names

Hawaiki and other place names were remembered as a place of origin for Maori. Hahaki, a chief of Kaitiaki and Doubtless Bay, said his people came from Hawaiki,¹⁰³ as do Ngati Awa¹⁰⁴ and Te Arawa of the Bay of Plenty,¹⁰⁵ Ngati Hei in the Coromandel Peninsula,¹⁰⁶ Kai Tahu,¹⁰⁷ and Ngati Kahungunu.¹⁰⁸ Two accounts written from Northland name both Hawaiki and Wawauatea (Vava'u) as islands of origin.

Evidence of the adding of other East Polynesian names comes from Mata-atua and East Coast tribes who remembered Hawaiki, Hawaikinui, Hikurangi (*Hi'ura'i in Tahiti and *'Ikurangi in Rarotonga), Rangiataea (*Ra'iatea in Tahiti), Tarahanga (*Taha'a in Tahiti), Tawhiti, Tawhirinui-a-Rua, Tawhitinui, Tawhitiroa, Tawhitipamamao (all *Tahiti), Tonga (Tonga), Tawauwau and Wawau (Vava'u), and Whiti (perhaps Fiji) as the places their ancestors came from.¹⁰⁹ The mix of names supports the idea that names from homeland clusters were transported across the Pacific from West Polynesia and new ones added in East Polynesia. Hawaiki became the dominant name, possibly replacing Pulotu, which may have been an original name for the duality in West Polynesia.

⁹⁷ Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, 598; Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 568.

⁹⁸ Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, 571.

⁹⁹ Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, p. 598.

¹⁰⁰ Williamson, *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs*, 300; Handy, *The Native Culture*, 251; Henry *Ancient Tahiti*, 115.

¹⁰¹ Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, p. 598.

¹⁰² Taylor, R., *Te Ika a Maui, or, New Zealand and its Inhabitants: Illustrating the Origin, Manners, Customs, Mythology, Religion, Rites, Songs, Proverbs, Fables, and Language of the Natives: Together with the Geology, Natural History, Productions, and Climate of the country: Its state as regards Christianity: Sketches of the Principal Chiefs, and their present position*. London: Wertheim and Macintosh, 1855, 193.

¹⁰³ Best, E., *The Maori Canoe: An account of various types of vessels used by the Maori of New Zealand in Former Times, with some description of those of the Isles of the Pacific, and a brief account of the peopling of New Zealand*. Wellington: Polynesian Society, 1925, 674.

¹⁰⁴ Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikaheke (Ngati Rangiwewehi, Te Arawa), 'Tapuna', GNZMMSS 44 (University of Auckland Library), 1849.

¹⁰⁵ Phillips, F. L., *Landmarks of Tainui- Nga Tohu a Tainui: A geographical record of Tainui Traditional History*, Vol. 2. Otorohanga: Tohu Publishers, 1995, 210.

¹⁰⁶ Best, *The Maori Canoe*, 678.

¹⁰⁷ White, J., MS 94 (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.).

¹⁰⁸ Best, *The Maori Canoe*, 678

¹⁰⁹ Smith, *Hawaiki*, 44.

West and East Polynesian homeland cluster names were relocated geographically. Hawaiki is a place at Maketu Harbour,¹¹⁰ Lake Rotongaio,¹¹¹ Kawhia Harbour,¹¹² and Aotea Harbour,¹¹³ Pouhawaiki is a volcanic cone in Auckland and Hawaiki a place name on the eastern side of Rangitoto Island. Other names were transported from the Tahitian and Rarotongan islands. Tahanga (*Taha'a) is a basalt quarry site in the Hauraki next to Whitianga Harbour. Taporapora (*Borabora or *Porapora) is in the Kaipara Harbour. Hi'ura'i and Aora'i in Tahiti, and 'Ikurangi and Arorangi in Rarotonga, appear as Hikurangi and Aorangi in several places in New Zealand. The name Rarotonga (Mount Smart) is found in Tamaki (Auckland).

The Hawaikian concept also represented origin in a religious sense. The gods Tane and Tiki were said to have made the first human at Hawaiki.¹¹⁴ Each newborn child was thought to have come from Hawaiki in the east.¹¹⁵ People said they were 'in Hawaiki' before their birth.¹¹⁶ Hawaiki was also the origin of food, as in the saying '*I kune mai i Hawaiki te kune kai, te kune tangata*' (From Hawaiki came food and people).¹¹⁷ Other bounty came from Hawaiki including the kumara (sweet potato)¹¹⁸ plantations,¹¹⁹ beached whales,¹²⁰ all fish (from a spring named Rangiriri in the sea near Hawaiki),¹²¹ the kiore (Polynesian rat),¹²² birds and greenstone.¹²³

Hawaiki also defined the spiritual boundaries of worldly existence. Hawaiki-runga (Hawaiki Above) represented the heavens above, and Hawaiki-raro (Hawaiki Below) the earth below.

A chant by Te Kohuora (Te Ati Haunui-a-Aparangi) reinforces the idea that the creation of islands and land were a conceptual mid-point or threshold between creation and reality. The chant begins from Te Po (the Unknown Night) and Te Kore (Primal Source-Potentiality of All Things). The heavens are formed, then Hawaiki, followed by several islands:

110 Stafford, *TeArawa*, 21.

111 Kelly, *Tainui*, 2.

112 Tamati Manuhiri Ngapora (Ngati Mahuta, Tainui), Shortland MS 86B, 1854, 110 (Hocken Library, Dunedin).

113 J. White, *Ancient History of the Maori*, Vol.1. Wellington: Government Printer, 1887, 155.

114 White, *Ancient History of the Maori*, 149.

115 Best, *Tuhoe*, 1925, 673.

116 Kerry-Nicholls, J. H., *The King Country: Or, Explorations in New Zealand: A narrative of 600 miles of travel through Maoriland*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1884, 69.

117 Ngata, A. T., & Te Hurinui-Jones, P., *Nga Moteatea*, Vol. 2. Wellington: Polynesian Society, 1961, 110-111; Cowan, J., 'Hawaiki', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 14(1905), 47; Johansen, J. P., *The Maori and his Religion in its non-ritualistic aspects*. Copenhagen: I kommission hos E. Munksgaard, 1954, 126-127.

118 Unnamed, GNZMMSS 49 (University of Auckland Library), 1949.

119 Orbell, M., *Maori Folktales in Maori and English*. Auckland: B. & J. Paul, 1968, xviii.

120 White, J., *Ancient History of the Maori, His Mythology and Traditions*, Vol. 2. Wellington: Government Print, 1887, 184-187.

121 Best, E., *Forest Lore of the Maori: With methods of Snaring, Trapping, and Preserving Birds and Rats, uses of Berries, Roots, Fern-root, and Forest Products, with mythological notes on Origins, Karakia used etc.* Wellington: Polynesian Society, 1942, 429.

122 Grey, G., *Ko Nga Moteatea, Me Nga Hakirara O Nga Maori: He Mea Kohikohi Mai*. Wellington: Robert Stokes, 1853, 432.

123 Te Kohuora (Te Ati Haunui-a-Apa-aparangi), 'R. Taylor Collection', GNZMMSS 297 (University of Canterbury Library), 1854.

<i>..Ka puta ki waho Te Rangi-e-tu-nei</i>	<i>The standing heavens appeared outside</i>
<i>Ka noho i Hawaiki</i>	<i>Sitting in Hawaiki</i>
<i>Ka puta ki waho</i>	<i>From whence came</i>
<i>Ko Taporapora, Ko Tauwharenikau, Ko Kukuparu, Ko Wawauatea,</i>	<i>Taporapora, Tauwharenikau, Kukuparu, Wawauatea</i>
<i>Ko Whiwhi-te-rangiora.</i>	<i>And Whiwhi-te-rangiora.</i>
<i>Ka tau te rangi</i>	<i>The heavens became light</i>
<i>Te atatuhi, te atarapa, te ata ka mahina</i>	<i>Then came the early dawn, the flashing dawn the dim glowing dawn, the twilight/moonlight</i>
<i>Ka mahina te ata i Hikurangi,</i>	<i>The dawn that shone above Hikurangi.¹²⁴</i>

The names Kukuparu ('Upolu) and Wawauatea (Vava'u) are from the West Polynesian cluster. Taporapora is Borabora or Porapora in the Tahitian archipelago (formerly Vavau from Vava'u). Hikurangi is from Hi'ura'i (Tahiti) and 'Ikurangi (Rarotonga). The inclusion of East Polynesian cognates confirms that the Hawaikian labels were subject to change by addition of labels from other homelands over time.

Maori farewelled their dead to Hawaiki, chanting for them to proceed to '*Hawaikinui, Hawaikiroa, Hawaikipamamao-te-hono-i-wairua*' (Great Hawaiki, Long Hawaiki, Distant Hawaiki the joining place of spirits). One lament farewells them to several West Polynesian cognates, including Hawaiki, Kuparu ('Upolu) and Wawau (Vava'u) where they rested until a final exhumation and cleaning of their bones set them free for final separation from the living:

<i>Ka heke i nga huihuinga</i>	<i>Proceed to the gathering</i>
<i>Ka heke i nga kawainga</i>	<i>Proceed to the line of spirits</i>
<i>Ka heke ki Kuparu, ka heke ki Wawau.</i>	<i>Descend to Kuparu ['Upolu] and Wawau [Vava'u]...</i>
<i>..kia hahuia, kia rokohanga atu</i>	<i>until you are exhumed</i>
<i>e wehe ana i te muriwai o</i>	<i>Whereupon you will be separated at the waters of</i>
<i>Hawaiki te kura i rapa ki Aotea Hawaiki</i>	<i>Hawaiki flashing upon Aotea.</i>
<i>Patua te turuturu ha whakaotirangi ha whakatotohirangi.</i>	<i>Striking the beam of heaven-journey's-end and final heavenly severance.¹²⁵</i>

The dead were also farewelled to '*Tawhitinui, Tawhitiroa, Tawhitipamainao te honoi-wairua*' (Great Tahiti, Long Tahiti, Distant Tahiti the joining place of spirits).¹²⁶

124 Ngata, AT., & Te Hurinui-Jones, P., *Nga Moteatea*, Vol. 3. Wellington: Polynesian Society 1970, 246-253.

125 Buck, *The Coming of the Maori*, 37-38.

126 Editor's note: This footnote is missing from the original text.

One striking feature of Polynesian oral tradition is that as ancestors migrated they transported much mythological lore about the creation, gods and culture heroes, because of their cultural, religious and philosophical importance, but very little historical lore concerning the places they originated from.Â Oral Traditions of Rennel and Bellona Islands. Honolulu: University of HawaiË»i Press, 1965, 257-259; T. 13.