

‘O Wākea Noho iā Papahānaumoku

Mele Ko’ihonua

A mele ko’ihonua is a genealogical chant that describes the characteristics or traits of the people of a specific genealogy. In this mele ko’ihonua, the genealogy shown is that of Ka Pae ‘Āina o Hawai‘i, the Hawaiian Islands. According to Hawaiian tradition, the islands were born from the union of Wākea, sky father, and Papahānaumoku, earth mother.

There are various versions of how the islands came to be. This mele comes from the Hawaiian Antiquities collection of noted Hawaiian scholar, David Malo.

This mele is typically done in the kāhoahoa style, which is a call-response type of chanting.

‘Ele‘ele – Alaka‘i (Leader)

Pōlū – Hui (All)

‘O Wākea noho iā Papahānaumoku

Wākea mated with Papahānaumoku

Hānau ‘o Hawai‘i he moku

Hānau ‘o Maui he moku

Born was Hawai‘i, an island

Born was Maui, an island

Ho‘i hou ‘o Wākea noho iā Ho‘ohōkūkalani

Wākea mated with Ho‘ohōkūkalani

Hānau ‘o Moloka‘i he moku

Hānau ‘o Lāna‘ikaula he moku

Born was Moloka‘i, an island

Born was Lāna‘ikaula, an island

Lili‘ōpū punalua ‘o Papa iā Ho‘ohōkūkalani

Papa was jealous of Ho‘ohōkūkalani

Ho‘i hou ‘o Papa noho iā Wākea

And returned to mate with Wākea

Hānau ‘o O‘ahu he moku

Hānau ‘o Kaua‘i he moku

Hānau ‘o Ni‘ihau he moku

He ‘ula a‘o Kaho‘olawe

Born was O‘ahu, an island

Born was Kaua‘i, an island

Born was Ni‘ihau, an island

The red afterbirth was Kaho‘olawe