I Kū Mau Mau!

Stand Together!

*This is a chant expressing “tumultuous joy,” when a multitude of people performed a task together such as bringing down a tree from the mountains to the lowlands—e.g. a koa tree to build a canoe. The chant was collected by N.B. Emerson and published in his notes to David Malo’s Hawaiian Antiquities (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1951, p. 186):*

One: I kū mau mau!\*

All: I kuwā!

One: I kū mau mau!

I kū huluhulu!\*\*

I ka lanawao!\*\*

All: I kuwā!

One: I kū lanawao!

All: I kuwā!

I kuwā huki!

I kuwā kō!

I kuwā a mau

A mau ka ēulu

E Huki, e!

Kūlia!

Stand together!

Shout!

Stand together!

Haul with all your might!

Under the mighty trees!

Shout!

Under the forest trees!

Shout!

Shout! Pull!

Shout! Push!

Continue the job

Hauling branches and all

Pull!

Persevere!

kümaumau é, hai kuwå! (chant for those carrying a log to shore to be made into a canoe), “follow together, follow shouting!”)

\*\* Emerson translates “I ka lana wao!” as “Under the mighty trees!” If so, perhaps the second line should be amended to “külana wao!” “Place where the forest rises up”; cf. “külana nalu,” “Place where the waves rise up.” “I kü huluhulu!” is translated “Haul with all your might!” It is not clear how Emerson derived this translation. The two lines under consideration are similar to lines in another canoe-hauling chant (June Gutmanis, Nå Pule Kahiko: Ancient Hawaiian Prayers; Honolulu: Editions Limited, 1983, p. 78-79):

\* Kü-pulupulu,

\* Kü 'alanawao,

These two lines address two forest gods associated with canoe building. Kü-pulupulu is translated as “Kü [giver of] verdure” by D. Barrere in S.M. Kamakau’s Ka Poe Kahiko: The People of Old (Honolulu: Bishop Musuem, 1964, p. 58); “pulu“ refers to “any greenery or underbrush cut to be used as mulch”; or a “low branch, as of certain trees such as koa and 'øhi'a.” Emerson (in Malo) translates Kü-pulupulu as “Kü the rough one, or the chip-maker, one of the gods of the wa'a” (p. 133); he translates “Kü-ala-na-wao,” or “Ku-ae-la-na-wao” as “‘There stands the forests,’ a woodland deity, one of the gods of the wa'a.” Barrere gives the name as Kü-alono-wao, “Kü of the mountain heights” (S.M. Kamakau, Ka Poe Kahiko: The People of Old, p. 58). Martha W. Beckwith gives the following translations of the epithets of the two Kü gods (Hawaiian Mythology, Honolulu: UH Press 1970, p. 15):

Kü-pulupulu (Kü of the undegrowth)

Kü-olono-wao (Kü of the deep forest)

\*\*\* Emerson translates “I kuwå a mau! / A mau ka éulu!” as “Stand in place! and haul / Haul branches and all!” “Mau” means “snagged”; “caught”; “grounded, as a canoe”; “stuck or stalled, as a car”; “éulu” is the top of a tree or plant. The lines seem to refer to the tree being stuck in the undergrowth, so some extra effort is needed to “float” it (lana), i.e., to free it.