

CLAUDE ROBINEAU

MOOREA

ENGLISH EDITION



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SOCIÉTÉ DES OCÉANISTES

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DISCOVERING MOOREA

West north-west of Tahiti, the island of Moorea emerges in a capricious upthrust of mountains against the glow of the setting sun.

Separated from its sister island by a mere fifteen-mile wide strait, Moorea and its neighbour Maiao or Tupuai-Manu, along with Tetiaora and Meetia, belong to the Windward Islands, part of the larger group of islands known as the Society Islands, called the Georgian Islands by their discoverers.

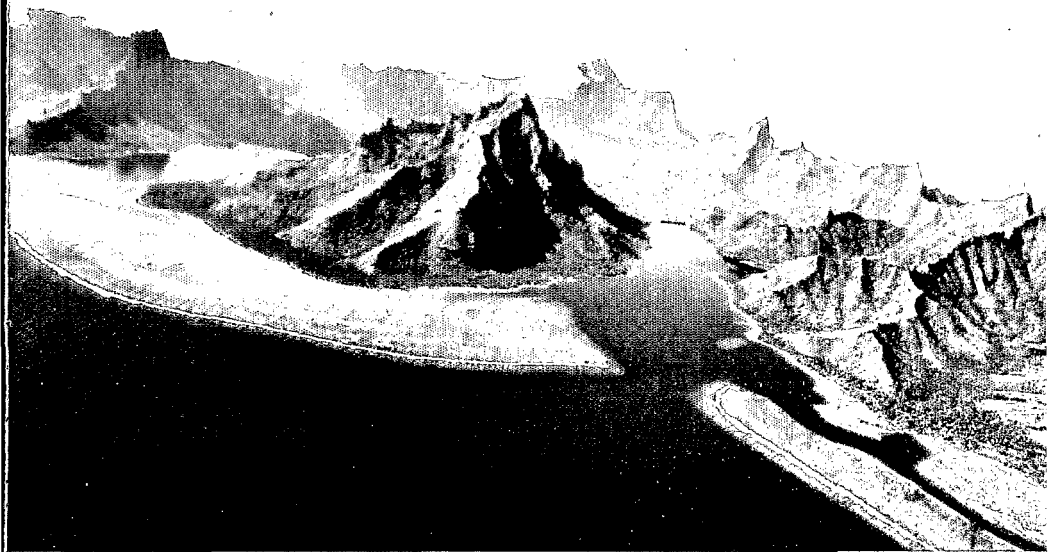
Moorea covers approximately 53 square miles and, in 1967, had a population of 4,385.

The aeroplane touches down on the north-eastern tip of the island on what is called in Moorea the **motu** or islet, even though it's actually part of the mainland. Like the other islets near the barrier reef surrounding Moorea, the **mae motu** has coral-red earth and sparse vegetation. And, like the coral atolls, one finds all the plants there which grow well in coral, like coconut palms, and *Gardenia tahitensis*, the Tahitian tiara plant which is used to make perfume-threaded leis and crowns for visitors on their arrival in Tahiti and for wearing during festivals.

The **motu** was originally a real islet but was joined to the mainland by filling in the sea channel, today forming a lake with marshes where pandanus plants grow in abundance. A small second lake called *vare'a*, south-west of Temae lake, is shown on a marine map dating from 1886 and is documented by the historian E. Caillot, but today no traces remain.

CLAUDE ROBINEAU

MOOREA



Cover : Aerial view of Moorea.

2 Right : Papetoai Bay. Left : Cook Bay.

2 Baies de Papetoai, - à droite - et de Cook, - à gauche. (Cliché Sofratop).

During the last century the Temae lake is much smaller than formerly as a rush called "opa'ero" in Tahitian has grown prolifically along the banks and into the water. One also finds fewer ava fish today, considered a great delicacy and formerly used extensively in celebrations and festivals.

Temae, hemmed in between the mountain and the lake among the mango trees, is the first village the traveller reaches on the way to the big hotels and the Club Méditerranée. This was the village that supplied the dancers for the royal family in Papeto'ai in the last century, and since then one or two troupes of dancers have been formed which perform in the tourist hotels.

THE NORTHERN SIDE OF THE TRIANGLE

After passing through the Temae valley and a small marshy area where the Chinese made a rice paddy during the last war, one arrives at a belt of coconut palms which stretches from the old village of Teaharoa, called today Tiaia, to the "Club Méditerranée" in the west. This area has recently become popular with tourists and with European and American residents who have built their homes here. The residential area has a gentle climate; like the other small islands, Moorea has a greatly varied climate within the radius of just a few miles. Freak rainstorms, for example, are common, but on the whole the area is protected from the wind and tends to be relatively dry. The trade winds

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which blow from north-east to south-east are cut off by the mountain chain and touch only the tips of the large bays, such as Cook and Opunohu. The **toerau**, a rain-laden wind from the north-east, blows only at certain times in the year, and the **maaramu** blows from the south-east and touches very little of the northern coast of Moorea.

The annual rainfall recorded at the meteorological station at Paopao, shows an average of 2,753 mm (109 inches) — more than four times the annual rainfall of Paris, and twice that of New York. The average temperature is 26.5° C. (80° F.) in the rainy season from December to April, and 24.5° C. (76° F.) in the dry season from June to October.

At one time the northern area was a great vanilla-producing zone : only about ten years ago the hills which now lie uncultivated were covered with coconut palms which bordered the circular route, and the large slightly-sunken interior of Paopao and Opunohu was covered with vanilla, and even today you can see the props used to support the plants, or **piti**, as they are still living.

Part of the Paopao basin has been reclaimed in market-gardening, in the cultivation of pineapples, oranges and mandarines, and Polynesian produce such as bananas, taro, **tarua** and sweet potatoes. These products are sold to the hotels in Moorea and to a small, mostly European, local clientele. It is loaded on to boats to be sold in the market at Papeete or in the shops there.

The most fertile area of Paopao is criss-crossed with tracks large enough for jeeps. Fields are often carved out on steep slopes on land cleared from the forest. The feverish activity and noise of tractors, bulldozers and mechanical saws contrast with the silence and calm of the coconut groves along the coast. A visiting professor, on viewing the modern machinery and the piercing noise, sadly remarked that French Polynesia was now truly a part of the American sphere of influence.

The Opunohu basin, well populated in former times, but unpopulated today, was the spot where plantations were first made by Europeans in the Society Islands, just after the arrival of the first missionaries. Today the basin is the location of the Territory's Agricultural School and a centre of experimentation and research for the agricultural and forestry services.

Also in the area, from Orau valley to Maherepa, is an experiment in cultivating "without earth". Essentially this is intended to rid market-gardens of numerous parasites contained in the earth which makes the cultivation of European-type vegetables very difficult in tropical humid countries.

Papetoai is important for more than one reason. It was the site of the first missionary station in Moorea at the beginning of the 19th century which built the first church and the first school ; it was the Pomare royal family's residence ; and it was the chief administrative centre until the beginning of the 20th century. Papetoai has also an unusual number of "colonial houses",

called "vanilla houses" **fare vanira**, as their owners constructed them in a contemporary style with their exceptionally large incomes from vanilla production in the 1910's.

IN THE SOUTH-EAST AND THE SOUTH-WEST

The boats from Papeete arrive at three wharfs on the south-eastern coast of Moorea at Vaiares, Afareaitu and Maatea and from there trucks with local-style wooden frames connect with Haapiti and the south-western coast.

The coastal plain is narrow with built-up areas nestling at the mouths of valleys which fall sharply down to the sea.

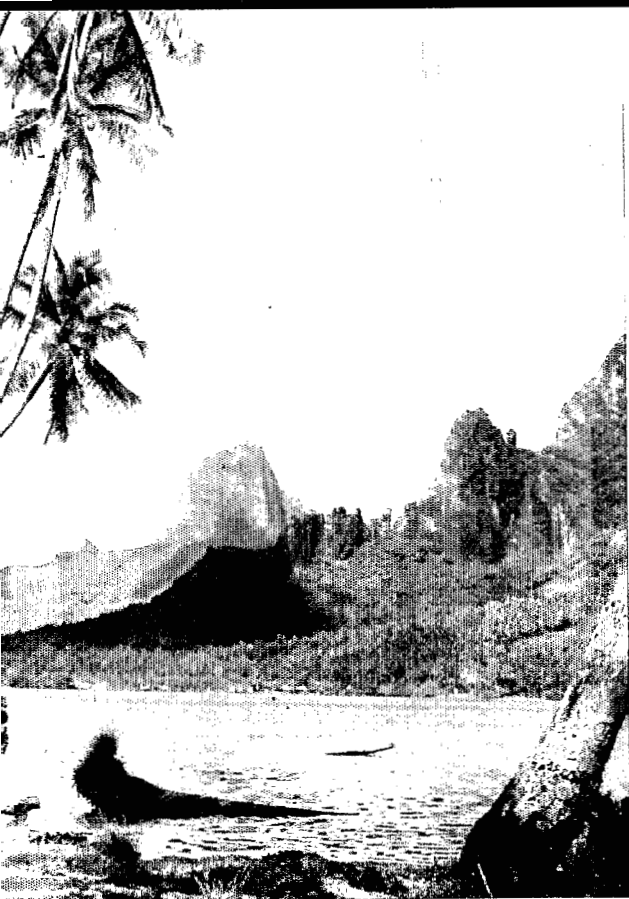
Afareaitu is the main administrative centre and one of the principal historical spots in Moorea. It existed at the time of the first missionaries and, along with Papetoai, was the most populated area of the island. The London Missionary Society set up the second mission station here and published a bible. This was the first book printed in Polynesia and, unfortunately, has been lost. The Society also set up a school, the Academy of the South Seas, for the missionaries' children and it was here that King Pomare III received his basic education.

In sharp contrast to the other populated areas sprinkled along the road, Maatea is a large, closely-knit village off the circular route, with charming houses covered with flowers. In this area we notice that the coconut palm fronds often hang limply, a sign of disease caused by a local insect. Further on along the road we find the small fishing hamlet of Atiha, snuggling in a little bay dominated by the peaks of the central mountain chain. On the south-western coast there are few inhabitants except in the isolated village of Haapiti, formerly a centre of the Catholic Mission, where a massive church still stands.

Compared with the fertile northern area, the southern part of the island is less cultivated and operates differently. Although it has 60 per cent of the population, unemployment is much higher than in the north. Traditional agriculture and fishing are more common here, and the wage-earner is far less important, so business and services are not as developed as in the north. However, an economic study shows that the southern area of Moorea has a very active core of wage-earners at Afareaitu and Maatea who work in Papeete during the week and return to the village on week-ends.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

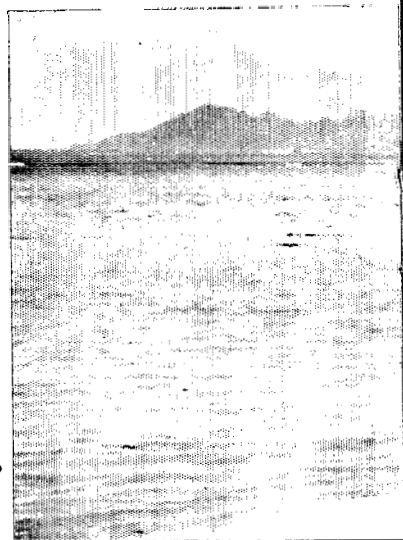
The Tahitians make good use of Moorea's natural topography : mountains, valleys, streams, rocks, headlands, marshes, bays and reef channels all have names. Different physical features are often accounted for by legends describing the exploits of the gods and heroes of Tahitian mythology. However,



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- 3 Baie de Cook (Cliché Tepari).
- 4 Face sud-ouest de Moorea.
- 5 Face sud-est de Moorea.
- 6 Moorea, vue de Tahiti.
(Cliché J. Boullaire).

- 3 Cook-Bay.
- 4 South-west side-face of Moorea.
- 5 South-east face of Moorea.
- 6 Moorea seen from Tahiti.

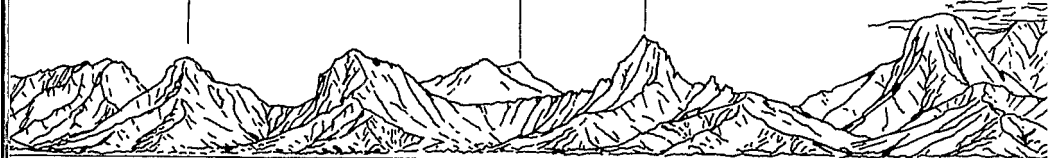


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ATIATI

ROTUI MOUARO

TOHIVEA



FACADE SUD-OUEST DE MOOREA

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IIVEA

MOUAPUTA

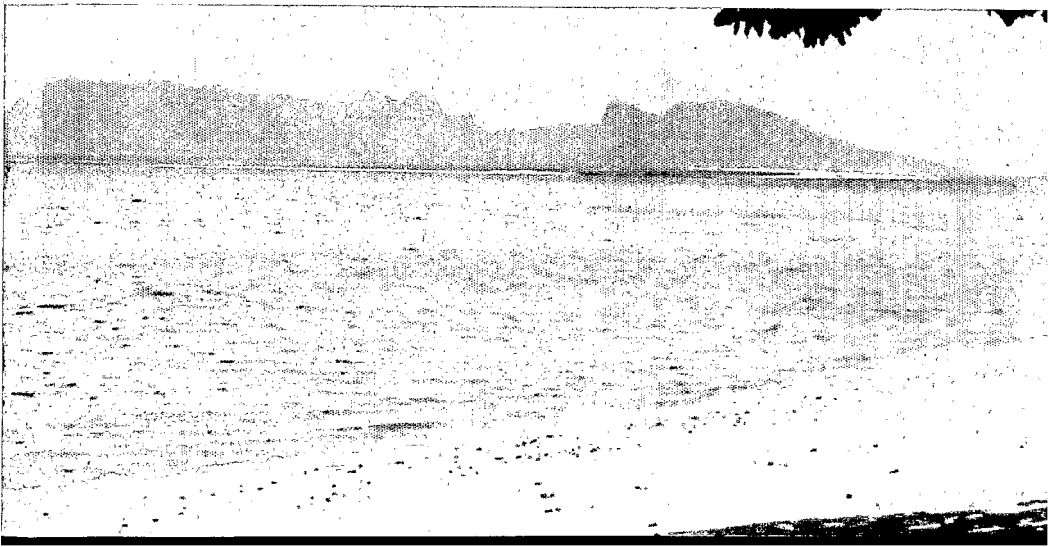
ROTUI

LAC TEMAE



FACADE SUD-EST DE MOOREA

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geologists say that the island was formed from a volcano, part of a chain of volcanic mountains which now comprises the Society Islands. The islands structured like a large basin draining into the sea through two bays, Cook and Opunohu, or Papetoai. The basin is surrounded by the slopes of the old volcanic cone, which is dissected by valleys, and a narrow coastal plain fringes the exterior. It is on the coastal plain that one finds the coconut palms and the inhabited areas along the circular route.

The mountains on the periphery of the basin rise at first gently, then suddenly : huge cliffs border the southern side of the basin where there is a very sharp drop and the highest peaks in Moorea — Tohive'a (1,207 m.) in the south-south east, Moua-puta (830 m.) in the east, and Mouapu (762 m.) and Mouaroa (880 m.) in the west.

Teuira Henry, grand-daughter of one of the first English missionaries, explains the meaning of a few of these names in her book, "Tahiti aux Temps Anciens". Tohive'a means "hot spade", Mouaroa means "long mountain" — also called "the cathedral" by Americans because of its shape. Mouaputa — "split rock" — is also called "shark's tooth" to denote the opening at the top explained by legend as a feat of Pai. Pai was a famous Tahitian hero and favorite child of the gods, especially of Taaroa, the Supreme Being. Here's what happened : one day Hiro, god of thieves in Tahitian mythology, wanted to take over Rotui mountain and bring it to Raiatea by tying it with pohue vines to his canoe. But the gods, foster-fathers of Pai, warned him of this danger so Pai climbed Point Tataa on Tahiti from where he could see right over Moorea. When he threw his spear it hit Mouaputa and woke up the roosters on the island, thereby forcing the thieves to flee. But the thieves did manage to take a piece of the hill in Opoa, Paiatea, covered with little toa trees similar to those found on Rotui mountain and strangely different from the surrounding vegetation.

To return to our description, the slopes of the original volcanic cone were gradually worn away by erosion, creating deep grooves that became the valleys we see today. The only place where the original cone still exists is in the eastern part of the island between Tohiven and Mouaputa above Afareaitu.

The two largest valleys, Opunohu and Paopao, mark the mountainous plateau in the north rising up to 900 metres at Mt. Rotui. Rotui means "sending off of the spirit", recalling the old belief that it was here that spirits of the dead circled round in farewell before journeying to Raiatea's heaven or hell in the Windward Islands. It is said that the giant Tafai, looking for the spirit of his dead wife, climbed Rotui so that he could discuss it with the gods, but without success.

The coastal plain surrounding the island is the result of the weathering by the sea of the base of the volcanic slopes and the coral reef surrounding the island. This constant beating formed beautiful white sandy beaches, especially

along the north-western coast, and north to north-east of the coastal plain. They stretch north of Haapiti right along to the Club Mediterranee, along the northern coast towards Maharepa and up to lake Temae and between Vaiare and Maatea. The coral reefs are noteworthy also, especially the barrier reef in the south stretching from Point Atiha and the reef along the coast of the Temae "motu".

Moorea's lagoon is as beautiful as the silhouette of its mountains. In good weather the lagoon is an enchantment of colours from rich emerald to azure blue, enriching the colours of the corals and the fish that swim amongst them.

And, of course, the Tahitians have a name for the many coastal accidents of geography : islands, inlets, peaks and passages are connected with legends.

Patii, a great priest in old Moorea and converted to Christianity, told Reverend Gramond, Teuira Henry's grandfather, about the exploits of Ruahatu, king of the powerful sea, who created new places of worship, or *marae*, after the flood we find described in Tahitian mythology, by opening up many passages in the barrier reefs at Moorea and in the other Society Islands.

All these legends show how nature nourished the beliefs of the ancient Tahitians. And these are the same beliefs explaining the origins of the islands and the vicissitudes of history, becoming less and less mythological.

MOOREA IN FORMER TIMES

In the 1970's Moorea is becoming less and less like the Moorea of former times. An economic revolution with social and cultural implications is forcing Moorea into the modern world and, when we have the perspective of history, will probably prove as important as the revolution at the beginning of the 19th century which marked the disappearance of Old Polynesia.

The social and cultural transformation brought about with the arrival of the first Europeans was so complete that few traces of the old Moorea remain today : a few ruins, some archeological evidence, some mere fragments of traditions makes it difficult to assess them, apart from the remarks of sailors or missionaries who saw Moorea in that age. What we have today are the remains of the marae studied by Professor K. Emory and the archeologist team of Green, Rappaport, Davidson and Sinoto and the traditions reported by Princess Arri Taimai, Queen Marau, her daughter, and Teuira Henry, plus the notes of the missionaries John Davies and William Ellis. These form the nucleus of the material on Moorea's early history.

Sir Peter Buck, the famous Maori scholar, tells us about the birth of Moorea and Tahiti. After the punishment of the gods, a giant eel swallowed a young girl at Raiatea; possessed by her spirit the eel in a rage broke through the earth between the twin islands of Raiatea and Tahaa. The earth which was torn away became a large fish that, directed by Taaroa, the Supreme God's

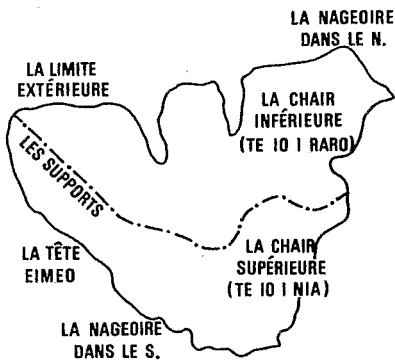


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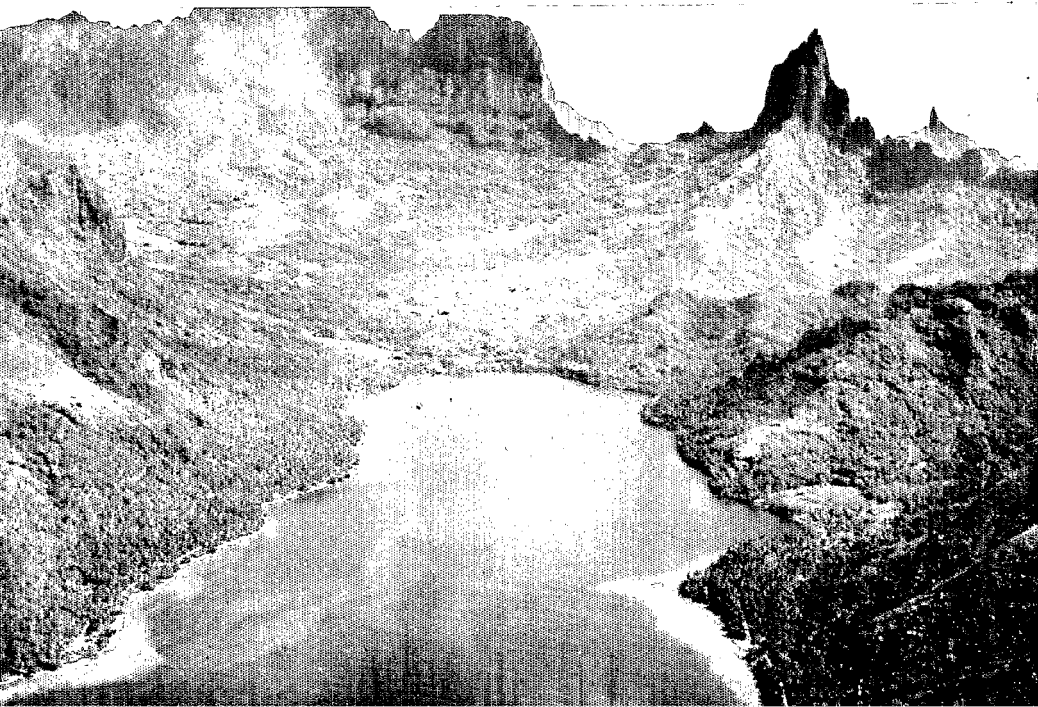
LE POISSON MOOREA

(d'après Teuira Henry et
E.S.C. Handy)

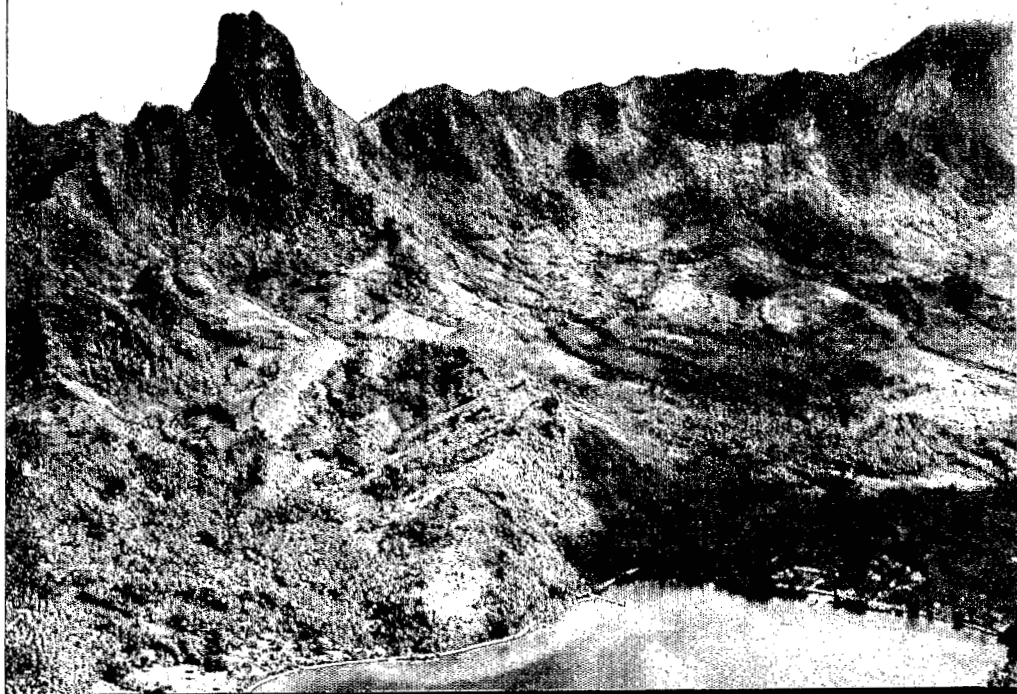
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- 7 Pierre sacrée à cupules. (Cliché Robineau).
- 8 Le « poisson » Moorea.
- 9 Fond de la baie d'Opunohu. (Cliché Labaysse).
- 10 Baie de Cook, village de Paopao. (Cliché Labaysse).
- 11 Ilots du Club Méditerranée. (Cliché Labaysse)
- 7 Sacred stone with small cavities.
- 8 The Moorea « fish ».
- 9 Head of Opunohu Bay.
- 10 Cook Bay : village of Paopao.
- 11 Islets of « Club Méditerranée ».



assistant, swam towards what is today the site of Moorea and Tahiti. This enormous fish was **Tahiti nui**, or large Tahiti, and its first dorsal fin sat up and formed Orohena, a high mountain in Tahiti. The second dorsal fin broke off and floated in the wake of the fish like a little fish, or **Tahiti iti**, the little Tahiti which became the island of Moorea.

ORIGINS

The name Moorea is a recent one, a substitution at the beginning of the 19th century for the old name "Aimeho", commonly called "Aimeo" or "Eimeo". This was the name given to designate the home of the ruling family. Moorea was substituted for Aimeho when the ruling family adopted it after hearing that the high priest of one of their **marae**, Nuurua, had had a vision of a very beautiful yellow lizard, **moorea**, and it became a sort of family symbol.

The name of the chiefs of this family, Marama, means moon, and it is said that they were descended from Taaroa and Hina, goddess of the moon. There were four branches of this family, in Moorea, Huahine, Porapora (Bora-Bora) and Mataiea (Tahiti).

The Marama family story, documented by Arii Taimai, is at the base of the origins of Moorea. A Marama of Punaauia at Tahiti acquired by marriage the rights to Varari in Moorea, especially to the national **marae** of Nuurua. His descendants acquired Haapiti when the Atiro'o of Puna'auia, cousins of the Marama family, came to settle on the island at Haapiti, claiming it by relationship and hospitality rights. These Atiro'o were given the southern area of Haapiti and settled almost everywhere, on the eastern coast and at Vaiare and Te'avarao, and in the centre at Opunohu by crossing over the mountain ridges.

Becoming powerful, the Atiro'o refused to pay homage to the Marama at Haapiti and their marae, and created a separate place of worship. Then, when the Atiro'o murdered two Haapiti twins who had mocked them, the population rose up in revolt and, led by Marama, conquered the districts of Opunohu, Vaiare and Te'avarao. His only rival was the arii of Varari who, by mistakenly refusing the homage of the people of Afareaitu, left the field open to Marama, who accepted it. By a later alliance Marama obtained leadership over Varari and Nu'urua.

According to Arii Taimai, the Marama were the rulers of Moorea up to the time of Cook, and the princes mentioned by the first discoverers were only the vassals of the Marama. However, it is strange that Cook and the first Europeans who went to Moorea heard only about these secondary chiefs and heard nothing about the Marama. Elsewhere the Marama were allied with the Teva of Papara, a powerful Tahitian family, and with the Pomare, a family that was to become royal. Arii Taimai stresses the ties of dependence which made the Marama sovereign over the chiefs of Papara and Pomare II.

It is possible that at the time of the first European contacts, the Marama were only chiefs with theoretical rights because when the Pomare acquired power through foreign alliances, they became the true rulers of Moorea. They conquered the most powerful of Marama's vassals, Mahine, whom Cook had taken to be chief of the entire island, and they set up a large district, Teaharoa, over which they held the title of chief, Taaroa arii. Finally they settled in Papetoai.

The shift of power from Haapiti to Papetoai corresponded to a migration from this valley to Papetoai.

RELIGIOUS REMAINS OF OLD MOOREA

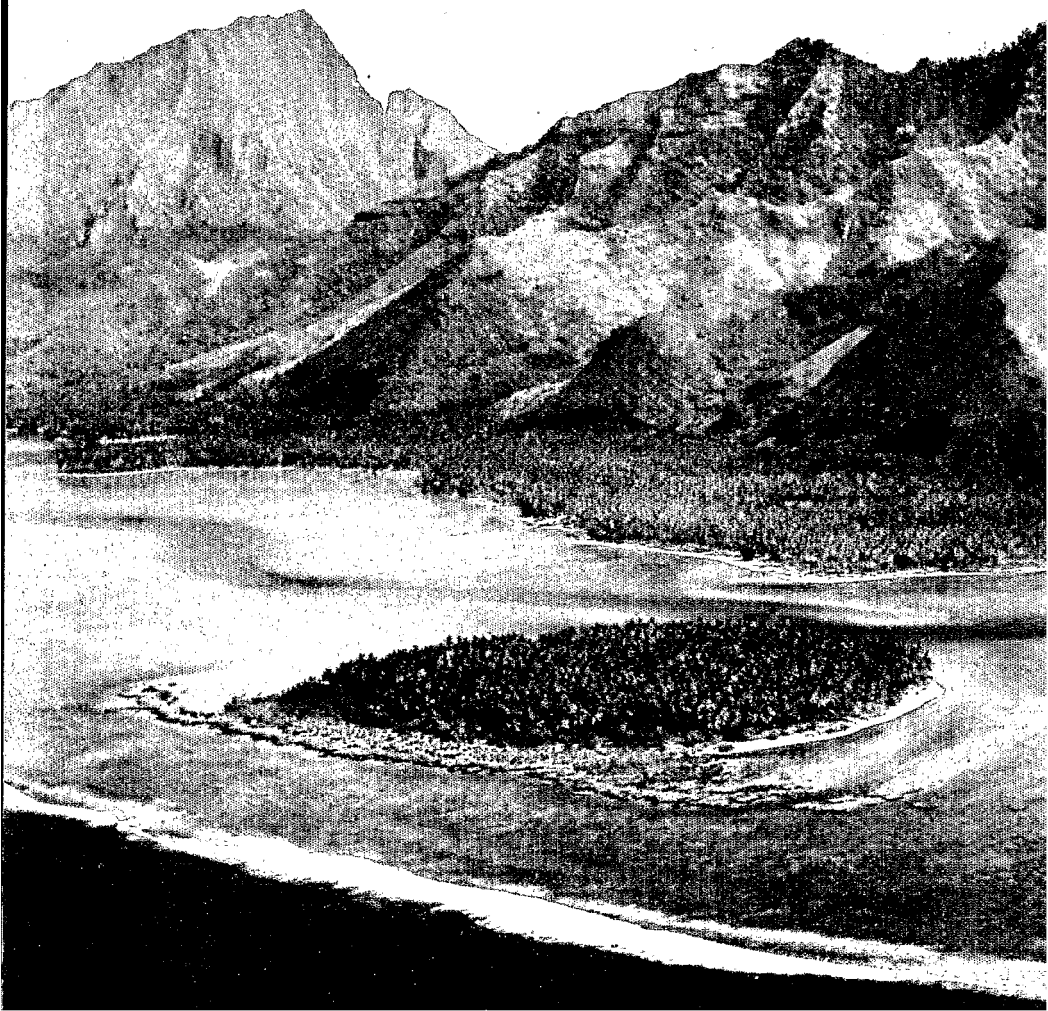
There are many accessible religious remains in Moorea. A small number are called **marae** or even council platform.

A normal tour of the island encompasses a number of **marae** referred to as the coastal type, usually situated on a promontory. These **marae** are built in coral blocks representing a huge altar, **ahu**, in the form of a pyramid with stairs. Other **marae** are found just a few hundred yards from the sea. The structures found in the Opunohu valley should be kept distinct from the rest : excursions to the depths of the small and medium-sized valleys, like those of Afareaitu or Maatea, reveal ancient structures.

The oldest **marae** on Moorea is Umarea at Afareaitu. Carbon dating 14 gives ± 900 . We have three lists of **marae** from Moorea; the first two come from traditions collected by Arii Taimai and Teuira Henry. The **marae** in this list have disappeared or have changed their name. The last list corresponds to the structures reconstructed 40 years ago by K. Emory.

According to Teuira Henry, Moorea had four national **marae**, or **marae arii** — royal **marae**. Nuurua, in the Varai area, was the worship place used by the first Marama when they arrived from Punaauia before settling in Haapiti. The **marae** is at the mouth of a little river, **ahu**, backing on to the sea and protected by **aito**. The high **ahu** and part of the surrounding wall are made of coral and are still plainly visible. Situated at the edge of a coconut grove, the **marae** is now taken over by an orchard. Nuupere in Maatea, and Umarea in Afareaitu are the same type of **marae** but are not as well preserved. Their designation as royal **marae** by Teuira Henry shows the important role played by these two villages during former times in Moorea.

Taputapuatea at Papetoai was the **marae** consecrated to the god Oro, son of Taaroa. This cult developed in the 18th century in the Society Islands under the Opoa priests in Raiatea, but the **marae** was destroyed and the first octagonal church of Papetoai was constructed in its place.





Some of the *marae* in the Opunohu valley were restored by Y. Sinoto of the Bishop Museum. They are situated in a very beautiful Tahitian chestnut grove and there is easy access to them as an illuminated path leads up from the road. Similar reconstruction of one of the important coastal *marae* would be of great interest to tourists wishing to learn more about old Moorea and the old Polynesian culture.

TRADITION AND CHANGE IN MOOREA

In 1948, A. t'Serstevens compared Moorea with the Tahiti of Pierre Loti a century before : "In Tahiti the large partly-tarred road cuts into the countryside, opening up the area to cars, trucks and vans, throwing iron and cement bridges over the rivers. In this setting the path mingles with the countryside, winds between the trees and crosses rivers as small wood bridges. There are no more than three vans in the entire island. One uses only horses, without saddles or bridles, but just a blanket thrown over its back, or perhaps the horse is hooked up to a small two-wheeled cart painted in bright colours which move noiselessly on the sand. Even though the island is so close to Tahiti it has lost none of the idyllic tropical charm that has enchanted so many visitors.

After passing through Maharepa past the Chinese shop and the ugly Protestant church, one can see just a sandy road which is coloured white, red or mauve, depending on the light and shade. The wooden houses are old-fashioned with perforated railings, but one sees more of the native-style houses made of woven bamboo with roofs of "niau", each part of a little hamlet. There are huts for sleeping, eating, cooking and washing. People greet you with a smile here, and everywhere you hear "ia ora na" and even "haere ta maa", which means "come and have dinner". It is only an expression of welcome but it creates a friendly family atmosphere."

So the island hasn't changed much since the time of the first European arrivals.

CHRISTIANISATION

The first missionaries in Moorea were probably Bicknell and Wilson towards the end of 1802, when they preached on the island for one month, first in Maharepa, then in the villages around the island. But it was after the exodus of 1808 that the Mission from Port-Jackson near Sydney, Australia, arrived and settled in Moorea. Davies, Scott and Henry were missionaries who went to Papetoai and set up a school there, the forerunner of the famous Academy of the South Seas. The missionaries made frequent trips to Tahiti from Papetoai and also went to the Windward Islands, so Moorea became the centre for

the Mission until it returned to Tahiti in 1817. However, at this time the island was not abandoned as the Papetoai centre was not only maintained but a second centre on the opposite side of Moorea, at Afareaitu, was set up by Orsmond. The first Polynesian printing works was then set up and in 1821 a children's Mission School was established, the Academy of the South Seas. By this time modern Moorea had taken the form it was to retain until the beginning of the 20th century. Under the guidance of the Mission, the economy started to develop, confirming the role of the island as a base for the Mission. In 1818 the first missionary ship, the "Haweis" visited Papetoai. Mr. Gyles, a farm expert sent from Europe by the London Missionary Society to start the cultivation of sugar can, coffee and cotton, created a plantation and a sugar refinery in Opunohu in 1819 with the help of Reverends Darling and Platt. And in 1821 the first skilled workers with a threading machine and a cotton weaving machine arrived in Moorea.

The missionary activities were gradually transferred to Tahiti when the Protestant ministers' influence became greater. This had been increased by the conversion of Patii, high priest of Papetoai, Vara or Tepaurii, chief of Afareaitu and of the largest section of the people. It was also enhanced by the support of the Pomare royal family, who often visited Moorea. In contrast to Tahiti, torn by traditional and evangelical rivalries, made worse by the use of guns and the interference of European "technicians", Moorea became a model of a christianised and orderly Polynesian society.

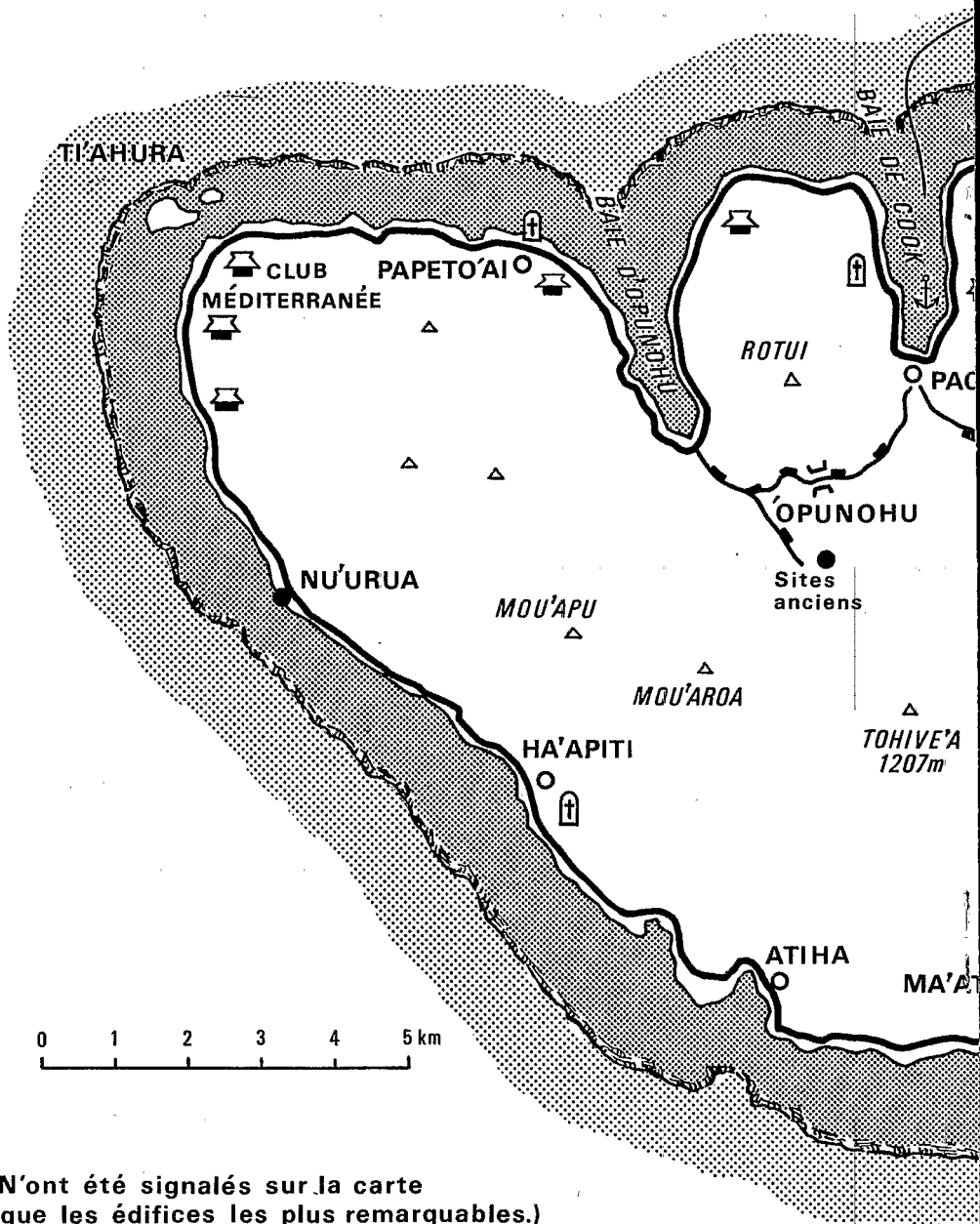
COLONISATION

While the first half of the 19th century was a troubled time in the Society Islands, the second half of the century was an era of stabilisation after the question of ownership of land had been settled, and the export trade developed and a clear-cut religious and administrative organisation emerged.

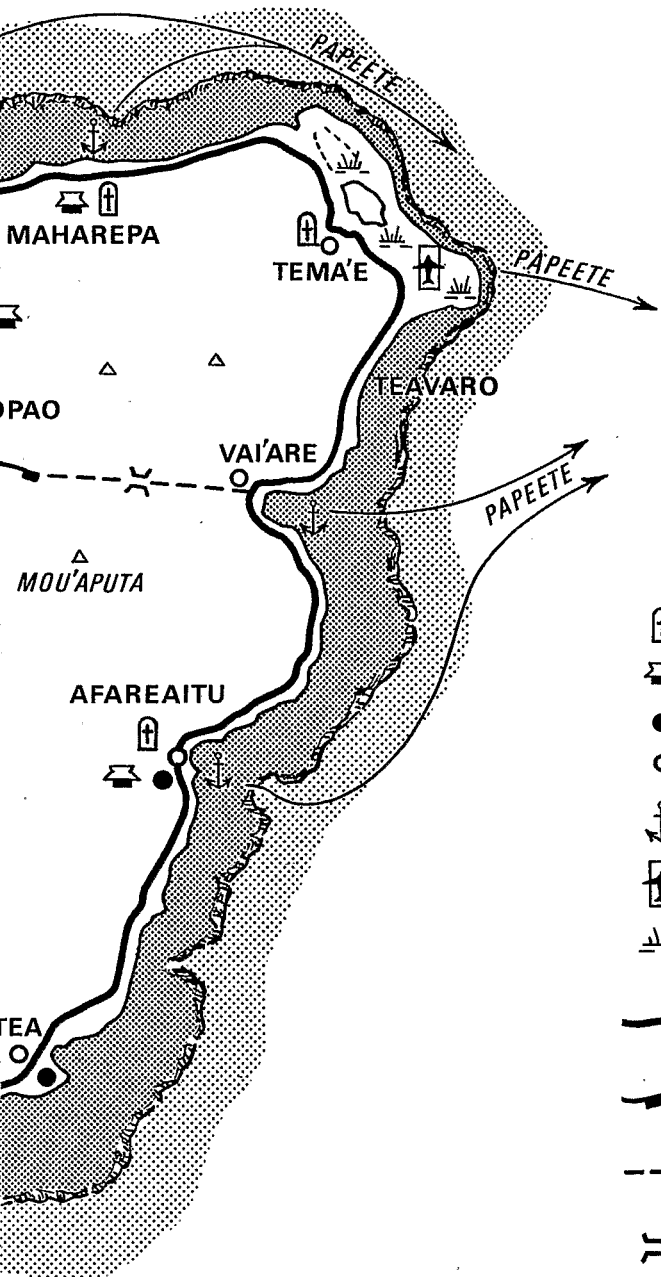
All factors are interdependent. Stability and peace encouraged the first wave of Europeans and Americans, who settled permanently and created plantations. In Moorea, as in Tahiti and the rest of French Polynesia, the European-American families, **popaa**, and the crossbred European-Polynesians, "demis", acquired land and developed quite large properties. The younger members of the big families in Papeete and Tahiti came to Moorea to make their fortune.

Economic success in Moorea depended on the coastal coconut palms producing copra right up to the end of the century and on the development of vanilla at the beginning of the 20th century and the planting of coffee and coconut palm groves in the valleys of the interior after the first world war. Originally copra was cultivated on the reefs of the lagoon and cotton cultivation, which used to be important in Moorea before the development of the coconut groves, lasted only 20 to 30 years. For an island like Moorea this experiment in agri-

MOOREA



(N'ont été signalés sur la carte que les édifices les plus remarquables.)



MAHAREPA

TEMA'E

















TEAVARO

VAI'ARE

MOU'APUTA

AFAREAITU

TEA

-  Temple ou chapelle
-  Hotel
-  Marae
-  Village
-  Wharf desservi
-  Desserved wharf
-  Aérodrome
-  Marécage
-  Swamp
-  Route de ceinture
-  Circular road
-  Route de pénétration
-  Penetration road
-  Sentier
- Path
-  Col
-  Pass

culture was extremely important because by the leasing of farms and the creation of salaried incomes for the population it caused a relatively modern development of the island on the one hand, and on the other, it transformed the social structure by settling these "demi" families of mixed blood into the villages and making some Tahitian families economically superior. Although there were relatively very few Europeans, Moorea's modernisation process could be detected quite early, in its prestige houses, small hotels and shops, the circular route and the wharfs, schools and the hospital. The traditional life of Moorea already included some of the more important services of a modern society. This was no longer a primitive life.

TRADITIONAL LIFE

Cut off from Tahiti, the villages of Moorea were isolated until the 1950's. Up to then most of their resources came from the valleys and the lagoon, selling their "cash crops" to buy commodities and the manufactured indispensables : rice, petrol, cloth and clothing, utensils, tools and furniture.

As in the rest of Polynesia, the natural environment, earth and water, provides the source of food and materials for houses, canoes and boats : bread-fruit trees, mangoes, lemon trees and bana palms abound around the villages without mentioning the omnipresent coconut palms. The *fe'i* is found in the heart of the island deep in the valleys. This is indispensable for *ma'a Tahiti*, Tahitian food, the bamboo used for building, and on the more elevated slopes and plateaux oranges are found, used to make the beer used in festivities. It is also here that the food crops are cultivated : sweet potatoes, tarua, yams, manioc, and pawpaws. The majestic mape grows along the streams ; small prawns are caught in the running waters and, in the mud on the outskirts of the villages and in the valleys, one finds pigs squelching around which will one day be eaten in the big *tamaaraa* festivals.

Fishing in the lagoon, either by line or net, brings in the daily needs and is also a monetary source as, along with two or three other Tahitian districts, Moorea has provided fish to the Papeete market since it began in the 1850's. The Saturday night deliveries for the Sunday market in Papeete are memorable for their large laden canoes rowed by singing men, each announcing its island with its own particular song. Although nylon is now gradually replacing cotton for making nets, one should not miss seeing the large majestic nets set out to dry over the branches of the *aito* beside the river. One can see them in nearly all the fishing villages, but especially at Atiha.

Going along the circular road, one can notice four or five different kinds of house. First, small houses on stilts with pandanus *rauoro*, or coconut palm, *niau* roofs with woven bamboo partitions. This is certainly the oldest method of building a house, especially if the roof is of *rauoro*, the *niau* being a recent

substitute as it is easier to work with but rots twice as quickly. But the **rauoro** is a better selling proposition. Many of the adults and older people, especially from Maatea, go into the hills bordering the village to look for pandanus leaves to weave and sell to businesses and building firms in Tahiti. This type of house nevertheless is not the original type of home of the islanders, which was a long house no longer seen except in a few photographs and at Pape'ete at the Fare Ma'ohi of Vainini'ore. Often this type of small house is built by substituting imports for local materials : this is the ugly pinex house, a wooden structure with a corrugated iron roof.

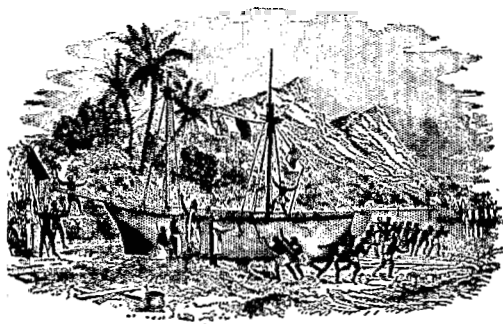
The second type is an old majestic square house, made of imported treated wood with a high roof made of pandanus (or sheet iron) with two or four slopes, and a gallery-type veranda encircled with ornate balustrades reached by a broad but short staircase and a banister on each side. This is the "colonial house", the **fare vanira** or **fare metua**, the family home. The Papeto'ai village has a lot of these old houses, like all villages, indicating the more prominent family or families living in the community.

Third, there are modern comfortable houses of woven bamboo or varnished wood, with pandanus roofs. These house the tourists, the European residents or the "demis" and could be classified as the "neo-Polynesian" style.

The fourth type are neat houses with iron roofs and painted wood or cement partitions, lots of modern windows and a wide door through which one can see tables, sofas and armchairs : all the furnishings of a modern living room. This is the model home of the future for the average Tahitian family which, with the present increase in monetary income, is seen much more often now. Generally the neat gardens with their masses of flowers go well with the well-kept houses : the village of Ma'atea is a good example.

Before the last war only the first two types of house existed. A large family used to live in an enclosure planted with the most common fruit trees : breadfruit, mangoes and banana palms, and the various buildings of the Polynesian home were built amongst them : sleeping quarters, dining quarters, kitchen and bakehouse. Each village had at least one eminent Tahitian family with more land, therefore richer both in the harvest and in money than the average person. They lived in a more impressive house — a **fare vanina**, for example — and through direct or indirect income from their land were able to employ a certain number of day-labourers from the village.

But the salaried work was scarce as also was ready cash except in the "boom" vanilla harvests when there was an increase in the market prices creating a chain of profits from the Polynesian producer to the "demi" middlemen and then to the Chinese merchant. Much work was done cooperatively, either by families or with the help of neighbours or the parish community if the work was too much for the families themselves. In this way houses were built, everybody helping the builder on condition that he would repay the aid in



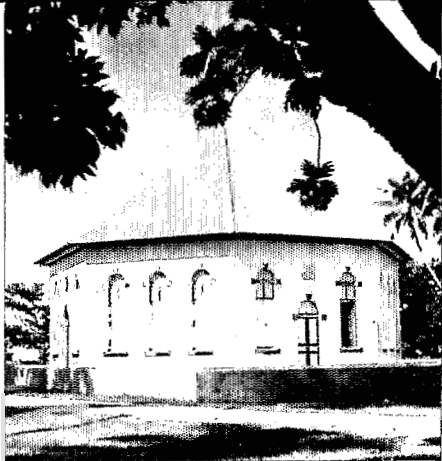
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13 A Moorea, le 7 décembre 1817, lancement du « Haweis », navire missionnaire, le premier construit en Océanie.

14 Temple octogonal de Papetoai, reconstruit à la fin du XIX^e. Etat en 1969. (Cliché Robineau).

15 Entrée du temple d'Afareaitu, construit en 1912. (Cliché Robineau).

16 Peinture de P. Heyman, chapelle de Paopao. (Cliché Charnay).



14

13 Moorea, December 7, 1817 : Launching of the « Haweis », the first mission vessel built in Oceania.

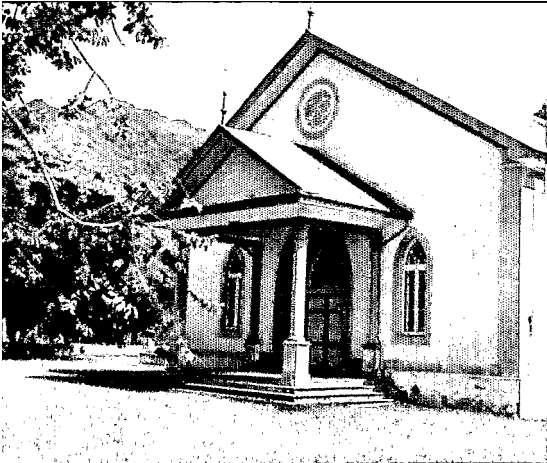
14 Octagonal temple of Papetoai, rebuilt at the end of the 19th century : as it was in 1969.

15 Entrance of the temple of Afareaitu, built in 1912.

16 Chapel of Paopao : painting by P. Heyman.

18





15

17 Chapelle d'Haapiti, avec le Père curé et des visiteurs. (Cliché O'Reilly).

18 Maison de réunion à Afareaitu. (Cliché Missions évangéliques).

19 Assistants à la réunion. (Cliché Missions évangéliques).

17 Chapel of Haapiti with the Parish Priest and visitors.

18 Meeting-house at Afareaitu.

19 People attending the meeting.



16



17



19

some other way. The participants were fed and, at the end, a **tamaaraa**, feast, was held by the builder. The wives were in charge of the cooking and the children of serving the food. In the 1920's the coffee plantation at Ma'atea was planted cooperatively with the encouragement of the government through the district chief Tavana. Places of worship are still built in this manner. The faithful, that is the majority of the population, raise the money to buy the building materials and produce the necessary labour for building. The completion of the work is celebrated with a feast and **himene**, religious songs, and **tamaaraa**.

This cooperative tradition emphasises two essential features of traditional society : the church, pillar of society, and the role of festivals. They are not unique to this island, but they are inseparable from the traditional way of life of the people, and Moorea was a suitable place for their preservation, as much for its religious singularity as for its relative isolation from Tahiti.

Since the middle of the 19th century, religious administration in Moorea remained stable : the two centres of the Protestant Church at Papetoai and Afareaitu were divided into five parishes, and a small European and "demi" Catholic minority was grouped in a Catholic parish with a secularised church at Haapiti. In each Protestant parish there is a church and a minister ; in each village or part of the district there is a meeting house, **fare putuputura'a**, a deacon and the congregation, the **pupu**, or group, or the **amuira'a**, meeting. The **amuira'a** is the centre for most of the collective activities such as planting, building and feasts. May is the month when church funds are collected, and this is accompanied by invitations, feasts, **himene**, **tamaaraa**. The Wednesday evening service at the meeting house and the Sunday service in the church give life a daily rhythm throughout the year. T'Serstevens gives a very vivid description of a **fare putuputuraa** service in Ti'aia in his book **Tahiti et sa couronne**.

A Moorean village is therefore only a collection of houses most of the time or, more exactly, an enclosure of houses, **aua fare**, around one or more religious buildings, with a school, Chinese shop and sometimes a district officer and a wharf where the boats arrive. Apart from places of worship the Chinese shop is the only place where village relationships and contacts take place.

Festivities are at the other end of the pole of traditional cooperative living. Candes, **tamaaraa**, add colour to ceremonies in the cycle of life, along with family reunions, which are a change from the monotonous relaxed daily life. There were other occasions for festivals, such as agricultural competitions between districts, **amuira** invitations to the interior of a district. All the preparations for these festivals were cause for feverish activity, in itself a celebration : fishing at night for little valley prawns, or fishing from the reef, going to the depth of the valley to collect **uru** and **fei**, gathering oranges on the plateau and making beer from them... all activities which make today's

"tamaataa" but a pale reflection of those joyous times. Festivals, like work, were the opportunity to live in a group, to show other people, other groups and other cooperatives what one could do. In the large number of ceremonies, contrasting with the frugality of daily life, the old Polynesian values of the spirit of competition and prestige were much in evidence.

MOOREA TODAY : A SUBURB OF THE TAHITIAN CAPITAL

To travellers' eyes, the traditional element of Moorea seems to be epitomised in the native dances, the sight of a truck decorated with palms and filled with comely girls and guitar-strumming men, all weering perfumed leis and circlets in their hair. Or a canoe gliding on a twilight lagoon, a **tamaaraa**, with its flowers and its foreign foods to the uninitiated, the **pareu**, the **mama ruau** dresses, **tifaifai**, **more** and various wooden curios, of mother-of-pearl or of **tapa** found in the shops along the circular route and in the hotels or at the Club.

However, in reality it is quite different. Firstly because these things are only the fragmentary and material remains of an economy and culture, so cannot constitute its meaning. Secondly, Moorea has changed quite a lot during the last few years and is changing before our very eyes. Like the Japanese who live in a European way by day but return to the traditional house and ancestral customs each evening, the inhabitants of Moorea lead a sort of double life : they earn their living as farmers or as wage-earners in the village, on the island, or in town. They go spear-fishing for their Saturday or Sunday meal, sing **himene** at their daily church worship, and get together rarely for a big **tamaataa** followed by songs and dances or take an occasional happy tour of the island, boozing liberally.

What do the people of Moorea do today ? Apart from a few special sectors in agriculture, such as fruit, agriculture is declining. There is no longer any vanilla on an island whose slopes used to be covered with it. The old coconut palms are often stripped or stranded in dense bush and the coconuts left to rot. However, the wage-earner is becoming more and more common. In 1968, 44 per cent of the island's working population was paid by salary and 30 per cent of the salaried workers worked outside Moorea, usually in Papeete. A large part of these wage-earners were young men whose families lived in the village while they worked in town during the week and returned to Moorea at weekends. Thus there is a certain lifelessness in the villages during the week, in contrast with the activity which begins on Friday nights with the arrival of the boats bringing home the workers. This creates a new atmosphere for the weekends — family and friends, the influx of money, relaxation, playing with balls on the village square under the light of a gas lamp, playing billiards while women and children watch television, drink or play the guitar and sing





22

- 20 La gendarmerie à Moorea vers 1890.
- 21 Type de maison ancienne en bambou avec toit de pandanus, vers 1930. (Cliché Kellum).
- 22 La pêche au grand filet dans la baie d'Opunohu, en 1934. (Cliché Kellum).
- 23 Une école à Moorea dans les années 40. (Cliché Sylvain).
- 24 Séchoir à coprah. Type ancien à toit de chaume. (Cliché Robineau).
- 25 Mariage de la vanille. (Cliché Robineau).
- 26 « Maison de vanille ». Maison coloniale des années 20. (Cliché Robineau).



24



25

- 20 « Gendarmerie » at Moorea : about 1890.
- 21 Typical old bamboo house with pandanus roof, about 1930.
- 22 Opunohu Bay. Fishing with large net.
- 23 A school at Moreea in the nineteen-forties.
- 24 Drying-house for copra : ancient type with thatched roof.
- 25 Pollinization of vanilla.
- 26 « Vanilla House ». Colonial house of the nineteen-twenties.



26

23

at the nearby hotel. Some go fishing on the reef or in the valley rivers for weekend meals. The next morning is a time for relaxing and "puttering about", gathering **uru** for the next days' food when the men will be gone and women and children alone again, cutting and watering the grass in front of the house, preparing the noon meal while the wife does the weekly washing. Saturday afternoon is spent training the players in one of the two sports teams of the village in anticipation of approaching football games. Saturday evening means usual a movie, attracting the women and children, while the young people go dancing and others rest. Sunday is the day when you get up late, a day divided by church at 11 or noon, dressed up in one's best, and sport competitions in the afternoon where the whole village meets and the day ends with the return of the workers by boat to Papeete to begin another week's work.

This is the rythm of an industrial society : the monotonous daily routine of the week's work, the freedom of the weekend, the wearying travelling to work and back and modern leisure activities : billiards, movies, dancing and sports.

To explain this we must go back to the establishment of the missionary system. This was imposed by forbidding part of the Polynesian culture : art and pagan idols, dancing and rites were considered pagan and, therefore, condemned in the light of the new religion. Later on, dances and rites were relearned and recreated but in accordance with the European style, and even this was discouraged for a long time. On the other hand, the discontinuance of family control which occurred through the acquisition of money and the transformation of the style of life through the influence of foreign ways of life, brought about a different way of life. Developing tourism and the radio superseded the traditional ways of living and a steady process of deculturation was set in motion.

Until the beginning of the tourist booms in the 1960's, and the first nuclear bomb experiments which, by their economic impact, attracted a large part of the rural population into salaried positions, Moorea remained relatively remote but not too much so to be cut off from the world and from progress, but enough to preserve the ancestral rythm. Now however, change is brutal. The intensive development of air services makes the island only 7 minutes away from Tahiti. Part of the population works in town, in Papeete, a large part of the food comes from there also, the development of hotels is closely connected with tourist organisations in town and this increases business, people come to Moorea to settle and buy land, the construction of bungalows and houses proceeds space, and more and more people from Papeete come to spend a weekend or holiday in Moorea. Thus it is not an exaggeration to speak of Moorea as a suburb of Papeete. One can only hope that Moorea does not acquire some of the more unpleasant characteristics of a large town.

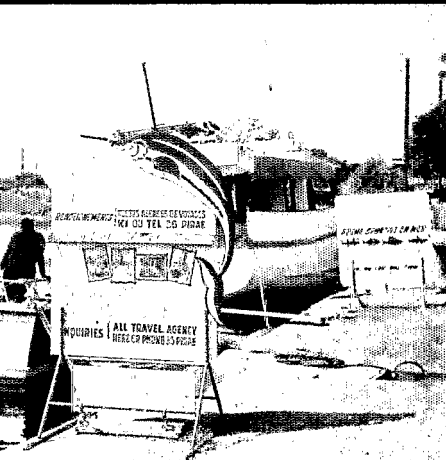
AND NOW A TOUR ROUND THE ISLAND

Starting out from the aerodrome at Moorea, we are going to take the circular route around Moorea, in an anti-clockwise direction. For those travellers arriving by boat, they will need to take into account the distance between aerodrome and wharf and bear this in mind when estimating the mileage to the various points of interest.

— Afareaitu	+ 6 miles
— Vai'are.	+ 3 miles
— Hotel Bali Hai (Maharepa)	— 3 miles
— Hotel Aimeo	— 5 miles
— Paopao.	— 6 miles

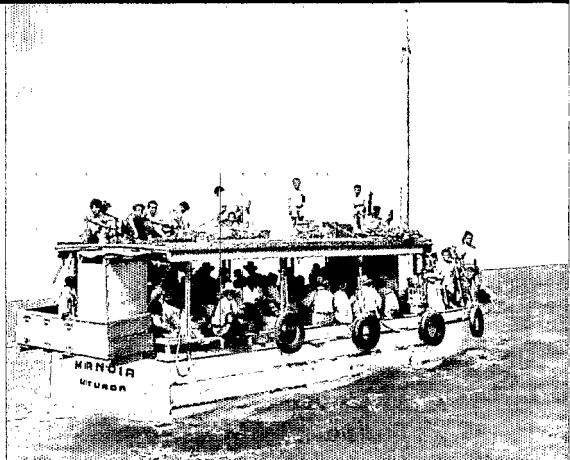
- 0 miles The aerodrome at Temae, a fresh water lake, the **motu** with its coral-red earth, **tiare tahiti**, copra dryer on **niau** roofs, and coral burial places.
- .6 miles Temae village with dancing troupes.
- 1.8 miles Tiaia : outlet for Temae lake.
- 3 miles Maharepa : important tourist centre (hotels, shops with "curios-
pareu", painting studios).
- 4 miles Painting studio.
- 5.6 miles Paraoro : important tourist centre (with hotel) and a very beautiful view over Cook Bay to the ridge of mountains.
- 6 miles Paopao village : large cultivated valley with a footpath leading to the Vaiare Pass and Vaiare Bay ; by car one can visit the Opunohu valley.
- 7.5 miles Catholic chapel at Paopao : painting by Heyman representing the Holy Family, Tahitian-style.
- 10.6 miles The Opunohu valley : the interior route goes by the territorial agricultural school in Paopao, towards the restored **marae** sites in the beautiful mape forest, and to a viewpoint where one can admire the two bays, Cook and Opunohu.
- 14 miles Papetoai or Faatoai village : formerly the village of Queen Pomare IV, with old houses in wooden colonial style, an octagonal church reconstructed in 1887 on the ruins of the first octagonal church

contd. p. 30



27

- 27 Papeete avant le front de mer. Quai de départ pour Moorea. Invitation au voyage. (Cliché René Violet).
- 28 Des « boats » analogues assurent la liaison Papeete-Moorea. (Cliché Charnay).
- 29 Les touristes descendent du « truck ». (Cliché Club Méditerranéen).



28

- 27 The sea-front at Papeete. Departure wharf for Moorea. « Invitation au voyage ».
- 28 Boats like this one link Papeete and Moorea.
- 29 Tourists alighting from the « truck ».

29





30 A cheval sous les cocotiers. (Cliché Club Méditerranée.)

31 La pointe de Tema'e avec le champ d'aviation de Moorea. (Cliché Sofratop).

32 Moorea. Groupe de danseurs. (Cliché Charnay).

30 On horseback under the coconut palms.

31 Tema'e headland with Moorea airfield.

32 Moorea. Group of dancers.

30

31

32



- in the Society Islands which stood where the national **marae taputapuatea** had been dedicated to the Tahitian god Oro, son of the supreme Taaroa.
- 17 miles Tiahura : important tourist centre (with the Club Méditerranée and a hotel), and the start of the big beaches on the north-west coast.
 - 19 miles Varari : Nuurua **marae**, the first important national **marae** of Moorean proto-history era.
 - 22 miles Haapiti : old coral Catholic church.
 - 24 miles Vaianae Bay.
 - 25 miles The bay and village of Atiha : fishing nets, beautiful views over Tohiva, Putuputura next to Tohiva, Mouaroa.
 - 29 miles The grouped village of Maatea : remains of a beautiful and very old "tarodièrè", and the Nuupure **marae**.
 - 30 miles Haumi : **tanito** temple constructed in old Tahitian style, of bamboo.
 - 31 miles Afareaitu : chief administrative town of the island, large church built in 1912 on the ruins of the one which Pierre Loti inaugurated, Umarea's national **marae** and the Tetii **marae**.
 - 34 miles Vaiare Bay : you can goto Paopao on foot.
 - 36 miles Tevaro : the most beautiful beach in Moorea between the village and Temae aerodrome.
 - 37 miles Temae aerodrome.

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