

# Reciprocity, Redistribution and Prestige Among the Polynesians of the Society Islands

*Claude Robineau*

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In a society so complex and so acculturated as Tahiti, the study of social phenomena, particularly the people's behavior and the motivations behind what they do, does not work well without appealing to history, notably the history prior to the arrival of Europeans. Whatever upheavals Tahitian society may have experienced for almost two centuries, it is unthinkable that the institutions, the conduct, the old ways of thinking have not left some traces today and that recourse to the past cannot serve to explain present characteristics. That is most true of the Tahitian economy and of the search for an explanation of present behavior. We have experimented with this method in studying ostentation phenomena in the present economy (Robineau 1968).

On the practical level, this course of action brings up the problem of the Tahitian economy's capacity for transformation in the face of industrial societies in relationship to which eastern Polynesia is peripherally located. On the theoretical level, it raises the question of evaluating the validity of history as an explanatory factor for the

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The present text owes much to the exchanges of views I have had with the archaeologist, Bertrand Gérard, both as to the state of the economy in the district of reference and the function of ostentation and the role played by the chief's headquarters in this district.

transformation of societies. In other words, does the present state of the Tahitian economy depend upon historical conditions that have been remodelling it for 170 years or upon some intangible cultural datum other than history? We think that this latter explanation, which we shall call "culturistic", cannot give an adequate picture of Tahitian reality and that the cultural state of reality, no matter how well set forth, must be integrated into a dynamic structuring that is inherent in human societies and that our historical perspectives attempt to explain.

I. Tahiti is known to harbour a markedly pluralistic culture. As a result of the processes of acculturation and colonization that marked the end of the nineteenth century, one could observe the establishment and peopling of European and Chinese colonies and a widespread racial admixture in the population, more so than in the other islands of central Polynesia. Aside from foreigners, described as *popa'a* and as *tinito*,<sup>1</sup> the population is made up of two distinct groups: the *ta'ata tahiti*, or *ta'ata ma'ohi* whom we will call "Polynesians",<sup>2</sup> and the *ta'ata 'afa popa'a* who are generally called *demis* [half-breed, half-caste].<sup>3</sup> This distinction, theoretically based on cross-breeding, is more cultural than biological, on which point all of the authors agree (Finney 1965; Moench 1963; Ottino 1965, 1972). We will leave aside the phenomenon of class that some have tried to read into it (Panoff 1964: 126-133) as being irrelevant for the rest of the exposition.

What is of interest for us to observe here is that the *demis* are located on the borderline between two cultures, assuming traits from both cultures at once and utilizing the potentials of both. They consider themselves as being Tahitians and are considered by everyone as belonging to Tahiti because of their attachment to certain specific values, notably competition and prestige (Robineau 1968). However, they are distinguished from "natives" [*indigenes*] (a French term still used currently in Tahiti) by their mastery of the workings of modern economy, their avidity for work for profit, their business sense, and their desire to accumulate. Confronting a Polynesian community, a dynamic *demi* installed in a village plays the role of animator. This is very clear-cut on the economic level, so much so that a notable Tahitian of this sort from the neighbouring island of Moorea, who is Polynesian of blood, language, and culture is so attached to these values that, from the economic point of view, he is a *demi* because, on this level, he behaves just like a *popa'a*.<sup>4</sup>

Field studies were made in a rural district of Tahiti where we analyzed the internal economic relationships. A few years ago, a study of fishing, one of the main activities of this district, was conducted there (Ottino 1965). Besides this, the community was noteworthy as having been the location of the exploits of the Spanish Catholic Mission that, nearly two hundred years ago, came to evangelize the Tahitians. Thanks

to it there is the *Journal de Maximo Rodriguez* (Rodriguez 1930) that describes the functioning of this society in minute detail. To start with, then, we propose to analyze the *Journal*, in order to explain the relationships prevailing in Tahitian society at that time, and afterwards to carry out an analysis of the present relationships in the district chosen.

Tahiti is said to be divided into districts, a term used in both English and French to translate the Tahitian term *mata'ina'a*. These districts, which group together one thousand or more inhabitants, correspond to historical divisions of the island; their present boundaries were set some hundred years ago. Thus, what is called in Tahiti the Tairapu Peninsula (La Presqu'île) or Tahiti-iti [Lesser Tahiti] and which, at the time Maximo Rodriguez wrote the *Journal*, was Teva-i-tai brings together five districts, each with an elected council and chief (*tavana*). These districts correspond to five parishes of the Evangelical Church, each with representative institutions (assemblies of believers and deacons).<sup>5</sup> It is one of these districts that we shall take as an example.

II. The *Journal de Maximo Rodriguez* (Rodriguez 1930) relates the stay in Tahiti, during ten months in 1775, of a Mission of Spanish priests who had been sent out by the Catholic Church and the vice-royalty of Lima to evangelize the Polynesians. Maximo Rodriguez was an officer in this Mission, an interpreter who took care of relationships with the local authorities and who was given the task of observing what went on in the indigenous society and the customs prevailing there. Rodriguez made daily notes of his relationships with the inhabitants, visits that he paid or received, the trips that he undertook, and the incidents that did not fail to arise within the population while the Spanish vessels were present or, after their departure, with the Mission and its members.

The *Journal's* value lies in the fact that its author, who seems to have been a good observer, to have had a balanced and open character, and to have been capable of adapting easily to a foreign world, very quickly became a friend of the *ari'i* or Tahitian [great chiefs] who had parcelled out the governing of the island among themselves. For them he became a highly appreciated mediator and spokesman concerning incidents that occurred during this ten-month stay on Polynesian soil. While the ships were present, there were numerous minor incidents, largely sailors' escapades, and when the Spaniards' numbers were reduced to the members of the Mission, the climate tended to deteriorate because of the narrow-mindedness, blindness, and unawareness of the fathers who made up the Mission itself. They limited themselves to praying and cultivating the garden which had been set aside for them and had the briefest and most infrequent contacts possible with the neighbouring Tahitians. Materially speaking, they were "hangers-on" in the Tahitian

society, while they disdained its institutions, its beliefs, and even those Tahitians who did not share their Catholic faith, which included everyone by the end of the Mission. There was no propagation of the faith; rather one might speak of propagation in reverse because they were to lose the few converted souls who had come back to their land with them. This explains why the fathers decamped upon the arrival of the frigate which was sent out either to replenish their stores or to take them back.

It is known that social and political stratification in ancient Tahiti revolved around a few categories — chiefs (*ari'i*) and, below them, deputies or sub-chiefs, landowners (landed proprietors), commoners, and various categories of public and private servants. Because the authors vary both as to terminology and function, we shall not try to be more exact here, being satisfied with referring back to the sources (de Bovis 1855; Henry 1962; Morrison 1966; Tekau Pomare 1971) and to the bibliography about the subject (Williamson 1924; Handy 1930; Sahlins 1958; Newbury 1967). For it matters little to us, as Maximo was not very clear. Aside from the *ari'i*, his *Journal* distinguished only their men of trust, called by the author "intendants", "captains", and "chiefs of guard" (of the valley); below these was the general population. This lack of detail was the result of the fact that he was mainly in contact with the *ari'i*, and with two of them in particular, Vehiatua and Tu, whom he often accompanied when they moved and thanks to whom he was introduced into Tahiti's *ari'i* society.

These *ari'i*, chiefs of the districts (*mata'ina'a*) and the political units into which Tahiti was divided before the unification introduced at the instigation of Europeans, were related among themselves. Outside of political struggles that might temporarily separate them, the *ari'i* visited each other, exchanged presents, and participated in the same ceremonies on certain of the most celebrated cult sites (*marae*). Vehiatua, who was, according to the *Journal*, the *ari'i* of the district where Maximo resided,<sup>6</sup> had authority over all of the chiefs of the peninsula,<sup>7</sup> a listing of whose respective districts and subdistricts we can reconstruct (Anuhi, Aiurua, Vaaotea, Vaiuru, Tairapu, Mataoae, Toahotu, and Afaahiti. All of these districts together made up, as we know, Teva-i-tai, one of the two units of the Teva domain, the other being Teva-i-uta, made up of three districts: Papara, Mataiea, and Vaiari (Papeari) in Tahiti-nui. Tu (or Otu as he was called by Maximo), the second *ari'i* with whom he was familiar and the companion of Vehiatua, was the chief of Pare and of the northern districts of the island: Arue, Matavai, Papenoo, and Tiarei. Papenoo and Tiarei, for example, had Tu's brothers as *ari'i*; Tu or Vairaatoa or yet again Pomare First was on top and also *ari'i rahi* of Tahiti, a title which he had just taken away from the *ari'is* of Papara; in Maximo Rodriguez'

time, the *ari'i* of Papara was Amo, whom Maximo saw when he went through the district and who was the chief of the Teva group and therefore superior in a certain way to Vehiatua.<sup>8</sup>

Concerning Tahiti's peninsula and the rights that could be exercised there, the *ari'is'* world had four levels: that of the districts, that of the whole peninsula (Vehiatua for Teva-i-tai), that of the Tevas, and finally the level of the *ari'i rahi*, then held by Tu.<sup>9</sup> In reading the *Journal*, we see that Vehiatua, in his capacity of superior *ari'i* of Teva-i-tai, paid constant visits in his domain and that numerous exchanges of presents were made on such occasions. Tu, with whom Vehiatua was allied after having been his adversary, shared his time between his own domain and Vehiatua's, and his stay in the peninsula was marked by large transfers. Maximo's *Journal* thus allows a study of the exchanges and the economic behaviour of Tahitians on the level of the *ari'is* and of the relationships that the chiefs maintained with the people. We see here two aspects: (1) that of the relationships that the Tahitian society, the *ari'is* and the people, kept with the officers of the Spanish vessels, with the Mission, and most particularly with Rodriguez; and (2) that of the internal relationships of Tahitian society, between the people and its chiefs.

As in the case of the arrival of Wallis (Wallis 1774) or other navigators putting in at the oceanic archipelagoes, the first contacts between Tahitians and Spaniards were marked by exchanges of gifts. The Tahitians brought bananas, breadfruit, and coconuts and also offered pigs, mats or *tapas* [cloth of beaten bark]. In exchange, the Spaniards gave metal objects, axes, knives, nails, fishhooks, glass trinkets, and European cloth. In Maximo's account, these exchanges of presents were concomitant with an offering by the chiefs present of a banana shoot as a pledge of peace; this indicates that these exchanges were more social than economic, intended to some extent to seal friendly relationships. When these relationships had been established, exchanges of an economic sort were organized to correspond to the respective needs of both parties: the Europeans needed drinking water, firewood, and fresh produce; the Tahitians demanded alcohol, arms, and manufactured products, such as European clothing and cloth, hardware, and iron tools.

This satisfaction of the respective needs of both parties would seem to be the basic purpose of these exchanges. However looking at them more closely, one can see that the transactions became very personalized after the first exchanges when the parties hardly knew each other. They concerned the *ari'is*, Maximo, the commander of the Spanish vessel, and the missionaries. It is necessary to take into account this personal quality in order to catch the significance of these exchanges. According to the *Journal* (Rodriguez 1930:6), Maximo was adopted by Tu as his brother ("son of his own mother and father") and considered to be

an *ari'i*; hence the transactions in which Maximo was involved were exchanges of presents between *ari'is* of the island upon visits that he made during the ten months of his stay.

In their peninsula establishment, Maximo and the Mission subsisted thanks to the supplies brought to them by the inhabitants. These were provided systematically by the people of a valley "earmarked" by Vehiatua. More or less assimilated by the *ari'is*, Maximo and the Mission members were treated as *ari'is*, and therefore the inhabitants of a specific locality were charged with bringing them the items they needed to subsist. It was a tribute for which the fathers gave a few metal gifts (knives, fishhooks) or glass trinkets in exchange. However, unlike the true *ari'i*, they did not assure the security that the people might expect from any chief; the real basis of this tribute was in fact the protection and benefit that Vehiatua hoped to draw from business with the Spanish vessels and from the technology of which they were bearers — hence the numerous exchanges of gifts whose function was to maintain the alliance between the chiefs and the whites.

The practice of exchanging products is deeply embedded in Tahitian society; the indications given by the *Journal* are revealing in this regard. In the *Journal* may be found the main traits or features of a system that assure the cohesion of a social pyramid: tribute from the people to their chief; tribute from *ari'is* to honour visits made to them; and large quantities of subsistence goods when an *ari'i* (with his family) goes to stay at the home of one of his peers. Relationships within Tahitian society are introduced or sealed by exchanges that show their reciprocal nature (between *ari'is*) or their asymmetry (tribute). Tribute, however, is made only as one aspect of a larger exchange between the *ari'is* and their people, in which the people in return enjoy the protection of the chiefs.

III. In proceeding to the present-day analysis of the district we have chosen, we set ourselves the task of showing that the present-day relationships expressing the functioning of the Tahitian economy of this area form, under a superficial modernity, a structure which reminds one of that prevailing two hundred years ago upon the arrival of the Europeans.

Located at the extremity of Tahiti's peninsula, the district presents, economically and objectively, both the advantages and disadvantages inherent in such a location. Compared to the other districts, it has a much more extensive lagoon, and therefore a greater potential wealth of fish. The main valley, occupied by coconut plantations, pastures, and coffee groves, has resources analogous to those of the other districts, but the length of the shore allows for an outlet from other large valleys which, at the time of Maximo Rodriguez, seem to have been separate, autonomous districts.

The population is grouped together in a compact village at the mouth of the main valley, while the fishermen's households are scattered about at the edge of the lagoon on the beach, which extends to the south of the village. Perhaps one can see in the district in this predominant presence of the ocean one of the reasons for the important role of activities connected with the ocean, whether it is a matter of fishing, for which the village owns large nets — though other districts own such nets, too — or outrigger canoes races, for which the district has a solid tradition of virtuosity and for which they are recompensed each year by winning the first prizes at the Tiurai.<sup>10</sup>

In this district, as elsewhere, Tahitian land holdings are small, cut up into parcels, often encumbered by joint rights of ownership resulting from the succession of generations and the crossing of family rights through the interaction of matrimonial alliances. These small holdings contrast with the large, single-tenanted properties belonging to the wealthy half-caste or *popa'a* families from Papeete who particularly monopolize the valley districts of which Maximo Rodriguez speaks. Aside from the district chief's public works and transport enterprise, of which we will speak again and which employ a certain number of workers, salaried employment outside of the district, especially in greater Papeete, is, along with big net fishing, the sole source of moneyed income for the population. For any one of these activities, the location of the district "at the end of the island" is a disadvantage in terms of transporting fresh products to the market, and also in terms of the daily commuting to Papeete. This isolation of the district, still more noticeable a decade ago when the village was connected with the rest of Tahiti only by a poor trail, explains why employment offered by the chief seems like a windfall in the eyes of the population, and thus underlines the eminent functions of the *tavana* in the village.

Actually, these functions are executed not by the nominal chief, but by his adoptive son, who is connected by blood with one of the most illustrious half-caste families of Tahiti, of which the Polynesian side descends through the women of the Tevas of Papara, and therefore from the *ari'i rahi* of Tahiti before the title fell to the Pomares. The young chief — his adoptive father, though nominal chief of the district is obliged because of the weight of his years to rely on his son for the administration of the district — performs at the same time the official functions of *tavana*, the burden of his enterprises, and to some extent the village's social arbitration. Protestant, he belongs to the predominant church; his wife is the principal schoolmistress in the district's public school. Because of the new municipal institutions established in 1972, the young chief has become mayor of the commune or town (*'oire*) regrouping four districts of the peninsula and of Tahitinui (Pueu, Tautira,

Afaahiti, Faare) and the councillor in the Territorial Assembly, the lower legislative house.

In addition to all of these activities, the young chief owns a big net (*'upe'a rahi*) for fishing *ature* [scad: *Selar crumenophthalmus*], which abound in the lagoon in the first months of the year. These fish are greatly appreciated by Tahitians, and they sometimes make sensational catches whose sale brings in considerable income (Ottino 1965). In 1963-64, the chief busied himself with the matter, organizing teams, or staff, launching the net, presiding over the catches and shipping them quickly to Papeete, keeping a watch over the sale, and dividing up the income. Our interest in this enterprise comes from the fact that it entailed the participation, in the name of kinship or through ties with clientele, of a very large majority of the population of the village. It associated participation with the results, not through salary, but through the sharing of the product and the profits. It realized, between the majority of the village and its chief, a model of relationships based on reciprocity in the means of production — the chief providing the capital represented by the net and the means of transporting the product to the market, with the village, for their part, providing the work. A corresponding reciprocity occurred in the division of the profits, half of the sale going to the chief (the owner of the net, transporter of the product, and organizer of the operation) and the other half going to the workers. According to the ethnologist, Ottino, the sellers of the product at the Papeete market are called *'opere* [apportioner] by the owners of the net, while the buyers generally use the term *ta'ata ho'o* (Ottino 1965:59) to designate the sellers at the market place; that also underlines the redistributing role the chief holds as a corollary of his powers of organization.

After 1964, the adoptive son of the district's *tavana* expanded his activities by setting up an enterprise for public works and heavy transport and, while his wife continued in her occupation as village school-mistress, he split up his time between the district, where his net was, and Papeete, where he had his new business. This made for more employment in the village. Afterwards, his relatives took back the big net, and while two other big nets appeared later on the young chief concentrated his activities on the public works business.

Through the economic role that he plays in the district, this chief is, for everyone — and in everyone's eyes — the protector of, and spokesman for, the people. Therefore, he is credited with a capital of prestige that he must show and illustrate if he does not want to fall in the esteem of his compatriots. In exchange for this credit, recognized and "reimbursed" to some extent by the chief's eminent action, the district grants him its confidence. In the political elections, not only does the district vote for the chief but also for the men or parties that he

recommends. This prestige function of the chief is complex. He has prestige in his district because he is the defender of its interests. He is the village's biggest entrepreneur. He furnishes employment, giving the village the possibility of acquiring cash income. The inhabitants also are aware that he is well known as an entrepreneur throughout Tahiti and displays tact and cleverness in his dealings with the political powers — it is a flattering thing to have as *tavana* a well-known, even famous man. Finally, by his prowess (at the Tiurai races, for example), he makes it possible for the district to be winner in competitions among the different districts of the island. Thus, the chief's prestige in the eyes of his people is the result of many factors; if one of them turns out to be in his disfavour it cannot compromise him all at once — the fall of the chief's prestige would result only from a general and appreciable crumbling of the positions that this prestige has assured him thus far, a disintegration implying a slow one-way process over several years.

The prestige that the *tavana* enjoys in this instance in the eyes of those he administers is not a static phenomenon: the economic and social positions deteriorate, and even without that, habit dims their attraction in people's eyes. In the same way, a benefit or service is rendered only once and the prestige with which the people credit their chief in exchange for objective or subjective services that he renders requires that these latter be numerous and constantly renewed. Thus the chief is caught up in a prestige dynamics that he must master if he wants to maintain his status. In other words, between the people and their chief, there is a dialectic of reciprocity through which the chief provides services — material in the form of subsistence or money, moral owing to the district's renown — and the people provide their allegiance. The chief keeps his position through the prestige he enjoys in regard to his people, and he enjoys the benefits that having the people on his side confers. Much of this may be explained by describing an event that happened in 1971: the marriage of the chief's daughter.

The *tavana's* attitude of active collaboration with the political powers made the district appear to the observer to be like a government **fief whose orientation** in representative actions is bent in his direction, as in the Territorial Assembly, legislative elections, referenda, and, very recently, the township of East Taïarapu; this attitude was possible **because of the authority** that the chief had over his people, an authority **founded** on the prestige that he enjoyed due to services rendered. It **permitted** the installation of a resting and exercising base for the Army in the **village**. This livens things up a bit there and brings in some cash **income**, but it also brings forth the bad humour that builds up in every **Tahitian when foreigners** lack discretion and take up too much of the human landscape.

This base has been advantageous for the powers that be because it is installed in a locality where the chief is favourable to it. It was also advantageous to the chief because of the base's help in organizing his daughter's wedding celebration. Actually, aside from the village, this celebration brought together two to three thousand guests who came from Papeete, the governor of French Polynesia (then a minister), a secretary of state, and a former governor who had come from France on an official visit and who was invited to the event. The village, left to its own resources, could not have served as host to so many people. So the chief did not appeal to it for the usual preparation of such a *tama'ara'a* [Tahitian feast], and the village felt left out of things. It sulked, it seems, at the church ceremony, but not at the feast. The chief was criticized for having had the celebration organized by strangers instead of having solicited help from the village, which was ready to reply to his appeal. But the people were secretly flattered at having hosted and greeted so many important persons and consequently the chief's prestige was bolstered.

Upon this occasion, the chief's position appeared in all its complexity. The *tavana* enjoys a reciprocity of exchanges with his people (services exchanged for support), but he is also in a similar position in relation to the government. He brings political support from his district in exchange for official services, which extend from the use of public equipment to the supplying of service and work for the benefit of the district. Thus, he is an agent for the redistribution of goods and services obtained in exchange for his collaboration and the flattering self-image those in power can derive from his district.

IV. Tahitian society in a district like the one we have just studied is based, on the economic level, on a complementary twofold system of reciprocity and redistribution, involving a people and a chief and recognized by the people in a dialectic of exchange. This legitimate dialectic, the power of the chief over his people in exchange for honour and prestige for the people in comparison to those of rival districts, constitutes the essence of the Tahitian community.

This structure of reciprocity and redistribution based on the chief's prestige seems analogous to that which prevailed in the former society with which Maximo Rodriguez was familiar at the dawn of the arrival of Europeans two hundred years ago. This analogy permits us to illuminate, with the light of the present institutions, the past about which the notes available to us seem but poor and fragmentary. Inversely, it also suggests that the changes to which Tahitian society has been subject for two centuries have not altered the deeper principles of organization, and we may be led to believe that it will always be so.

Would it be reasonable to do so? Might one not think that the

situation just described arises essentially from subjective factors, for instance, from the exceptional personality of the chief? Might one not also think that a more profound change than that which has occurred in Tahiti might modify that structure? We need to refer briefly to the Tahitian evolution and the conditions under which it took place. The political and social organization of ancient Tahiti foundered in 1815 with the defeat of the traditionalist chiefs by the innovating Pomares and the foreigners at the battle of the *fe'i pi*; the *ari'i rahi* became a Biblical king, the only *ari'i* of Tahiti, and the chiefs became *tavanas* or governors. The society, deprived of its political heads who were also the heads of great lineages, was reduced to a collection of minor lineages and more or less extended families. These crystallized into households that seemed like some sort of Biblical families and gave the missionaries the illusion of creating a Christian universe.

Anyway, the economy changed little; colonial exploitation, in this case copra production, did not get going right away and the depopulation (which occurred right after the coming of the Europeans) diminished to quite an extent the pressure of the population on the resources and freed lands where coconut groves for copra could be planted. The economy, at the lowest levels, remained a village economy, based on self-subsistence, while surpluses went into the ceremonial economy circuits — the *pure*, for example — reinvented by the missionaries as a substitute for manifestations connected with the former politico-religious structure or reimposed on the new structure by the faithful of the new church as a relic of the past. Besides this, one might advance the hypothesis that when the colonial economy of copra was put into operation, the work carried out on the owners' plantations followed tradition again, by simply transposing tolls formerly due to various categories of the chiefs of ancient Tahiti by the commoners. In this economy, the processes of intra- and inter-family cooperation and intra- and inter-village cooperation continued to occur and, as a corollary, so did the manifestations of reciprocity in exchanges of redistribution and prestige on the part of the chiefs.

For a decade now, Tahiti has functioned fully as a moneyed economy which already has had the effect here and there of stretching family ties, of giving economic autonomy to the reduced families consisting only of couples and their children, and of creating new consumer needs. The big family reunions have not stopped, nor have the ceremonial manifestations, but it is well known that the time required for social transformations is greater than that for economic innovations. Moreover, our district has remained on face-to-face speaking terms with its chief, but it is known that it is poor and isolated, and that he has prestige and has mastered the mechanics of modern economy, is dynamic,

and has relationships with the most powerful *popa'a* known in Tahiti. But the village may lose its chief; he may be introduced into more active economic circuits, and money may slowly accomplish its job of erosion. Is it not conceivable that the present manifestations of this ancient Tahitian structure based on reciprocity and redistribution will ultimately disappear? Even if the answer is not clear, this deeply-rooted social system is one factor that must be taken into account in considering the future evolution of Tahiti.

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## Notes

1. *Popa'a* [white man, European, or of European family origin (Caucasoid); North American, Australian]; *tinito* [Chinese].
2. *Ta'ata tahiti* [literally "person of Tahiti"]; *ma'ohi* [native].
3. *Ta'ata 'afa popa'a* [person half-Tahitian, half-breed]. In Tahiti, speakers of French use the neologism *demi* [half] to designate a half-caste Polynesian and European.
4. In the economic order, the overall economic success of the half-caste cannot be denied, but the differences in economic status are no less great between the big, wealthy *demis* of the capital and the small, country *demis* in the rural districts.
5. The Evangelical Church of Polynesia is made up in each village sector of a congregation of faithful followers, *'amuira'a*, who elect their deacon. A parish is made up of several *'amuira'a* and directed by a pastor. The parishes are grouped into wards (or synods) represented by councils, the delegates to which constitute the Superior Council in Papeete, the highest body. The Superior Council designates the president of the Church, consecrates and appoints pastors, and heads the whole religious community. On the economic level, the Church serves, through its *'amuira'a*, as a model for structuring work groups and keeps up a lively ceremonial communion among its members (Robineau 1968).
6. Maximo Rodriguez does not tell us whether the divisions he calls "district" here and there in his *Journal* are all on the same level.
7. "Vehiatua, proprietor and chief of the district of Ohatitua" (Rodriguez 1930: 14).
8. One hesitates to write that Amo was paramount to Vehiatua, as it seems wrong to interpret, *ipso facto*, the political relationships within Tahiti as feudal tenureships.
9. We know that Tu was the operating name that Vairaatoa bore as his Tahitian title before the supreme title passed along to his son, who was Pomare II; thus, we use here the only name that Maximo seems to have known.
10. *Tiurai* [the month of July] designates the festival that takes place in Tahiti beginning with July 14th, the French national holiday.

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