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A NEWLY DISCOVERED ILLUSTRATION OF TUAMOTUAN CREATION

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MY article "Tuamotuan Creation Charts by Paiore," appearing in the March 1939 number of *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*,¹ brought forth from Monsieur E. Ahnne, president of the Société des Etudes Océanienne, at Papeete, Tahiti, another illustration of Paiore's account of creation. This new illustration together with references to Caillet and Paiore, which Monsieur Ahnne has found in his rare copy of the *Annuaire* of Tahiti² for 1859, greatly clarify the account of creation which Paiore gave Caillet, and the early Tuamotuan charts of creation.

The newly discovered illustration, drawn by Lt. Xavier-François Caillet, and shown by figure 1, represents six phases in the evolution of the world, and, as far as it goes, follows exactly Paiore's account given Caillet and presented by Henry in *Ancient Tahiti*.³ The sixth phase was finished in pencil, whereas the others were done in ink, and at this point Caillet apparently abandoned this method of illustrating Paiore's account in favour of the chart which he drew (fig. 2). Also indicative that he was experimenting with this illustration of the account and not copying a drawing by Paiore, is the fact that at a number of places lines were crossed out, and, on the base of the first stratum in stage 3, an attempt was made in pencil to represent the sky by a circular arch. The handwriting of the legends, written in the space over each figure of the series, is that of Caillet, as can be proven by a document dated 1 March, 1870, written and signed by Caillet, which Monsieur Ahnne has sent to the Bishop Museum, and the handwriting, paper, and ink are the same as that of the Caillet chart (see fig. 2, *J.P.S.*, vol. 48, p. 4) which is also in the B.P. Bishop Museum.

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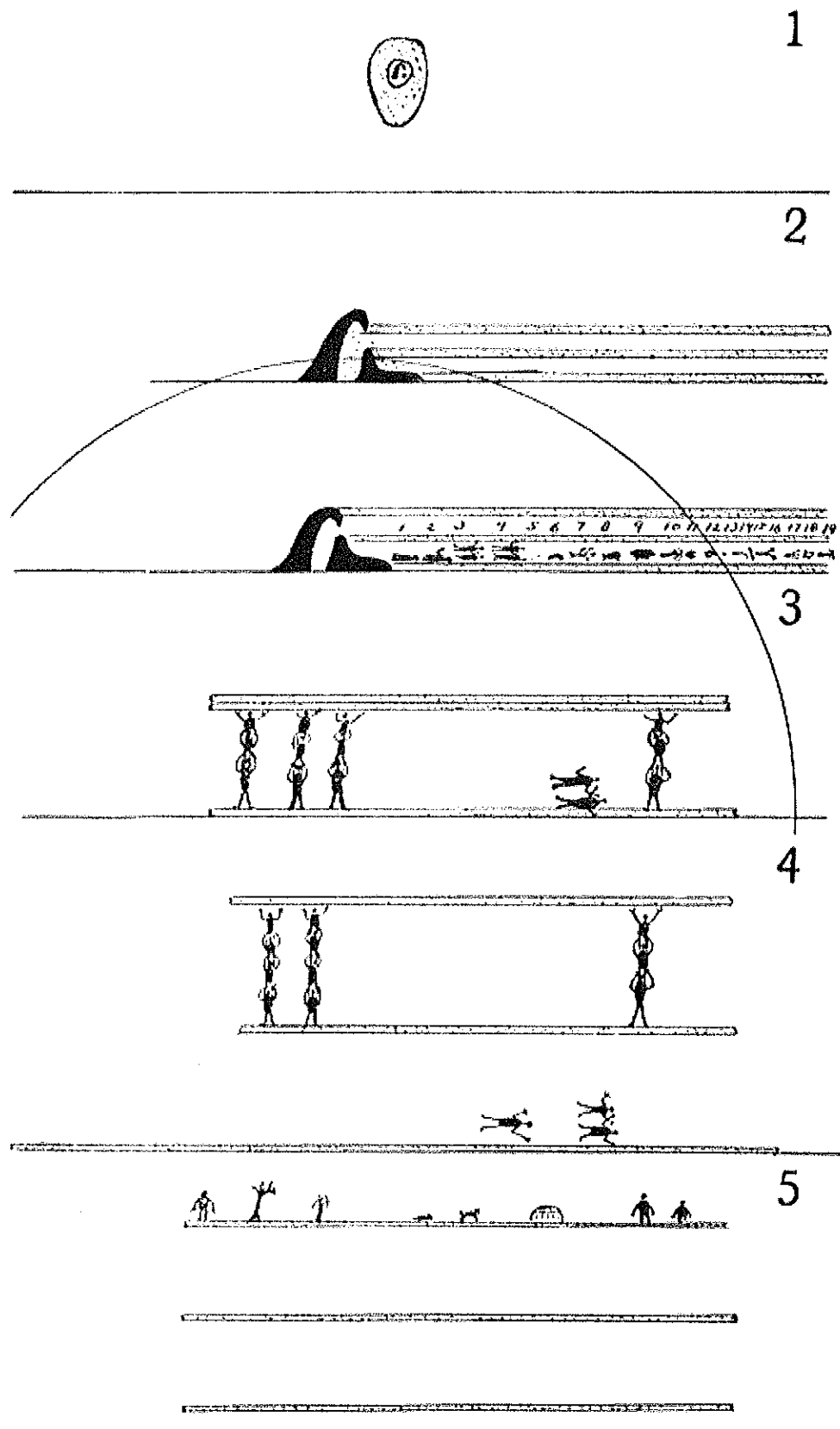


FIG. 1.

FIG. 1.

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If now we take up Caillet's Païore account of creation as presented by Henry,⁴ we will see how perfectly Caillet's series of figures (fig. 1) illustrates it:

"The universe was like an egg which contained Te Tumu (The Foundation) and Te Papa (The Stratum-rock). [Stage 1, fig. 1.] It at last burst and produced three layers superposed, the one below propping two above. Upon the lowest layer remained Te Tumu and Te Papa, who created man, animals, and plants. [Upper half of stage 2, fig. 1.]

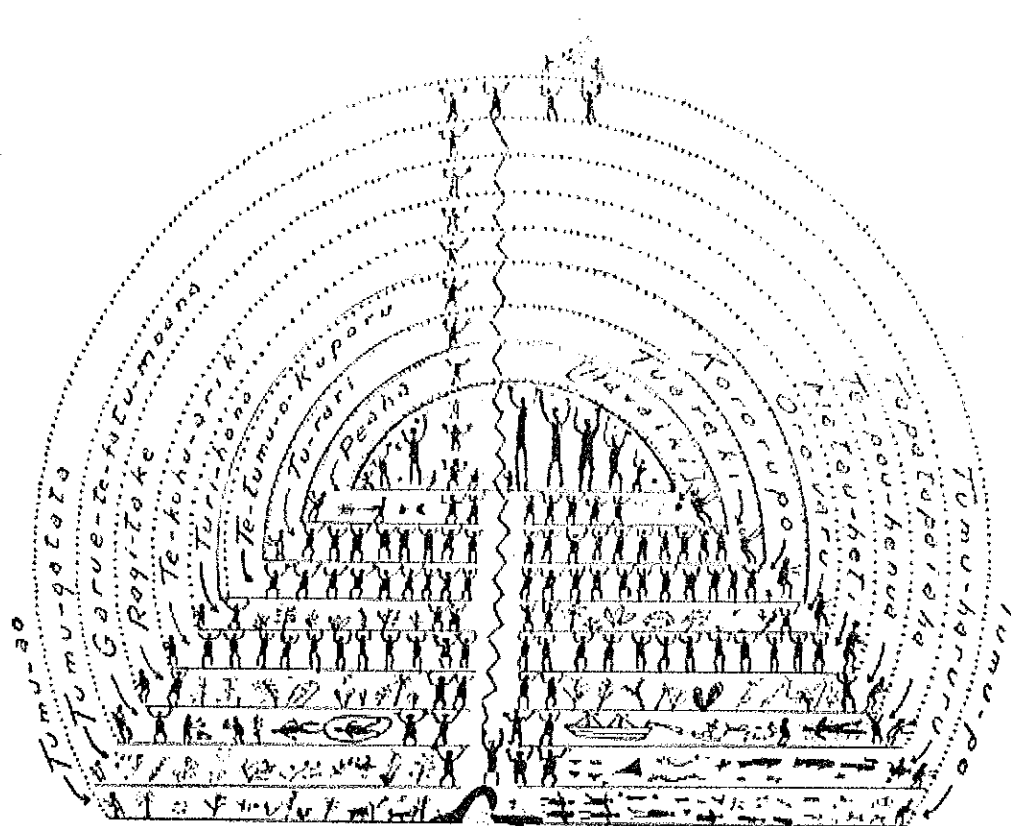


FIG. 2.

FIG. 2.

"The first man was Matata [=Ma-ta'ata, i.e., *matangata*] produced without arms, and he died shortly after he had come into being. [Lower part, stage 2, no. 1, *matata*.] The second man was Aitu who came with one arm but without legs, and he died like his elder brother. [Lower part, stage 2, no. 2, *aitu*.] Finally, the third man, Hoatea [=Oatea, i.e., Atea] or Haotu [=Fa'ahotu, wife of Atea, and therefore wrong, Atea being correct], and he was perfectly formed.

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"After these came a woman named Hoatu [=Hotu, or Fa'ahotu, i.e., Fakahotu]. She became the wife of Hoatea [=Atea], and from them descended the human race. [Lower part, stage 2, no. 3, *hoatea* and *haotu* (=Atea and Fa'ahotu).] Their children increased rapidly, the most notable of them being Aito [=Tahito] and his wife, Fenua (Land). [Lower part, stage 2, no. 4, *taito* and *fenua* (i.e., Tahito-fenua).]

"When the people had greatly multiplied, Hoatea [Atea], their progenitor, proposed to expand their dominion by raising the layer above them, to which all agreed except Aito [Tahito] and Fenua, who preferred the horizontal position that they were accustomed to. [Stage 3.] So strong men raised the layer above them with their arms, mounting upon each other's shoulders as they did so until the highest trees could stand upright. [Stage 3, fig. 1.]

"Aito and Fenua [=Tahito and Fenua] begat Tangaroa-i-te-po, an evil genius of great power who afterwards ruled the netherlands. [Stage 4. See the new figure beneath the feet of Tahito and Fenua.]

"When the lowest layer of earth became filled with creation the people made an opening in the middle of the layer above so that they could get upon it also, and there they established themselves, taking with them plants and animals from below. They then raised the third layer in the same manner as the first, and ultimately established themselves there also, so that human beings had three abodes [stage 4 and 5, fig. 1.] ..."

In the chart of creation which Caillet drew (fig. 2) he attempts to illustrate its evolution by showing Te Tumu and Te Papa enclosed as in an egg (a, b, fig. 2), and then, after the egg explodes, reposing on the lowest of the three horizontal layers. In the chart he has given Te Tumu and Te Papa a central position by transferring most of the plants

and animals appearing in Stage 2 of the illustration, figure 1, over to the left side, reversing their order. He retains the same human figures but partly reverses their order and he sets the plants in an upright position, as the second layer is now represented in its uplifted position, allowing the plants to stand upright. Exactly the same plants and animals are given.

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Of great importance is the fact that the first stratum of Paiore's 1869 chart ⁵ has the same plants and animals and the same human figures, all produced in the same order and drawn in the same way as on Caillet's chart. It is certain that the one was copied from the other. The Paiore 1869 chart in reality incorporates the Caillet chart and is simply an elaboration of it from three strata to ten strata, to allow for ten phases, or generations of creation, appearing in Tuamotuan creation chants. This fact alone practically established the Caillet chart as the earlier, whether copied by Caillet or composed by Caillet or composed by Caillet and Paiore together.

Now Monsieur Ahnne has found on page 16 of the *Annuaire* of Tahiti for 1859 ⁶ that Caillet is there listed as *enseigne de vaisseau, commandant particulier des îles Tuamotus*, in residence of Anaa, and on page 40 that Paiore is given as regent of the Tuamotus, in residence of Anaa. Monsieur Ahnne also possesses a sort of *Annuaire* in the Tahitian language, a pamphlet of 24 pages, without date or printer's name, but clearly from its contents printed in 1860 or 1861. It is entitled *Hau Tamaru* (Protectorate) and in it is this statement (which I translate from the Tahitian) dated Papeete, 8 Dec. 1859: "Paiore, regent (*auvaha*) for the Tuamotus, appointed Oct. 1, 1853 (and appointment renewed)." And a little farther on one reads that the administration of Tahiti was divided among three departments, and for the second department, Monsieur Caillet was the head. So Caillet and Paiore were together in 1859, either at Anaa or in Papeete, Tahiti. In 1861 Paiore was retired from his post of regent of the Tuamotus, and in the *Annuaire* for 1862 (p. 67) and for 1863 (p. 148), Paiore is listed simply as chief of the island of Kauehi. We know he was living at Fakarava in 1864 from Arbousset's account of meeting him there in that year (Arbousset, Th., *Tahiti et les îles adjacentes*, Paris, 1867, p. 318). Our library lacks the *Annuaire* for the years between 1864 and 1885, so I have not been able to follow Paiore further. We simply know he was living in 1869, the date of the elaborated chart (Emory, fig. 2) signed by him.

Now, in the *Annuaire* for 1863, there appears a *description sommaire de l'archipel Tuamotu*, ⁷ very likely to have

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been contributed by Caillet, since it is largely concerned with the hydrography and geography of the archipelago, and Caillet, in 1853, ten years earlier, had been put in charge of accurately locating and describing the islands of the eastern part of the archipelago ⁸ and was then *adjoint au Commandant* at Papeete, ⁹ a post he seems to have occupied since 1860. ¹⁰ In this description of the Tuamotus are some remarks on the beliefs and traditions of the Tuamotuans, derived from Anaa, and undoubtedly through Paiore, for in mentioning the famous warrior Mahangatuaira, it is stated that he was an ancestor of Paiore. ¹¹ Under the heading *forme de la terre d'après la tradition* occurs: ¹² "According to the ancient tradition, the earth was composed of three layers superposed. Each of these layers had its own sky ..." This statement accords with the Caillet chart and would indicate that Paiore had communicated his account of creation to Caillet by that time, and so in all probability during the year 1859, when the two were together at Anaa.

We have another bearing on the period of the Caillet chart from the fact that Montiton's chart published in 1874 ¹³ is obviously also derived from some copy of the Caillet chart, and not vice versa. ¹⁴ Montiton was stationed at Anaa from 1852 to 1868. During 1869 he transferred his activities to the eastern Tuamotus, returning to Anaa in July, 1872, ill and worn out, to remain there just long enough to make preparations for quitting the Tuamotus and to be in France by the end of the year. ¹⁵ In all likelihood, therefore, he obtained his chart prior to 1869. For he says he gave up, at Anaa, his researches into the religion and customs of the natives before going to the eastern Tuamotus. ¹⁶ And if so, the Caillet chart from which it is ultimately derived must have been in existence prior to 1869.

Still another line on the date of the Caillet illustrations is afforded by the documents written by Caillet in 1870, which have been sent to the Bishop Museum by Monsieur Ahnne. These are minutes of district meetings at Anaa, kept in the Tahitian language. Here Caillet has caught on to the right use of *h* in spelling native words. His poor orthography in this regards in writing native names in his account of creation and names and words in his legends for

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his two illustrations, clearly indicate that he wrote them before he was as well versed in Tahitian as he shows himself to be in 1870.

As we know, it is a European and not a Polynesian trait to illustrate an account by drawings. I do not doubt that when

Païore related his account of the development of the world from the Tuamotuan view, Caillet attempted to picture it in his own mind and drew the series of figures in figure 1 to make it clear and finally settled on figure 2 as the best method to illustrate the account. Païore is quite likely to have sat by and watched him, or assisted him with suggestions, even to have made drawings himself, but the chart, figure 2, obviously, it seems to me, grew out of the attempt, shown by figure 1, to illustrate the account, and Païore must have made a copy of the final product for himself, for his 1869 chart incorporates it. This figure 1, then, would be the ultimate source of the Caillet chart (figure 2), the Montiton chart, and the Païore chart of Tuamotuan creation.

At the island of Takapoto in 1929, in the hands of Mati-a-Tepeva, who claimed he had inherited all of Païore's lore, and is reputed to have the largest collection of Tuamotuan manuscripts in the hands of any native, we saw a rather fanciful and elaborate but crudely drawn creation-chart, in coloured crayon. It was clear that he hoped to get a sum of money from us for the chart and as prospective buyers he allowed us only a glimpse of it. Seeing Atea depicted, as I recollect now, with a European crown on his head, and accompanied by what appeared to be angels in the sky, I paid little attention to it. It would be interesting now to observe to what extent he may have carried on, if at all, elements of Païore's 1869 chart.¹⁷ At Napuka in 1934, I showed old Temae the portrait of Montiton appearing in *Les Missions Catholiques*, to see if he recognized him. On another page was Montiton's creation chart. Temae was fascinated by it, and several days later brought some friends in to admire it. None of them had seen or heard of anything of the kind.

I have come to the conclusion that these charts which appeared in the third quarter of the last century, while extremely useful in explaining and adding details to the Païore account of cosmogony presented by Henry, cannot be

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taken as creations of the ancient Tuamotuans. The evidence we have points to Caillet as the author of the first chart ever made, or to Caillet and Païore as joint authors.

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FIGURE 1.

Copy of Lt. Caillet's illustration of the stages of Tuamotuan creation as explained by Païore. Caillet's legends (translated from the French):

1. The germ of creation enclosed in an egg. 2. The germ arriving at maturity produces the earth in three layers separated by a little distance one from the other. 1, *matata* [=ma-ta'ata]; 2, *aaitu* [=aitu]; 3, *hoatea* and *haotu* [=Atea and Fa'ahotu]; 4, *Taito* and *fenua* [=Tahito-fenua]; 5, *roo* [=ro], ant; 6, *rori* [sea cucumber]; 7, *faara* [=fara, pandanus]; 8, *uri* [dog]; 9, pig; 10, *meia* [banana]; 11, *e hufi* [=ufi, yam]; 12, *varo* [sea centipede]; 13, *nono* [fruit of *Morinda citrifolia*]; 14, *e toi* [? tree]; 15, *e oura* [lobster]; 16, *mara* [mara tree]; 17, *ofe* [bamboo]; 18, *avai* [=ava, *Piper methysticum*]; 19, *ha'ari* [coconut]. Note for 6: A fish which burrows in the sand. When one scratches it, blood comes from it similar to that from a man. The Tuamotuans fear it.

3. To be able to stand upright, the people push up the two upper strata.


4. The people elevate the upper stratum to put it far off and live on the second stage.

5. The people inhabit the upper stratum.

(The original document in Bishop Museum.)

FIGURE 2.

Copy of illustration of Tuamotuan creation made by Caillet, probably in 1859, to illustrate account of creation given by Paiore, regent of the Tuamotus in residence at Anaa (1853-1861). For A, B, C, and A', B', C', the legend is missing. For *a*, or *a-b*, Caillet has a very faint pencil note in French which, as near as I can decipher it,

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seems to be "divinities pierres" or "divinite en pierre." For either *a'*, or *b'*, Caillet wrote in ink, "nom de cette pierre" through which he passed a line, evidently writing the legend elsewhere. In the case of *c-h*, I have put these letters in myself to indicate the names which Caillet wrote opposite these figures: *c*, Tama; *d*, Tohu; *e*, Kana; *f*, Pepe; *g*, Titimataitoo [Titi-ma-Tahito?]; *h*, Pinao [=Pingao]. I find that Caillet has written *c* over the first pair of figures, next to *a'*; *d*, over the next pair; *e*, over the next figure; and *f*, over the next. The legend for these can now be supplied from figure 1: *c* is Tahito and Fenua; *d* is Atea and Fakahotu; *e* is Ma-ta(nga)ta; and *f* is Aitu. *i* is given by Caillet as Taroa [=Ta'aroa, i.e., Tangaroa]-i-te-po.

For 1 to 15, numbered by Caillet, these are the legends given by him: 1, [*ha*]ari [coconut]; 2, *ava*; 3, *ofe* [bamboo]; 4, *mara* [a tree]; 5, *varo* [sea centipede]; 6, *e houfi* [=ufi, yam]; 7, *meia* [banana]; 8, pig; 9, *uri* [dog]; 10, *faara* [=fara, Pandanus]; 11, *nono* [*Morinda citrifolia*]; 12, *e toi*; 13, *manu*, *e oura* [animal, a lobster]; 14, ant; 15, *e rori* [sea cucumber], a fish which is found in the sand and which loses blood like men, when one scratches it. The Tuamotuans respect them because of that resemblance with man. (Original drawing in B. P. Bishop Museum.)

¹ Emory (1). (See literature cited, at end of article.)

² Annuaire des Établissements Française de l'Océanie, Papeete.

³ Henry, pp. 347-349.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Emory, fig. 2.

⁶ See note 2.

⁷ Annuaire, 1863, pp. 71-102.

⁸ Findlay, p. 593.

⁹ Annuaire, 1863, p. 105.

¹⁰ Ibid., 1862, p. 17.

¹¹ Ibid., 1863, p. 93.

¹² Ibid., 1863, pp. 94-95.

¹³ Montiton (2), p. 339; Emory, p. 5, fig. 3.

¹⁴ Emory, pp. 12-13. If Montiton's chart was the first, it seems to me he would not have misinterpreted it. Of course it is possible that he copied it from some earlier chart of which Caillet also made a copy, or copy of a copy, but the discovery of the illustration, figure 1, makes it quite certain, I think, that Caillet himself is responsible for the first chart of this kind.

¹⁵ Terlyn, pp. 190-191; Caillot, p. 400; Montiton (1), p. 230, 238, 315.

¹⁶ Montiton (2), p. 342.

¹⁷ In 1931, Mati came into Stimson's study at Papeete, while Fariua was presenting his esoteric cult of Kiho to Stimson. He had brought with him to Papeete his manuscript books of Tuamotuan lore, reputed to be the most valuable collection in the western Tuamotus. Unfortunately, Mati immediately engaged in argument with Fariua over the esoteric cult of Kiho. Stimson then read the esoteric chants Fariua had written out. Mati departed with the remark that Stimson would not need his books (Stimson, Cult of Kiho-tumu, B. P. Bishop Mus. Bull. 111, p. 46, 1933, Honolulu), and so we may have lost some very valuable material, including perhaps what Paiore himself wrote down for his family to preserve.