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# MISCELLANÉES

## Rongorongo Glyphs Clarify Easter Island Rock Drawings

par Sergei V. RJABCHIKOV \*

Many Easter Island (Rapa Nui) rock drawings (petroglyphs) can be understood taking into account the readings of the *rongorongo* records of the famous « talking boards » only. This article is devoted to the study of a new portion of the Rapanui petroglyphs. In deciphering the *rongorongo* glyphs I use my own classification and translation scheme (Rjabchikov, 1987: 362-363, fig. 1 ; 1993a : 126-127, fig. 1 ; 1993b : 23, fig. 1 ; 1994 : 8, fig. 6 ; 1995a : 5, figs 12 and 17 ; 1997-2001). Besides, I always take into consideration the vocabularies and rules of alternating sounds of the Polynesian languages.

1. Two fishlike creatures are depicted at Ahu Ra'ai (Lee 1992: 90, figure 4.75). They are a fish and a young one. Glyph **30** *ana* is incised on a large fish. This word means 'abundance', *cf.* Hawaiian *ana* 'to have enough or too much' (Rjabchikov, 2001). Two arcs (*cf.* Rapanui *tapa* 'side') represented between the two fish may denote indeed 'offspring' (*cf.* Rapanui *tapa* 'offspring').

2. G. Lee (1992 : 76, fig. 4.53) believes that large fish shapes depicted at Mahatua are difficult to identify as to species. Really, these are two fish, a Remora (*Echeneis*) and a tuna-like fish. The first fish identified by a sucker is named *paerati*, the second is named *kahi*, *pei* or *remoremo* (*cf.* Randall and Cea Egaña, 1984 : 9 ; Métraux, 1940 : 173). Below the fish combination there is glyph **30** *ana* in which glyphs **39** and **4** are inscribed. I read the word *ana* 'to have enough or too much' as well as the word *rati*, i.e. *paerati* (*cf.* Rapanui *pae* 'enough', *paepae*, *paenga* 'boat', Maori *rato* 'to be served; to be distributed').

One can examine glyphs incised on a stone

sinker for net or line (Métraux, 1940 : 188, fig. 13b). I have distinguished three glyphs **149** *Hatuhatu* (epithets of the sun god *Makemakel Tangaroa/Tiki/Tane*), glyphs **1 4** *Tiki atua* 'the deity *Tiki*' in combination with two glyphs **149** *Hatuhatu* as well as glyph **47** *ava* (*cf.* Rapanui *avaava* 'to lift'; on the other hand, this sign may depict a sucker) in combination with two words **39-4** (*pae*)*rati* 'the *paerati* fish'. It is known that according to Rapanui beliefs, the god *Makemake* was connected with the ocean and fishes (Rjabchikov, 1999a).

3. A fish-in-fish motif is incised at *Ava o Kiri* (Lee, 1992 : 78, fig. 4.58). Another fish-in-fish motif is also incised at the same panel (Van Hoek, 2000: 15, fig. 6). M. Van Hoek (2000 : 16) claims : « To the east, where the sun is 'born', there is the fish-in-fish motif that may be interpreted as a 'pregnant' sea animal representing the beginning of life, although a fish eaten by a larger fish is also a possible interpretation ».

I have investigated both pictures. The first figure (Lee, 1992 : 78, fig. 4.58) includes the fish-in-fish (shark-in-shark) motif, glyph **103** under it as well as glyph **41** and a fish above it. Interestingly, the shark inserted in the larger shark is associated with a crescent. I suppose that the moon design (*cf.* glyph **3** *hina* 'the moon', *Hina* 'the moon goddess') relates to the moon goddess *Hina*, as in the Hawaiian beliefs the goddess *Hina-puku-i'a* gives abundance of all the fishes (Beckwith, 1970 : 69). A sentence of the Creation chant can be cited as an example : « *Tingahae* by copulating with *Parararara-hiku-tea* produced the shark » (Métraux, 1940 : 321). The name *Tinga HaelHoe* means 'The paddle'

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hoarseness kills', it is an epithet of the moon goddess *Hina* (Rjabchikov, 1998-1999). The name *Para-rarara-hiku-tea* signifies 'The shine/the heat-the white tail' <sup>1</sup>.

Glyph **103** reads *pe* that compares with Tahitian *pe* 'ripe' and Rapanui *hakapee no kai hoao* 'abundance'. Glyph **41** *ere* presented in several Rapanui rock designs and *rongorongoro* records (Rjabchikov, 1995b ; 1999b ; 2000a ; 2001) corresponds to Mangarevan *akaere* 'to recite genealogies; to show descent', Maori *rere* 'to be born', *reretahi* 'one child born at a birth' and Old Rapanui (*h*)*ere* 'child; descendant'.

So the script signs of the first motif have allowed to choose the following interpretation : the fish-in-fish denotes the « pregnant » fish only.

The second figure (Van Hoek, 2000 : 15, fig. 6) includes the fish-in-fish motif oriented east-west as well as glyph **30** *ana* crossing both fishes. The word *ana* means either 'abundance' or 'shine; east, the sun' <sup>2</sup>. It is well to bear in mind that the fish is the god *Tangaroa*'s symbol in the Maori mythology (Buck, 1966 : 439).

The tail of a tuna fish is depicted at *Pu Hakanini Mako'i* (Lee, 1992 : 78, fig. 4.57). Glyph **30** *ana* is presented near this tail. Again, both interpretations — 'abundance' or 'shine; east, the sun' — are possible.

4. The tail of a tuna fish is depicted at *Hanga Oteo* (Lee, 1992 : 78, fig. 4.56). Glyph **149** *Hatu* 'The creator' is incised on this tail. I think that it is a symbol of the sun god (*Makemake, Tangaroa, Tane, Tiki te Hatu*).

5. A frigate bird, two faces as well as some other petroglyphs are incised at a cave on the islet *Motu Nui* (Lee, 1992 : 73, fig. 4.49). G. Lee (2000 : 112, fig. 6) interprets a part of this rock picture: « This frigate bird is in a cave shelter at *Motu Nui*. It seems to have a fish near its mouth and a *komari* below the right wing ». One can try to realise the whole plot. In fact, the vulva form *komari* (cf. glyph **64** *mea* 'red') and the fish (cf. glyph **12** *ika* 'fish') are depicted near the frigate bird (cf. glyph **44** *taha* 'frigate bird'). The fish is united with glyph **39** *ra'a* 'the sun'; a unique petroglyph is presented below the left wing. This

sign is a rectangle divided into four parts (one lengthwise rectangle and three cross ones). Since in some instances glyph **44** *taha* denotes the name of the tribe union *Te Kena* of the ruling tribe *Miru* (Rjabchikov, 1997a : 31), the strange rectangle may be an emblem of the tribe *Miru* (cf. the lengthwise rectangle) on which territory the tribes *Raa* 'The sun', *Hamea* (*Ha Mea*, i.e. *A Mea*) 'The red colour' and *Marama* 'The crescent (or the light)' lived (cf. the three cross rectangles). One can say with a fair degree of confidence that glyphs **64** *mea* 'red' and **39** *ra'a* 'the sun' are designations of the tribes *Raa* and *Hamea* in this context. The fish depicted near the frigate bird may reflect the fact that the highest-ranking clan *Miru* was 'sea' people (Gell, 1993 : 271).

The two masks (cf. glyph **60** *mata* 'face; eyes') denote the sun deity *Makemake/Tangaroa/Tiki/Tane* (Rjabchikov, 1996 : 142; 1997b). One of the masks is united with the ribs (cf. Rapanui *kavakava* 'rib') and with glyph **4** *atua* 'deity', cf. the name of the deity *Kava Aro* 'The Ribs — the Face/Day/Light' <sup>3</sup> (Rjabchikov, 1998a : 66). Glyph **149** *Hatuhatu* 'The creator' is presented near this fragment ; cf. Rapanui place name *Te Mata o Hotu* (Barthel 1962: 106) 'The face of the creator'.

The name *Kava Aro* is written down on the *Tahua* tablet (Ab 4), see fig. 1 : **4 32 138 26 50 115...** *atualua Kava maa hi taka* 'the deity/dwelling 'The Ribs — the Shine/the Sun' ...' <sup>4</sup>. Interestingly, according to the Easter Islanders, this deity together with the deity *Kava Tua* lived in the regions of *Maunga Parehe* or *Ra'ai* (Englert, 1974 : 137 ; Heyerdahl, 1976 : 117). Both place names are associated with a fire and the sun <sup>5</sup>.

6. As has been shown earlier (Rjabchikov, 2000a), signs carved on a hollow stone called the Trumpet of *Hiro* are connected with the personages of the Rapanui legend « *Hiva Kara Rere*, the god of the rain ». According to this story, *Tare* and *Tive* — the children of the god *Tiki* — could clash the winds. A priest asked the sun deity *Tiki* to hide his face; the priest also asked the rain deity *Hiva Kara Rere* to drive the clouds. The parallel plot is presented in the Samoan mythology (cf. Polinsky, 1986 : 314. : the winds

1. Cf. Rapanui *para* 'to heat', Maori *para* 'to shine clearly', Rapanui *rararara* 'to get warm; to become warm', *rara* 'side', Maori *rara* 'rib'

2. Cf. Rapanui *anaana* 'shine; to shine; shining'.

3. Cf. Rapanui *aro* 'front; forehead; face', Maori *ao* 'day', *aro* 'to face, to turn towards', *aroaro* 'front', Tahitian *ao* 'day; light', *aro* 'front; face', Samoan *alo* 'front', *ao* 'head; day'.

4. Cf. Maori *ma* 'white, clean', *whakama* 'to make white', *hi* 'to dawn', *hiki* 'ray of the sun', Rapanui *taka* 'round; bright red'.

5. Cf. Rapanui *maunga* 'mountain', *parehaonga* 'special earth oven', *para* 'to heat', Maori *para* 'to shine clearly', Tahitian *he* 'crooked'. Rapanui *ra'ai* signifies 'the sun' (Liller, 1993 : 126). I believe that the place name *Parehe* is a reflex of the Rapanui legend about the chief (the sun god) *Tuki-hakahe-vari-ia-tohu* (Rjabchikov, 1997d : 209).

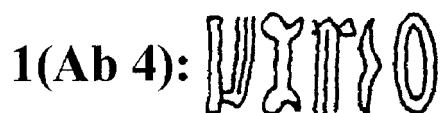


FIG. 1.

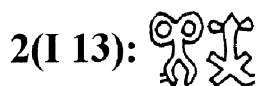


FIG. 2.

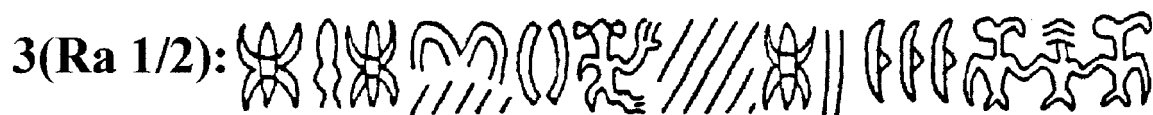


FIG. 3.

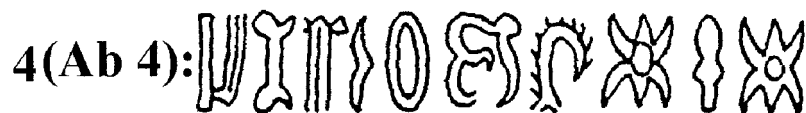


FIG. 4.

FIG. 1-4. of the final variant of the manuscript « Rongorongo Glyphes Clarity Easter Island Roen Drawings » by Sergei V. Rjabchokov.

are united by *Tiitii* [*Tiki*] or *Toiva*. The latter name may be split into the words *to* (cf. Samoan *to* '(of rain) to fall upon; to come upon') and *iva* (cf. Maori *hiwa* 'dark'). So this name means figuratively 'It is raining', and it is comparable with the name *Hiva Kara Rere* 'The Darkness — the wings are flying'. It is well to bear in mind that the sound *h* can be omitted in the Polynesian words, cf., e.g., Rapanui *hiva*, Marquesan, Mangarevan *hiva*, *iva* 'stranger'; Rapanui *tuhi* 'to alienate', *tui* 'to expel'; *hai*, *ai* 'to wrap up'; *hurihuri*, *uriuri* 'black, dark'; *hiri*, *iri* 'to elevate'; Niue *uhila*, Rapanui *uira* 'lightning'..

Now one can interpret the names *Tare* and *Tive*. The first name correlates with Maori *whakatatare* 'to look intently', and the second name correlates with Maori *tive* 'to scream'. I think that the east <sup>6</sup> and north-west <sup>7</sup> winds are the incarnations of *Tare* and *Tive* respectively.

In the myth « *Ure-a-Oho-Vehi* and the two spirits » (Métraux, 1940 : 366 ; Fedorova, 1978 : 284) there are the following words : *Ka hau, e ka hau ngaehé. Ka hau te nukunuku Kavakava Aro, Kavakava a Tua...* 'May the wind blow, may the wind blow. May the wide extended (deities) *Kavakava Aro* and *Kavakava a Tua ...*' <sup>8</sup>. Here the deities *Kavakava Aro* (*Kava Aro*) and *Kavakava a Tua* (*Kava Tua*) play roles of the deities (winds) *Tare* and *Tive*. Actually, the name (*Kava*)*kava Aro* signifies 'The Ribs — the Face', this is a mark of the east wind ; the name (*Kava*)*kava (a) Tua* signifies 'The Ribs — the Back' <sup>9</sup>, this is a mark of the north-west wind. The connection of the names *Tive* (Maori *tive* 'to scream') and (*Kava*)*kava (a) Tua* is quite possible because of the wordplay : cf. Rapanui *kekekeke* 'shout' and *keke* '(of the sun) to set'.

7. A turtle is incised at *Hanga Oteo* (Lee, 1992 : 48, fig. 4.3). Seven cupules (the seven stars = the Pleiades) and glyph **49** (*ariki*) *mau* are represented inside it. The parallel fragment is presented in an oral version of the *rongorongo* record « *Apai* » : *tuu hitu* (Thomson, 1891 : 518) 'the seven stars' <sup>10</sup>. Two circles depicted on the border of the turtle sign denote glyph **60** *mata*. In compliance with the Tuamotuan and Easter Island beliefs (Lee, 1992 : 80 ; Rjabchikov, 1993c : 5, table 1 ; 1997a : 46), the Turtle is a

designation of the Pleiades. On the other hand, Hawaiian *Makali'i* [*Matariki*] 'the Pleiades' means literally 'Eyes/Face of the Chief' (Bec-kwith, 1970 : 367 ; Rjabchikov, 1998a : 73). Really, glyphs **60-49** *mata* (*ariki*) *mau* correspond to the term *Matariki*; this name is also registered on the Santiago staff (I 13), see fig. 2 (Rjabchikov, 1993c : 6, table 3). Below the turtle there are six lines which may be the signs of the nights/days or months (cf. Rapanui *tika* 'landmark', *titika* 'direct; direct line', Maori *totika* 'direct', *whakatika* 'to direct').

8. A comet with a long tail is carved at *Vai Atare* (Lee, 1992 : 160, fig. 5.33). This plot has been investigated by the author (Rjabchikov, 1997c). One can offer its alternative interpretation : glyph **5** *Atua* denotes the star Canopus, and glyphs **41 25** *Rehua* denotes the star Antares (Rjabchikov, 2000b ; 1999c). There are strong grounds for believing that the comet was indeed Halley's Comet of A.D. 837 or A.D. 1301 (I have used the *RedShift 2* computer program).

9. A *Vai Atare* panel contains many motifs (Lee, 1992 : 161, fig. 5.36). A comet with two tails is Halley's Comet of April 10, A.D. 837 (cf. Belyaev and Churyumov, 1985 : 26). Near this petroglyph there are three moons corresponding to glyphs **3** or **61** *hina* 'the moon', a frigate bird (cf. glyph **44** *taha*), a man together with four lines (the wordplay is quite possible : glyph **6** reads *ha*, and Rapanui *ha* means 'four') and a vulva (cf. glyph **110** *vie*) including eleven lines. The parallel record is presented on the Small Washington tablet (Ra 1/2), see figure 3: ... **7 73 7 124 57-6 ... 7 4 3 3 3 44 44 33 44 ... .. Tuu He, tuu** « the two tails of Halley's Comet of April 10, A.D. 837 » ; *Tarahao ... Tuu Atua; hina, hina, hina, taha, taha, ua, taha...* 'The star *He* (Castor ? or Pollux ? of Gemini; a curved line of stars in Scorpius ?), the two tails of Halley's Comet of April 10, A.D. 837; the month *Tarahao* (March-April) ... the star Canopus; three nights (from the new moon of April 8 till April 10, A.D. 837)' <sup>11</sup>.

The text written down on the *Tahua* tablet (Ab 4) was partially decoded above. The full name of the deity *Kava Aro* is as follows (see fig. 4) : **4 32 138 26 50 115 44-14 7 73 7 atuahua Kava maa hi**

6. Cf. Rapanui *matatohio* 'east wind' and Samoan *mata'upolu* 'ditto' including *mata* 'eye; face ; look'.

7. Cf. Rapanui *papakino* 'north-west wind', *papakina* 'to break ; to get broken; to clash', *kino* 'bad; evil'. It is known that when the north-west wind blows, a sound of the Trumpet of *Hiro* is akin to that of a trumpet is produced (Métraux, 1940 : 310).

8. Cf. Maori *nuku* 'to move; to extend; wide extent; distance'.

9. Cf. Rapanui *tua* 'back; behind', Samoan *tua* 'back; behind; beyond, outside'.

10. Cf. Old Rapanui *tuu* 'star'.

11. Cf. the name of the Rapanui statue *Tuu He* (Mellén Blanco, 1986 : 174). The star *He* (cf. Tahitian *he* 'crooked') may correspond to a curved line of stars in the Scorpius constellation, see Best, 1955 : 41, 57. Cf. also Rapanui *taha* 'to go hither and thither', Samoan *tafa* 'to be visible; to begin to ripen', Rapanui *taha* 'to tear', *tahanga* 'one, alone', *uaaua* 'residence', *hua* 'flower; fruit; to bloom; to sprout'.

taka ; *Tahau tuu*, *He tuu* ‘the deity/dwelling ‘The Ribs — the Shine/the Sun’ ; {Castor ? and Pollux ?} or {Antares ? and the curved line of stars in Scorpius ?}’<sup>12</sup>. Here the heliacal (morning) rising of these stars is described. The parallel fragment is presented in the folklore text « *Apai* » : ... *Tahau*; *te Nanai e oho*; *te Nanai e Rai*... (Thomson, 1891 : 518) ‘... Pollux ? (Castor ?; Antares ?) ; the Spider<sup>13</sup> is going ; the Spider — the Sun...’.

I suppose that the sign (*Ha*) depicting a person and the four lines (*cf.* Rapanui *ha* ‘four’) inscribed on the panel denote the star Vega (Rjabchikov, 1999d). Then the three moons and the frigate bird correspond precisely to the *rongo-rongo* text; the eleven lines denote in my opinion the eleventh month, *Vaitu-nui* (April-May); furthermore, the three moons may denote April 8, 9 and 10, A.D. 837.

10. On a red scoria *pukao* (Van Tilburg and Lee, 1987 : 145, fig. 6) at *Ahu Akahanga* the following petroglyphs are depicted : a two-headed frigate bird (*taha*) as well as a frigate bird (*cf.* glyph 44 *taha*) connected with glyphs 3 *Hina* and 149 *Hatu*. The petroglyph resembling glyph 91 *taoraha* ‘whale’ is carved above the latter glyph. As the frigate bird is a symbol of the

supreme god *Makemake* (Métraux, 1940 : 314), the signs of the birds denote his name. As *Haua* is a local name of the moon goddess *Hina* (Rjabchikov, 1987 : 365), the symbols of the frigate birds and the moon designate the names of the permanent companions, deities *Makemeke* and *Haua* (Métraux, 1940 : 313-314). Moreover, the whale is another incarnation of the god *Make-make* (Rjabchikov, 2000c).

A frigate bird (*cf.* glyph 44 *taha*) is carved together with glyph 3 *Hina* at the statue quarry of *Rano Raraku* (Lee, 1992 : 21, fig. 2.4 : the left figure). In my opinion, they are the names of the sun god *Makemake* and moon goddess *Hina*.

11. On a red scoria *pukao* at *Ahu Vinapu* (Van Tilburg and Lee, 1987 : 145, fig. 7) there are petroglyphs some of which are lunate symbols and some others are boat ones. Interestingly, the place name *Vinapu* signifies ‘The producing moon goddess *Hina*’ (Rjabchikov, 1990 : 22). Besides, there are glyphs 108 *hiri* ‘to elevate’, (reversed) 3 *hina* (*Kokore*), 25 *Hua*, 4 *Atua*, 39 59 32 *Ra’a kau* ; they correlate with the nights of moon ages (the glyphs read from right to left). Seven cupules may denote the seventh month, *Koro* (December-January), or the Pleiades, and two big cupules may be the sun signs.

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12. The star's name *Tahau* may be compared with the name *Hau* ‘the star Antares (Alpha Scorpii)’ (Rjabchikov, 1998b).

13. Cf. Hawaiian expression *Ke alanui o ke kuukuu* ‘The great road of the spider = the ecliptic’ (Åkerblom, 1968 : 15).

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