A **moai** of Michelangelo Carrara marble carved by Rapanui artist Bene Tuki stands in Venice.

In early 2004, an agreement was signed between the Italian Marenostrum Foundation (whose President is Orlando Pandolfi) and the Rapa Nui Mana Henua Ote Ao Corporation (President, Edgard Hereveri) for a series of joint activities leading to cultural and artistic exchanges, development strategies, and education and training. I am myself Honorary President of the Rapa Nui Corporation and Director of the Scientific Council of Marenostrum.

Field activities and cultural exchanges took place in May and August 2004 in Rapa Nui, and in August and September 2004 in Italy (Venice, Carrara, Palmaria and Porto Venere). A book is in press (*Empowerment. From Rapa Nui the Navel, to Wherever in the World*) describing all these activities and their projections, including implications for small islands development. The title of the Italian version of the book is *Empowerment. Da Rapa Nui, l’Ombelico della Terra, a Ovunque nel Mondo*.

I will refer here only to the sculpture in Carrara of a **moai**, as well as of the Te Pito te Henua with the surrounding stones, made with the most prestigious and expensive marble in the world. Carrara marble comes from the Michelangelo marble quarry, active since Roman times and from which Michelangelo himself selected and extracted the material for his *chef-d’œuvres* (David, Moses, La Pietà, etc.).
phistication of events, and the high concentration of world media. The *moa* represented one of the main attractions (among others, the Matato’a dancing group of Rapanui was also invited), and was extensively covered by the media. Many social events of the cinema stars took place nearby the *moai* in the Lido of Venice.

There are no doubts that the visibility and the attractiveness of Rapa Nui for tourism have increased considerably. In addition, the aspirations of a number of Rapanui, including Edgard Hereveri, is that the Rapanui culture acquires an international value. This is empowerment. Furthermore, as it is made of Carrara marble, this is a *moai* “for eternity”.

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