A splendid read. Ka ‘Ara te Mata! is simply marvelous for the continued encouragement of reading and writing the Rapanui language on the island. If there is any small critique to be made, then it would only be that more Rapanui--and less Tahitian--should be used. As much as 50% of the vocabulary in the publication is at times Tahitian, not Rapanui. This smarts.

Ka ‘Ara te Mata! not only opens our Rapanui eyes--it opens our Rapanui hearts.

Review

Edwin N. Ferdon Jr., an old Easter Island hand, who celebrated his 80th birthday last year, has recently published another book, Early Observations on Marquesan Culture 1595-1813. The publisher is University of Arizona Press, Tucson. The price: $40.

Robert Langdon.

Originally an American geographer, anthropologist and archaeologist, Ferdon did extensive field work especially in Ecuador and Mexico and published his Studies in Ecuadorian Geography in 1950. In 1955-56, he went to Easter Island and the eastern Pacific with Thor Heyerdahl’s Norwegian Archaeological Expedition and later served as co-editor, with Heyerdahl, of the two massive tomes on the expedition's work.

After retiring in 1978 after 17 years as associate director of the Arizona State Museum in Tucson, Ferdon decided to try to recreate the life of the people whose shell and bone artifacts, stone ceremonial structures and what not he had helped to excavate in Polynesia. He started with Tahiti and delved into the records of the British, French and Spanish explorers who visited that island between 1767 and 1797. The result was Early Tahiti: As the Explorers Saw It 1767-1797, which the University of Arizona Press published in 1981.

Ferdon followed up his Tahiti book with a similar one on Tonga, Early Tonga: As the Explorers Saw It 1616-1810. That saw the light, with the same publisher, in 1987. This third book in the same vein on the Marquesas has a somewhat different title because the European explorers did not call at the Marquesas with the same frequency or for the same lengths of time as they did in Tahiti and Tonga. Indeed, Ferdon’s principal source of information was not the explorers but a missionary, William Pascoe Crook, the first European to live in the group. He was there for 19 months in 1797-98. A marvelously informative, but little-known ethnography based on Crook's observations is preserved in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Ferdon’s Marquesan volume runs to 184 pages. This is well over 100 fewer than his previous volumes. It follows a similar pattern, however. After a brief opening chapter about the position, geography and climate of the Marquesas, there are chapters on: the Marquesans and their dwellings, social organization and government, religion, daily life and diversions, from birth to death, the quest for food, transportation and trade, and warfare. A final chapter discusses the origins of the Marquesans and eight cultivated American plants that Crook found growing in their islands. The invaluable bibliographical references that follow fill almost 27 pages.

For those interested in Easter Island prehistory, the last chapter is especially significant. Although in the past Ferdon never quite saw eye-to-eye with Heyerdahl on the question of American Indian influence in Polynesia, his discovery of Crook's material forced him to conclude that 'one might reasonably ascribe the presence and use of some of the American plants ... to a pre-Columbian introduction'. This prompted the further thought that 'a more balanced approach' to the American Indian question is now justified than has been apparent in the past.

PUBLICATIONS


★ Blixen, Olaf. 1993. El arbol de la abundancia y el origen mitico de las plantas cultivadas en America del sur. Moana, IV(3). In Spanish. For information, contact Dr. Blixen at Casilla de Correos 495, Montevideo, Uruguay.


This study found that a small percentage of the Polynesian population, including East Polynesia, carry a Melanesian genetic marker, as do some very early Lapita skeletons.


This brief report describes the analysis of DNA from prehistoric skeletal material from Ahu Tepeu and Ahu Vinapu and provides genetic evidence for the Polynesian origin of prehistoric Easter Islanders. The “...results confirm the Polynesian affinities of the original settlers and support the view that the unique culture that developed on the island resulted from the environmental conditions and several centuries of isolation.”

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★ Journal of the Polynesian Society, 1994. Vol. 103(1) for March. University of Auckland, New Zealand. Of particular interest in this issue is a paper by Elizabeth Matisoo-Smith, “The Human Colonisation of Polynesia. A Novel Approach: Genetic Analyses of the Polynesian Rat (Rattus Exulans), pp. 75-87. This paper presents a model for a corroborative genetic approach (mtDNA) for tracking paths of human migration by using a commensal species that travelled with the colonists on their founding expeditions.


★ Mellen, Francisco and Carmen Zamarron. 1993. Catalogo de Armas y Artefactos de las Islas del Oceano Pacifico Central y Australia. Ministerio de Defensa Armada Española y Instituto de Historia y Cultura Naval, Museo Naval. Madrid, Spain. Lunwerg Editores S.A., Manuel Silveta 12, 28010 Madrid. Paperback, 94 pages, 8½ x 12 format. Ten pages of text, maps and charts; the remainder is given over to the catalog. Entries are accompanied by black and white photographs, plus 19 full-color plates and bibliography. This catalog illustrates and describes the collection in the Museo Naval (none are from Easter Island). The catalog costs approximately US $5 (500 pts.; postage is extra. Contact the Publisher for details.


Spriggs, Matthew, and Atholl Anderson. 1993. Late Colonization of East Polynesia. *Antiquity* 67:200-217. This paper reviews and rejects every first-millenium (AD) carbon date from East Polynesia, including Rapa Nui. [Important even if you don’t agree with its conclusions.]

Tok Blong Pasifik. 1994. February, No. 46. South Pacific People’s Foundation of Canada. This focus of this issue is “The Commonwealth in the Pacific.” A complimentary copy can be had by writing to SPPF, 415-620 View St., Victoria B.C., Canada, V8W 1J6.

The *Institute of Archaeology Publications* (UCLA)

is offering Monumenata Archaeologica 17,
*The Rock Art of Easter Island: Symbols of Power, Prayers to the Gods*

by Georgia Lee  Price is $35.

Send Check/Money Order payable to UC Regents, in US funds on a US bank. California sales tax: 7.25%, Postage/handling $3.50 +$1 for each additional book.

Please allow 8 weeks for delivery. Send order to:
Institute of Archaeology Publications, UCLA, 405 Hilgard, Los Angeles CA 90024-1510.

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**Easter Island Foundation Fundación Rapanui**

*Houston, Texas. People gathered at Rice University’s Fondren Library to hear Dr. Georgia Lee talk about the history and archaeology of Easter Island. More than fifty participants, including Chilean Consulate Jorge Norambuena, attended the April lecture and reception that followed. rosa Gorman and Nubia Carvajal, representing Casa de Chile, assisted as hostesses for the evening. LanChile Airlines generously donated a round-trip ticket from Santiago to Easter Island as part of a silent auction held during the reception. Other auction items were donated by rosa Gorman and Monica Monsalves. The LanChile ticket was purchased by Paraguayan rancher Rhett Butler [we are not making this up!] in heavy bidding.

Rapanuiphiles swamped the gift table for EIF mugs, t-shirts, recent publications and other paraphernalia. EIF is grateful to Sheri Roane and Carol Radney for their help with the reception, Gabriel Covarrubias of LanChile Airlines, and to all who helped make the evening a success.*

Barbara Hinton, President

The possibility of the Viña del Mar branch of the William Mulloy Library moving into badly-needed larger quarters is actively under investigation. The city mayor’s office has given the go-ahead for a study to be made of the feasibility of rehabilitating two small houses behind the Fonck Museum where the Library is currently housed in one-half of a small office. The houses, formerly a garage and a servant’s quarters, have been used for many years by the City’s Departamento de Tránsito. An architectural study is now underway.

William Liller, CEO

The EIF proudly announces that it’s most recent publication is now available:

**The Ancient Solar Observatories of Rapa Nui:**
*The Archaeoastronomy of Easter Island*

by William Liller

This fascinating exploration of the island’s solar observatories is based on the early research by the late archaeologist, William Mulloy.

Sixty pages, over 30 illustrations, index and glossary.

All proceeds benefit the Easter Island Foundation.

Price $14, plus $3 shipping and handling ($4.50 for overseas orders).

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The Ancient Solar Observatories of Rapa Nui is available from the Easter Island Foundation 666 Dead Cat Alley Woodland, CA 95695