VOYAGING AND ISOLATION IN RAPA NUI PREHISTORY

Ben Finney, Ph.D.
University of Hawai‘i, Manoa

... the most important and central fact leading to an understanding of Easter Island culture-history is its unusual degree of isolation by sea (William Mulloy 1979: 111).

The trend of Pacific Island settlement has been eastwards. Some 50,000 years ago when vast quantities of water locked in the glaciers greatly lowered sea levels, early seafarers—probably traveling by raft—crossed the narrowed channels from Sunda, the extension of mainland Southeast Asia that most of Indonesia had become, to Sahul, a great continent formed by New Guinea, Australia and surrounding continental shelves. Around 1,500 B.C., well after the glaciers had receded and sea levels had risen, canoe voyagers with roots in Southeast Asia pushed eastwards from islands off the north shore of New Guinea, and moved rapidly through island Melanesia to reach the mid-Pacific archipelagos of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Their identifiable Polynesian descendants then spread farther eastwards, reaching all the way to Rapa Nui perhaps as early as 400 A.D.

A solution to the puzzle of why Polynesia should have been settled by the descendants of seafarers who began on the faraway Asian side of the Pacific, rather than by voyagers from the much closer shores of South America, presents itself if we study the map of the Pacific (Keegan and Diamond 1987).

Thousands of miles of open ocean lie between South America and Polynesia, a vast expanse of blue water broken only by the Galapagos and a few other islands immediately offshore South America. In contrast, the seas between Polynesia and the south-eastern end of Asia are filled with islands, beginning with the rich island world of the Philippines, Indonesia and New Guinea where the seagoing canoe and deep-sea navigational skills were apparently developed, and extending across Melanesia and Micronesia to that vast island realm so aptly named Polynesia. Whereas this virtually continuous distribution of islands extending eastward evidently encouraged generations of canoe voyagers to sail farther and farther into the ocean by rewarding them with island after island to colonize, the empty seas off South America apparently offered little inducement for continental sailors, despite their fine sailing rafts, to cross thousands of miles of open ocean to explore and colonize an island world that was beyond their experience. Otherwise, the inhabitants of Rapa Nui and other islands of Polynesia would be speaking languages derived from the American side of the Pacific, not, as is the case, from Asian side.

Yet, however logical such reasoning might seem, it does not answer the question of how the lone island of Rapa Nui, located so far to the east of the easternmost archipelagos of Polynesia, came to be settled. A canoe sailing directly to Rapa Nui from the Marquesas, thought by some to have been the source of Rapa Nui migrants, would have to cross almost 2,000 miles of open ocean. At 1,450 miles away, Mangareva, another candidate as a source island, is somewhat closer. A scattering of atolls and the tiny high island of Pitcairn lying to the east of Mangareva cuts this gap...
by 300 miles. But, even from Pitcairn, a voyage across 1,150 miles of open ocean to a single, small island would be a difficult undertaking.

That Rapa Nui lies to windward, with respect to the easterly trade winds, of the rest of Polynesia would seem to compound this difficulty immensely. Polynesian canoes can tack to windward, but it is a long, slow process as almost four miles has to be sailed obliquely to the wind to make one mile directly to windward, a ratio that increases greatly when also sailing against a strong current (Finney 1985:10). A crossing from Pitcairn to Rapa Nui made directly against the southeast trades and accompanying currents would therefore require a canoe to sail over 4,000 miles, a task made even more difficult by the beating the canoe and crew would suffer pushing directly against wind and sea. According to such reasoning, a voyage from Pitcairn or any other Polynesian island to Rapa Nui would seem out of the question; even the colonization from the west of the main Polynesian archipelagos would look improbable because of their position to windward. Indeed, Heyerdahl (1978:332) largely based his argument against the orthodox theory of Polynesian settlement from the west on his assertion that canoe voyagers could not have sailed across the tropical Pacific against "the permanent trade winds and forceful companion currents of the enormous Southern Hemisphere."

The easterly trade winds are, however, anything but permanent. Periodically they die down, and the winds blow from the west, not from the east. This monsoonal pattern is strongest in the western Pacific; in Indonesian waters the alternating seasons of winter easterlies and summer westerlies are still exploited by commercial sailing vessels to carry cargo back and forth from one end of the archipelago to another. The regular extension of these summer westerlies virtually to the edge of Polynesia was undoubtedly exploited by the immediate ancestors of the Polynesians, the makers of the famous Lapita pottery, to expand so rapidly into the central Pacific. Although these summer westerlies become much more episodic in the eastern Pacific, spells of westerly winds apparently were frequent and long-enduring enough to enable the Polynesian descendants of the Lapita pioneers to spread beyond Samoa and Tonga to the archipelagos directly to the east (Finney 1985:11-15).

But once seafarers reached the easternmost of these island groups--the Marquesas, Tuamotus and Australs--they had, in effect, run out of archipelagos. Whereas for many generations members of this seafaring lineage had been rewarded with landfalls on island after island in a virtually continuous series of archipelagos that extend from Southeast Asia two-thirds out into the Pacific, any of their descendants who tried to search for yet more archipelagos farther to the east must have been sorely disappointed when they found only empty seas except for Pitcairn and its two little outliers. Furthermore, it appears that the spells of summer westerlies become even more episodic and brief in duration the farther one sails east through these lonely seas. Indeed, the difficulties of sailing farther eastward, and the frustration of not immediately finding rich lands over the horizon, may well have played a role in those initiatives to the north-northwest and to the southwest that resulted in the discovery and colonization of Hawai'i and Aotearoa (New Zealand) respectively.

Yet, despite the problems of exploring eastward, and the lack of immediate rewards for so doing, some voyagers apparently kept searching in that direction, as witness the temporary settlement of the tiny island of Pitcairn and its even more minuscule outlier of Henderson Island--and, of course, the subject of this essay: the colonization of that loneliest outpost of Polynesia, Rapa Nui.

Over the last eighteen years we have sailed the reconstructed voyaging canoe Hokule'a some 40,000 nautical miles through Polynesian waters, touching on islands in Tuamotus, Societies, Cooks, Aotearoa, Tonga and Samoa, as well as throughout the Hawaiian archipelago. Although we have not yet attempted to sail to Rapa Nui, we have learned enough about the wind patterns of the Pacific, and how to use them to sail where we want to go, to hazard some educated guesses about how Polynesians might have reached this island, and, once there, what maritime links they might have had with their kinsmen to the west. In previous analyses of Polynesian voyaging and settlement I speculated on this question (Finney 1976, 1979). A brief visit to Rapa Nui in 1989, as well as by conversations with others intrigued by this question--notably, Sergio Rapu, Jo Anne Van Tilberg and Cesar Caviedes--now leads me to expand on those speculations.

The key to reaching Rapa Nui would be to get enough days of favorable westerly winds to enable a canoe to sail sufficiently far to the east in order to come close enough to the island to see it, or detect it indirectly by telltale cloud formations, by the appearance of terns or other "land finding" birds, or by other signs by which island navigators use to recognize when land is near (cf. Lewis 1972:153-232). In my earlier discussions on how voyagers might have been able to get enough westerly wind to push as far east as Rapa Nui, I expressed some doubt that the spells of regular summer westerlies would last long enough in eastern Pacific seas, or be frequent enough there, to enable a canoe to be worked as far east as Rapa Nui. Accordingly, I suggested an alternate way to gain easting by exploiting the zone of westerlies located between about 35° and 50° South, winds that square riggers sailing from Tahiti and other points in the Pacific once used to reach the west coast of South America.

That some exploring Polynesians must have discovered this westerlies zone seems likely. However, whether they ever tried to utilize them to explore eastward is, of course, open to question, as is how long they could have survived in their open canoes the cold wind and seas that can be encountered even before entering the tempestuous latitudes known as the "roaring forties". Suppose, however, that some especially adventurous voyagers did go down to around 35° South to try to run before westerlies there, and that after a week or two the cold wind and rough seas forced them to angle north to seek the warmth of the tropics. If so, they might have stumbled across Rapa Nui in their flight from the cold.
Eric de Bisschop's unsuccessful attempt to use these westerlies to sail a bamboo raft from Tahiti to South America in 1956-57 (de Bisschop 1958), relates to the above scenario. De Bisschop first sailed south from Tahiti to get out of the trade wind zone, and then turned toward South America, at around 30° South, hoping to find enough westerly wind there to work eastward without having to expose his craft and the crew to the rigors of the higher latitudes. Although they found some westerly wind there, they were not far enough south and therefore had to endure long spells of easterly head winds and calms. After months of slowly working eastward, de Bisschop and his crew were finally forced to abandon their disintegrating raft—but not before they had passed a just a few hundred miles to the south of Rapa Nui. Perhaps sometime in the past a sleek double-canoe with sailing characteristics superior to that of de Bisschop's raft might have followed a similar course, but just far enough to the north to have resulted in a landfall on Rapa Nui.

Since then, perhaps even more plausible possibilities for finding enough westerly wind to reach Rapa Nui have come to mind, one stemming from the realization that warm calms. After months of slowly working eastward, de Bisschop and his crew were finally forced to abandon their disintegrating raft—but not before they had passed a just a few hundred miles to the south of Rapa Nui. Perhaps sometime in the past a sleek double-canoe with sailing characteristics superior to that of de Bisschop's raft might have followed a similar course, but just far enough to the north to have resulted in a landfall on Rapa Nui.

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Typically preceding or during an El Nino event the usual atmospheric pressure gradient across the South Pacific of high in the east and low in the west flattens out or reverses. This is known as the "Southern Oscillation"; hence total phenomenon of ocean and atmosphere disturbances is referred to as an "El Nino-Southern Oscillation" (ENSO) event, although here I will use the simpler label of El Nino event. This oscillation manifests itself in a weakening of the trade winds, and the outbreak of prolonged and intensive periods of westerlies, generally during or around the summer season. Although these westerlies are usually confined to the western and central Pacific, in 1982-83 a particularly massive El Nino event brought a prolonged outbreak of westerlies that pushed far into the eastern Pacific. Reports of these westerlies has led me to hypothesize that early voyagers from West Polynesia might have employed the widespread westerlies of such major El Nino events to expand to the Marquesas and other archipelagos of central East Polynesia, and that if these El Nino-intensified westerlies extended all the way to Rapa Nui they might have been crucial in the discovery of this easternmost outpost of Polynesia (Finney 1985:16-18). Subsequently, Caviedes and Waylen (MS 1989) have developed the latter suggestion, citing wind data gathered on Rapa Nui during the 1982-83 El Nino event showing that prolonged spells of westerlies indeed reached the island.

Among others, Bierbach and Cain (1988), interpret evidence from oral traditions and cultural and linguistic comparisons to indicate that the land from whence sailed the legendary colonizer Hotu Matua was located in the Marquesas. Yet, because this group lies so far directly downwind (with respect to the trade winds) from Rapa Nui, it is difficult to conceive of how voyagers from the Marquesas could ever have found sufficient westerly winds during a typical summer to sail far enough to the southeast to even get within range of the island. Nor, because of the relatively northerly position of the Marquesas, would voyagers from there have been ideally situated to catch of winter westerlies which, as outlined directly below, are more prevalent in the more southerly islands of Polynesia. The more widespread westerlies of a major El Niño event would therefore appear as the most likely wind regime that Marquesan voyagers could have exploited to sail southeast to Rapa Nui.

When the Hawaiian navigator Nainoa Thompson was planning how to work Hokule'a from Samoa to Tahiti in 1986 he chose to sail during the winter, when the trades have a reputation for being steadiest, instead of the summer when westerlies are typically most common. He did this for two reasons: first, because he wanted to avoid sailing during the summer hurricane season, and second, because his research had shown that even during the winter there may occur spells of westerly winds favorable for sailing to the east. These winter westerlies are caused by the passage through the trade wind field of troughs that extend up from low pressure systems moving across the ocean far to the south. The winter of 1986 proved to be unusual winter season, for low pressure troughs repeatedly disrupted the trade wind field, bringing westerly wind shifts that enabled Hokule'a to sail first to the southern Cooks and then from there on to Tahiti (Finney 1988).

These winter westerlies are more prominent in the seas along the southern edge of Polynesia, since these waters are closer to the low pressure systems that generate them as they cross the ocean still farther to the south. For example, during May through September the weather on Rapa Nui (27° South) is often unsettled and rainy with frequent spells of westerlies winds (British Admiralty Vol. 2.37); during the week I was there in August of 1989 westerly winds, or northerly winds which are also favorable for sailing to the east, prevailed during four of those seven days. Yachtsmen wishing to sail to Rapa Nui from the west have found these winter westerlies most useful, typically sailing from Mangareva (23° South) to Pitcairn (25° South), and then on to Rapa Nui. As Green (1988:55) and Langdon and Tryon (1983:53-55) have suggested, perhaps earlier voyagers chanced upon Rapa Nui in following this route, or in sailing a parallel route from one of the Austral Islands, which extend from Rurutu (22° South) to Rapa (27° South), or in sailing from as far west as Rarotonga (21° South) or Mangaia (22° South) in the Southern Cooks. Figure 1 shows a weather map for 8 July 1988 obtained at the Chilean meteorological office on Rapa Nui which shows the pattern of mid-latitude low pressure systems moving eastwards with troughs extending into Polynesian waters, and bringing westerly wind shifts that could be exploited to sail east toward Rapa Nui.

Some support for the thesis that Rapa Nui was reached by voyagers who exploited westerlies to intentionally explore to

Vol 7, No 1 * Page 3
the east beyond the last known points of land comes from computer simulations in which these wind patterns are programmed. Although the original computer simulation study of Levison, Ward and Webb (1973) in which only drift voyages were simulated virtually ruled out the possibility that

Rapa Nui could have been reached by drifting there from any other point in Polynesia, when Ward (MS 1988) and then Irwin, Biskler and Quirke (1990) subsequently made intentional sailing and navigation part of the computer algorithm they were able to simulate some voyages to Rapa Nui.

The famous "Manuscript E", which records a Rapa Nui account of the colonization of the island (Barthel 1978), the colonizers had foreknowledge of the island and sailed directly to it. Inasmuch as knowledge of Rapa Nui was obtained by the voyage of the dream soul of Hau Maka to Rapa Nui and back the homeland, one is tempted to dismiss the account as so much fantasy. Yet, there is some ethnographic background to it. According to the journal of Edward Robarts (Dening 1974:62,119; cf. Porter 1822, Vol. 2:54-55), a British sailor who lived in the Marquesas at the beginning of the 19th century, even at that late date the shamanistic prophets (tau'a) were still having dreams of rich islands over the horizon that were inspiring groups of Marquesans to take to their canoes in search of them. Even though the computer simulation study of Levison, Ward and Webb (1973) would seem to rule out a "pure" drift voyage all the way to Rapa Nui from any other point in Polynesia, unexpected westerly gales might have played a role in the island's discovery. Marquesans sailing to the Tuamotus could have been driven far to the east by sudden westerly gales, and then have elected to keep heading in that direction in hope of finding land sooner than it would take them to work their way back to the west. Similarly, people making a crossing from Man-gareva to Pitcairn, or between islands in the Austral group might have been driven far past their target by strong westerlies and then opted to keep pressing eastward.

Whether the result of an intentional exploring initiative, or of a combination of unexpected westerlies and a desperate gamble to run before them, the discovery of such a lone, small, and distant island as Rapa Nui was truly an impressive achievement. Could more than one canoe have reached the island, as some traditional accounts (for example, Englert 1970:88-84 and Mulloy 1979:113) might appear to indicate? Multiple landfalls from different islands in central East Polynesia (or from the same source island, but from different time periods) are of course possible, though the odds against very many canoes reaching Rapa Nui would seem to be high. Perhaps at the most there may have been a trickle of canoes that fetched up off Rapa Nui over the centuries. More unlikely is the possibility that there was any regular intentional two-way communication back and forth between the island and the rest of Polynesia.

It has often been posited that two-way voyaging occurred between distantly-separated islands in Polynesia, both during the settlement period involving exploratory round-trips followed by planned colonization voyages, and during post-settlement times involving voyages made back and forth for adventure, exchange or other reasons. While the four round-trip voyages between Hawai'i and Tahiti we have made on Hōkūle'a might seem to indicate that there were no technical reasons why Polynesians could not have periodically made two-way voyages between widely-spaced islands, it is necessary to consider the sailing and navigational conditions of each candidate route before making any judgment. Hawai'i and Tahiti are aligned so that a nearly north-south course line cuts across the easterly trades, a situation that allows voyaging back and forth without having to wait for wind shifts. Furthermore, this route involves sailing between the massive archipelago of Hawai'i and an island arc extending hundreds of miles from the western Societies to the north-eastern Tuamotus. The southbound navigator has only

![Figure 1](image-url)
to hit one island in the Society-Tuamotu arc to be able to re-orient himself for Tahiti, while the northbound navigator has to find only one of the islands spread along the lengthy Hawaiian chain. For example, on each of Hokule'a's southbound legs landfall was made in the western Tuamotus, which let the navigator know exactly where he was in relation to the final destination of Tahiti. Similarly, on each of the northbound legs landfall was made on the "Big Island" of Hawai'i allowing the navigator to with confidence head directly from there to O'ahu.

Sailing back and forth between central East Polynesia and Rapa Nui would have been much more difficult than between Hawai'i and Tahiti despite the shorter distance involved. To begin with, Rapa Nui probably never was rich in good canoe-building timber, and as the population grew the island was deforested forcing the islanders to build their small fishing craft out of scraps of wood or out of reeds. For the purposes of discussion, however, let us assume that at the time of first settlement and for some centuries thereafter, there was sufficient wood on Rapa Nui to build canoes capable of sailing a thousand or more miles. The question then is how easy it would have been for the Rapa Nui to sail one of these craft back to central East Polynesia.

Actually, such a voyage would not appear to present any insuperable navigational or sailing problems, even for rather modest craft guided by relatively unskilled navigators. Rapa Nui sailors would only have had to wait for a solid spell of easterly trade winds, then head downwind to the west toward the relatively huge targets presented by the archipelagos of central East Polynesia. During the 1940s and 1950s, when the islanders were restricted from traveling by Chilean authorities, periodically groups of Rapa Nui men set sail for Tahiti in rowboats stolen from the Chilean Navy and in tiny, makeshift sailboats, and with nothing much more sophisticated in the way of navigation than instructions to head for the setting sun (Jacquier 1948; Laguesse 1954; McCall 1981; Negres 1956). Although some of these craft were lost at sea, several did land in the Tuamotus, and one made it as far west as Rarotonga, indicating how even makeshift, rudimentarily-navigated craft can sail from Rapa Nui to central East Polynesia.

However, such crossings to central East Polynesia would not in themselves have any impact on Rapa Nui culture unless they led to more voyages from central East Polynesia back to Rapa Nui. It is precisely this return voyage that would have been most difficult, whether mounted by Rapa Nui sailors seeking to return home, or by those they had told about the island and its location. Not only would sailors have needed just the right wind conditions to head that far east, but they would have had to have been able to find a lone island in an immense ocean space without benefit of a surrounding or screening archipelago. This navigational task would have been particularly tough if they had been forced to repeatedly tack against easterlies between spells of favorable westerly winds. "Never say never" is probably the safest word of advice to offer to anyone attempting to judge whether or not an ocean crossing could have been made in a canoe or some other traditional craft. Nevertheless, I think it reasonable to assume the problematic wind and navigational conditions for sailing back and forth between central East Polynesia and Rapa Nui would have made two-way communication over that route much more difficult than between archipelagos within heart of East Polynesia.

A good case can be made that the wind conditions in central East Polynesia, the circumstance that all islands there form part of larger island groups, and the relatively close proximity of these archipelagos to one another would have facilitated inter-archipelago voyaging, a theme that some archaeologists are now investigating (Walter In Press; Rolett In Press). Canoes going back and forth, particularly during the early centuries of colonization when populations were relatively small, would have meant that new ideas, artifacts, institutions and linguistic forms could have been widely shared among the islands of the Societies, Cooks, Tuamotus, Australs and Marquesas, thereby slowing cultural and linguistic differentiation within this region (Pawley and Green 1984:138-139; Kirch 1986; Finney et al. 1989:293).

Even after individual island societies had begun to mature, and their citizens began to focus more on internal affairs than voyaging overseas, these conditions would have allowed some diffusion of innovations around the region. In contrast, Rapa Nui's situation as a lone island located so far to windward would have prevented the people there from easily communicating with their East Polynesian cousins, and therefore from freely sharing innovations, including linguistic ones (Biggs 1972:150), that developed over the centuries in the central East Polynesian archipelagos.

Therein lies the significance of Mulloy's statement about isolation being the central fact of Rapa Nui prehistory. Rapa Nui culture looks so archaic and different from its East Polynesian neighbors not necessarily because it was settled earliest, or most directly from West Polynesia, or because it was an amalgam of Polynesian traits mixed with those brought by South American raft voyagers or Iberian sailors from lost Spanish galleons. Rapa Nui is so unique because it was so isolated from the rest of Polynesia.

References Cited


**THERE'S NO BIZ LIKE SHOWBIZ:**

**HOLLYWOOD COMES TO RAPA NUI**

No more tranquillity on Rapa Nui. Everyone has caught "movie fever". The film being made on Easter Island and produced by Kevin Costner will either be titled "Rapa Nui" or "The Center of the World", depending upon which news item one prefers. The background for the movie will be the statues, archaeological locations and native vegetation. Scenery is being prepared by an Australian team, and sets constructed to imitate the appearance of the island prior to European arrival. Two villages are being created consisting of dozens of houses, an 80 meter long ahu with 16 statues, and a palm forest.

All the necessary material for the construction of the props (steel, wood, cables, cement, and plastic) was acquired in Chile and transported to the island by ship and plane. The budget is said to exceed ten million dollars and is described in Chilean newspapers as "the most important film ever made in Chilean territory."

The story plot is a sort of Romeo-Juliet love triangle--"a history of romance and adventure on Rapa Nui before the arrival of the white man." It revolves around two people, a young man called Ororoina and a girl, Ramana, who belong to different—and enemy—tribes. The other side of the triangle is Maké, who is also in love with the heroine. Ramana will be played by Canadian actress, Sandrine Holt, who previously had a part in *Black Robe*, Hawaiian actor Jason Scott Lee (*Dragon* and other films) has the male lead. Maké is played by Esa Morales, a Puerto Rican actor who was in the film, *La Bamba*. Through these people the movie shows the conflicts and tensions in the era of the "long ears" and the "short ears" that finally ends in total warfare and results in the subject...
and death of nearly all the representatives of the ruling cast (the "long ears"), burnt in the fire at the Poike ditch.

No one seems to have informed the film writers about the actual meaning the words, *hanau eepe* and *hanau momoko*, which have nothing to do with ears, nor about the latest findings in regard to the Poike ditch which likely was the result of earth ovens or agriculture [See *RNJ* 4(3):1990, The Poike Ditch in Retrospect by Carlyle Smith]. Hollywood, however, has seldom let the facts intrude upon a good story line.

Besides the featured actors, there will be fifty speaking actors of various nationalities, including Hawaiian, Tahitian and Maori. Some local Rapanui hope to make the jump to English. A few, like Pascal Pakarati, are taking private lessons in English. A young islander, greeted with the usual "Iorana" replied, "No, no! Spik to me Enleesh!" Islanders who hope for parts are letting their beards and hair grow and working to eliminate tan lines acquired from swim suits. Girls are being encouraged to appear topless and will be paid a bonus for nudity.

The screen play is by Kevin Reynolds who is also the director. The plot seems to be changing almost daily; as of mid-February it was as follows:

Hotu Matu'a, newly arrived to the island, lies dying in a grove of palm trees. His last words: when times get tough, I will return in a white [I] canoe. Compressing many centuries and the entire history of the island into a couple of generations, we now find it is the late 1600s. Ororoina, a long-ear grandson of the chief loves Ramana, a short-ear girl. She is also loved by a short-ear boy, Maké. The long-ears are being badly treated by the long-ears who have subjected them and require them to do all the labor. In a bit of gratuitous bloodletting and to show how cruel the long-ears are, an old man has caught some fish and one of them is of the type that only kings can eat. So a long-ears hits him over the head and kills him.

The father of Ororoina feels he has failed his people and not brought honor to his family so he paddles out to a passing iceberg and floats away. [I am not making this up!] Lots of comments about how cold the weather has become. There is a good bit of aardvarking [gratuitous sex] around the quarry by the lead characters.

But now the birdman competition is coming up. Because he made a large statue in only five days, the short-ear suitor gets to compete in the contest. Ramana goes into a cave to whiten her skin and fatten up as she is the prize.

The birdman competition, as envisioned by Hollywood, displays abundant violence: competitors cut ropes so some fall to their death, a shark eats a contestant (in gory detail) and at Orongo, men gamble on who will win: "I'll bet five chickens MY contestant wins" and "I'll bet five moai that MY man wins."

On Motu Nui, both the short-and long-ear suitor find an egg but the short-ear, Maké, finds his first. They swim back to Orongo. As he is about to present the winning egg, he fumbles the ball, so to speak. He drops the egg! So Ororoina wins the contest and the girl. She moves in with him in seclusion. She discovers she is pregnant.

Suddenly they see a fire. Ah! It is the revolt of the short-ears. A huge fire (in a simulated Poike Ditch) consumes the long-ears as men, women and children are thrown into the flames. This grisly scene shows the short-ears munching on barbecued body parts of the long-ears. Colonel Saunders in the South Seas.

Ororoina rushes off to see what is happening. When he returns, Ramana is gone. He searches for their secret cave and finds her dying with a newborn by her side. He takes the baby and leaves the island in a canoe. The last flash on the screen says "Archaeology tells us that Pitcairn was settled from Easter Island around this time..." [This will come as a surprise to Polynesian archaeologists.]

Well, this film will finally eliminate Heyerdahl's theory from the general public's understanding of Easter Island. Now we have icebergs and Pitcairn to contend with.

The impact of the film production is everywhere. Everyone seems involved in it, and every islander who wants to work has a job. The town itself seems deserted; you could shoot a cannon down main street and not hit anyone. Work on the paving of Policarpo Toro goes slowly and other projects around the village have stalled for lack of workers, for the film production pays better.

Preparations for the film are staggering. All available space is being used, and empty buildings have become workshops. Thirty very large *moai* are being made of welded steel frames, coated with a sprayed-on material and carved with typical *moai* features. Some are made in sections with interior devices so they will break apart when toppled. The fabricated statue that will be moved down from the quarry will have a mechanized device inside rather like a Rose Parade float. Special effects such as these are being done by Bill Howe who worked on *Crocodile Dundee* and *Mad Max*. The local school auditorium is a factory for turning out woven mats and baskets; the old pool hall is the factory for manufactured artifacts from adzes to spears to kites and banners. The gym is a storehouse, and on the grounds of SASIPA-CORFO are eucalyptus trunks being turned into palms trunks with the stucco and paint.
But the most magical of all is the bodega and museum rooms at the Sebastian Englert Museum. Here 2500 costumes are being made under the inspired direction of John Bloomfield who did the costumes for Robin Hood, Superman, and Conan the Barbarian. Eighteen Rapanui women are busily at work with sewing machines making costumes, capes, feathered head dresses, hami, shell necklaces, etc. One entire wall has rows and rows of fake mahute (bark cloth) made from pelon (a felted material normally used for lining). Bloomfield brought in 4000 meters of pelon and it is being dyed various tints and then, after sewing, is distressed by being roughed up with cheese graters (he acquired thirty of these in Chile). Some costumes are made from real mahute brought from Tonga but this is both fragile and expensive, thus the pelon. Mannequins display costumes and body paint--and one has great feathered wings and a bird headdress--this is the birdman costume. Those actors portraying the long-ears will wear plastic ears with wood ear plugs.

Palm trees in the village are being bought for $300 each, dug up and moved to Rano Aroi where a palm forest is being simulated. Lacking enough palms, eucalyptus trees will fill in the background. (Not too many islanders are willing to part with their palm trees).

The traditional village under construction near Ahu One Mahiki on the south coast has thatched boat houses (hare paenga), hare oka (round houses), hare moa (chicken house), manavai, tupa, and an ahu, with statues. A larger structure, looking more Samoan than Rapanui, will apparently be the house of the chief.

The iceberg scene was supposed to have been filmed in Antarctica but now it is said that a fake iceberg will be constructed in Australia and shipped to the island.

On the 18th of February, all movie preparations came to a screeching halt as islanders went on strike. The film makers threatened to cancel the project. The Rapanui demanded a 20% pay raise; they wanted more time for lunch (with drinks included); accident insurance in case of injuries during filming; and they wanted only Rapanui girls to play in the film, not imported Tahitian, Hawaiian and Maori girls. [One islander, however, pointed out that there were only two pretty Rapanui girls on the island!]. The strike was settled when they received a 19% raise.

The down side: nearly all the Rapanui are in favor of the movie for they have plenty of jobs and are caught up in the glamour of it all. A few stand apart, concerned with what will happen when the film is over and what lasting effects will impact the culture. Even now some of these are being seen. Both farming and fishing have been disrupted; not many islanders are planting crops and a shortage of fresh vegetables was noted at the twice-weekly feria. Some islanders are worried about the example of a different life style and cite an increase in hard drugs, alcohol consumption, and prostitution. Many fear the possible introduction of AIDS. When the film ends, much of the equipment will remain behind; then there will be fights to see who gets what. Few islanders are putting their earnings into savings or tangible improvements, preferring to spend their money on food and drink. When Hollywood goes home in June, a depression is sure to follow.

Some have concern for the archaeological sites. For the scenes at Rano Raraku, a fake moai will be lowered down the quarry slopes. Before putting in the mechanism for this, it was necessary to dig some test pits. The pits revealed many statues--small to large--beneath the surface. Will the pressure on the surface cause damage? Excavations in the quarry have disturbed some paenga stones and a stone paved ramp is being built near the entry to the quarry. This has no counterpart in the ancient society, but will it be removed after the film is completed?

The village set appears to not be impacting anything subsurface but the question remains as to what will happen after the filming ends. Will all the stones and cement supports for the moai be removed and the site returned to its original condition?

The scene involving the fiery Poike Ditch sounds dangerous, with large numbers of extras and six meter high flames (using butane). Although fire proof clothing will be worn, such scenes have the potential for serious injury.

One problem concerns the plan to capture frigate birds from Salas y Gómez and bring them to Motu Nui for filming. Both of these are bird sanctuaries and yet, despite formal protests, permission was granted to do this.

If nothing else, the Rapanui are survivors. They recovered from the smallpox epidemic, the Peruvian slave raids and leprosy. Surely they will survive the impact of Hollywood as well.

And the final product? No doubt the photography will be excellent and the island will look beautiful. The costumes will be wonderful (Academy Award caliber). Just don't expect to end up with any factual knowledge about the ancient Rapanui society. This is SHOWTIME!

Georgia Lee, Ph.D.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

LA MERCED'S EASTER ISLAND COLLECTION: A FORGOTTEN HERITAGE
Rodemil Morales, M.

A small but worthy ethnological collection of objects from Easter Island is curated at La Merced's museum in the center of Santiago, Chile. Although it is known by scholars, most Rapanui philosophers are unaware of its existence, due in part to a lack of information and the fact that the exhibit was opened to the public only 12 years ago.

The collection was initiated in 1873, with the support of Reverend Benjamin Rencoret of the Orden Mercedaria of Chile. Half a century later, with the formation of an excellent natural history collection, this museum was converted into an important research center although it functioned privately for the community of the Mercedaria School and its adjacent cloister.
Some of the first and most important pieces from Easter Island were donated by Father Zosimo Valenzuela, who obtained them directly from the island. Other pieces were obtained from Chilean naval personnel. Some objects were acquired from individuals and antique collectors in London, Paris, and Santiago. The last purchase was made in 1984.

Unfortunately, in some cases, high prices were paid for reproductions and objects that appear to not be from Rapa Nui.

No less grave is the lack of a conservator or curator for these objects. Upon studying the Museum's data and contrasting that with the objects, the conclusion is that many errors were made in classification, dating, origin, etc., making it difficult to follow the history of each object. Confusion also exists in the interpretative signs in the exhibit.

Conservation of the objects has been affected by their method of storage. When the old school was demolished in 1971, the greater part of the collection was placed in unsecured warehouses of the cloister. When the restoration was completed in 1980, three rooms were opened, one of them for the Rapa Nui collection.

But, part of the nearly 200 pieces still remain in conditions that are not appropriate. In addition, information about the origin of many of the objects may be lost with the disappearance of an old priest of the Order, who is the only one able to reconstruct the past of many of these pieces.

The problems of information, classification and conservation could be resolved if the Orden Mercedaria would return to a positive curatorial attitude, which would make it easier to put the collection in order, eliminate pieces with no value and exhibit others which are now in warehouses. It would enable scholars to find in this collection significant objects for investigation, to do comparative studies and to verify the authenticity of many doubtful cases. This is a job which would have educational benefits for many of those whose only contact with Rapa Nui is through such collections as that of La Merced.

The Easter Island collection occupies one of the three rooms in the small museum on the second floor of the old building. A group of carvings that show an "evolution" of the moai kavakava ranges from an almost primitive type to modern figures of large scale which pass for post-Missionary carvings. A few appear to be carved in toromiro wood. Other remarkable carvings include a beautiful rei-miro, an ao, tahonga, paa, moko, etc.

Also exhibited are stone and bone fishhooks, sewing needles, and numerous obsidian tools. There is a well-preserved tapa cloth poncho that is sewn on the sides and a hami made with vegetable fiber. These appear to be ancient.

There is little doubt that scholars could give important interpretations of these pieces of the cultural past of Rapa Nui, now to be found in Santiago's La Merced museum.

[Editor's note: The Basilica of La Merced is located at the corner of Merced and MacIver just two blocks east of the Plaza de Armas. It is noted for its antique statue, the Virgen de la Merced, which dates from 1548. The church has been rebuilt several times as a result of severe earthquake damage. The museum is next door to the church, on Calle Merced. There is a small entry fee. Guide books say it is closed Sunday and Monday, but when we tried to visit on a Tuesday, it was all locked up.]

ON RAPANUI OBJECTS IN THE ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTION GÖTTINGEN

Regina Pinks, Oberweser, Germany

The "Institut und Sammlung für Völkerkunde" in Göttingen is today looking back upon a history lasting more than 200 years, making it the oldest and, at the same time, most important ethnographic collection in Germany.

It's foundation in 1775 was influenced by the philosophical theory of "Aufklärung", showing great interest in the processes of human history, its evolution and natural phenomena. This engagement produced in the 18th--and also the following century--a lot of exploratory voyages to all parts of the world, in which not only foreign plants, animals, minerals, fossils, etc. had been collected, but some "curiosities" of non-European cultures, too.

The basis for the collection of today was built by the "Naturalienkabinett" (i.e., natural history collection) of the zoologist Büttner, which had been bought in 1773 by the director of the library of the university in Göttingen, Christian Gottlieb Henne (Plischke 1931:12). For the administration of this cabinet, which was now titled as a royal
academic museum, Henne nominated young Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who was studying medical sciences. In 1775 the whole collection was separated into four independent sections, of which the ethnographical part was named as "Ethnographische Sammlung".

One year later Blumenbach was nominated as a sub-inspector for the academic cabinet and he kept this post for his entire life. One of Blumenbach's multiple interests originated during his work as a sub-inspector was studying books of travel from the great explorers of his epoch. He held personal correspondence with some of these famous men, respectively with members of their crews, e.g. the Englishman Sir Joseph Banks, who had participated as a natural investigator at the second voyage of Captain James Cook (1772-1775).

This scientific correspondence with different travelers aroused in Blumenbach the idea of buying ethnographic objects from their journeys for his museum.

Thus, on August 17, 1781, he wrote a letter to the government, asking for items which had been collected during the voyages of discovery by the British navy.

On July 15, 1782, some wooden chests arrived in Göttingen, containing 349 objects of Polynesian provenance, which had been bought or bartered by members of James Cook's travels. Some items of unique value caught the attention of the scientists of the time. Even today they belong to the most precious items in the collection: a mourning dress made of thousands of little feathers and pandanus-leaves with a mask of mother-of-pearl, which had been bought in Tahiti, and a feather helmet, which depicted the Hawaiian god of war, Kukailimoku (Plischke 1929).

Later, Blumenbach acquired more Polynesian objects from Johann Reinhold Forster and his son Georg Forster, who had both accompanied Cook's second voyage around the world. After J.R. Forster's death in 1799, his son Georg sold altogether 69 items to the museum, which already had been developed into an important meeting point for engaged scientists of different disciplines (Plischke 1931:33).

The main idea during the following years was to enlarge the ethnographical collection. Besides, in the 19th Century, it was a favorite medium for illustrating the university's lectures on ethnography, which had been originated in 1803 by Professor A.H.L. Heeren [1]. Since this time the collection had accompanied the studies of many scholars and is also a favorite place for school classes and various interested persons.

In its magazines and exhibits we now find more than 16,000 objects from all parts of the world. As Rapanuiphiles, we have a special interest in the items from Rapanui, which will be introduced now.

Altogether the collection contains 31 items of quite different periods. The earliest are a spear point (mata'a), two needle-needles, a bark cloth (tapa) and a headdress made of dark feathers, sold by the "Museum Godeffroy" (Hamburg), respectively its manager A. Pohl, to Göttingen in 1886 [2]. According to Heyerdahl, who gave an opinion on these Rapanui objects on May 8, 1967 during a visit to Göttingen, they are "fine, old items" [3].

In the years 1927 to 1957, fourteen pieces were added, partially donated or sold by private persons and partially bought from traders dealing with ethnographica. In this older group, we have four mata'a, two needle-needles, one headdress (see above), one ua (ceremonial baton), four anthropomorphous wooden carvings, a fish-shaped rei miro, a bird-shaped carving and two stones covered with petroglyphs.

Another group consisting of modern objects of art has been bought in 1990 from Mr. M. Dahms. He brought 13 objects: a kohou rongorongo, two wooden moai figures titled as 'ahu akivi' in the filing cards, two rei miro, a flat stone in the shape of a human head, a hat made of straw, an annular headdress made of shells, an old mata'a, a club, which handle shapes the face of a moai kavakava, and a wooden moai kavakava, and finally two unidentified stone implements.

Figure 1: designs on a fragment off a stone pillow.

Some of the older ones, especially the two stones with glyphs, are of interest to the investigator. They were given to the custody of the collection in 1938 by H. Falke, Ph.D. Falke found the stones, together with two spear points made of obsidian, during an excavation, when he visited Rapanui on a journey across South America [4].
As the correspondence between Falke and the director of the Institut für Völkerkunde, Hans Plischke, shows, Falke sent him the objects with the request that Plischke give him a compensation of free choice, because Falke had a financial crisis. Thus Plischke let the poor man have an amount of 150 Reichsmark, a lot of money at this time.

One of the stones is quite flat and has a dimension of 9.5 x 12 cm. Originally, it was broken into three pieces, but is restored now and represents (according to Heyerdahl, see above) the fragment of a stone pillow (ngaru'a) which carries two carvings (figure 1): a bent over human-shape with head; hand and foot have been erased by breakage of this stone [5], and another anthropomorphic figure, of which only the lower part of the body--two legs with feathers (?) at the upper end--still exists. Both petroglyphs show great similarity to the anthropomorphic pictograms of the kohou rongorongo, the still undeciphered wooden tablets of old Rapanui. This similarity is more visible at the second stone, which has several different glyphs on both sides. It is made of gray tuff, a kind of volcanic stone, that can only be found in the east part of the island and has on the recto pictures of two frigate birds (makohe), a big fish with two ears, two vulvae (komari) and a human-like figure (fig. 2).

The verso (fig. 3) has three different motifs, showing two frigate birds and a human being. At the lower left is a crescent-shape glyph. But the most interesting glyph to be seen on this stone is the human figure on the verso, representing a kind of action that doesn't exist in the fund of characters of the Rapanui script. One can interpret this action as "pushing a spear", and its vital realistic presentation is really astonishing. This carving is one that demonstrates the ability of the people of Rapanui to reproduce their environment and themselves in a high grade of abstraction, but nevertheless to emphasize its typical attributes.

References


TONGARIKI IN THE NEWS

Tongariki has been in the news of late; even the New York Times has gotten into the act. Archaeologists in various parts of the world have voiced their approval and/or disapproval of this complex project, sponsored by a Japanese crane company, Tadano.

Not only is the site an exceedingly elaborate one, it suffered severe damage from a tsunami that hit here in 1960. Gonzalo Figueroa, a Chilean archaeologist and main advisor on the project, argued that the chief supervisor of the excavation should be Dr. William Ayres of the University of Oregon who has extensive experience on Easter Island and in Polynesia. Figueroa points out that a larger number of trained archaeologists should be working at Tongariki but ultimate responsibility should be in the hands of someone who has written extensively on the subject, such as Dr. Ayres, to assure that all findings from the excavation eventually will be published.

However, Mario Orellana Rodriguez, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Chile, has been appointed "archaeological supervisor" of Tongariki's restoration by the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales. Ayres has withdrawn from the project. In an interview (New York Times for February 16, 1993, by Nathaniel C. Nash), Ayres stated that his fear is that bickering could lead to faulty excavation and loss of valuable information about the site. An excavation can only be done once and if something is missed, that record of history is lost and cannot be reconstructed. Ayres noted that Tongariki is more complicated than anything else that has

Notes

[1] In 1928 cultural anthropology, as a university discipline, was institutionalized in the Georg-August-University of Götingen.
been done in either French Polynesia or Hawai‘i. And, once the initial funding by Tadano of Japan runs out, it will be much harder to raise funds to finish the project.

The following letter from Dr. Ayres, dated 28 January 1993, illuminates the controversy:

Dear Editor:

I am writing to let you know the latest developments in my involvement with the Tongariki project. After spending about ten days in meetings in Chile in late December-early January, I submitted my resignation from the Tongariki project on 5 January to Sr. Don Sergio Villalobos of the Chilean National Monuments Council. This was a difficult decision because I am committed to the conservation of Easter Island’s archaeological heritage. I write now as a professional who has continuing concerns about how the archaeology is being handled.

I was optimistic when I returned to Chile at the end of December to clarify my role in the project. However, the meetings did not go well and the views that the entire project should be a University of Chile one (the opinion held by Patricia Vargas and Claudio Cristino) have been maintained by the government. Prof. Mario Orellana, a dean at the University of Chile who has no experience in the Pacific, now has been asked to coordinate the excavations. We could not agree on a satisfactory role for me. In part, this was because I felt I could not continue in a situation in which I was given responsibility for the excavations by the National Monuments Council but I had not been kept informed about the project nor provided with copies of any of the field records—such as profile drawings, photos, and plans—even of excavations I directly supervised in October. Vargas and Cristino have confiscated all of these excavation records and refuse to provide me with copies.

The role assigned to me by Orellana was unacceptable not only to me, but also to other members of the Chilean research committee and to many government officials. Despite this situation, I believe that the excavations are continuing (I have had no recent communication from Chile). From the outset, I had been concerned about the supervision of excavations because of the complexity of the site; unfortunately, the monitoring appears to have deteriorated rather than improved.

It is discouraging that the project has moved in this direction. International cooperation has become too restricted in the critical area of excavations and this raises questions about adequate recovery and publication of the scientific evidence and the resultant accuracy of the monument reconstruction.

William S. Ayres, Professor of Anthropology and Director, Pacific Islands Studies, Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

Despite controversy, the work at Tongariki continues. Both large and small statue fragments have been excavated in the ruins as well as a carving that appears to represent the head of an eel (but which looks more anthropomorphic to most who see it). Many smaller artifacts have been found, but these were not visible during our recent visit to the island as they had been removed from the museum display and loaned out to the film company as models for movie props.

The large moai head uncovered at Tongariki being photographed by the BBC (for Nomads of the Wind).

Small torso found in excavations. Photo: R. Morales

With the removal of rubble, the stone plaza is now visible. An enormous moai head was found and evidence suggests there were several earlier ahu—perhaps as many as six distinct building phases, the foundations of which are being encountered.

THE PETROGLYPHS OF TONGARIKI

Georgia Lee, Ph.D.

"...on the coast below us, quiet and still, lay the overturned images of the great platform of Tongariki, one fragment of which alone remains on its base, as a silent witness to the glory which has departed. The scene was most wonderful of all when the full moon made a track of light over the sea, against which the black mass of the terrace and the outline of the standing fragment were sharply defined...."

[Katherine Routledge 1919:136].

Aside from such evocative descriptions of Tongariki’s great shrine, a great deal of interest has been focused on both Tongariki’s ahu and moai, located on the bay at Hanga Nui at the foot of the quarry, Rano Raraku. Not only was the ahu the largest on the island, its façade reached a height of more than
four meters. It contained more statues than other shrines on the island—at least fifteen were visible—although research by Van Tilburg (personal communication) revealed a total of thirty statues or fragments of statues.

Tongariki was remarked upon by Thomson, Routledge and others, who were impressed by its scale and obvious importance to the ancient society. It was the "first choice" for restoration by William Mulloy who turned to Akivi instead due to the logistical problems associated with its distance from the village. Thomson (1891:507-8) describes the fallen statues and notes red tuafa crowns lying a short distance away, "The hard stones of which the sea-front of this platform is constructed are of immense size, faced and neatly joined together. One of the foundation stones in the center of this wall is of red tuafa and represents a human head." In typical fashion for those days, Thomson proceeded to trash the ahu: "Our investigations were commenced at this point by throwing down the facing-stones and working straight backwards through the platform. The labor was great, and occupied the most of our forces for nearly two days but the catacombs and tombs underlying the structure were thoroughly examined...containing human remains." Thomson busily extended his work: "The entire plain back of Tongariki Bay is one vast cemetery, containing the decaying remains of thousands of people. Every pile of stones, cave or ruined platform, house, or cairn, has been used as a tomb. The christianized natives of to-day still regard this as a favorite burial-place."

Tongariki's ahu is one of some half-dozen on the island built so that the statues faced the rising or setting solsticial or equinoctial sun (Liller 1990; 1991).

The tsunami

After a tsunami crashed into the sea wall in May 1960, interest was revived—for the force of the water destroyed the ahu and scattered the statues over a wide area (E. Mulloy RNJ 5(3) 1991:33-34). The tsunami caused the sea to rise 13 meters above its normal level and the sea raced inland, covering a huge area—up to 700 meters inland. The huge moai, some of them 18 to 20 feet tall, were lifted, rolled over, and washed inland and left lying, in some cases as much as 100 meters from their original position. The debris left behind included rocks, boulders from offshore, stones from the ahu, stones from the various modern stone walls around the area, bones and skulls from the tombs (which had been located under the moai)...along with bones of dead sheep, rotten fish, lobsters, eels, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, octopus, and seaweed.

Tongariki's damage from the tsunami was not immediately discovered as islanders were confined to the village area at that time; a passing sheepherder was the first to see the debris and spread the word in Hangaroa.

Following the tsunami, a salvage expedition collected some of the skulls and bones that had been washed out by the water, as well as small carved stones that apparently had been built into the walls of the ahu. Many were small, some only eighteen inches in diameter (ibid.).

Today a restoration project is trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together.

Only a few petroglyphs (rock carvings) are directly associated with the ahu at Tongariki. One of these is carved on a slab that probably was part of the façade; it has an outsized komari (vulva form) carved on it—the largest one on the island, measuring 214 cm. (fig.1). The other lies on a bit of bedrock directly inland from the platform. The design is unclear but appears to consist of series of circular lines. It is roughly pecked.

A great stone paenga (shaped block) lying before the ahu has small Makemake faces carved on its top surface. It is difficult to believe the force of water moved this enormous slab. It may have been in transit, on its way to be included in some building effort related to the shrine. The ongoing restoration work at Tongariki has uncovered two more petroglyphs—faint turtle shapes—carved on papa (smooth lava flow) in front of the ahu.

Tongariki is located in the Tupahotu clan area, according to Routledge (1919).
herding days. In order to construct these sheep pens, many hare paenga were destroyed and the stones reused in the walls. This is a great loss for, from all indications, some of the houses must have been residences of high status individuals.

The petroglyphs themselves have suffered from neglect, traffic (both human and animal), and numerous acts of vandalism which ranges from chalking the designs to scraping them with stones in order to make them more visible for photographing. In two instances, castings were made of selected designs in order to create museum displays; one was made of a latex-type material with the result that latex seeped into the pores of the stone, leaving unsightly white speckles on the petroglyph. The other casting appears to have been made with some sort of resin which left an ugly residue. In an effort to remove the latter, a blowtorch was applied which only succeeded in melting the material into the rock. The petroglyph now has an odd glassy appearance. The fact that these attempts to make copies were done by so-called museum professionals is unconscionable.

The motifs at Tongariki's petroglyph site range from large to small, from elaborate to simple, and have a wide selection of designs. In nearly all instances, the carving is of superior quality; these were obviously made by experts. A few are bas relief, others are formed with deep smooth grooves, carefully pecked and abraded. Some of the most interesting motifs are those which are also seen on rongorongo boards. One panel is outlined with rows of tiny cupules pecked into the rock. In documenting the site [1], the sections of papa were given letter-designations.

The designs at Group A (fig.2) include three well proportioned and finely carved birdmen in bas relief. The birdmen motifs here are the finest outside of Orongo. Their placement in relation to each other is interesting for they form a circular pattern as if 'revolving'. A line of small cupules runs through these figures along with four larger cupules. Nearby are some other forms, one of which is a rather poorly designed birdman made with lines only, not bas relief. It's lack of expertise suggests it was carved by a different hand. This group has two large and deep taheta (basins), one of which has rows of cupules carved around the upper edge. A face with prominent ears and what may be a goatee is on the edge of the outcrop along with another face, less complete. All around are small shallow depressions cut into the surface. Two oversized tuna (kahi) with interior lines plus many cupules complete one section of Group A. Adjacent is the other taheta plus what may represent small 'moai' figures and two komari. Other indistinct lines are present, weathered beyond deciphering.

Group B has another large tuna with fins, interior lines and cupules, two small "Makemake" half faces, a set of cupules that form a rectangle, and an outstanding sea turtle (honu). The turtle's shell is detailed as is the head, which is carved in bas relief. Groups D and E have a scattering of diverse designs, including some awkward birdmen, fish, cupules, and small moai figures. One, (fig 3) is a nicely stylized bird figure which resembles the birds on rongorongo tablets.

Group C (fig 4) features a large tuna with interior lines and fins, a small poorly formed birdman, another large and well made turtle with a bas relief head. The panel is enclosed with hundreds of tiny cupules. Nearby is a simpler, perhaps unfinished, turtle. An adjacent papa has a rongorongo figure, in the form of a human with curved legs and prominent ears. Next to this are curved lines, cupules, small moai-like figures and shallow rectangular taheta.

Figure 3, rongorongo design

Discussion of Tongariki's designs

Rongorongo

Emery (1972:63) suggested that rongorongo was the result of writing seen by islanders after contact with the Western world. He based this statement on his perception that rongorongo designs were not found in the island's archaeological evidence.
He appears to have been unaware of their existence in the rock art. Métraux (1974:198), however, noted the similarity between certain petroglyphs and rongorongo glyphs.

Designs in common between rongorongo boards and petroglyphs are rei miro (ceremonial pectorals), vulva signs, birdmen, birds, and anthropomorphic figures with pointed heads or out sized ears.

It appears to be significant that rongorongo motifs carved on wooden tablets are also found in the island's rock art suggesting that the designs on the "talking boards" were inspired by the petroglyphs.

**Turtle**

Turtles seem to have always been a rarity on the island. However, they were certainly known as is clear from the petroglyphs as well as a few fragments of turtle shell found in archaeological sites on the island. Métraux (1971:187) recorded a legend that said turtles "disappeared" because of the passing of the kings.

Turtles were significant throughout Polynesia. They were connected to (and reserved for) kings, royalty and special rituals. They possessed so much mana that they could be substituted for a human sacrifice. In the Tuamotus, the Pleiades were represented by female turtles and male turtles stood for the Belt of Orion. Stars indicated the times for the turtles to arrive (Emory 1947:34). Turtle petroglyphs in the Marquesas were made for rain-making offerings or for a record of turtle sacrifices (Suggs 1961:150).

On Rapa Nui, some of the turtle petroglyphs at the site known as Omohe are connected to still-remembered legends. There are 34 turtle petroglyphs on Rapa Nui but the finest are among those at Tongariki. What makes them special are the detailed shell plates and bas relief heads. These were made by master carvers.

**Tuna**

Many petroglyphs on the island refer to various kinds of fish and sea mammals. Those which depict tuna can be identified by anatomical details, particularly the shape of the tail. Tuna is one of the island's delicacies and, in former times was often reserved for kings. It might also be used for sacrifice, or a petroglyph of a fish could refer to human sacrifice: "fish for the gods" (ika throughout Polynesia). In the Marquesas and Tahitian islands, sacrificial victims were hung from trees by shell hooks placed in the mouths. At least one Easter Island petroglyph of a tuna is associated with a legend; this example is found at the site of Omohe on the north coast.

**Birdman**

The birdman motif is distinctive and is one of the key symbols of the ancient society. It depicts a crouched human form with the head and beak of a bird. Island wide, 481 birdmen have been documented. Eighty-six percent of the total are either at or near Orongo. They are rare elsewhere. Tongariki has twelve examples, three of which are very finely carved.

**Komari**

Island-wide, komari or vulva form designs comprise the single most numerous motif. 564 have been recorded on the island. The distribution pattern for this motif is unusual. It is completely absent from the north coast (Poike to Ava o Kiri) and only a few scattered examples are found between Ava o Kiri and the northern end of the island. Most often (66%)
they occur around Orongo and Rano Kau. Although only three are recorded at Tongariki, one is oversize.

What might these designs signify? They may be evidence for a fertility cult or perhaps obsessive interest in sex. Routledge's (1919:267) informants claimed they were portraits of individual women who were immortalized by having these figures cut on the rocks as part of "bird child" ceremony. Suggs (1966:181) mentions that, for the Marquesas, sexual activity was used as a religious propitiatory technique, which confirms the research by Marshall (1961:19) on Ra'ivavae. Marshall (1961:275) and Sahlins (1985:26) both suggest that, due to missionaries and a European-inspired sense of modesty and prudishness, many early sexual activities practiced by the Polynesians had been obliterated and only traces can be found today in the oral literature and accounts made by early-day travelers.

Small moai figures

These small designs that appear to represent miniature moai are puzzling. One hundred seventeen have been recorded in all parts of the island except on Poike. These were not small statues 'in the making' but are true petroglyphs. Many are found clustered together in groups. These little figures are very subtle and easily overlooked. Most have the head and torso indicated; a few show facial features, and some have arms. Their significance is obscure. We do know they were still being made late in time for one is carved into the top of a decapitated moai near Tahai.

Distribution factors

A study of the distribution patterns of Easter Island's rock art (Lee 1992) suggests that some of the petroglyph elements can be associated with kin groups, economic activities, status, or ritual. Myths and legends may be illustrated in some although, as these were collected late in time, there is always the possibility that they were created to explain the petroglyph.

Tongariki's petroglyphs are strongly indicative of status concerns: turtles, tuna, birdmen, Makemake faces, and most importantly, rongorongo figures. The presence of huge beach cobbles, remnants of status housing (hare paenga) enforces this view.

That which is not found at Tongariki may be significant: there are neither fishhook designs nor canoes, although sites on the north coast, not far from Tongariki, have large numbers of both. Fabulous sea creatures which abound on the north coast (with a few at Orongo) are also lacking.

There are many 'unknowns' in regard to Tongariki's petroglyphs. The on-going archaeological excavations may reveal information to help us to better understand the site. Whether these were symbols of power and status, or depictions of legends or visions, or concerned with the darker side of the ancient culture, they can be enjoyed on their own for their elegance of line and design.

Notes

1. The Tongariki petroglyphs were documented as part of a University Research Expeditions Program (UREP), University of California, Berkeley. This field project, under the direction of the author, extended from 1982 to 1986. My sincere thanks to those individuals who participated in the documentation; the University of Chile; and Jean Colvin, Director of UREP.

References


Rapa Nui Rendezvous

Don't forget to make your plans for the RAPA NUI RENDEZVOUS to be held in Laramie, Wyoming, next August 3-6. According to George Gill, Chairman of the Rendezvous Committee, all surviving members of the original Norwegian Archaeological Expedition to Easter Island and East Polynesia will be attending the Rendezvous. Some will be presenting papers.

A major country-western band will entertain at the barbecue and a group of Rapanui will prepare a traditional umu for another evening.

Information or questions? contact George Gill, Ph.D., Dept. of Anthropology, University of Wyoming, PO Box 3431, Laramie WY 82071. Fax: (307) 766-3700.
Accommodations? contact Laramie Inn and mention the "room block" for Rapa Nui Rendezvous. Call 1-800-642-4212; or (307) 742-3721. Double room: $48 per night; Single is $38 per night.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

A BIT OF RAPA NUI IN THE NETHERLANDS:

A Report by Herbert von Saher, RNJ's Correspondent in the Netherlands

Twenty years ago the Municipality of Easter Island took the initiative to approach their colleagues on the Dutch island of Texel in order to start "sister ties" between the two islands.
Many European municipalities have established these "sister ties" with municipalities in other countries; such ties express themselves in collaboration and exchanges in the fields of culture, sport, etc.

The reason why Easter Island chose Texel Island is that the discoverer of Easter Island, Jacob Roggeveen, sailed from Texel at the start of his voyage of discovery in 1721. This idea is a bit of an historical error: Jacob Roggeveen himself came from the province of Zealand in the Southern part of the Netherlands (see RNJ Vol. 4 (3), his fleet had been formed by the "Great West India Company" established in Amsterdam and had sailed from the port of Amsterdam. In those days the only outlet from the harbor of Amsterdam to the North sea (and the oceans beyond) was through the Zuyderzee, the inland sea notorious for its shallow waters that made navigation very tricky even for the relatively small ships in use during the eighteenth century. Therefore all ships left Amsterdam with as little cargo as possible. Where there is an opening to the North sea between the mainland of Holland and the island of Texel, they anchored on the Texel roads and there loaded drinking water, food, cannon balls, etc., for the long journey. So every ship that left Amsterdam had to pass by Texel, but that does not mean that they came from Texel; none of the pioneer navigators did.

However that may be, the Texel municipality felt flattered by the approach from Easter Island, and the "sister ties" were indeed established, but after the signature of the documents very little actually happened. During the Pinochet regime in Chile the Texel municipality did not feel inclined to friendly approaches.

It was finally a private initiative that has recently tried to give some substance to these "sister ties", initiated now a generation ago. Niek Welboren, a painter, who lives and now has an art gallery in a small village on Texel called "Eierland" (which means in English "Eggland" because the place is teeming with birds) has--not surprisingly--all his life been fascinated by the parallel between the name of his village and the birdman culture of Easter Island (There are more parallels between these two islands: they are both almost the same size and they both live from fishing, sheep and tourism). Niek made a plan to start a cultural exchange between Easter Island and Texel; he managed to find a number of sponsors who financed his trip to Rapa Nui, and he stayed there during the first four months of 1992, making drawings of his impressions of the island. In the course of 1993 the well-known Rapa Nui woodcarver, Bene Tuki, will be Niek Welboren's guest. He will make woodcarvings there and even try to carve a big moai from imported stone, because, contrary to Easter Island, Texel is of alluvial origin, consisting only of sand dunes and clay flats, not a suitable stone can be found there. The moai will be left on Texel (of course looking inward from the sea) as a lasting symbol of the ties between the two islands. It is the intention that, in the future, Texel will become a permanent outlet for Rapa Nui art and handicraft. This would then be a first permanent base broad for these products from Easter Island.

On the 9th of January there was a reunion in Niek Welboren's gallery (called "Scholerie" because it is in a nice old, abandoned village school) which marked the opening of the exhibition of his drawings to those who had sponsored his trip, a slide show of the photographs taken during his stay in Rapa Nui and more entertainment. Your correspondent went there to attend these proceedings. The trip there is a great contrast to the trip to Easter Island: a huge ferry with room for more than 250 automobiles from the mainland of Holland goes there every hour; the trip lasts half an hour. The winter gale that was blowing with wind force 8 on the Beaufort scale hardly moved the ferry. We passed the famous Texel roads, where in the past so many voyages leading to successful discoveries of far-away places or to disaster, had started.

At the exhibition a lot of inhabitants of the island had gathered amongst whom was the burgomaster; a prominent non-local was Mr. L. Roggeveen, a direct descendant from old Jacob of 1722, who was also a visitor to Easter Island. There was a representative from UNESCO who talked about the UNESCO program for the maintenance of the cultural identity of "small" cultures on isolated islands. Niek Welboren's drawings appeared to be personal visions of how his impressions of different places and aspects of Easter Island had worked on his fantasy. No one can fail to be impressed by what he sees on Easter Island and it is obvious that for someone who has been dreaming about Rapa Nui from his own Eggland for so long, these impressions are profound. No wonder that the public was impressed. The slide show gave a realistic picture of the island in which it became clear that someone who spends four months there gets opportunities for photography that most tourists who only spend a few days there, never have. Moai in the evening light with a low sun are much more impressive than when the sun is vertically above. Drawings and slides combined gave quite a complete picture that was very much enjoyed by one and all.

The evening ended with a manifestation of art from Texel: a local quartet sang and played medieval music on sometimes bizarre old instruments.

Later in the year, when Bene Tuki will have completed his moai, another report may follow. In any event, a beginning of a cultural exchange between the islands of Rapa Nui and Texel has now effectively been made.

[Welboren can be reached at Island Art Center, Postweg 72, 1795 JR de Cocksdorp, Texel, Holland].

**WHAT'S NEW IN POLYNESIA**

- **Undersea volcanoes.** The earth's greatest concentration of active volcanoes has been found on the sea floor 600 miles northwest of Easter Island. Using sonar scanning devices, scientists aboard the research vessel Melville were surprised to find 1,133 seamounts and volcanic cones. Some rise more than a mile above the floor of the ocean, and some are nearly 7,000 feet tall. According to Dr. Ken Macdonald of the University of California at Santa Barbara, two or three volcanoes could be erupting at any given moment. There
is no greater concentration of volcanoes elsewhere--on land or sea.

Scientists are interested in determining whether periods of underwater volcanic activity could trigger El Nino conditions.

The area of volcanic activity covers 55,000 square miles near the East Pacific Rise, a ridge running from north to south where two of the huge plates of the earth's crust are separating. These plates are pulling apart at a rate of eight inches a year--faster than anywhere else on earth.

✓ The Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association's 15th Congress will be held in Ubon Ratathani, Thailand, from January 5-12, 1994. Six major themes have been announced: 1) Archaeology, Cultural Resource Management and the Public; 2) The Pleistocene and Early Holocene in the Indo-Pacific Region; 3) Indo-Pacific Prehistory: Regional Perspectives; 4) Indo-Pacific Prehistory: Thematic and Theoretical Perspectives; 5) Archaeology and Sea-Level Change During the Holocene; and 6) Studies in Rock Art.

For further information, contact Dr. Peter Bellwood, IPPA, Department of Prehistory/Anthropology, Australian National University, GPO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia.

✓ The First International Conference on Oceanic Linguistics will be held at the Vanuatu Complex of the University of the South Pacific from 5-9 July, 1993. It will be concerned with the languages of the Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian. For further information, contact: John Lynch, Pacific Language Unit, University of the South Pacific, PO Box 12, Vila, Vanuatu.

✓ Pitcairn: Pitcairners received airmail delivery in August, in the true sense of the word. Mail was dropped, literally, not The Orion plane dropped five parachute loads, including over half a ton of mail, gravel bag filling and packing. The last parachute load scattered the assembled islanders as it swayed back and forth directly above them.

The plane made two farewell circuits and then flew off to make a survey of Oeno, Henderson, and then on to Easter Island.

A subscription to the Pitcairn Miscellany can be had for $5 a year. Interested parties can send an updated personal check, postal note, or money order. The Miscellany is printed monthly and sent four times a year in batches of three. Contact: Editor of Miscellany (Education Officer, Gov't Adviser), Pitcairn Island, South Pacific Ocean (Via New Zealand).

✓ Cook Islands: Two Canadian women who researched the youth of the Cook Islands in 1990, reported on various youth-related problems in the latest issue of Tok Blong SPPF (#41:16-18, November 1992).

Underage drinking and the numbers of teen pregnancies are increasing, along with a general erosion of the Cook Islands' culture. Their survey predicted continuing overseas migration because of a lack of job opportunities and limited educational opportunities in the islands.

Those who do go overseas for an education do not return to invest their skills in the Cook Islands.

✓ The 6th Festival of Pacific Arts, held in Rarotonga, was organized around the theme of "Seafaring Pacific Islanders". As hosts for the Festival, Cook Islanders challenged other island nations to build and sail their own canoes to Rarotonga and seven Cook Island navigators-in-training went to Honolulu to study under Hawaiian navigator Nainoa Thompson. The twelve member crew of the Te Aurere, a Maori sailing canoe, traveled 3200 kilometers in fierce seas, taking 22 days to reach Rarotonga. When they finally landed, they were the first to arrive from Aotearoa in more than 1000 years [Pacific News Bulletin].

✓ The new provincial chief and administrator of the Rapa Nui National Park [CONAF] is archaeologist José Miguel Ramirez, formerly of the Fonck Museum in Viña del Mar. Ramirez will present a proposal at the Laramie conference in August [the Rapa Nui Rendezvous] to create an International Scientific Advisory Board for the Park. The objective of the proposed Board deals with the assessment and promotion of all specific projects, to help in securing funds, and to oversee their operation on the island. The Advisory Board should aim to coordinate international efforts from different institutions involved with the natural and cultural heritage of Rapa Nui for more coherent and effective work on the island.

White-knuckle time... In a brief article, El Mercurio for 12 January reported that LAN-Chile's flight 033 arrived at the island to find it buried in deep fog--an atmospheric condition that happens once every three years or so. The article went on to say that the pilot, not having enough fuel to return to Santiago, requested that the Armada's new rescue craft position itself 1000 meters in front and precisely in line with the runway and turn on every light on the boat full blast. And it worked--with just ten minutes of fuel left. That is the official story.

However, several island informants say that a Christmas Eve grass fire had put the radio beacon on Mt. Orito out of commission. As summer rarely has bad weather, there seemed no urgency to repair the damages. But a couple of weeks of drenching rain had saturated the island, causing the unusual build-up of fog. And then when the airport lights were turned on, they malfunctioned due to the moisture. Two workers went out to try and repair the damage; one dropped a wrench into the wiring and all lights--and control tower radio--were shorted out. So the story goes.

When the plane arrived to the island to no response--no lights, no radio, and no runway visible through the dense fog--it was the Navy that communicated with the pilot who instructed them to position their rescue craft. The boat was put into service, flares were lit at the runway's end, and the pilot was able to land safely. Our informants add that the furious pilot had to be physically restrained when he met with airport personnel.
Owing to this and other complaints, LAN Chile has changed its arrival times to the island. They no longer arrive in the middle of the night; only in daylight hours. So it's OK to fly, folks. LAN's pilots clearly are top-notch.

✓ Nine cruise ships are expected to stop at the island this year, including ships from Russia and Germany. Although cruise ships stay only a few hours, when one comes to the island there is brief but frantic activity as tourists are brought ashore and taken on a quickie visit to some of the most famous sites. Usually every island vehicle is pressed into service.

In one day in February of this year, two warships from French Polynesia with helicopters arrived at the island, plus a Chilean warship, a special supply ship bringing equipment for the film, and a Lan-Chile flight. The village was swarming with French sailors, the beach at Anakena had Chilean sailors, cargo was being unloaded, and helicopters buzzed back and forth between the airport and the French warship. It seemed more like downtown Los Angeles than the "most isolated inhabited place on earth".

✓ Housing Minister Alberto Etchegaray visited the island and announced a plan to pave the island's roads in order to keep down the dust and erosion. During his visit he put into operation a plan to improve and finish the pre-fab houses [made of asbestos panels], and he delivered the first of the subsidies which will be distributed in 1993. A number of pre-fab houses need to be finished or expanded, and some are having façades of natural stone added to them.

✓ Rapa Nui music studio: Housing Minister Etchegaray also participated in a groundbreaking ceremony for the future music studio to be built next to the island school and which will house a piano destined for the island. Chile's most famous living pianist, Roberto Bravo, has promised to deliver a piano by March. It is hoped this building and the piano will foster musical culture among the island's children. As a result of Bravo's visit and concerts he gave on the island last September, [see RNJ 4(6):76], he has arranged a scholarship for a Rapanui girl, Mahani Teave, to study piano at the Conservatory of Valdivia. Bravo also is beginning work on a tourist brochure in Spanish, French, English, and Rapa Nui which he hopes will help preserve the island's heritage.

✓ The new fire truck of the Isla de Pascua Fire Brigade was seriously damaged when a fireman of the First Company, Arsenio Tepano Pont, took it without authorization. The vehicle turned over when he lost control while making an inappropriate turn on Te Pito o Te Henua Street on Christmas Eve. The injured fireman was taken to the island hospital.

✓ The infamous "monumental" lighthouse appears to be temporarily stalled. Island groups, Corporación de Resguardo Cultural (CdRC) and Comisión Impulsora Campana de Oposición al Proyecto Faro have opposed this project from its inception and organized protest marches against it.

At this moment the foundation still stands, causing some concern that construction will continue once the furor dies down.

✓ Governor Jacopo Hey has called for help to save the ahu at Hanga Piko which is being severely impacted on the ocean side by wave action and on the other side by the port and its activities. US$ 200,000 is needed to save it. The ahu's statues are condemned to a brief life span unless help comes.

✓ New construction: A new market place is being built on Policarpo Toro street. This structure will have a platform with open sides and a roof. It will serve as the weekly market place, thus freeing up Policarpo Toro for through traffic on market days.

The Banco de Estado has a new building under construction, just behind and east of the present bank.

✓ The reed boat caper. Kitin Muñoz who is described as "un adorateur inconditionnel d'Heyerdahl" by La Dépêche (September 1992) will travel to Pitcairn, Mangareva, Tahiti and then Japan in a reed boat which will be constructed on Rapa Nui. Muñoz, who seems not to be up-to-date in his reading, claims that Rapanui's toto ra reeds are "exactly the same species as those at Lake Titicaca..." He will construct a reed boat 30 meters long, 8 meters wide, and 5 meters high which will carry ten men: two Rapanui, one Tahitian, one Maori, one Japanese, one American, one Frenchman, one Italian plus himself. A cameraman is not selected as yet.

The plan is to set out from the island in October 1993. Muñoz claims there were multiple cultural contacts throughout the Pacific: "...one can say with certainty that in ancient times Japanese from Okinawa had commerce with New Zealand...." And he adds: "...the linguistic similarities, botany, and blood types are too flagrant--let us end the quarrel of settlement from the east or from the west. The subject is completely dépassé."
A dozen Aymara Indians from Bolivia are coming to construct the reed boat. Naturally, a film and a book will immortalize this epic event.

✓ **Padre Ramiro Estévez** is the island's new priest. He has been appointed for one to two years, replacing Padre Urbiola, who was a temporary fill-in for Padre Luis Reidl who left due to ill health. Padre Ramiro is scheduled to take up his new post in March.

✓ **The paving of Te Pito o te Henua Street** was inaugurated for the second time in December. The first paving fell apart due to faulty bricks. Extensive repairs failed to fully rectify the situation so the street has been completely taken up and replaced with new—and one hopes—properly made bricks. As we reported in the past, many of the cement bricks began to deteriorate soon after being put in place due to an insufficient amount of cement in the "mix". The paving project on Te Pito o te Henua has lasted for years with the street being mainly impassable during that time. Now the paving of the island's other "main" street, Policarpo Toro, has begun—just in time for the main tourist season. Although it is torn up for over half its length, work is going very slowly due to lack of workers; everyone prefers to work for the movie project which pays better and is far more glamorous than shoveling dirt.

✓ **Supply ship.** Recent materials which have arrived on the regular supply ship include building supplies for the airport, paving materials for Policarpo Toro Street and public and private building material. Also on board: tanks of propane gas, live animals, powdered milk, and 30 tons of dynamite to destroy Vai Atare for rock which is to be used for paving roads and repairing the runway.

✓ **Vai Atare's** dense basalt is the focus of a new agreement between CONAF and MOP (Ministry of Public Works). The agreement establishes that the Dirección de Aeropuertos of MOP will finance the archaeological study of the site and CONAF will study the ecological impact and eventual damage that will occur. Luis Gonzalez, regional representative of the Dirección de Aeropuertos, said that it is urgent to quarry Vai Atare for stone to build roads and to repair the airport runway. This project still requires authorization from the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales.

According to experts, the airport runway requires a lot of repair work. The technical problem is that asphalt is not adhering well due to the poor state of intermediate layers. A French firm will initiate a study in March.

Gonzalez stated that the runway repair will use all the rock at Vai Atare. The island's mayor, Alberto Hotus, and the Consejo Municipal do not oppose this quarrying as it will avoid impacting other parts of the island.

According to tradition, Vai Atare is the place where the island's first king, Hotu Matu'a, spent his last years. The dense basalt is the quarry site for the great stone blocks that went into building the famous **ahu** at Vinapu. The area contains many early sites of archaeological interest and was originally studied by Patrick McCoy.

✓ **Rapanui stewardess' on LAN Chile!** Eleven new LAN Chile crew members (nine stewardesses and two stewards) are serving on the South Pacific route and will wear especially designed uniforms. All are either born on the island, or live there permanently.

✓ **The sub-secretary of the Interior**, Belisario Velasco, examined matters relative to property titles on the island which refers to the return of government lands to individuals. He met with members of CONAF, the Armed Forces, and the Ministry of Real Estate, as well as various local groups. Governor Hey suggested that the government give 1200 hectares (2400 acres) of the 11,000 hectares it now owns to more than 100 married couples to use as **parcelas agrícolas**. Velasco also suggested that information pamphlets be distributed in order to minimize the amount of misinformation that now exists in the community.

✓ **The new Cultural Center.** On 8 February 1993 Hangaroa's elite heard two hours of opening remarks at the inauguration of their town's new cultural center near the caleta and soccer field. A sweltering midday sun warmed those sparsely scattered among six rows of chairs. They applauded speeches given by two continental Catholic bishops and representatives from the European organization funding the building, Ivan Radowich Pacheco (Director Executive of OCAC) and Mari Paul Neveille (Member of the European Comunidad). Finally, Alcalde Alberto Hotus, who had redesigned the cultural events of the traditional Rapa Nui Tapati to accommodate the opening of his cultural center, rose to announce the performance of a conjunto by Marcos Rapu's dance group. The dancers were waiting inside the complex's central room, reached only through a narrow door. One can imagine the crowd of people, surging toward the narrow slot. As soon as everyone mashed in, Alberto halted the dancing to introduce yet another speaker. Quietly the crowd thinned, and Alcade Alberto at last invited all to partake of the **curanto** outside with dancing on the lawn.

Any irritations were soon dissolved during the next half hour when **korohua** Kiko Pate, now in a wheelchair, and Alberto sang and chanted in the mode of ancient Rapa Nui while troughs of meat chunks were passed among the surrounding onlookers.

The new Center is expected to provide space for traditional crafts people to demonstrate their skills to visitors, both Rapa Nui and those from **hiva**. 

Joan T. Kurze [Seaver]

✓ **Another village?** Don Alberto Hotus, the new Alcade, has proposed to build a new village on the island, along the south coast near Ahu Te Tenga. His proposal suggests building some 200 houses and a church. His idea is to open up other parts of the island so young people can have more land. However, there is a great deal of land around Hangaroa that is not being used and TeTenga has many archaeological sites of importance that would be impacted by such construction.

✓ **Tapati Rapa Nui** did not happen this year. A watered down version occurred around the inauguration of the Cultural Center but there was no queen contest, no parade, no spectacular dancing or other events. One reason: everyone is involved with the movie and being paid for doing so, thus there was little motivation or inspiration for a festival.
Progress? in the village. There are now 200 more telephones on the island, Hangaroa has curbside garbage pickup, and at least 500 vehicles are now buzzing around the island. If the new satellite TV is installed (plans call for this to go up at the top of Vai Atare!), islanders will be able to directly receive programs from the continent...an event looked upon with some trepidation by many who already think there is enough influence coming to the island, without further diluting the culture with direct TV. Due to the time differences, adult programming will be shown at an earlier time on the island.

Moai go home. The two statues which formerly stood in front of the governor's office were moved (as part of the Tapati festival) back to their original position, Ahu Orongo, at the tip of Poike peninsula. They were hoisted onto a flatbed truck, cushioned with old tires, tied down—and off they went.

Poike's statues being loaded for the long trip back to their original location. Photo: Judy Retensky

The construction of the Mulloy Research Library continues to remain on hold pending successful outcome of the Municipality of Hangaroa's search for funds for "el material petreo y la mano de obra" to quote the formal agreement signed by the Foundation, the Director of Chilean Bibliotecas, Archivos, y Museos, and the Secretary of the Sociedad de Amigos de Isla de Pascua. Meanwhile, some thought is being given to establishing, purely on a temporary basis, a small library in Viña del Mar. Unless the Biblioteca Nacional or the Sociedad de Amigos provide a librarian, volunteer help would be needed, but it would be help well spent, getting the books and journals, maps and photographs, videos, and other materials catalogued and shelved.

At the same time the Foundation could acquire and put to good use some of the basic equipment needed by a modern library, such as a telephone and fax, a copying machine, and a word processor. As always, donations are gratefully accepted; if any readers have influential and kindly friends in companies that manufacture these or any other kinds of library equipment, please contact either the Editor or the undersigned.

In January and February, Foundation President Joan Kurze [Seaver] and Vice Presidents Georgia Lee and Steven Fischer passed through Santiago, Chile, and with the undersigned met with Carlos Cardoen, President of the Sociedad de Amigos de Isla de Pascua and Daniel Quiroz, Coordinator of the National Museum. Various topics concerning the Library were discussed openly and frankly.

William Liller, Chairman, Easter Island Foundation

Easter Island Foundation/Fundación Rapa Nui
666 Dead Cat Alley, Woodland, CA 95695.

PUBLICATIONS


These two massive volumes contain most of the proceedings of the 14th IPPA Congress; Volume 3 in this series is still to come. Although many of the papers concern early hominid development in Southeast Asia,
early agriculture, and related early developments, such as Lapita Pottery, one paper deals directly with Easter Island: "Characterizations of Easter Island obsidian sources", by F.R. Beardsley, W.S. Ayres, and G.G. Goles (in Vol.2). Also in Vol.2 are two papers dealing with Polynesian settlement: "Human craniofacial form and the evidence for the peopling of the Pacific" by C.L. Brace, D.P. Tracer and K.D. Hunt; and "Polynesian origins and migration: the story according to nuclear and mitochondrial DNA markers" by M. Hertzberg, KNP Mickelson and R.J. Trent.

These volumes are available from Bibliotech, ANUTECH Pty Ltd, GPO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia. Cost: AU $20 each.


This is the original version of the diary of a Spanish pilot of the Real Armada, Juan Pantoja y Arriaga. The paper includes maps and notes of various islands visited.
❖ Smith, Elliot. Cook Islands Companion--A visitors guide to the Cook Islands. Pacific Publishing Company, PO Box 8031, Emeryville, CA 94608. (No publication date given).

Review by Joan T. Kurze [Seaver], Ph.D.
President, Easter Island Foundation

Dr. Forment, currently Chef de travaux scientifiques et responsable de la section "Polynésie" des Musées royaux d’Art et d'Histoire de Bruxelles, received her Ph.D. in History of Art and Archaeology from the University of Gand in 1989. Specializing in non-European cultures, her particular interest has been the wood carvings from Rapa Nui [1]. This monograph, abstracted from her doctoral dissertation (unseen by this reviewer), focuses on the portable Rapa Nui wooden male skeletal figures called moai kava kava.

Until recently the scientific community had assumed that Rapa Nui's "traditional" wooden carvings already had been researched, and that the current production of tourist carvings was unimportant in reconstructing Rapa Nui history. Forment, however, thought it necessary to cast light on "certain problems raised by the Rapa Nui wooden carvings". Thus this monograph presents solutions for these, unlisted "problems".

A short linguistic history of the current names of moai kava kava, moai paa paa and ahu aku appears in her first section. She highlights toromiro as the preferred wood in her list of primary carving materials because of its compact grain and reddish hue, a sacred color in Polynesia. Forment tells us that the few toromiro trees remaining in the crater of Rano Kau in late prehistory were saved for master wood craftsmen. Her description of carving techniques is heavily based on Lavachery’s 1935 notes about the carving of a moai kava kava by Juan Tepano.

The moai kava kava, in its normal aspect or "representation", crouches slightly with knees bent and eyes fixed straight ahead. "Aberrant" moai kava kava (an adjective I shun due to its inappropriate application to Rapa Nui criteria by Thor Heyerdahl) are bicephalic carvings, asexual pieces (no primary sex markers), moai kava kava with feminine features (vulvas and/or breasts) and those figures with turned heads. A sub category of "particularités" or "problems". The few toromiro trees remaining in the crater of Rano Kau in late prehistory were saved for master wood craftsmen. Her description of carving techniques is heavily based on Lavachery’s 1935 notes about the carving of a moai kava kava by Juan Tepano.

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In 1934-35 by Métraux, the renowned but now deceased French ethnologist. However the opinion of the group documenting the petroglyphs on Rapa Nui in 1981 with Dr. Georgia Lee differed somewhat from that of Forment’s concerning Lavachery’s "innovative research on wooden figures and petroglyphs". A certain ambiguity in many of his petroglyph drawings indicated that they might have been sketched from afar, perhaps from the back of a horse.

Unfortunately, the monograph’s photographs are poorly reproduced, and the line drawings minimal. Clear illustrations providing specific examples of figures with cavities and burned areas would advance Forment's case for "sympathetic magic". A map would geographically place the reader, and a glossary would help the non-Rapanui speaker. Although this monograph could not be termed a good read for those unversed in French, for students of iconography in Rapa Nui artifacts, here is thoughtful scholarship presented by a serious Rapa Nui researcher.

To this reviewer’s knowledge, Dr. Forment has not yet visited Rapa Nui. My own experience over the past decade reinforces a consistent theme in Rapa Nui society: that is one's expectations of their behavior is seldom fulfilled on the basis of Western logic.

Notes

References
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In William Hyder’s review of The Ceremonial Center of Orongo by Alan Drake (RNJ 6(4), he comments that the book takes the reader inside houses "...for views of painted slabs that have not been seen in nearly a hundred years." Not so: these were exposed during Mulloy’s restoration in 1974.  

Alan Drake, New Jersey

In regard to "METEI: An Epilogue" in RNJ 6(4), it is too bad that the printer omitted my address. Perhaps in the next issue, you could add an "Erratum"...

Stanley C. Skoryna, Ph.D. (Biol), M.Sc., M.D., Director of the Medical Expedition to Easter Island (1964-65) and University Professor, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 1A4.

Our apologies to Dr. Skoryna.

Another monster moai has been discovered--this time in Tucson, Arizona. The moai is part of the Magic Carpet Mini Golf park and it is about thirty feet tall with a center walkway through its tummy. The eyes have red lights in them that light up at night. Nearby features include a sphinx and a tyrannosaurus. Photo: Emily Ross Mulloy.

RAPA NUI JOURNAL
P.O. Box 6774 Los Osos, CA 93412-6774
FAX: (805) 534-9301
Georgia Lee, Ph.D. Publisher and Editor
Frank Morin, Assistant Editor

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