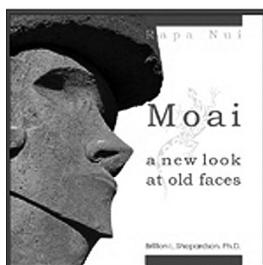


Book Reviews



Shepardson, Britton L.
Moai: A new look at old faces

Hanga Roa: Rapanui Press, 2013. 255 pp.
ISBN 978-956-9337-00-0. US\$30 (softcover).
Available at from

www.museumstore.cl and www.islandheritage.org

Review by Alex E. Morrison,
The University of Auckland

Moai: A new look at old faces, by Britton L. Shepardson, is a unique combination of the personal experiences of an archaeologist conducting fieldwork on Rapa Nui juxtaposed against the results of innovative computer and mathematical techniques aimed at exploring unresolved questions about Rapa Nui's famous megaliths. The item sports a sleek and attractive appearance and is suitable for placement on an office desk or even a coffee table.

Upon initial inspection, this book is clearly more than the usual picturesque journey through the statues of Rapa Nui. There is uniqueness in the way that Shepardson crafts his own personal field experiences alongside often complex quantitative analytic techniques. The eleven chapters alternate between narratives drawn from the author's extensive fieldwork on Rapa Nui and his attempts to resolve questions about the chronology, location, and explanations for why the *moai* were constructed.

In my opinion, the strongest points of this book are the often hilarious and heartfelt experiences that Shepardson so accurately depicts about the struggles of conducting archaeological fieldwork in a foreign and isolated place. Some of these struggles include the need to be flexible when things do not go according to plan, the difficulties of being an outsider in a new place, and even dangerous encounters with the local insect populations. In the course of these descriptions, the author explores important contemporary issues regarding indigenous perspectives on archaeology, the politicization of scientific knowledge, and the need to operate with a conservation ethic when conducting archaeological research. Clearly, Shepardson has thought hard on these issues and his extensive fieldwork on the island gives him an intimate perspective on the challenges that face the Rapa Nui community.

In terms of the archaeological analysis of the *moai*, the author presents a series of rather complex quantitative analyses incorporating seriations, statistical models, and computer simulations in order to address *when*, *where*, and *why* the *moai* were constructed. While upon first look these analyses appear to be so specialized as to render them incomprehensible to many non-specialists, Shepardson does a remarkable job of explaining the techniques in a clear and understandable manner.

In Chapter 6, Shepardson develops a multivariate seriation program he calls Shortest Patch Seriation (SPS) to address the question of *when* the *moai* were carved. I will not attempt to describe the model here, except only to explain that the algorithm takes metric data of multiple *moai* attributes and then calculates a relative ordering solution based on a "gradualness" criteria. It is not clear how the author "roots" these relative orderings or assigns absolute dates to each of the statues in the absence of independent chronometric determinations. It appears that a Bayesian prior distribution drawn from associated *ahu* dates is used as a *terminus post quem* for the construction of corresponding *moai* and therefore provides some form of chronologic constraint for the items in the seriation.

I have to admit that I do not agree with the use of a few of Shepardson's analytic assumptions operationalized in the Shortest Path Seriation. First, the model assumes that the rate of change throughout the sequence is constant and we are never told what this rate is, or given a rationale for why it was chosen. Phylogenetic trees developed in genetic research often model rates of change in order to determine the time period when sub-lineages split off from parent populations, but rates of change in genetics demonstrate higher fidelity in transmission and their replication systems are far better studied and understood than the transmission of cultural information. There are reasons to believe that some attributes of *moai* design will be influenced by abrupt innovations in carving technology, logistic population growth, as well as periodic changes in social political structure on the island. Attention to the classification of *moai* attributes used in the seriations according to traits that are determined to be selectively neutral may help to justify the use of the gradualness criteria and the constant rate of change assumption. It should be noted that Shepardson is well aware of the potential problems associated with these assumptions, as he makes explicit note that the results need to be independently verified.

In Chapter 8, Shepardson presents his argument for a spatial association between inland *moai* locations and the territorial land divisions documented by Katherine Routledge. He disagrees with the commonly held idea that the majority of inland statues were abandoned in transport, and instead hypothesizes that many of these *moai* were used as territorial markers. In order

to provide evidence for his argument, Shepardson compares the distances of these *moai* to the proposed territorial boundaries and then compares these data to a set of random points. His results suggest a strong significant correlation between *moai* and territorial boundaries when compared to the random dataset.

Shepardson's hypothesis is indeed an interesting one and upon simple visual inspection, there does appear to be a correlation between the territorial boundaries and the location of some of the inland *moai*. However, there are a few precautions one needs to take when quantifying spatial relationships. Spatial data are fundamentally different than the types of observations treated in classical statistical analyses. More often than not, events close in space are not independent of each other and therefore violate fundamental principles of classical statistical theory such as stationarity in variance and mean. Quantitative geographers have been working on the non-stationarity problem since the mid-20th century and most spatial statistical analyses now incorporate some assessment of the spatial autocorrelation or trend of a dataset and utilize differential weighting in order to model the covariance of these observations. In short, spatial autocorrelation increases the potential for a Type I error and must therefore be assessed. While this caveat does not necessarily discount Shepardson's hypothesis, it does open up the potential for future statistical modelling, especially since Shepardson has made the *moai* dataset publicly available through Terevaka.net.

Finally, Britton L. Shepardson makes an important and valid point that to remain viable in the future, archaeologists must now take a critical look at how they conduct research on Rapa Nui. These changes include making archaeological datasets publicly available, the development of new analytic techniques that do not destroy the archaeological record, and perhaps most importantly, the training and incorporation of indigenous people in archaeological fieldwork. *Moai: A new look at old faces* is a bold movement in the right direction.



Fuentes, Miguel
(Ed.). *Rapa Nui y la
Compañía Explotadora,
1895 - 1953*.

Hanga Roa: Rapanui
Press, 2013. 408 pp.
ISBN 978-956-9337-02-4.
US\$25 (softcover).

Available from www.museumstore.cl.

Review by Moira Fortin,
Victoria University

Cuando vi el título del libro “Rapa Nui y la Compañía Explotadora”, pensé que se trataría de un libro más sobre la aparente represión brutal que el pueblo Rapanui sufrió durante la época de la Compañía Williamson Balfour y nada más. Sin embargo, me sorprendió ver la cantidad de disciplinas que se unieron en este libro, otorgando una visión más holística del periodo, contribuyendo con información nueva desde su área de *expertise*. Este libro de 405 páginas, segundo volumen de la misma temática, es un compendio de 15 artículos los que están divididos en seis secciones, la mayoría de las cuales cuenta con un prólogo independiente escrito por académicos de diversas disciplinas, quienes están ligados a la investigación en Rapa Nui.

Me parece fundamental que se esté haciendo investigación sobre la historia del siglo XX en Rapa Nui. La historia contemporánea de la isla también merece ser estudiada, o al menos alguna reflexión al respecto. En este sentido las secciones “Antecedentes”, y “Antropología e Historia”, nos brindan una contextualización histórica, desde diferentes puntos de vista, del ciclo ganadero de Rapa Nui, periodo comprendido entre las primeras misiones católicas 1860 hasta la inclusión de la isla a la administración Chilena en 1966.

Este volumen, además, nos recuerda que la cultura Rapanui es una cultura viva, que ha estado en constante cambio, relacionándose con su medio, adaptándose y adoptando nuevos patrones culturales. Los artículos de Ramírez y Escobar, así como el de Fajreldin, hablan precisamente de la relación del pueblo Rapanui con distintos aspectos que surgieron durante la época de la Compañía y a los cuales tuvieron que adaptarse; la relación de la comunidad Rapanui de la época con los patrones alimentarios que estuvieron sujetos a continuos procesos de cambio. La problemática de la salud e historia de la implementación de los servicios de salud occidental en Rapanui aportan información respecto de su relación con la población isleña de la época, pero desde la perspectiva de la salud pública.

Foerster y Moreno Pakarati reflexionan en sus respectivos artículos sobre la relación que existió entre la comunidad Rapanui y la Compañía. Foerster no solo describe y analiza dicha relación, sino que además aporta información inédita acerca de la constitución y operación de la Compañía, dando el marco necesario para entender la historia contemporánea de Rapanui. Moreno Pakarati, por otro lado, se refiere a dicha relación como la “domesticación del poder colonial”, definiendo dicha domesticación como un conjunto de estrategias que los Rapanui habrían adoptado, consciente o inconscientemente, para acercar el poder colonial al “sistema” de la comunidad local. Lo interesante de este artículo en particular es que el autor reflexiona como Rapanui sobre su propia historia desde una cosmovisión que es propia de su cultura.

Otro aspecto interesante de este libro es que nos recuerda constantemente que no todo en Rapa Nui tiene que ver con los restos arqueológicos de la prehistoria Rapanui, ni con los *moai*. El supuesto misterio que rodea a los *moai*, por el cual son tan famosos mundialmente, resulta en que vestigios como los del complejo industrial de Vaitea pasen al olvido. Las secciones “Arqueología y Arquitectura” y “Patrimonio Histórico, Memoria e Identidad Rapanui”, se enfocan en este tema precisamente, en la necesidad de recuperar los vestigios del pasado histórico de Rapanui.

Me llamo profundamente la atención el artículo de Vilches sobre las pircas, ya que en Rapa Nui las pircas son parte del paisaje y de la vida diaria, pero uno nunca se detiene a pensar en su importancia histórica. En este artículo se describen distintos tipos de pircas, así como el contrastante valor patrimonial que poseen las pircas en relación con los restos prehistóricos megalíticos de Rapanui (*moai*) cuyo cuidado ha sido mucho más visible. Respecto de este último punto, la diferencia de la puesta en valor de los distintos restos arqueológicos que posee la isla, autores como Pineda y Torres se refieren a la escasa protección patrimonial de sitios históricos, como el complejo industrial de Vaitea, y a la urgencia de rescatar estos espacios de la historia contemporánea, no solo en virtud del cuidado del patrimonio, sino que por sobre todo en virtud de la recuperación de la memoria, historia e identidad del pueblo Rapanui.

Si bien el título de este libro es “Rapa Nui y la Compañía Explotadora”, abarca mucho más que eso. Aquí se analizan temas que tienen directa relación con el periodo de tiempo que estuvo en operación la Compañía en la isla, pero además se analiza y se reflexiona sobre temas contingentes y conflictos que han resurgido en los últimos años en la isla. Temas que si bien son del pasado reflejan de algún modo lo que sucede hoy en la isla. Los derechos sobre el terreno Rapanui es sin duda uno de los conflictos más recurrentes en la relación entre el pueblo Rapanui y el Estado Chileno. Este conflicto, en su versión contemporánea, es analizado en detalle en los artículos de la sección “Tierras y Conflicto Étnico Rapanui”. Delsing ofrece aquí una visión a los problemas relacionados con la tenencia y propiedad de la tierra en Rapa Nui. Además explica que la fuente de dicho conflicto podría estar ligada a la no comprensión del concepto de *kainga*, “relación indisoluble entre un grupo sanguíneo y su territorio” (p. 342), por parte del Estado Chileno. Un documento inédito del Parlamento Rapanui ofrece algunas perspectivas en torno a cómo deberían afrontarse dichos conflictos, siendo algunas de sus perspectivas bastante radicales.

Si bien este libro es bastante específico respecto al tema y periodo histórico que aborda, la variedad de disciplinas y puntos de vista que reúne hacen que el

texto se abra al lector, otorgándole una visión holística de este periodo de la historia Rapanui. La importancia que yo le veo a este libro es la posibilidad de tomar un periodo histórico de la isla, analizar su evolución y reflexionar sobre su aparente desenlace, digo aparente porque creo que nada está resuelto aún en la historia Rapanui. Sin ánimo de polemizar, creo que este texto podría servir como punto inicial al momento de tomar cualquier decisión futura respecto de las tierras en Vaitea, especialmente ahora que se está decidiendo “qué hacer” con dicho patrimonio. Un texto donde un ejemplo del pasado podría ayudar a autoridades Rapanui a delinear futura toma de decisiones respecto de la cultura, memoria y manejo de las tierras del pueblo Rapanui.

When I saw the title of the book, “Rapa Nui y la Compañía Explotadora”, I thought it would be a book about the apparent brutal repression that the Rapanui people suffered during the time of the Williamson Balfour Company and nothing else. However, I was surprised to see the amount of disciplines brought together in this book, providing a more holistic view of the period, contributing new information from each area of expertise. This book of 405 pages, the second volume on the same subject, is a compendium of 15 articles which are divided into six sections, most of which have a separate foreword written by scholars from various disciplines, whose work is linked to research on Rapa Nui.

It is my opinion that research on Rapa Nui history of the twentieth century is crucial. The contemporary history of the island also deserves to be studied, or at least to be reflected upon. In this sense, both sections “Antecedentes” and “Antropología e Historia” give us a historical context, from different points of view, about the cattle cycle of Rapa Nui, and the period between the first Catholic missions from 1860 to the inclusion of the island by the Chilean Government in 1966.

This volume also reminds us that the Rapanui culture is a living culture, constantly changing, interacting with its environment, adapting and adopting new cultural patterns. The articles from Escobar and Ramírez, as well as the one from Fajreldin discuss precisely this; the relationship Rapanui people had with different aspects that arose during the time of the Company, to which they had to adapt. Firstly, the relationship of the Rapanui community of that time with dietary patterns that were subject to continual change, and secondly, the history of the implementation of Western health services on Rapa Nui providing information about its relationship with the island’s population, but from the perspective of public health.

Foerster and Moreno Pakarati reflect in their articles on the relationship that existed between the Rapanui community and the Company. Foerster not only

describes and analyzes this relationship, but also offers new information about the formation and operation of the Company, providing a framework for understanding the contemporary history of Rapanui. Moreno Pakarati refers to this relationship as the “domestication of colonial power”, defining such domestication as a set of strategies that the Rapanui would have adopted, consciously or unconsciously, to bring the colonial power into the local community’s “system”. One interesting aspect about this particular article is that as a Rapanui, the author reflects on his own history from a worldview that is specific to his culture.

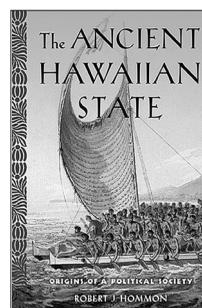
Another interesting aspect of this book is that it constantly reminds us that not everything on Rapa Nui has to do with the archaeological remains of Rapanui prehistory or the *moai*. The alleged mystery surrounding the *moai*, which are so famous worldwide, results in that fact that other archaeological remains, such as the industrial complex of Vaitea, pass into oblivion. The sections “Arqueología y Arquitectura” and “Patrimonio Histórico, Memoria e Identidad Rapanui” focus on precisely this issue, the need to recover the remains of the historic past of Rapanui.

Vilches’ article on *pircas* deeply drew my attention, mainly because on Rapa Nui the stone walls are part of the landscape and daily life, but you never stop to think about their historical significance. Different types of stone walls, as well as the contrasting value that *pircas* have when compared with the remains of Rapanui megalithic prehistory (*moai*, whose care has been much more visible), are described in this article. On this last point, authors such as Pineda and Torres refer to the difference in values that various archaeological remains have and the poor heritage protection afforded to historical sites, including the industrial complex of Vaitea. They suggest the urgency in rescuing these spaces of contemporary history, not only to preserve the heritage, but above all to recover memory, history, and identity of the Rapanui people.

Although the title of this book is “Rapa Nui y la Compañía Explotadora”, it encompasses much more than that. Here, issues that are directly related to the time period that the Company was in operation on the island are discussed, and current issues and conflicts that have emerged in recent years on the island are examined and reflected upon. Although these themes are from the past, they somehow mirror what happens on the island today. The Rapanui land rights are undoubtedly one of the most recurrent conflicts in the relationship between the Rapanui people and the Chilean Government. This conflict, in its contemporary version, is examined in detail in the articles of the section “Tierras y Conflicto Étnico Rapanui”. Delsing offers here a hypothesis to the problems related to land ownership on Rapa Nui. She explains that the source of the conflict could be linked to the lack of understanding of the concept of *kainga*,

an “indissoluble relation between blood group and their territory” (p. 342), by the Chilean State. An unpublished document from the Rapanui Parliament offers some perspective on how such conflicts should be addressed, although some of their viewpoints are rather radical.

Although this book is quite specific on the subject and historical period, it addresses the variety of disciplines and viewpoints together that make the text accessible to the reader, providing a holistic view of this period of Rapanui history. The importance I see to this book is the ability to take a historical period of the island, analyze its progress, and reflect on its apparent outcome; I say apparent because I believe that nothing is solved in the history of Rapanui yet. Without wanting to be polemic, I think this text could serve as a starting point when making any future decisions regarding land in Vaitea, especially now that decisions are being made about “what to do” with that heritage. This is a text in which an example of the past could help Rapanui authorities delineate future decision-making regarding culture, memory, and land management of the Rapanui community.



Hommon, Robert J. *The Ancient Hawaiian State: Origins of a Political Society*

New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 336 pp. ISBN 978-019-9916-12-2. US\$56.18 (hardcover). Available from www.amazon.com.

Review by Jennifer G. Kahn,
College of William & Mary

Recently, Hawaiian archaeology has been actively engaged in meta-analysis, with three synthetic works published since 2010 discussing long term socio-political transformations in the archipelago. Hommon’s “*The Ancient Hawaiian State*” is one of these current works that tackles the question of social complexity in pre-contact Hawai‘i head on. Much of the book is crafted to propose a model for the emergence of endogenous states in the Hawaiian archipelago. Central to Hommon’s argument is the notion that eyewitness historic accounts and later 19th century emic accounts lend great strength to the historical analysis of state emergence in Hawai‘i. The ability to complete comparative analysis of social transformations in Polynesian chiefdoms, all of whom share a common cultural ancestor, is posited as another strength of the Hawaiian case study.

The Ancient Hawaiian State is comprised of four main sections. The first, organized in six chapters, provides a detailed ethnographic summary of Hawaiian life during the contact era. Each chapter offers data relevant to the study of social complexity. For example, *The People* explores rank and status in contact era Hawai'i, illustrating differences between commoners and chiefs with respect to their relationship with the land, kinship, and genealogy. In *Government, War, and Refuge*, Hommon explains how the king's advisors, chiefs themselves, formed a mobile court. The mobile court served as a highly visible sign of the ruler's political power, but also served as a political strategy to call on rival chiefs. In this section, Hommon begins to construct an argument about the dual nature of kingship, which he revisits when building his model of state emergence in Hawai'i. As we lack a comprehensive ethnography of Hawai'i, Hommon's masterful synthesis of a broad range of ethnohistoric and ethnographic sources is a significant contribution to the field.

In Section 2, Hommon devotes two chapters to discussing why Hawai'i should be considered a state society. His definition of the state, as a "durable, large scale, territorially-based autonomous society in which a centralized government, directed by a leader or a group of leaders, employs legitimate political power, backed by coercion, to exercise sovereignty" (p. 121) presages his later focus on coercive power as central to the development of the Hawaiian state. I found the discussion of Hawaiian bureaucracy and the development and maintenance of a "control hierarchy" particularly useful. Many aspects of Hommon's arguments have relevance for comparative research on early state societies. A case in point is his claim that in early states, the role of the bureaucrat and the retainer may be difficult to distinguish from one another.

In Chapter 8, Hommon proposes, contra Yoffee (2005), that examples like Hawai'i which fall between rigid typological state or non-state arguments can be the most instructive for understanding the evolution of social complexity. For example, why did urban development, such as dense towns and nucleated settlements, fail to develop in Hawai'i to the same extent as in other archaic states? While Kirch (2010) has argued that large elite residences were palaces, Hommon acknowledges that this hypothesis requires testing with intensive archaeological research. Similarly, while Hawaiian temples, or *heiau*, are the largest among those found in Polynesia, they are less elaborate than those found in other state societies. Yet, as Hommon outlines, other aspects of the Hawai'i case study fit well within expectations for emergent states. The estimated pre-contact Hawaiian population of 250,000 people certainly is within the range for medium-sized archaic states. There is strong evidence

for expansionist warring polities in the late pre-contact and contact period. As Hommon stresses, while these emergent polities were fragile, they had some durability: eight political polities had been merged into three, the Big Island had fairly sustained polities that appear to have functioned as states, and at least two multi-island states had some longevity.

In Section 2, Hommon explores Hawai'i as a unique case study due to eye-witness and emic accounts describing some of the socio-political shifts developing in the late pre-contact to post-contact periods. While the rich historic and ethnohistoric literature surely provide access to data not seen in the archaeological record, such as the cultural relevance of political actions and the motivations of rulers, the majority of such accounts, European and Hawaiian alike, only refer to the lives of the ruling elites. A heavy reliance on such accounts, seen in both Hommon and Kirch's recent study (2010), leads to top-down analyses that, whether intended or not, place much social and political agency in the hands of the chiefs and kings, to the detriment of the commoners. Hommon's study, while expertly synthesizing much of the historic data, also fails to adequately problematize the use of such texts. Given that oral traditions and genealogies could shift through time based on political allegiances, one has to critically compare accounts to search for points of convergence and divergence. Similarly, the explorer accounts are potentially biased, typically offering only male, Western views of chiefly life, by visitors who often lacked good language skills, stayed for short periods of time, or only visited particular islands or particular coastal regions. For a study that utilizes historic accounts in such an integrated fashion, I would like to see a section problematizing the use of such accounts, preferably outlining particular methods the author has used to ameliorate potential biases.

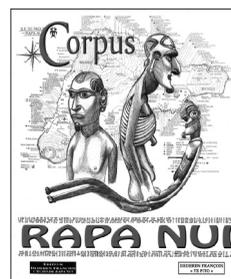
Section 3 exemplifies the strength of comparative analyses focused on the emergence of social complexity in Polynesia. Hommon provides instructive comparisons with Tikopia, the Society Islands, the Marquesas Islands, and Tonga. Utilizing primarily ethnographic data, Hommon outlines key elements of rulership. His focus on symbolic versus active chiefs, and nested hierarchies, is an important contribution to the field. It is here that Hommon develops his economically-based "hard-time hypothesis", arguing that active rulership with potentially transformative effects develops during times of productive shortfalls. For many Oceanic scholars, these comparative chapters will do much to contextualize the development of social complexity in the region. However, in contrast to the later Hawai'i chapters, the comparative case studies rely almost wholly on ethnographic data, creating scalar and temporal conflicts in the comparative analyses.

In the last three chapters, Hommon develops his model of state emergence in Hawai'i, integrating several key hypotheses that he has put forth over the last decades, including the intensification of sweet spots, salubrious cores, full land situations, and the hard times hypothesis. Central to his model is perceived food stress and surplus shortfalls in the minds of the ruling chiefs, which led to suites of political activities that eventually led to the emergence of states. While Hommon's model stresses the importance of the economy and demographic change, it focuses on political centralization enacted by Hawaiian rulers as ultimately leading to socio-political change. Hard times led Hawaiian rulers to actively centralize their governments, to develop new bureaucratic managing systems, and to utilize coercive power strategies such as expansionist warfare, ultimately leading to newly emergent states. Hommon argues that while war itself is not a necessary condition for state emergence, it is a highly visible centralized political practice that leaves archaeological traces. It is these coercive centralized practices, rather than divine kinship (contra Kirch 2010), that Hommon puts forth as prime movers in the Hawaiian context.

Hommon's book is engaging and well-written. It synthesizes a vast amount of material related to social complexity and social evolution in Polynesia. The book will be of interest to a wide range of audiences, including Pacific Island archaeologists and anthropologists and scholars of social complexity worldwide. One of the book's strengths is its entanglement with many key debates in anthropology, notably: what to do with emergent states that do not strictly fit typological models; diarchy and triarchy as strategies of rule in prehistoric and modern nation states; how to identify whether pre-contact socio-political units were economically self-sufficient; who controlled rights to resources; durability and fragility of archaic states; and sources of power in emergent states. As Hommon notes, his hard times hypothesis converges with other crisis response models for nation states developed in other disciplines such as political science, economics, and history, well positioning his work to have broad appeal in the social sciences.

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Dederen, François "Te Pito". *Corpus Rapa Nui. Inventaire mondial de la statuaire en bois de l'île de Pâques/ Corpus Rapa Nui. Global inventory of the wooden statuary of Easter Island*

Braine-L'Alleud: François Dederen, 2013. 588 pp. ISBN: 978-2-8052-0214-8, 978-83-60875-69-8. 40.0€ + shipping (softcover). For purchase information, contact: bernard_philippe@hotmail.com; dederenphilip@hotmail.com.

Review by Rafal M. Wieczorek,
Harvard University

François Dederen is a name in no need of introduction for Rapa Nui aficionados. He has been active in this field since the 1960s and has been involved in many projects. While he is best known for his creation of high quality, hand-carved replicas of *rongorongo* boards, he has also taken on the laborious task of documenting wooden statuettes from Rapa Nui in the collections of world museums, and his new book, which is the subject of this review, is a documentation of this task.

On my desk as I write is a massive, 2kg book dedicated exclusively to the documentation of *moai kavakava* and other types of Rapa Nui's wooden statuettes collected by sailors through the centuries. The book is bilingual; written in French with English translations running alongside with it. The book consists of two parts; the first, which fills the first 100 or so pages, is an introduction and overview of the topic. The circumstances of formation and ultimate fates of great Polynesian collections of Breton, Epstein, Hooper, Oldman and others are discussed, after which the author goes on to discuss probable significances of statuary in the pre-contact culture of the island. Dederen here gives detailed information on about 450 Easter Island statuettes belonging to *moai kavakava*, *moai pa'apa'a* and *moai tangata* types (a couple of birdman statuettes are also featured). They are listed and classified according to various typological indicators such as ear or mouth shapes. Their provenance and current location are also provided. Cranial carvings of 130 figurines are carefully drawn in separate figures.

The second and main part of the book constitutes of drawings of 450 figurines, most in front and rear views. Each statuette is presented in a standardized fashion with 25 characteristic elements, like engraved

eyebrows or the number of ribs, carefully recorded and greatly simplifying cross-comparison between different specimens. The rationale behind choosing drawings rather than photographs has to do not only with avoiding lengthy copyright negotiations, but also in order to be able to portray objects in a standardized fashion and with greater precision.

The book concentrates its efforts on wooden figurines, so other wooden objects such as *rapa*, *ao*, *reimiro* or *tahonga* are not featured. The omission of *moai moko* is, however, puzzling. They seem to fit well in the stated goals of the publication, have many common characteristics with other statuettes, like fanned tails the same as birdman forms, and some even feature cranial designs. Perhaps the author felt that their inclusion would expand an already voluminous publication to an unmanageable size.

The book arguably has many other flaws; as often occurs in self-published works, the editorial side of the monograph leaves much to be desired. Spelling errors are rampant, many plates with drawings are misplaced

and are therefore hard to locate, and the English translation is at times rusty. However, all these flaws are easily forgiven because what we hold in our hands is, at the end of the day, a very unique publication presenting information that is otherwise not available anywhere else in literature.

Amongst the wealth of issues available on the subject of Rapa Nui, specialized volumes dedicated to the wooden figurines are rare, and this is what makes this book so special. Even if one follows the *moai kavakava* topic with commitment, he or she will undoubtedly find a wealth of new, never before seen material in Dederen's book. For this reason, I highly recommend this unique, one of a kind monograph.

The publication has limited printing of 300 copies. Every copy is numbered and comes with a personal dedication from the author, which is a special plus, although the sheer weight of the book means that shipping costs might be quite high and shipping to anywhere in American continents doubles the price of the book.