

historical documentary, *Hay Mana*, about the islanders who participated in the raising of the first *moai* at Anakena with the Heyerdahl Expedition, was also shown in December.

January 2010 included several *kai kai* programs for children led by Isabel Pakarati who has been instrumental in keeping this tradition alive on the island. A photographic exhibition *Ojos de Rapa Nui* by Francisco Javier Hernández Vázquez also took place in January. A new DVD about the evolution of surfing on Rapa Nui over that past 30 years, *Haka Ngaru*, was launched in January. A photographic exhibition by German photographer Stephanie Pauly, *Ha Ere Mai Mo Ūi* opened in February. Ana Maria Rojas gave a presentation called *La Naturaleza Tejida* about textile objects in the collection of the Museo de Historia Natural in Santiago and in the Museo Fonck in Viña del Mar. In March, Andrea Seelenfreund gave a talk about new tools for mapping the ancient migrations in the Pacific using genetic analyses of plants.

As always, we commend the MAPSE for offering such unique and varied programs for both the islanders and visitors to Rapa Nui.

## WHAT'S NEW ELSEWHERE

### GERMANY'S HISTORIC "FESTIVAL OF LANGUAGES" HIGHLIGHTS RAPANUI

*Steven Roger Fischer  
Auckland, New Zealand*

EASTER ISLAND'S INDIGENOUS TONGUE FEATURED prominently at history's largest and longest gathering dedicated to the languages of the world. Bremen's "Festival der Sprachen" ("Festival of Languages") – held between 17 September and 7 October 2009 at Germany's famous Hanseatic metropolis of 700,000 – combined a marathon of fifteen separate linguistic conferences (c. 160 presentations) with public events, special lectures, "language days" and exciting performance arts.

It was the brainchild of Prof. Dr. Thomas Stolz, Chair of Linguistics at the University of Bremen, who also guaranteed that the "Festival of Languages" offered everything from crash tutorials in Portuguese, Russian, Finnish, Arabic and fifteen other languages (all in one day!), to classes in Spanish cooking, body-language dance, and a history of the world's writing systems with an accompanying exhibition of various scripts – including Easter Island's *rongorongo* – in the University Library.

In a separate conference on language contact, Dr. Miki Makihara of Queens College, City University of New York, presented a paper on "Rapa Nui and Spanish in Contact". In another, dedicated to Guam's Chamorro language, Dr. Steven Roger Fischer of the Institute of Polynesian Languages and Literatures, Auckland, New Zealand, spoke on "Sources for the Old Rapanui Language of Easter Island." To engage the general public in particular, a special series of weekly lec-

tures on language was concurrently offered at Bremen's lovely 16th-century "Haus der Wissenschaft" ("House of Science") alongside the city's main mediaeval cathedral; as a special invitee and co-organizer of the "Festival of Languages", Dr. Fischer delivered, in German, to an elderly audience of about eighty, the lecture "Die Entzifferung der Osterinselschrift" ("The Decipherment of the Easter Island Script").

It was a thrilling schedule for all. There was a Catalonian Day, a Chinese Day, a Ladin Day (about the Romansch language of the Swiss valleys), a Turkish Day, an African Day ... then Pole, Maltese, French, Chamorro, Luxembourgish, Lower German, Mediterranean, Uzbek, Canadian-Québec, Amerindian, and many more. For three entire weeks it was a linguist's dream-come-true.

And historic "firsts" occurred as well. A genuine "Tower of Babel" rose to the occasion: a five-meter-high (18 ft) structure in four tiers, of 6,500 identical wooden blocks, was erected before Bremen's celebrated Science Center, each one of the blocks having been inscribed in bold letters – by a group of secondary-school volunteers and by assisting linguists – with the name of one of the world's languages ... with Rapanui again featured. On another day, Prof. Dr. Stolz and Dr. Fischer, using a sound system and assisted by a small group of graduate students, read out the names of over 6,500 separate languages inside a brightly new and cavernous shopping mall alongside the river Weser, as surprised shoppers stopped, stared, and asked questions about language: the whole point of the event. A cheer rang out when Rapanui's name resounded in the fourth hour. The whole "Guinness-worthy first" lasted five and a half hours.

Hundreds attended the "Festival of Languages". All of Bremen was enthused for three whole weeks. Indeed, there was no mistaking that the general profile of language, language study, language engagement, the crucial role of language in society was heightened throughout the larger community. Several new language societies were founded during the "Festival of Languages". Several different volumes of the academic proceedings will be published in 2011. Perhaps of most prominent significance was the official founding of VO-CES: The International Center for the Study and Teaching of Lesser-Used Languages, by Prof. Dr. Stolz, his wife and colleague Dr. Christel Stolz, Dr. Dónall Ó Riagáin of Ireland, and Dr. Fischer of New Zealand. This new linguistic center, dedicated to the world's smaller and, mainly but not exclusively, endangered languages, will be based at the University of Bremen, and Rapanui will again be an important member of its program.

The "Festival of Languages" had set a high goal from the very beginning. "I wish to achieve," Prof. Dr. Stolz had told a journalist before the grand opening, "that language is understood to be omnipresent and inalienable, and that linguistics is appreciated as the authoritative discipline in this regard."

It had taken two full years of planning, coordination, fundraising, and management before the doors finally opened in Bremen to the world's leading linguists. Another two years

will now be spent publishing the papers, analyzing the results, and assessing the undeniable success of the “Festival of Languages”. For many more years after this, the resonance of history’s largest linguistic gathering will doubtless continue to inspire the world.

And Easter Island’s Rapanui language was more than a significant part of it all: far more than a simple wooden block, it proved a veritable foundation stone.

**JAMES COOK AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE PACIFIC**  
An Exposition held in Bonn, Berne, and Vienna

*Herbert von Saher,  
Boemendaal, Netherlands.*

THIS YEAR, AN IMPORTANT EXPOSITION will be held in the cities of Bonn, Germany; Berne, Switzerland, and Vienna, Austria. It is important because of the trophies that were carried back from the three voyages of Captain James Cook between 1768 and 1780. The objects were mainly divided between the British Museum in London, the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, and the Zoological Museum of the University of Göttingen in Germany. As far as I know, this is the first time that these three collections are on display together, along with loans from many other places.

The objects include nautical instruments used during the expedition and models of the ships together with paintings of Cook and his officers; an enormous number of spears, ceremonial paddles, headrests, bowls, and other woodcarvings; headdresses of feathers, reeds, etc; ornaments of porpoise bone and mother of pearl; large decorated pieces of barkcloth; plus some objects collected by the zoologists on board the cruises. The area of collection was much wider than the well-known Polynesian Triangle: it ranged from Siberia and Alaska in the North to the Straits of Magellan, and Australia in the South. Having these objects in one exposition allows a visitor to make comparisons and, above all, to realize that the people who fabricated them all belong to one Polynesian family. Every group of islands in this area is represented by its own cluster, and if a visitor wants to find arguments against Thor Heyerdahl’s theory of an Andean origin of the Polynesians, he just has to walk through this exposition in order to be convinced.

Sadly, the Easter Island artifact cluster only contains a few objects: a ceremonial paddle and a dance staff, artifacts that most of our readers will already have seen. More rare is an elegant carved wooden hand, apparently used in the Birdman ceremonies, and held by a dancer; two shell ornaments; the only piece of barkcloth (for the *ariki*) that was collected by Cook, plus a feather headdress acquired by Johann Reinhold Forster. It is in combination with the entries from the other islands that these objects derive their importance.

I was particularly impressed by the many large-sized pieces of barkcloth on display and their beautiful geometric designs, which are rarely shown elsewhere. Also impressive

are the large feather mantles, which are in remarkably good condition. They alone make a visit to this exposition worthwhile.

A 275 page catalogue (in English or German) accompanies this exposition; it shows all the objects interspersed with articles by experts. Its price of € 29 is dirt-cheap, and it is a must for every student of Polynesian culture. The exposition in Bonn will already have come to a close when this issue of *RNJ* reaches you; the follow-up in Vienna will be from May 10 to September 13 and in Berne, from October 7 to February 13, 2011.

**THE PROJECTED EXHIBIT OF A RAPA NUI MOAI IN PARIS** divided the island community. A statue was slated to be shipped to Paris for an exhibit sponsored by Louis Vuitton. Louis Vuitton has held numerous art exhibits since the opening of its Paris gallery in 2006. The show that just ended was an exhibit called *Ecritures Silencieuses* (silent writing), featuring three *rongorongo* tablets borrowed from the Vatican collection. The next scheduled exhibit was a *moai* from Rapa Nui. It was said that the *moai* would be shipped via sea and likely up the Seine on a barge. The exposition was to be in the center of Paris, in the Jardin de las Tuileries, and scheduled to last for two weeks. It was said that the exhibit was to help promote Rapanui “cultural identity”. Edgard Hereveri, the Easter Island tourist director, said the statue would “expend spiritual energy to change the conscience of humanity.” However, in February, a contingent of Rapanui converged in Hangaroa village with placards protesting the removal of a *moai* from the island and 90% of voters cast a “no” vote to removing a *moai* from the island.

**EASTER ISLAND FOUNDATION NEWS**

**WHAT’S NEW AT THE EIF OFFICE**

GREETINGS FROM BAYWOOD PARK! 2009 was a challenging year for the EIF due to the state of the economy. We sincerely thank all who were able to help us out with an end-of-year donation and those who have promptly renewed their memberships for 2010. Please know that your past and continued support of the EIF is deeply appreciated! Due to your help, we were able to keep our office open, which was in danger of closing. Generous donations to our scholarship fund enabled us to award four scholarships for 2010!

Thanks to some very generous EIF members, we have expanded our selection of used, rare and out of print books. For a complete list of titles, go to [islandheritage.org](http://islandheritage.org) and click on “publications”. This page is updated regularly, so check frequently and see if anything on your Rapa Nui wish list is available!

The EIF has a new presence online. Please visit [islandheritage.org](http://islandheritage.org) and check it out. A very special *Thank You* to one of our Founding Members, Alan Drake, who graciously helped us in creating our new website. *Maururu nui*, Alan!