

Whilst Montecino's sources are strong in the anthropology of food, some of the historical materials appear to have been taken from existing, more popular texts. For example, the retelling of the Angata rebellion is done entirely from Routledge's account, with no attention paid to the very detailed and well-researched Van Tilburg (2003) or the more philosophical Castro Flores (2006), although the latter is cited in the bibliography.

But, I do not want to be too critical of this innovative work. I wish a bit more attention had been paid to the accuracy of dates, instead of just accepting what informants said. One element that I felt was lacking is an appreciation of just how inventive the Rapanui are, in the past and in the present. Multiple influences bombard the little island, but people stick to what they know and have respect for it. As they changed their ancient religion from the stone figures (*moai*) to the ordeal of the birdman and, then, to Christianity in various forms, so they adapted their cuisine to what was available, combining and recombining their fresh ingredients in ways that suited them. Now that the Rapanui are free to bring whatever influences they wish to their island, small supermarkets and a variety of other commercial enterprises sell goods from Chile, but also Polynesia, imported using the only way to get to the island by air: LAN, the Chilean airline.

The earth oven (*umu*) is a rarity, except for tourists, but cooktop pots still boil meat, fish and vegetables; Chilean fried bread (*sopaipillas*) came from the metropole, whilst sashimi reveals the Japanese influence. There even is "fast food" and limited take away as tourist and local alike delight in the resources of the island along with the imports.

Food as display is practiced by the prominent families of the island in the form of taking over the running of religious festivals where anyone who stops by at the family compound is offered food and drink (non-alcoholic, usually) as part of a cycle throughout the year, surprising tourists with local hospitality. Who does what and when is detailed on pages 214-215, on public display. These feasts generally, but not always, focus on the ancient oven for the cooking of the food, as Montecino notes in her concluding paragraphs.

The delight many Rapanui have for food and cooking is evident in Chapter IV, with extensive quotes from informants about how and why they cook and eat as they do.

REFERENCES

- Castro Flores, N. 2006. *El diablo, dios y la profetisa. Evangelización y milenarismo en Rapa Nui 1864-1914*. Rapa Nui: Rapanui Press/Museum Store. [Not to be missed is the superb "Cantata Rapanui" composed and played by Julio Hotus and Silvia Abarca on an accompanying CD, an astonishing feat of invention and composition].
- Van Tilburg, J. 2003. *Among Stone Giants. The Life of Katherine Routledge and her Remarkable Expedition to Easter Island*. New York: Scribner.

Archaeological Investigations of Marae Structures in Huahine, Society Islands, French Polynesia. Report and discussions

Paul Wallin and Reidar Solsvik.
Review by Georgia Lee

BAR International Series 2091 .2010.176 pages.
Illustrated throughout with maps, plans, drawings, and photographs. Includes contributions by James Coil; Fiona Petchey, Alan Hogg and D. Hood
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Archaeological Investigations of Marae Structures... is based on new fieldwork carried out on Huahine, French Polynesia, in 2001-2004. The work is within the framework of the project "Local Development and Regional Interactions: The Huahine Archaeological Project". It is in collaboration with the Kon-Tiki Museum and the Ethnographic Museum (Oslo); the Service de la Culture et du Patrimoine, Pape'ete; the Norwegian Research Council; and the Bishop Museum, Honolulu.

Huahine has seen much archaeological research in the past, mostly by Dr Yosihiko Sinoto; Wallin and Solsvik's work is a continuation of that, and their focus is on the question of the age of *marae* in Central East Polynesia.

According to the authors, *marae* complexes were built for multiple uses. They sort out two main phases: a Late Phase (megalithic stone structures used by paramount leaders; and Earlier Phases, used at family and lineage levels. Dating was conducted on charcoal from *marae* on the Windward Islands in order to control for wider context.

The authors study the changes in *marae* over time, both natural and cultural, how the structures were located in the landscape, and aspects of extended uses and modern alterations. The maps, plan drawings, profiles, drawn details, and photographs are excellent and numerous, making it easy to follow the excavation processes. The illustrations are clear and understandable with good descriptions on the dating of stone structures.

Wallin and Solsvik make some excellent points concerning restorations/reconstructions, and change. They cite Sinoto's careful reconstructions that stabilized sites but kept original shapes, and thus preserved lost prehistoric phases. Efforts by others often include "interpretation" that changes the shape of the structure (p. 104). The authors propose that only stabilization and slight restoration should be done on an original site. If a "reconstruction" is desired, then a copy or a model should be built elsewhere (such as at a museum) rather than make interpretative experiments on original structures. To combine features from a site can turn the whole *marae* into a "time-machine" with different chronological phases within the same structure (p. 105). [Sadly, we have seen that done too often on Rapa Nui *ahu!*].

I have only one “quibble” about this book. It would have helped if a native English speaker had read through it prior to publication. While the text is always understandable, errors in English usage could have been avoided.

Easter Island on the Air: British TV and Radio

Review by Paul G. Bahn

In Great Britain we recently had a TV show and a radio show devoted to Easter Island – they were very different in style and content, and both may be of interest to the readers of the *Rapa Nui Journal*.

Many readers must, like myself, have been intrigued by the widespread announcements in the media some time ago that a big new cave system had been discovered on the island, containing all kinds of wonders including some hitherto unknown rock art. So it was with great anticipation that I watched a TV documentary entitled “Easter Island Underworld”, made in 2009, which aired on the National Geographic Channel in Britain on 26 June this year. I assumed that it would present us with all these new finds. Imagine my disappointment when it showed us very little!

The blurb for the show claimed that the “network of dark caverns...sheds new light on the former islanders”. Er... no it doesn't. The script claimed that the cavers were “hoping to find new clues as to how the island's once vibrant community disappeared”. I can only assume that their hopes were dashed. Later the voiceover proclaimed that “caves like these are providing tantalizing clues as to what happened to Easter Island's once thriving community” – but we were shown no such clues.

Overall, the show presented a fair picture of what we know of the island's past, with some terrific visuals, as one would expect from National Geographic, and numerous dramatic re-enactments of conflict, with painted natives fighting, hiding, toppling a statue, doing the birdman race, being shot by Europeans, or dying of smallpox. I strongly suspect that the two writers, Geoff Luck and Robert Zakin, had read Flenley & Bahn very thoroughly. The account of the island's past covered everything from arrival through deforestation and religious/social change to Europeans, and scarcely put a foot wrong.

Where the new work is concerned, however, it was disconcerting to find that the “new caves” received at most only 5 or 10 minutes of footage scattered through the whole show. Andrzej Ciszewski, the “cave exploration leader”, together with “an expert team of experienced cave explorers” from Poland are shown abseiling down into cavities, or crawling through tight spaces, exploring the “underground labyrinth of caves”. In one sequence, they fix ropes to rocks on the surface (difficult, as the volcanic rock cracks easily) and descend to an inaccessible cave in a cliff face. They certainly look impressive in their caving gear, and using “lasers and other hi-tech surveying equipment to create a 3-dimensional

map of every cave they explore”. We are told at the end that they have found more than 320, and we see some of the detailed maps they have produced of some cavities and their contents. They plot artificial walls, fireplaces, and any other finds on these maps.

We are also shown divers exploring the coastal waters; but the sum total of information revealed here was that the island has no coral reef, and hence is poor in marine resources!

So what about the great new discoveries? The voiceover says of the ancient islanders that “the haunting statues they left behind dominate the landscape; but underground other equally significant relics of this once vibrant culture have survived.” And at the end of the show, we are told that “many of the volcanic caves and tunnels underground are yet to be fully explored; the most recent expeditions have uncovered a treasure-trove of artifacts.” Alas, all that we are shown in the footage is cave walls; a few artificial walls; one almost complete human skeleton lying *in situ*; a few human bones in a different cave; a freshwater pool; and a single *mata'a*! No rock art at all, no treasure-trove of artifacts, not even fireplaces (which are merely depicted on the maps). One can only assume that nothing of any consequence has actually been found, as otherwise it would certainly have been featured prominently by the National Geographic show.

The program also features three talking heads. One is Claudio Cristino, introduced as “Easter Island's resident archaeologist”, who accurately explains the main events in the island's past. Another is Sergio Rapu, who mentions caches of *mata'a* in caves, and comments on such topics as deforestation, isolation and cannibalism. Terry Hunt, in brief appearances, presents his claim that it was the rats and Europeans that did it – denying that there was any ecocide on the island: “what actually happened was genocide”!

Finally, one claim in the normally impeccable voiceover has left me absolutely baffled: “Radiocarbon dating on the remains of an early boat suggests they reached Easter Island somewhere between 500 and 1000 AD”. What on earth is this referring to? If it means some boat on a different island, what possible relevance can this have to dating the arrival of people on Rapa Nui?

By way of complete contrast, Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, is presenting a “History of the World in 100 Objects” on BBC's Radio 4. Each show is 15 minutes in length, and studies one important object from the Museum's collection, spanning the whole of the human past, and many parts of the world. Recently it was the turn of Hoa Hakananai'a, the museum's basalt *moai*, arguably the finest statue ever carved on the island. This interesting show was unfortunately marred by the fact that MacGregor always pronounced its name as “Hoa Hakanana-Eye-a”, his claim that it has been roughly translated as “Hidden Friend”, and his belief that it used to stand on a coastal platform, with other stone giants as companions, before being transferred to Orongo.