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## Letters

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor: After reading Lehman Henry's article on The Area of Rapa Nui (*RNJ* 8:71-3) I checked some sources of information not mentioned in the article. Following is what I found:

- 1968 *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (3rd ed., 1963)  
(Ninth printing) (p.617)  
c.46 sq. mi (119 sq. km.)
- 1977 *Calendario Atlante de Agostini* (p.685)  
162.5 sq. km (63 sq.mi.)
- 1955 *Diccionario Enciclopédico Abreviado (Espasa):*  
Vol.6 (p.335)  
118 sq. km (46 sq.mi.)
- 1965 Appendix 1 (p.1151)  
179 sq. km. (69 sq.mi.)
- 1975 Appendix 2 (p. 1106)  
162.5 sq km (63 sq. mi.)

As Mr. Henry points out, it appears that encyclopedias update their information from time to time. The well-known and respected *Espasa Abreviado* (at present in 10 volumes) "enlarged" the island between 1955 and 1965, and then "shrank" it between 1965 and 1975.

Dan Gartner, Canberra, Australia.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the coverage given me in Easter Island Foundation News (*RNJ* 8:4, pg. 106). However I would like to correct some of the statements which misrepresent my position at WMF.

I have been a consultant for the WMF Easter Island program since 1978. The emphasis of this program lies in the conservation of the monumental archaeological heritage of the Island. Hence, most of the projects carried out have been developed by CONAF or the Centro Nacional de Restauración y Conservación of Santiago. The only collaborative efforts have been the two meetings that were organized by the three institutions with ICCROM. These were the Reunión para el diagnóstico de la conservación del patrimonio de Isla de Pascua, held in Santiago de Chile, March 1988, and the Lavas and Volcanic Tuffs International Meeting held on the island, October 1990.

I take this opportunity to let you know that the Proceedings of this last meeting are now in print, published by ICCROM in a volume called *Lavas and Volcanic Tuffs*. A copy of this book will certainly be sent to the Mulloy Library.

A. Elena Charola, New York.

## REVIEWS

 *Voyage of Rediscovery: A Cultural Odyssey through Polynesia*. Finney, Ben, with Marlene Among, Chad Baybayan, Tai Crouch, Paul Frost, Bernard Kilonsky, Richard Rhodes, Thomas Schroeder, Dixon Stroup, Nainoa Thompson, Robert Worthington, Elisa Yadao. 1994.

University of California Press, Berkeley. \$30.  
326 pages plus index, appendices, notes and references.  
Black/white illustrations, charts, and maps.

Review by Georgia Lee

Basically, *Voyage of Rediscovery* is a technical book in that the central core contains detailed discussions of sailing maneuvers, sailing without modern instruments, meteorological maps, etc. These data show how Polynesians sailed across the Pacific without benefit of navigational instruments. But the book also is about the revelation that has occurred for Hawaiians and other Polynesians who have had--as a result of the voyages--a portion of their forgotten past returned to them. It is a significant work, particularly for those with an interest in Polynesian migrations.

In Chapter 1, "Without Ships or Compass", the history of discovery in the Pacific and the earlier thinking about Polynesian colonization are reviewed. It was Thor Heyerdahl and Andrew Sharp who challenged the general thinking on migration and discovery. Heyerdahl's view had the Polynesians stemming from two separate migrations from the American mainland, whereas Sharp accepted the view that Polynesians came from the Asian side of the Pacific but, rather than intentionally colonizing their ocean world, they found their way from island to island by being blown off course or by floating aimlessly around the ocean in the hope of being cast ashore on an uninhabited island.

The response of archaeology was to search the islands and dig for evidence indicating how the islands were settled. These efforts have confirmed that Polynesia was settled from the West and migrations have been traced by the presence of Lapita pottery in early sites. The Lapita people were ancestors of those who became Polynesian in and around Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

However, hard information that would either refute or confirm Sharp's hypothesis of drift vs deliberate sailing was lacking; voyaging canoes and traditional navigators had long since disappeared from East Polynesia.

Chapter 2, "Experimental Voyaging", describes the creation and testing of replica sailing canoes. The first to be constructed, *Nalehia*, confirmed that double-hulled canoes could sail to windward. The second, *Hokule'a*, was modified for heavy seas and, although built of modern materials, it was a traditional design. But knowledge of how to steer by stars and waves had been lost in Hawai'i. A master navigator from Satawal, where ancestral systems are still in use today, became the pilot on this voyage.

Here the book outlines non-instrument methods for navigation, orientation and course setting, keeping on a course via star observations, and making landfall by subtle clues such as ocean swells, floating debris and the appearance of birds.

*Hokule'a* sailed on May 1, 1978 from Maui and reached Tahiti after 32 days at sea. The return took 22 days. This voyage demolished Sharp's limits on Polynesian voyaging capabilities and is a classic example of experimental archaeology.