Publications
Just when you thought it was safe to go to the bookstore again, it had to happen. It was inevitable that someone would write the world’s worst off-the-wall book about Easter Island. Having suffered through some of those old turkeys such as Werner Wolff’s Island of Death (statues in the quarry were blown onto their ahu by volcanic activity) and the super-diffusionist American Indians in the Pacific by Heyerdahl, I thought we had reached the nadir. Not so. R.A. Jairazbhoy has surpassed them all. The Ish tar of the world.

It seems that, according to Jairazbhoy, everything can be traced back to Egypt. Some Polynesian/Rapa Nui features are tracked from Egypt to Mexico to South America and then to Rapa Nui. Along with many valid but misinterpreted references, Jairazbhoy relies heavily on his own previous writings as proof of his theories. (For example, and to give a feel for his mind-set, one of his earlier books is titled Ancient Egyptians and Chinese in America.)

Even the Easter Island birdman contest can be traced back to Egypt: “If one were to propose antecedents to the practice, the thought of the Egg of the Egyptian sungod would have to come to mind” (Actually, this possibility not once crossed MY mind).

The Conclusion starts off with: “If one looks simply at the ethnographic art of the Pacific islanders . . . one would never suspect that there are links in these cultures with the high civilizations of the Continents” (No Kiddings! And, “This is the only way of accounting for the remarkable parallels in belief with the higher civilisations . . .”

1. for one. am tired of racist theories and attitudes which denigrate the capabilities and creativity of the Polynesian peoples. Aside from a good laugh, I can’t think of any reason to recommend this book.

References

PUBLICATIONS


The English summary states: The enigmatic rongorongo-unique script in Polynesia was invented by Easter Islanders before the first contacts by Europeans. This publication presents the results of deciphering, reading and translation of hieroglyphic texts on two kohau rongorongo tablets from the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology (MAE-Kunstkammer) in St. Petersburg. The study shows it to be a hieroglyphic script that reproduced the living speech and every sign is equal to the morph or the syllable. There is a considerable number of plants’ names, some toponyms (names of bays), titles of chiefs, etc. The book contains a catalog of signs with their meaning and translation.


This quality-produced volume contains papers by Davide and Viviano Domenici (I naufraghi del Pacifico), Giuseppe Orefici (Il popolamento della Polinesia e Rapa Nui; L’origine dei Rapa Nui tra storia e leggenda; and Risorse economiche e attività espressive), Gianpaolo Monti Martinengo (Geologia dell’Isola di Pasqua), Luigi Piacenza (La vegetazione dell’isola e le sue modifiche nel tempo), Andrea Drusini (Aspetti antropologici dei Rapa Nui), Giuliano Romano (Astronomia nell’Isola di Pasqua), Giancarlo Ligabue (Il sentiero dell’alba), José Miguel Ramirez (Migrazioni polinesiane), Andrzej Jacek Tomaszewski (L’industria litica), Antonio Paolillo (Applicazioni tecnologiche: Agricoltura e territorio), Georgia Lee (L’arte rupestre), and Patricia Vargas Casanova (Modelli insediativi).


This catalog was produced to accompany an exhibition of Easter Island artifacts, along with some other Pacific artifacts, shown this year in Milan, Italy. The exhibition was scheduled to end in May but as attendance far exceeded expectations, it was continued until mid-September. The exhibited pieces are illustrated and described (pp. 178-282); these were gathered from various sources in Chile and Italy, including several pieces from the Sebastian Englert Museum on Easter Island.

The main text of the book contains various papers about the island: Giuseppe Orefici (L’Isola di Pasqua e la Polinesia, and
Il Progetto Rapa Nui; Maurizio Biordi (Il 'Primitivismo' e l'arte oceaniana: l'Isola di Pasqua e la Polinesia); Wilhelm Solheim II (Le vie marittime dall'Asia sud-orientale all'Isola di Pasqua); Marco Biscione (La navigazione nel Pacifico); Giancarlo Ligabue (Nocchieri del Pacifico); John Flenley (Vegetazione e civiltà sull'Isola di Pasqua); Luigi Piazza (La produzione delle fibre vegetali nell'Isola di Pasqua); Andrea Drusini (Antropologia dell'Isola di Pasqua); Andrzey Tomaszewski (L'industria litica dell'Isola di Pasqua); Giuliano Romano (L'astronomia nell'antica Rapa Nui); Georgia Lee (L'arte di Rapa Nui); Catherine and Michel Orliac (La scultura lignea dell'Isola di Pasqua); William Ayres (Architettura e figure in pietra dell'Isola di Pasqua); and Paul Bahn (C'erano cannibali sull'Isola di Pasqua?).


- Revista Española del Pacifico, No. 4/Año IV for Enero-Diciembre 1994. Asociacion Española de Estudios del Pacífico, Madrid, Spain. This issue contains a paper by Francisco Mellén (Hallazgo en el Museo de América de una azuela de piedra, recogida en Tahiti por marineros europeos a finales del siglo XVIII), plus other papers, some of which concern the voyages of Mendana and Quiros.


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The “European Society for Oceanists (ESO) is a new professional organization which addresses itself to researchers with a regional interest in Oceania. “Oceania” is defined as comprising the classic geographic areas of Australia, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

In the context of an increasingly integrated Europe (politically, economically and scientifically) the Society aims to enhance intellectual exchange and cooperation between individual researchers and between scholarly institutions, both within and outside Europe. This goal is to be achieved by maintaining an information network, by organizing conferences and by other appropriate means.

The society shall also endeavor to represent the interests of Pacific peoples to the general public and institutions. The ESO is an interdisciplinary organization; membership is open to anthropologists, linguists, historians, geographers, psychologists and other researchers. ESO Main Contact: Bente Wolff, Institute of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, Frederiksholms Kanal 4, DK-1220 Copenhagen K, Denmark. FAX:+45-35-32 3465; Phone:+45-33-473233/+45-35-323464; e-mail:es-bw@palais.natmus.min.dk

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