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## EIF News

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## Easter Island Foundation

KAY KENADY SANGER, EIF PRESIDENT

not endless wastes of ocean but a vista of valleys and mountain peaks stretching to the horizon. He does not bother to mention that, before the end of the Ice Age, there was nobody around to sit on this spot, no matter what the truth of his description of what they might have seen from up there! Nor does he ever explain why the rise in sea level completely drowned all traces of his supposed great civilization—why had it built nothing at all on the higher bits of ground?

In any case, his quest is to seek traces of the survivors of that cataclysm. Tongariki is shown again: "Surrounded by the deeps of the Pacific Ocean, Easter Island is a mystery made of statues". Hancock, now perched on Rano Raraku, tells us that archaeologists see the making of *moai* and the sudden abandonment of this activity as a "great folly" (do we?), "but the ancients weren't stupid and they didn't do all this for nothing"!! So why did they do it? Hancock proceeds to enlighten us, over a shot of Anakena.

"For a start, the sculptures are rooted in astronomy which would have been an essential tool for the navigators who first found this place. The giant statues and the platforms they stand on face the rising sun on specific days of the year (how can this be, when he has just mentioned that they occur almost all round the island?!?) and target significant stars. It was part of a massive endeavour to connect sky to ground, and it's a pattern I'm seeing all over the ancient world. But there's no evidence whatsoever of any contact between these early cultures (nice of him to admit it!). Two thousand miles from anywhere, Easter Island is the remotest inhabited spot in the world. Yet it emerges from legend as a place of refuge for the survivors of a terrible flood that had destroyed the earth at the end of a prehistoric golden age (does it??). The only real event that fits the bill is the sudden end of the last Ice Age when melted ice caps flooded the globe. Many coastal areas which could have supported an advanced seagoing civilisation would have been inundated and the people forced to find new homes."

Later in the show, after reminding us of his theories about the astronomy and "star-maps" of 10,500 BC supposedly incorporated in the Giza Plateau and the Angkor temples, he repeats that on Easter Island ". . . the obsession with astronomy surfaces again. Many of the statues line up with the sun and the stars". So he believes that all these sites and others are linked, they are not distributed randomly (as the rest of us poor fools have always thought): no, they are the result of a deliberate plan. "No one could have done this without being able to survey the whole world". These sites, like Easter Island, are all allegedly known as "navels or centres of the world" (and he shows us that famous boulder). They form a network of interconnected sites which the ancients could have used to map and survey the earth! But of course he never explains why this network was made up of such radically different types of monument—quite apart from the irritating little detail of their widely differing dates.

But the bit that really made me laugh out loud was as follows: ". . . and the great statues of Easter Island—surely not accidentally left lying exactly midway between Giza and Angkor?"

And some people actually take this tosh seriously. Oh dear. "New Age" definitely rhymes with Sewage.

WE ARE DELIGHTED to announce that the William Mulloy Library is now scheduled to be up and running on Easter Island by October 1999. A goal of the late archaeologist, William Mulloy, the library has been a major objective of the EIF since the Foundation's inception. The new facility will be housed in one of the recently remodeled buildings at the Sebastian Englert Museum. Generous donations from Foundation supporters will help furnish the library which will house Spanish and English language books, copies of research papers, and scanned materials on CD ROM, as well as a computer. Donations will also fund a salary for a librarian whom we hope will be Rapanui. Those who wish to donate books for the new library should contact RNJ offices.

In conjunction with the Library's scheduled opening, Georgia Lee will lead a special archaeological tour of the island departing in October 1999. Tour participants will be (we hope) on the island for the arrival of the *Hokule'a*, barring any unforeseen delays in the long sea voyage. Interested readers should call Far Horizons Archaeological Tours for more information: 800-552-4575 or by email <journey@farhorizon.com> or <rapanui@compuserve.com>.

The EIF board voted in August to continue support of a sister library at the Fonck Museum in Viña del Mar. This popular library will remain a major Easter Island research center, with rare and irreplaceable books, photographs and electronically stored archival material.

The Foundation needs your continued support for the successful operation of these two libraries, plus scholarships for Rapanui students, and fellowships for Easter Island research. Please remember the "Navel of the Earth" with your holiday gift giving. You may mail a check to the EIF at PO Box 6774, Los Osos, CA 93412.

### Pacific 2000

The next conference dedicated to Easter Island and Polynesian studies will take place on Hawai'i Island, August 7-12, 2000. Conference chair is Dr Steven Roger Fischer. The conference venue will be the Hawaii Preparatory Academy at Kamuela (Waimea), Hawaii. Our next issue of RNJ will contain full details and a call for papers.

### Moai Sightings

*La Depeche* (Tahiti) for the 16th September featured a full page ad for Heineken beer that shows the beer logo superimposed on the face of a *moai* at Rano Raraku. Jeez, is nothing sacred? Thanks to Robert Koenig for sending the picture.

Bud Henry of Hawai'i recently returned from Rapa Nui and informed us of an unusual sighting: fuzzy stuffed teddy bear-like *moai*, made of royal blue or golden-colored plush. These are for sale (\$35) in one of the island's stores.