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WEBSTER'S RAPA NUI - ENGLISH THESAURUS DICTIONARY (Review)

Shawn McLaughin

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create a life that happened hundreds of years ago, unless that life involved keeping diaries and the like. So the author, Dunmore, is forced to speculate quite a bit about La Pérouse's early life, what he might have done, or seen, or thought. We learn that the man was "matter of fact" and "competent" and had a "sense of proportion". Sterling qualities all, but it makes for some dull reading. But while the story picks up when the expedition puts out to sea, the sailings are not covered in detail. I would have liked to have learned more about La Pérouse's life, in the broader Pacific context.

A search of Vanikoro that began in 1964 continues, and enough evidence has been found to say with certainty that the graveyard of the La Pérouse expedition has at last been located. Cannonballs, a skeleton in the reef, and various material items have been found, some indicating that at least a few of the crew survived the wrecks. Some think the survivors built a small boat and sailed away. Perhaps — but, if so, there is no record of it. The survivors apparently were in conflict with the local islanders and seemingly ended up in the stockpot. A sad ending to a marvelous adventure!

As for the book itself, I am torn in how to appraise it. I suppose that Dunmore had to scrounge for every last bit of information he could find, searching for tidbits of La Pérouse's life (and probably, a lot of material was destroyed in the French Revolution). So the author likely did the best with what he had to go with. Am I a better person for having read the book? No. Do I know more about La Pérouse now than I did before? Yes. Would I buy the book? Probably not. Would I read it again? Definitely not. Better to check this out from the library.

This book is part of the "Lives of Great Explorers" series, with 267 pages plus Notes, Bibliography, and Index.

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WEBSTER'S RAPA NUI - ENGLISH THESAURUS DICTIONARY

Philip M. Parker

Icon Publishing, 2008
ISBN 978-0-497836-76-4
\$28.95 from Amazon.com

Review by Shawn McLaughlin

As a companion to *Webster's English to Rapa Nui Crossword Puzzles* (by Philip M. Parker, Icon Publishing, 2005), there's a new reference work for Easter Island bibliophiles — *Webster's English to Rapa Nui Thesaurus - Dictionary*. Touted as the first of its kind, this

thesaurus / dictionary is a unique and valuable addition to the reference section of any Rapanuiphile's bookshelf, although with the otherwise indiscriminate incorporation of Chilean / Spanish terms, it might be better to use the word "Pascuense" rather than "Rapa Nui" [*sic*: "Rapanui"]. Nevertheless, this 123-page-long, 6"×9" soft bound book contains a Rapa Nui to English thesaurus, a cross-listing of English subjects to Rapa Nui subjects, a vocabulary study list, and an index. Here's a sample entry for the word *mana* from the Rapa Nui to English Thesaurus:

Power; **synonyms** (*n*) force, ability, potency, authority, control, energy, agency, domination, intensity, strength, effectiveness, effect, aptitude, capability, command, gift, jurisdiction, mightiness, rule, vigor, weight, mastery, function, efficiency; (*v*) influence, might, domination, faculty, capacity, efficacy;
antonyms (*n*) powerlessness, helplessness, weakness

And here are the entries under the letter "O" from the Index of English Subjects to Rapa Nui Subjects:

oar see 'AO / **ocean** see Tai; **ocean current** 'AU / **ocean current** see 'AU / **one** see ETAHI / **onion** see ONIANA / **opt** see 1. ESCOGER; 2. SELECCIONAR; 3. VAC. / **orange** see 1. ANANI; 2. URE OMO / **oregano** see OREKANO / **orgasm** see REKE REKA / **out** see 1. 'A MU'a; 2. 'I HAHO; **wash out** / TATA; **pour out** PIPĪ / **outstanding** see HAKAIRI / **oven** see RONA / **over** see HAKA'OTI / **overcast** see MOTIHOR / **overcoat** see PARATOA / **ownership** see TAO'A / **ox** see 'UCI

The vocabulary lists provide verbs and nouns from Rapanui to English and English to Rapanui. For verb examples, there are **haka mataku** for "frighten" or **tautora** for "suffer" and **read** for "tai'o" or **medicate** for "taute". For noun examples, there are **hia hia** for "handsaw" or **inanga** for "chest" and **abdomen** for "manava" or **meat** for "kiko".

There are 57 pages to the thesaurus proper and 67 pages to the index — an altogether not insubstantial assortment for what is otherwise a fairly compact little book.

Together with the more classic works by Fuentes (*Dictionary & Grammar of the Easter Island Language* - Editorial Andres Bello, 1960) and Churchill (*Easter Island: The Rapanui Speech and the Peopling of Southeast Polynesia* - Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1912); and recent works such as Sallés, *et al.* (*Rapa Nui Lengua y Cultura: Diccionario Ilustrado: Rapa Nui* - Pehuén, 2006) and even Pauly (*Ara o te Vanana / Kohau Kimi Rave'a* [Phrasebook / Dictionary] - Comercial 3G S.A., 2008), this thesaurus / dictionary provides not just another Easter Island linguistic resource but, because of the inclusion of Spanish terms, it represents an opportunity to evaluate the evolution of language spoken on the island and by extension the evolution of the island's culture.

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