

The volume is organized in five chapters. Chapter One provides the reader with the environmental setting while Chapter Two deals with the history, including oral tradition; the major part of the publication. Chapters Three and Four describe the archeological survey. The general conclusion of the archaeological field survey is discussed in Chapter Five. Appendices such as "Fishes of Ra'ivavae" (Appendix 1, both scientific and local names are listed; "Whaling Ship Log-book" (Appendix 2 not 1 as stated in the text, pp. 17); Land Names"; and "Flora" are useful. The list of fishes however, does not differentiate between inshore, offshore, and pelagic species nor does the list indicate how the data was collected. Generously illustrated, the publication contains 164 figures (Figure 5.8 is mislabeled, pp. 193), 13 tables, and 26 photos.

Little is known about Ra'ivavae's cultural development and how the small prehistoric island society fits into the larger Polynesian settlement pattern, cultural concepts, and island and inter-island exchange network (but see M. I. Weisler, Issues in the Colonization and Settlement of Polynesian Islands, 1998. *Easter Island and East Polynesian History*, P. C. Casanova, ed.: 73-86. Santiago: Instituto de Estudios Isla de Pascua, Universidad de Chile). For instance, did Ra'ivavae undergo the same social processes as the other small island societies in Eastern Polynesia? Only future archaeological investigation will solve many of these issues. However, Edwards' publication of the archaeological survey sheds light on several aspects of Ra'ivavae's past. Edwards was able to identify the various tribal territories, estimate the size of the territories, and understand how they were spatially occupied. Population size and potential resources were also estimated. With the help of some elders that still remembered the functions of particular structures, Edwards identified the use of numerous types of architectural remains. *Marae* (ritual structures) were recorded throughout the island; most were linked to settlements though some were found in remote locations. Eight of the 80 surveyed *marae* had stone statues (*tiki*) in red tuff. These statues were restricted to the late-prehistoric/early-historic period and were associated with enclosed court *marae* with *ahu* (small house adjacent to *marae*). Some enclosed court *marae* with *ahu* also had an avenue. While both male and female statues were represented, female statues dominated.

The publication suffers from careless editing and some inconsistencies between maps, tables, illustrations, and text. However, this does not detract from the otherwise solid work. Unfortunately Mark Eddowes' name was misspelled (not Eddoes, p. xi). The reference for Gayangos 1776:126 (p. 5) is missing from the bibliography. Many of the scientific names of fauna and flora are misspelled (pp. 2, 3, and 4) and it is sometimes difficult to know if some of the information provided is based on the author's observation or outside sources. There are inconsistencies in the manner in which the various place names are reported; e.g., in Figure 1.2, the mountain is written as Rara Te Repa while in the text it is written as Raraterepa (p. 2). The placename Mahanatoa on page 2 is not mentioned in Figure 2 as stated. Conventionally, plant and animal species that should begin with capital letters are consistently written with lower case letter. The subtitle on page 2 "Ancient Fauna" should perhaps have been labeled

"Native Fauna" since it is uncertain if the present fauna reflects that of the past. "Table 1.1 Ra'ivavae Seabird Sighting" includes a mixture of land birds, shore birds, as well as seabirds.

Generally, the work is largely descriptive pulling together all available written and oral information. I agree with Edwards that one must be skeptical of uncritically accepting oral tradition (p. 9), particularly in view of the loss of people due to epidemics in the 1800s (p. 16) that had devastating effects on the island society. Nevertheless, in concert with the extensive archaeological field survey Edwards' publication provides a baseline from which archeologists can work. Furthermore, the publication offers a valuable insight to Ra'ivavae's past and it enriches Oceanic prehistory. Edwards' book is an important contribution to Oceanic archaeology; it contains a wealth of information and is a book that will entice everyone with an interest in the Pacific.



Early Visitors to Easter Island, 1864-1877. The Reports of Eugène Eyraud, Hippolyte Roussel, Pierre Loti and Alphonse Pinart

Translated by Ann M. Altman, Ph.D.
ISBN1-880636-05-0

143 pages, including Appendix (List of ships that came to the island between 1722 and 1879)

Los Osos: Easter Island Foundation 2004

Review by Shawn McLaughlin

TWELVE YEARS AGO the Easter Island Foundation undertook its first voyage into book publishing; a voyage that would bring to Rapanuiphiles and scientists an unprecedented look at Easter Island and the realms of Oceania; a voyage that one could conceivably trace to the first visitors on Easter Island who described what they saw. For, in the words of Eyraud, Roussel, Loti, and Pinart, the world first became aware of this remarkable little island. And because of the dedicated efforts of Georgia Lee, Frank Morin, and Ann Altman, we can all share those words, that awareness, and those first voyages.

So it's no small surprise that I enjoyed reading *Early Visitors*. Obviously I've read much of this material before, some of it even in extended format as it appeared in back issues of *RNJ* – but it's a real treat to be able to have each of these accounts in one place. It is an amply illustrated volume, with reproductions of engravings and watercolors that reveal as much about Easter Island at the time as the explorers themselves, what they thought was important and what they remembered. The appendix, a comprehensive list of visitors to Easter Island from 1722 to 1879 (generously provided by Grant McCall), serves as a unique reference but also underscores just how much traffic the island has seen over the years, despite its isolation. I especially enjoyed the Loti chapter, as he is by far my favorite "early visitor". Of course, I realize Loti tends towards exaggeration, but his language is unequaled in the literature of Easter Island – evocative, visceral-

ally accurate, a delightful combination of naive explorer, excited child, and scientist wannabe. And I've wanted to read more of Loti ever since I came across the usual excerpts from his journals years ago. In fact, the last time I was on the island I purchased a tiny little volume entitled *Isla de Pascua*, composed entirely of Loti's journal extracts (Libros del Ciudadano/LOM Ediciones, 1998). It's in Spanish, so I purchased it more as a keepsake than as something I could fully appreciate (languages other than English being not my thing, alas). But now, thanks to Ann Altman and her translation of Loti – which, like the other translations, accurately and powerfully sustains the flavor and substance of the writing – I'm re-living Easter Island's past once again. And, in some ways, for the first time. ♦

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE RIDDLE OF THE PRE-CONTACT WORLD MAPS SOLVED

For the spring issue of *RNJ*, Vol. 18(1), I wrote an article with the title "The Riddle of the Pre-contact World Maps", giving a review of the book *1421, The Year China Discovered America* by Gavin Menzies. This book is relevant to Rapa Nui because on page 402 it shows a map on which Easter Island figures as one of the "Chinese bases across the Pacific Ocean".

My conclusion about this book was that the writer, an admirer of Chinese civilization, stated that around 1421 the Chinese were, in effect, the first circumnavigators of the globe. However, the journal keeper on board Admiral Cheng Ho's fleet only claims that they came as far as Malindi on the East African coast, but not around Cape of Good Hope into the Atlantic. I could find no proof that Menzies' claims were convincing, but as he is a retired submarine captain from the British Royal Navy and therefore likely knows more about astronomy, geography and trigonometry than I do, I accepted what he said about those subjects. I was hindered by the fact that, in his book, the Pirî Reis map was reproduced in a severely reduced size, preventing one to discern the details. I also was intrigued by the abundant, but illegible, text on this map, which plays a vital role in Menzies' thesis. This Pirî Reis map of 1513, made by a Turkish admiral and predating Magellan's departure by eight years, indicates – according to Menzies – the exact outline of the South American coast including the Strait of Magellan and down to Antarctica. That needed an explanation; in my opinion, its basis could not be the Chinese maps, so I remained with the question: whose maps? I ended my article with the following sentence: "I consider this one of the most intriguing questions of history and I think that more effort should be spent to solve it...."

After sending the article to the editors, I reread it several times and at a certain moment I said to myself: "why don't you volunteer and make an effort yourself if this riddle of the pre-contact maps intrigues you so much?" Well, I did, and now I can inform readers of *RNJ* that I have solved the riddle. The answer is – with the benefit of hindsight – rather obvious: there are no pre-contact maps.

In order to reach this conclusion some research was in-

deed necessary. In the first place, I had to obtain a copy of the Pirî Reis map in its actual scale, thus allowing me to recognize its details. I had heard that posters of this map were on sale in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul so I sent an emissary to Istanbul, who brought me the poster. To my dismay, I then discovered that the remarks on the map were in Arabic. I then approached the editor of the map, a friendly Turkish woman, who advised me to buy the book "The Piri Reis Map of 1513" by Gregory McIntosh. This book tells you everything you ever wanted to know about this map, including the translation of nearly all the remarks on it. There is quite a lot of text, practically half the South American continent is filled with it, and there are indications next to most of the islands and bays. It is, of course, of great importance to learn what Pirî Reis himself has to say. In this respect, his map differs from all others of the period.

Menzies states that the animals shown in South America on the Pirî Reis map are only known there and unknown in the rest of the world, and that is proof they were drawn by eye witnesses. Now that I was able to see the map in its proper scale, the first "animal" that drew my attention was a human without a head but with his eyes, mouth, etc., in his breast. This is an illustration of the myth that such people were living in South America. A cow-like figure is a bastard of an ox and a unicorn with one crooked horn; the guanaco could just as well be a dog or a fox; and a monkey is drinking a glass of red wine. Instead of proving that these pictures of non-existing animals were made by eye-witnesses, as Menzies states, they are the proof of the exact opposite.

Now for the geography: the translations on the Pirî Reis map of South America southward of Cabo de San Roque, on the Eastern corner of the continent, are quite clear; they go as follows: Rio Sao Francisco, Bahia de Todos los Santos, Cabo Frio, Bahia de Rio de Janeiro, Angra dos Reis. You can follow this on a modern map. But there they stop; his indications do not go further. This is as far as the Portuguese came at that time.

A vital part of Menzies' reasoning is formed by the Southern compass rose on the Pirî Reis map, which he states is exactly over the Falkland Islands, because there you have the star Canopus right overhead and this allows you to find the exact South Pole. He highly praises the Chinese that they have discovered it. On page 122, Menzies reproduces the Pirî Reis map of the Southern Pacific next to a modern one of his own – but one that conveniently does not show latitude indications. The Pirî Reis map does not either, but with it in hand you can see that there are three compass roses in the Atlantic. The Northern one is on a latitude halfway between the Canary and the Cape Verde Islands. It is obvious that it indicates the Tropic of Cancer at 23.5 degrees North. The Central compass rose is at approximately the latitude of the mouth of the Amazon River, and it is obvious that this indicates the equator. The Southern compass rose is nearly at the same latitude as Pirî's indication of Rio de Janeiro, and it is equally obvious that it indicates the Tropic of Capricorn at 23.5° South. Menzies says that this Southern compass rose is at the latitude of the Falkland Islands, a pivotal point in his reasoning. But the exact location of the Falkland Islands is 52° 40' South, as Menzies states himself. Had he read Pirî Reis' indications, he would