

different but related meanings of these ligatures.

Since the characters in nearly all ancient scripts are based on depictions of real world objects, it is not surprising that similar characters are used in different scripts. But, argues Huppertz, if two scripts contain a lot of identical ligatures, or even similar individual characters, this could not have happened by chance. Consequently, the script of Mohenjo Daro is probably the ancestor of the *kohau rongorongo* of Rapanui.

European seafarers were exploring the islands in the South Sea during the early 18th century, and Rapanui was discovered by Jacob Roggeveen on Easter Sunday, 1722. Several ships from different parts of Europe followed his route and visited this small island during the next 150 years, e.g. James Cook, Georg Forster and Johann Heinrich Forster in 1774, La Pérouse in 1786, Otto von Kotzebue and Adalbert von Chamisso in 1816, and Frederick W. Beechey in 1825. Most of them used the island during the long passage across the Pacific ocean to replenish their water and food supplies or to repair the ships. Some of these explorers had a very friendly impression of the island's people, while others described more hostile meetings between the crew and the indigenous people. When Peruvian slave-traders kidnapped a number of men from Rapanui in 1862 in order to take them back to Peru, the existence of the people of Rapanui was seriously endangered for the first time. Various diseases were introduced, large areas of the island were used as farm land by the Frenchman Dutrou-Bornier, and living space for the indigenous people was strictly limited.

At this time, missionaries from the French "Congrégation des Sacrés-Cœurs" began to intervene. The French bishop of Tahiti, Tepano Jaussen, was interested in trying to preserve what remained of the island's traditional culture. The first missionary, Eugène Eyraud, came to the island in 1864. Although living conditions were hard in the first few months, Eyraud would not give up and carried on his missionary work for many years, later together with Hippolyte Roussel. Some of the cultural attributes they described e.g., conceptions of personal law, property, or religion can be compared with several examples from other parts of the world, e.g. the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea, or even Alexander von Humboldt's observations of the Chayamas people in Venezuela.

The impression the author gains from all the missionaries who worked on Rapanui is that, in contrast to the colonial authorities or traders, they were the sort of people who took care of their new parish. On the one hand, they acted as agents of the colonial political power, but on the other they also appear to have tried to protect the indigenous peoples and their cultures. Since they also learned the local languages, and even often used them in church, they provided their parishioners new support in a world that had taken away the ancient traditions and beliefs. Huppertz reduces the success of the missionaries on Rapanui (and in the whole of Polynesia) to the replacement of an ancient (threatening and arbitrary) tabu system by a new (harmless and invariable) system of Christian religion.

Today, the religious life on Rapanui is strongly influenced by the last missionary, Bertrand Riedl, who died on February 4, 1994. Visitors can see his efforts to integrate traditional culture in, for instance, the architecture of the church in Hanga Roa. On Sundays, one can listen to the moving hymns sung in the church in the Rapanui language, whereas in everyday songs, Tahitian or Tuomotuan variants are preferred by the people.

In her conclusion, the author maintains that while scientists studying ancient cultures in most cases only want to make their (academic) mark, and are not seriously interested in the people living this culture, missionaries want to help the people in an era where industrialization is spreading throughout the world. Since missionaries live for several years with these people, she suggests, they are able to understand the intellectual world of their parishioners, whereas the social anthropologist is only interested in material objects and whether they are of artistic interest for ethnographic museums. These museums, she feels, collect objects on the basis of their artistic value, and not their actual (i.e., traditional) meaning.

In my opinion, such a statement seems quite unjustified with regard to Rapanui research. This island may be one of the few cultures in which missionaries helped to preserve the traditions. But it is also one of the few regions in the world whose material and non-material culture has been documented and researched thoroughly, not only in museums but also by conscientious scientists who tried to let the island people take part in their research, as demonstrated by the Sebastian Englert Museum in Hanga Roa, the Easter Island Foundation, and indeed this journal. This statement by Huppertz, as well as several other parts of her book, show a grievous ignorance of some extremely important facts about this unique culture. The neglect of these facts led her to interpretations that in many cases could not be accepted, thus weakening the effect of the original intention of this book.

Looking at the positive side, this book does give a short overview of some of the cultural traditions of Rapanui, and provides some useful insights into missionary activities on this island. One good idea was to include biographical notes on various people discussed in the text in separate typeset boxes, so that the reader gets interesting information without disturbing the main text.

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- This edition brings Stanley's *Handbook* up to date from the 2nd edition published four years ago, and covers the Australs, Gambiers, Marquesas, Societies and Tuamotus. Right up front, the author states that he pays his own way, arrives unexpectedly and unannounced, and tells it like it is. You can't get any better than that in a guide book. This may seem a minor point to some, but travel writers who make their purpose and affiliation known naturally receive better service and thus write accounts of their wonderful terrific experiences, elegant meals, and so on. However, the average schmuck, arriving in an aloha shirt and knee socks, is likely to find that things are not quite as advertised.
- The *Tahiti-Polynesia Handbook* has a strong ecological emphasis, be it damage to coral reefs by divers, the Greenhouse Effect, or destruction of Moruroa by nuclear testing. Whether it is prickly heat or AIDS, stone fishing or nude bathing, you will find it here. The 'Resources' section is loaded with references to the literature available for this part of the world. Stanley's guides are what we take on our trips to the South Pacific. Highly recommended.
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- Heading South American way? Check into the South American Explorers Club, 126 Indian Creek Road, Ithaca, NY 14850; phone (607) 277-0488. They have clubhouses in Lima and Quito and their journal, the *South American Explorer*, is full of travel tips and great stories.