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CD REVIEWS

CD-ROM RESOURCES

Review by GRANT MCCALL
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I have been meaning to write this summary review for some time and it takes a period of research on Rapanui to give me the space to put together my thoughts on some CD-ROM resources that have been produced in the last few years. These offer both specialist and generalist information on the Pacific Islands and, especially, Rapanui.

As a visit to any computer shop will reveal, there is no lack of material on CD-ROMs, Compact Disc – Read Only Media – from porn to paying taxes, including a not small number of encyclopaedias and other reference materials. Late in this plethora of sources has been material on the Pacific Islands.

That situation is being remedied rapidly with the issue of both specialist and generalist resources, four of which I want to take up here, with special reference, for *RNJ*, to Rapanui. All four above listed are cross platform: that is, whether you have the Mac or prefer to suffer for your computing with Windows, these resources will work easily.

Lal, Brij V. and Kate Fortune. 2000. *The Pacific Islands. An encyclopaedia*. Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press.
<http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu> \$100

Let's begin with the most ambitious and comprehensive of the lot and that is, as you would expect, the Lal and Fortune *Encyclopaedia*, which in spite of its date of publication is only recently available in 2001. This is also the most expensive, but the set comprises a hard bound, 664 page book, along with the CD-ROM, which comes in a plastic pocket on the inside of the back cover. All that is in the print version is on the CD, including photographs and maps. The format used on the CD is Adobe Acrobat, a free program that is included on the disc. Just click and go. The advantages of the CD over print become immediately obvious for searching and cross-referencing: the index is a series of links to the main text. In short, for concise, well written, authoritative articles this is your source. There really is nothing like it in English or, for all I know, in any other language. There are maps, photographs old and new, drawings and articles on people, places and main features of the Pacific Islands.

The emphasis in the eight chapters is on culture, society and history, with a chapter on each, along with the last one, which has 37 "Island profiles", including a particularly good one of Rapanui. No, I shouldn't say that! The rest is very com-

plete and will answer any questions that most are likely to ask about the Pacific. There are references for further study as well. It is a starting place for both the researcher and the traveler who wants to be well-informed before arrival. There is just enough illustrative material so that the armchair traveler can enjoy the journey as well, although that is not the market for this exhaustive work.

But, and this is the only draw back that this source has, it is an academic production or, at least, a production by academics for themselves and a wider audience, the latter being conceived as the educated public. No, there is no jargon: mercifully, it is free of obscurantism. It is a very serious volume/disc with no frivolity, but plenty of well printed color reproductions.

Considering its content, it is the cheapest of the four sources I review. And, please let me emphasize, I am not saying that to please my mates or because I was a contributor to a very small part of this magisterial effort: have a look yourself, since there should be no trouble in finding it from the University of Hawai'i Press.

Tahiti. Magie des Iles de Polynésie. 1998. Pape'ete, Pacific-Image and Océane Productions. infos@pacific-image.pf XPF 6000 (ca. \$60)

Tahiti is altogether a very different production, intended for a larger market and just bursting with excellent and attractive design, color, videos and vibrant music. It is in French, mono-linguals be warned, but the disc really plays itself and one can just sit back and enjoy the music and the tour. Some very clever people spent a lot of time thinking about how to present a mass of material in a way that will grab and hold the attention of anyone, mature or of the sound-byte generation (phrase intentional). There are 700 splendid images, 25 minutes of video in all manner of Polynesian topics through which is woven 60 minutes of beautifully recorded music. Océane Production is one of the co-producers and they have provided a selection of some of their best audio CDs for the soundtrack. The video carries a commentary and, as well, there is 35 minutes of attractive male and female voice-over on many of the topics. Even if you don't understand the French, the sound carries one through the accompanying images and music.

This is not an academic production, as is the *Encyclopaedia*, but one intended for a broad audience, as easy to watch and listen to as a video and whilst the price may seem high, most things in Pape'ete are so, except for *les baguettes*! There is a "travel" and an information section, each serving its purpose, to inform, but also to entertain.

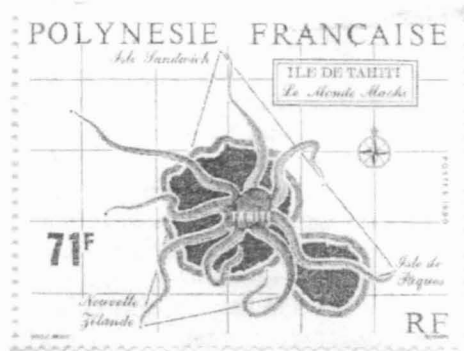
Album 2000. 2001. Pape'ete, Office des Postes et Télécommunications. <http://www.opt.pf> XPF 4500 (ca. \$45)

Album 2000, which appeared in early 2001, has images of 245 stamps and 107 telephone cards from French Polynesia, showing different aspects of that territory's culture and history, at least as seen from a French point of view published over ten years. Pretty dry, eh? Not so. Running throughout the chronologically and thematically organized CD is a terrific sound track of contemporary Tahitian (yes, only Tahitian as far as I could determine) music! If you have never seen post office productions from French Polynesia, order this disc and have a look;

sumptuous is one word that comes to mind. Again, Pacific-Image is involved in the technical production, as they were with *Tahiti*, so technically, it is superb and operates without difficulty. Worried about the French? No need. One can choose to listen to commentary in sonorous French, English or Tahitian! Try the Tahitian, a very nice voice!

Te Pito Te Henua. 1998. Santiago, Produced by Art and Mana, for DiBAM, Subdirección de Museos, Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastian Englert. mapse@entelchile.net. \$35.00

It may seem odd that I have included in this selection a CD-ROM from the French Polynesian Poste, but the illustration below is my link to the last CD I will discuss, which focuses on Rapanui. In 1991, the Post Office in French Polynesia published a series of stamps called "The Maori World" which featured aspects of traditional culture in the Polynesian triangle. Those of you of a geographic turn of mind will know that this triangle involves Hawai'i to the north, Aotearoa (New Zealand) to the southwest and, yes, Rapanui, at the southeast vertice. Well, the Chilean government went, as my sons say, "ballistic" when they saw images like the one clipped from the Post Office CD below. *Their* island as part of some kind of "French" conceived world! *Their* Rapanui on stamps issued by a foreign country, France (actually, not, but never mind); *Their* sovereign territory.....



Anyhow, images like this one really rattled the chauvinistic cages in Santiago and strong letters of protest were sent by Chile to France and, when they found out where French Polynesia was, they demanded an apology as well. The series continued to roll off the line, with one stamp showing the legend of Heke, the pan-Polynesian symbol of an octopus, in the center of the triangle, for the French (and Tahitians!), and its tentacles touching New Zealand, Hawai'i and, horrors! Rapanui!! I took up much of this rather amusing story of "uncertain sovereignty" in an article in *RNJ* ("Japan, Rapanui and Chile's uncertain sovereignty". *Rapa Nui Journal* 9 (N° 1, March 1995:1-7). Owing to this stamp scandal, in Chilean eyes, there is a contingent of Naval Marines on the island, flags everywhere in Hangaroa and, maybe even, increased government expenditure and concern for Easter Island? Perhaps it was not a Costner movie, but a postage stamp that so altered Chilean government policy towards Rapanui in the 1990s?

Te Pito Te Henua. *Cultura Rapanui*, will be the CD that will be of greatest interest for most readers of *RNJ*. Like the Tahiti production, it features brilliant images and music, but no voice-over. The text entirely is in Spanish, although the naviga-

tion is very simple and obvious. Were this also in English, it would sell very well for the visitor since at \$35 it can hardly be said to be expensive.



Father Sebastian Englert during the First World War when he was a Chaplain in the Germany army, shown with two unidentified colleagues who appear to be directly out of central casting. This photograph is just one of the hidden riches on the CD-ROM from MAPSE.

The photographic archive, for some reason, is hidden away and not immediately obvious. For example, there is an excellent series featuring 19th and early 20th century images, from missionary times to the funeral of Father Sebastián Englert. Regarding the latter, there is a photograph of him as a young chaplain in WWI that I had never seen before. When you get the CD, and I urge you to do so, find the section "Vida social" and, within that, "Familia". Click on the image that appears and you will see that it is one of 1971! There is no index, so you just have to go through one by one.

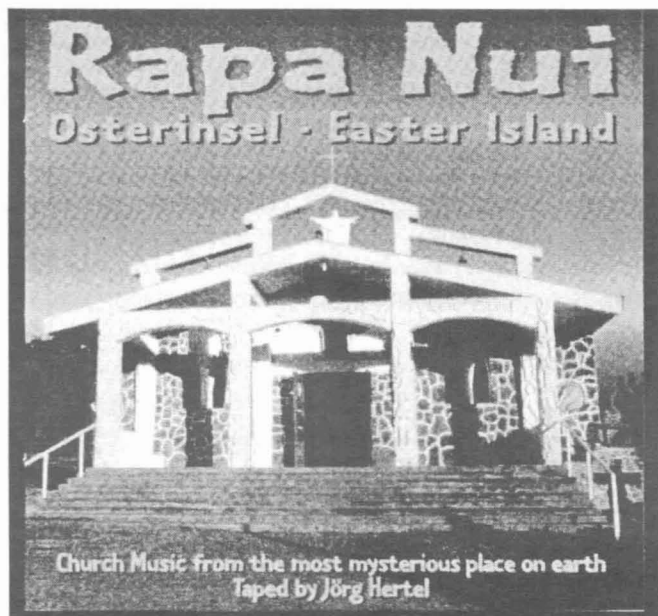


Schoolteacher Jacobo Hey with his class. This is one of the many images to be seen on the MAPSE CD.

There you will find Juan Tepano and his mother, the original Pakarati and founder of the family with his wife, Mama Veri (Victoria Rapahango) and school scenes from 1972 including one with a proud headmaster, Jacobo Hey, before he was governor. And, as the TV adverts says, "much more"!

I do not think that one will have much difficulty purchasing the first three CDs, but the Rapanui one may pose problems.

I purchased mine over the counter at the Museum itself. I did not see it in any other shop on the island. The Museum shop does not sell it either; just at the entrance. I tried the Chilean Government DiBAM (Departamento de Bibliotecas, Archivos and Museos) website in the hopes that they might sell it, but no luck. Francisco Torres, the temporary director of MAPSE (Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert), told me that if people send an e-mail (mapse@entelchile.net) or otherwise contact him, he would try to find a way to sell and post the CD. Or, purchase it on your next visit to the Island! I am told that from the USA, the cheapest route at the moment actually is through Pape'ete, so stop there and pick up the other two French discs as well and you will have the full set.



Rapa Nui/Easter Island/Osterinsel Church Music from the Most Mysterious Place on Earth

Taped by Jörg Hertel, Tug Records
Schiffstr.10, 91054 Erlangen, Germany
kontakt@joerghertel.de www.joerghertel.de
Neun@sci.com (\$15, plus \$10 shipping/handling overseas).

JÖRG HERTEL HAS CREATED A NEW CD of Rapanui music. His former CD, "Rapa Nui, Music and Natural Sounds" is now joined by "Rapa Nui, Church Music from the Most Mysterious Place on Earth."

Jörg has this to say about his experiences with the music of Easter Island: I am from Leipzig, East Germany. Perhaps my interest in the music of Easter Island is that I also come from a once-isolated place. Despite, or because of, the remoteness, I was attracted to Easter Island's "isolation music". There, humans sing one to another, perhaps to escape from these feelings of isolation. I noticed this when I began working as a music therapist and began listening to the music of Easter Island along with my patients. Most of them felt comfort from the rhythmic sounds, as in "Abraham's lap" they used to say. Often they said it was happy and melancholy at the same time. But the contradiction exists. On the one hand the islanders say, "singing holds

body and soul together". But on the other hand they are in hard competition with each other and wish to produce their own CDs, not just be a part of a larger selection. They argue vigorously and yet can be reserved and gentle. Their music mirrors this. Often they laugh and cry at the same time. It depends upon the momentary emotional presence of the listener as to whether or not it assumes more melancholy. How long can we share this variety, this shameless restraint? Papa Kiko is old, and he is the preserver of the music from the island. I hope the music can be passed along, but I could not find a successor. I preserved some music on CDs, which is probably the poorest version of retaining. But there is hard competition amongst the musicians and now there are organized bands with sponsors. Previously they sang in spontaneous gatherings.

Not only is the quantitative musical variety in danger but it is also jeopardized by the opening up the island to the world. The music of Easter Island diminishes aggression and makes work easier, it lets us sleep well, or gives us pure pleasure everywhere it is heard. I hope that the music of this isolated island—after the tribal wars, the missionaries, the researchers from the West—can also survive the flood of tourists and remain the most sensitive and long-lived link between past and present human society.

Art of the Pacific Islands CD

Produced by Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL); Art Selection and Content: Caroline Yacoe; Line and Content Editor: Wendy Arbeit

A Content Review by Norman Hurst

AT FIRST GLANCE, THE CD *Art of the Pacific Islands* is promising. It advertises over 100 images of Pacific Islands' art objects. These are organized into Micronesian, Melanesian and Polynesian culture areas, with specific island groups listed under their appropriate classifications. The program includes background audio and some video clips. There is also a glossary, bibliography and a list of photographic credits.

This reviewer is not recommending this product however, for several reasons, the most important of which is that the texts are not well written and most of the objects pictured were not made for use in their respective cultures. The CD purports to be of educational value. However, the example set by the text is negative with respect to content and viewers are given a trivialized selection of art from the cultures represented, most of which consist of tourist trinkets and reproductions.

These failings are not those of a writer or producer without resources. The bibliography cites excellent general works by such experts as D'Allewa, Gathercole, Guiart, Kaeppler, Meyers, Newton, Thomas, Neich, and Waite. All these authors have produced informative works, well written and well illustrated. The CD *Art of the Pacific* falls short of this standard.

The author of the text has created entries replete with grammatical mistakes including sentence fragments, failures of subject-verb agreement, and contractions. Greater failings are the poor syntax, generalizing tone, and non-sequiturs that characterize some entries. This is admittedly a subjective evaluation, but one that should be apparent from the following excerpts: