

REFERENCES

- MacIntyre, Ferren. 2001. "Enso, Climate Variability, and the Rapanui, Part II. Oceanography and Rapa Nui". *Rapa Nui Journal* 15(2):83-94.
- MacIntyre, Ferren. 2001. "Enso, Climate and the Rapanui, Part 1. The Basics". *Rapa Nui Journal* 15(1): 17-26.

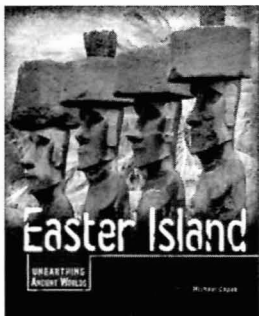
...

EASTER ISLAND. UNEARTHING ANCIENT WORLDS

Michael Capek

Twenty-First Century Books, 2009
 Hard cover (978-0822575832)
 \$25.03 (Amazon.com)

Review by Georgia Lee



Capek's children's book is illustrated with nice color photographs, slick paper, a classy eye-catching design together with large size fonts, all making it attractive to kids. As a children's book, the text is basic, if a tad sketchy. Page 9, for example: "Experts think that ... these people are of Polynesian descent". *Duh.*

The Introduction covers Roggeveen, the Spanish, Cook, a bit about the slave raids, and *rongorongo*. Chapter 1, "The Land of Stone Giants", describes Thomson's visit to the island; the next chapter, "Sleeping Giants", discusses the statues and the *ahu*. Chapter 3 is about Routledge and the *Mana* Expedition. "Senor Kon-tiki" is the subject of Chapter 4. Chapter 5, "The Moai Makers", covers Ferdon, Skjølsvold, Mulloy, and then Van Tilburg's *moai* project. There is an epilogue, a timeline, glossary, etc.

I am not sure what age bracket this book is intended for (it's part of a series called "Unearthing Ancient Worlds") — perhaps up to 7th grade. It has enough material to interest most youngsters and seems basic enough for them to understand a good bit about the island's past history.

...

ASTRONOMY AND LANDSCAPE IN EASTER ISLAND: NEW HINTS AT THE LIGHT OF THE THE ETHNOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

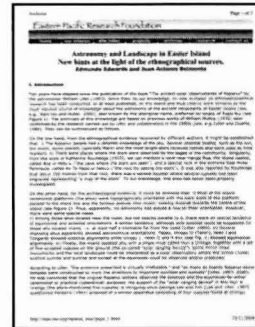
Edmundo Edwards & Juan Antonio Belmonte
*Archaeoastronomy in Archaeology and Ethnography:
 Proceedings of the European Society
 for Astronomy in Culture**

and

MEGALITHIC ASTRONOMY OF EASTER ISLAND: A RE-ASSESSMENT

Edmundo Edwards & Juan Antonio Belmonte
*Journal for the History of Astronomy: Archaeoastronomy***

Review by William Liller



In these two articles, very similar both in content and purpose, the authors argue the case that the 15 or 20 astronomically-aligned *ahu* on Rapa Nui were more likely constructed to indicate directions to the rising and setting of the Pleiades (known as "Matariki" in most parts of Polynesia) and to the Belt of Orion ("Tautoru"), rather than towards the solstitial and equinoctial sunrises and sunsets as this writer and others have

suggested. In support of their argument, Edwards, who notes that he has spent much of his adult life carrying out investigations in the South Pacific, and Belmonte, a Spanish astrophysicist, point out that stars and star groups played an important part in the culture of the ancient Polynesians and in the important matters of navigation, but nowhere, they maintain, was there a "solar cult" such as existed in the early Americas and in many parts of ancient Europe and Asia.

The articles begin with a succinct summary of the astro-ethnography of the Rapanui, and the authors make note of the extensive knowledge the islanders had of the sky. Special attention is also given to both the several places where celestial bodies were observed and some supposed star maps. The authors then review briefly the archaeo-astronomical data with reference to the work of myself and others, including William Mulloy, who have measured the azimuthal orientations of most of the island's *ahu*. Mulloy and Edwin Ferdon have noted that a few man-made indentations — "cupules" — found at or near special vantage points or by significant *ahu* might also be aligned with rising and setting solstices and equinoxes. These have been dubbed "sunstones" and "solar ranging device".

The remainders of the two papers are devoted to a wide-ranging discussion including a valuable and important pair of tables summarizing the Rapanui names for stars and asterisms, and explaining the lunar/stellar calendar, as gleaned from local informants. Edwards is perhaps uniquely qualified to pull together the reports of his informants and combine them with the published tabulations of others like Routledge, Metraux, Englert, Johnson, and Mahelona.

