

## THE HOTU MATUA

The new supply ship, formerly belonging to the Chilean Navy, has been re-dubbed "Hotu Matua" and will begin regular voyages from Valparaíso to the Juan Fernández Islands, and then to Easter Island. The Valparaíso Maritime Transport Miramar has made regular supply voyages to Easter Island since last August with a subsidy from the V Region. The contract provides US\$56,000 for each voyage if the company maintains a fixed price of US\$135 per cubic meter. The other supply ship, *Araki*, was scheduled for a September trip, but financial problems have arisen. The crew is unpaid, the company evicted from its offices, and the ship's certificate of navigability expired. When attempts were made to have it renewed, the *Araki* failed to qualify.

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## TOROMIRO WILL BE REPLANTED

SPECIALISTS AT THE NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN of Viña del Mar and Easter Island are working on a project to replant *toromiro* trees on the island. The last island *toromiro* disappeared around 1960. The five-year project will be presented next November at a competition for funds of the European Union for US\$600,000, and it will be presented in the Fifth World Congress of Conservation of Botanic Gardens to refine details. Last year twelve *toromiro* were brought to the island, and so far all are in good condition. In the coming years, CONAF hopes to plant at least three hectares (six acres) of this legendary tree on the island.

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## PALM TREE CONTROVERSY

A CHILEAN AIR FORCE PLANE brought 400 Chilean wine palm trees (*Jubaea chilensis*) to the island, and the four largest (16 feet) were planted at a new botanic garden at Vaitea. The smaller shoots will be distributed around the island. The Chilean wine palm is the closest relative to the now-extinct palm that used to be prevalent on the island. Many islanders—including the Mayor—were outraged, claiming that no one was informed about the project, and the land where the "ethnic botanical garden" is being created has the best soil on the island and should be used instead for agriculture. The Mayor added, "We have cattle grazing among the *ahu* and archaeological sites because there is no other land for grazing . . . and now they made this botanical project."

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## BAD NEWS

AS WE GO TO PRESS, word has been received from the island that discarded oil and petrol from SASIPA's diesel generators is being dumped in a basin, close to the water well used for the town of Hanga Roa.

*Childress, D. H. Ancient Tonga & the Lost City of Mu'a. Including Samoa, Fiji, and Rarotonga* (1996); *Ancient Micronesia & the Lost City of Nan Madol Including Ponape, Kosrae, Guam and Yap*. Adventures Unlimited Press (1998).

*Review by Georgia Lee*

These two recently published books by David Childress join his other efforts, "*Ancient Tahiti & the Lost City of Havaiki, Including the Marquesas & the Tuamotu Islands*," "*Ancient Rapa Nui & the Lost Land of Hiva. Including Easter Island, Pitcairn, & the Austral Islands*," "*Megalithic New Zealand & the Kaimanawa Wall, Including the Chatham Islands*," and "*Lost Cities of Ancient Lemuria & the Pacific*."

David Childress describes himself as a "rogue adventurer and maverick archaeologist" and he makes much of early 19<sup>th</sup> century references written by a variety of authors who, when they wrote those books, were unaware of scientific knowledge that is now available. Thus we hear a lot about ancient Egyptians in the Pacific, visitors from Outer Space, sunken continents, and so on.

Readers of Childress' books will find just enough factual information from good solid sources to give (for an instant) some credibility, but then—*voilà!*—spurious comments from really weird and/or outdated sources are added and mixed into a murky stew. The results can be fairly hilarious, but this technique of writing is very misleading for the less astute reader who may miss some of the tricky footwork and buy the Brooklyn Bridge.

Let's take a peek at *Ancient Micronesia & the Lost City of Nan Madol*. After describing a bit about Nan Madol, Childress asks a few rhetorical questions: "Were the first inhabitants . . . priests who used their ancient knowledge taken from India and Egypt to build the amazing seaport of Nan Madol?" "Was Pohnpei a remote Pacific base for an ancient navy that was occasionally visited by airships from distant airfield? It boggles the imagination! [*Here we agree with Childress, completely*]. Then he goes on to discuss Egyptian explorations in the Pacific around 1000 BC, and some Greek sailors are tossed in, ". . . remnants of Alexander the Great's army in Persia . . ." The chapter is concluded with a picture of an Egyptian glyph of the sun god Ra.

Can it get worse? Oh yesss. The final chapter is titled "The Mystery of the Settlement of the Pacific." And here we are treated to nutcases such as Barry Fell who advocated Libyans and Phoenicians in the Pacific as well as those pesky Egyptians.

At this point, Childress states, "Though many historians are reluctant to accept the theory of Egyptians in the Pacific, the evidence is overwhelming . . ."

Other books published by Adventures Unlimited include "*UFOs and Anti-Gravity*"; "*Extraterrestrial Archaeology*," "*The Anti-Gravity Handbook*" "*Underground Bases & Tunnels; What is the Government Trying to Hide?*," and "*Ether Technology*."