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Lonely Island

A True and Fictional
Tragical Historical yet Comical Account
Of the Myriad Mysteries and Enigmas
Of Easter Island

by

Clayton Bess

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Chapter One

The Mysteries

They say we ate people. I think probably we did.

But that was a long time ago. I was not even alive. I myself did not eat the people, not myself. Our people did. *If* they did. And although I think they did, what does that have to do with me? What does that have to do with today? Perhaps we will need to eat people again. Things happen that way sometimes when you live on an island.

They say we are a friendly people. I do not think I am friendly, so much. I do not think I am *un*friendly, either, so much. I am who I want to be: Toromiru.

From the way I am writing this, you are going to think I am mad. And perhaps I *am* mad. Perhaps that is the reason I am writing this, because I am mad. I am mad because people from so many different places around the planet keep coming here to look at us. They want to take our photos. My brother is very handsome and my sister is very beautiful; so these many people from their many places want photos of my brother and sister especially. My brother says, “Why? Where will I see that photo?”

The reason my brother says that? Perhaps my brother is mad, too. He knows that when the people go back to their homes around the planet, then perhaps they will use that photo in a story that perhaps they will write about us. So many different people are always writing about us in so many different languages. They all descend upon us wanting to know about our island because our island is “mysterious” and our island is an “enigma” and so what? And we are the people who live on this “mysterious and enigmatic island” and so what? And so they put our photos in their stories. And

sometimes what they write is not true or even close to true, but they have our photos anyway. But when my brother asks them why they want his photo, he says it with a grin, and they go ahead and take his photo anyway. But I think inside, perhaps, my brother is not grinning.

My brother is the one who takes the different peoples who speak English. I call them the Englishers: the Americans and English and Australians, of course, but also usually the Germans and the Japanese, and all of those who understand the language of English better than they understand the language of Spanish. My sister is the one who takes the Spanishers. Those are the different peoples from South America and Central America and Spain, and often the Italians and the French, too, or wherever they perhaps understand the language of Spanish better than the language of English. Those are the only two choices. Nobody who comes here knows our own language—Rapanui, as it is now called by our people and by some of the other peoples—and so it is no use to speak our own language to them. Nobody speaks it but us.

I usually follow my brother so that I can learn the English better. I am not allowed to lead the tours yet—if ever?—because I am too young. Or that is what they say. But that is not true either. I am certainly old enough, but perhaps no one trusts me enough, which is why I ask—"if ever?"—in the way that I do. There is always the matter of the lying and the doubting vis a vis the telling of the truth, that which is prickly.

I can take the Spanishers better than my sister because I have read many more books than she. And because I have followed my brother so many times I can do the Englishers equally good as to him. Perhaps better because I am always listening to the

Englishers talking to each other at the same time my brother is talking to them. So I know the questions they have but do not have the opportunity to ask him. Or perhaps they do not want to ask him for fear of offense, and often these questions are indeed offensive, but then, what is to be done about that?

My brother sometimes reads some books, but so do I. And I listen. And I always tell the truth, except out of playfulness. My brother sometimes makes up the truth. If he does not know an answer to one of their questions, he might open his eyes wide and lower his voice to a whisper and say, "It is a mystery." He knows this always works because everyone who comes here knows already that our island is full of mysteries and enigmas; in fact, as I have indeed explained already, that is exactly why they do come here. And what they do then, when my brother tells them it is a mystery, and opens his eyes wide? Then will they nod their heads very slowly and open their eyes wide also, like my brother, and raise their eyebrows. It is very comical. You would laugh to see it.

My sister makes up her own truth all the time because she does not really know anything, and that is the easiest. The other day at Rano Raraku a man from Paris, France asked her in Spanish, "How old are these statues?" When my sister did not answer right up right off, the man provided, "Two thousand years? Three thousand?"

My sister then replied, "Yes, between two and three thousand years! No one knows! It is a mystery!" My sister learned that trick from my brother, you see. Only since she was speaking in Spanish to the Spanishers, what she actually said was, "¡Es un misterio!" In Spanish, you are called upon to put the exclamation marks at both ends of the sentence, which of course doubles your exclamatory effect. And because of the extra

vowel sounds in Spanish, I have found that you can open your eyes even wider and you can stretch out “misteeeeeeeerio” for a longer time. In English, you would have to say “mysssssssstery” to say it long enough to open your eyes wide enough to get the same effect, and that would make you too silly to take serioussssssssly.

The Frenchman then turned to his wife and translated into French for her: "Ah, oui! Un mystèèèèèèèère," opening his eyes wider, I believe than anybody I have yet seen. The French are even more impressionable than anyone else, as you will see later.

I have read very many books about our island and our people, but still my brother and sister do not let me lead the tours yet. I think they think I know too much. I think they think I will get confused. Perhaps they are right. The more you know, the more you know you do not know.

One of the good things about following my brother or my sister when they take the tours is that the people begin to look upon me as one of the mysteries. I never say anything, and that is mysterious to most people. And when there are people who are my age, they are drawn to me because of my mysteriousness. Also because I am their age. Have you noticed that? Young people like to be with young people, especially if they are traveling with their parents who are, often, very dull to them. And so I wait. I look at the young people with my eyes, and I know they will come to me. At night, I make sure that I am near their hotel, and that they see me. Then they will always come to me. They always want to sneak out of their hotels at night to the same places they went during the day, with me, alone, in the darkness, with only the moon to show us the island.

I can drive. I am not allowed to drive, but I drive anyway. My favorite times are when the young people want to go back out to Rano Raraku, which is my favorite place. This is the quarry where the moai were carved out of the volcano and where they still stand, still waiting—after all these centuries—for their carving to be finished so that they can be moved to the shore. The mana of the moai is like electromagneticity, I believe, as I think I understand that word; the air hums with their mana; the breezes move among the moai and through the waving grasses like fishes in schools, and you can gulp them; in the moonlight in the dark you can breathe the mana into your own body, and you can be one with them.

Figure 1: Here are a few of the moai at Rana Raraku. Can you feel the mana of the moai from this photograph? I think not. I do believe you must be with the moai to feel their mana. And the mana of the moai is most powerful at night, when a camera does not work properly. A photo from a camera is not the best way to capture moai, to capture them as you might a school of fish, in one gulp.

The moai at Rano Raraku face down the hill, those that are not fallen down. All of them stand at different heights, all of them from one-quarter to three-quarters buried, some with only the tops of their heads showing, looking as though they are trying to keep their noses above the soil which each year grows a little higher up their necks. Most of the moai are straight up and down upright, but some of them are at an angle, as though they are drunk. In the moonlight, they are beautiful, and they are sad. And if it is a girl that I take there in the moonlight to Rano Raraku, she might cry. If it is a boy, he might be completely quiet as we walk among my ancestors on the edge of the volcano. There is no talk of the mysteries because the mysteries are right there revealed to us, surrounding us, blowing the breezes that wave the grasses at our feet.

Figure 2: Here is another angle at the moai, again hoping to capture the mana of the moai for your eyes, again probably failing by nature of a mere photograph.

If I can get my compadres to dare to climb to the top of the volcano, one of the highest places on the island, we can see the ocean all around us, shining a rippling silver

in the moonlight. For me this is something truly special and stirring to my soul. For the others, they are then thrilled. Or they may be terrified.

One girl named Eden was terrified. She was from the state of Kansas in the United States of America. If you know the film *The Wizard of Oz*—which is a film that I find very amusing—then you know that Kansas is flat and you can not see the end of the land no matter in which direction you look. I can not even imagine a place like that, except that I understand it is true. When Eden stood on the edge of the volcano and looked around at the ocean on every side of us—which is very much the opposite of Kansas—she started crying at first and then, rather soon, screaming. She needed to go back down, and she needed to go back down right then. I was not worried about the screaming because nobody but the moai could hear, and they always remain silent about our doings. I held her arm tight as I climbed down with her, and when we got back to the parking lot at the bottom, about a half hour later, and she was safe inside the van, I waited for her to stop crying, which she did after rather a long time. I asked her what was wrong. She was not able to say exactly. Her bounteous bosoms were still heaving with the sobs, and the sobs would not allow her to speak except a word at a time. But this is what I think: I think she was terrified by the loneliness.

She kept saying how far we were from anywhere. Even though she had flown over the broad Pacific Ocean from Kansas to the island of Tahiti, and from Tahiti the two thousand four hundred miles across that same ocean to our island, and even though she had been on top of Rano Raraku in the daylight, it had not yet sunk into her head how far she was from the rest of the world. She kept saying, “What if…” but she could not finish

the thought. This is what I think she thought: I think she thought, “What if this island sinks into the ocean?” or “What if the plane tomorrow cannot take off before it reaches the edge of the island, and we crash into the ocean?” which always appears to me a distinct possibility, as I watch the airplanes come and go in their little hugeness. Or perhaps Eden was thinking, “What if there has been a nuclear war in Kansas while I have been here, so far away?” I believe that is considered a distinct possibility also, in the world of today.

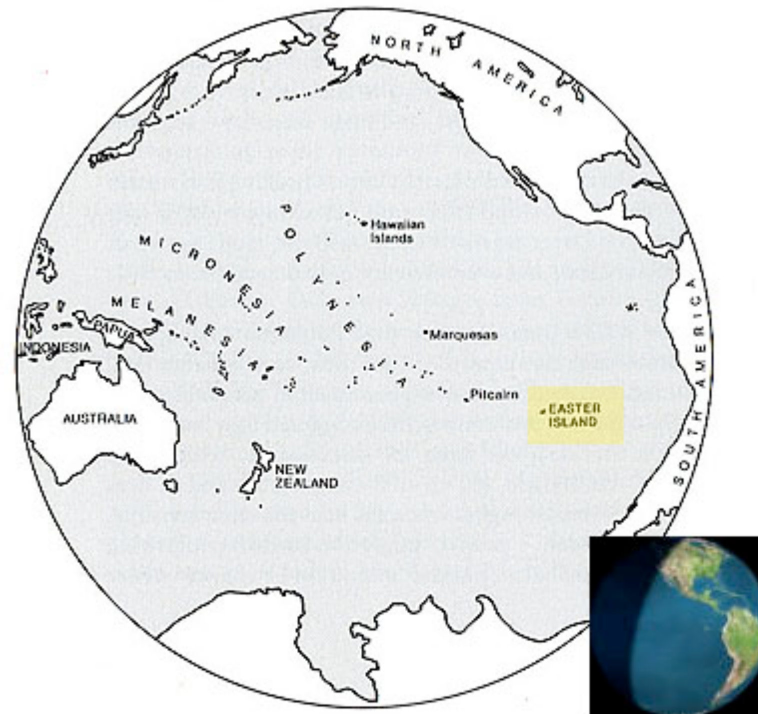

Figure 3: Where Kansas is. Perhaps you know enough geography to compare this map and this photograph of our Earth, a snapshot from space, I believe. (That is quite possible, too, I understand, is it not?) Perhaps you know where Kansas is situated in the United States of America, rather centrally? Perhaps then you can see —and then imagine—how far this Eden must travel to reach our island, and why she might become hysterical on the rim of Rano Raraku, particularly when our island is so small that it cannot even be seen from space, even as a dot.

These thoughts of Eden are thoughts with which one cannot argue, and I did not try. For my part, I tried to imagine standing on a prairie with nothing but flat land around me no matter which way I turned. That made me want to scream and sob, but I kept it to myself. And after Eden finished with her sobbing, I drove her back to her hotel.

There was one of the Englishers who was named Daniel. He looked older than me by perhaps a year or two, with the soft beginning hairs of a beginning beard. Perhaps he was seventeen or eighteen, although I have found it very difficult—with so many peoples of so many places—to guess at age because their styles of dressing and of acting are so different. I think, too, that Daniel was from one of the islands of England, on the other side of the planet, but since I could not understand except every third or fourth word he spoke, I never did know exactly where he did call home. Also, there are many names of many places that I have not yet learned, and people forget this obvious fact when they say to me so proudly, "I am from Blank."

I think Daniel had read in some of the books about how our people are sexy, and I think that is what Daniel wanted: sex. But the ways of Daniel were gross, and I think none of our people would want to play with him. Our people may be sexy and very playful, but they are not gross.

Daniel wanted me to show him The Cave Where Men Are Eaten. On some of our maps, it is called Cannibal Cave. There is nothing much to see in this cave except some pictures painted on the ceiling of the cave, but Daniel, I think, did not want to see the pictures, so much. He paid them little attention when I shone on them with the flashlight. I think what Daniel wanted was to find some human bones that had been gnawed by

human teeth. He kept asking me to shine the flashlight in and around the rocks on the floor of the cave. When he tried to take the flashlight from me, I would not allow that.

I think Daniel was attracted by the name of the cave. He wanted me to tell him about the great battle of “The Long-Ears” and “The Short-Ears” and when I would not—because that is a story I do not like, although I will tell it to you later—Daniel then wanted me to tell him a different bloody story. This other bloody story that he must have also read about somewhere in the many books written about our island was about a different battle. In this other battle a warrior said to his men, "Bring me the body of the man with the beautiful name so that I may eat him." Daniel wanted to know what that name was. I pretended I did not know that story because that is also a story I do not like. I did, however, know the name. And I shall tell it to you (in a whisper) at the appropriate time.

But for now, I just want you to know that after I showed Daniel The Cave Where Men Are Eaten, I left him there alone, because of repugnance and because I was afraid he would take the flashlight from me because he was much more powerful than I. I climbed out of the cave, and I did not come back for him. That was probably dangerous for him, on the rocks above the ocean, but there was a full moon, and his ways were gross. I think he may have tried to make trouble for me after that, and I think that is one of the reasons why my brother and sister do not let me lead the tours, even though I am qualified. Perhaps they are right. Perhaps they are not.

Chapter Two

Rano Raraku and the Mystery of the Moai

I told you that I like to go to Rano Raraku at night with the girls because sometimes it makes them cry: like that Eden from Kansas. Well, now, here I tell a lie; I did not tell you that is *why* I like to go there; that is merely one of the many reasons that I do like to go there. And terror, like that of Eden, is only one of the reasons that the girls might cry. They might cry, also or instead, because it is so beautiful in the moonlight. Or they might cry because it is so sad. In the moonlight sad, in the daytime, actually, sometimes, sadder.

I find it sad when I go there alone because I look at what it means, and I think of what it must have looked like when all our people were there all at once, from all parts of the island, all working on the moai, all over the quarry, all at one time, working, working, working at their different jobs.

There were many different jobs: there was the job of the first carving; there was the job of the cleaning and hauling; there was the job of the first-transport, with the pulling on the ropes and the pushing on the poles and the slip-sliding of the moai down the side of the volcano; there was the job of the final-carving; there was the job of the final long transport down to the shore, all around the island.

But let me tell you first about that first job, of the first-carving You can see it very well when you look at El Gigante and at the one that I myself call Coffin. Coffin and El Gigante, in the moonlight, are good sites to find the girls beginning their weeping.

When the carvers stopped so suddenly on Coffin, they left him protected forever by the overhanging cliff, and he is therefore very sad indeed.

Figure 4: Coffin from afar. Toward the right and about half way up the side of the volcano, you can see the little people in their colorful clothes standing in front of Coffin and admiring his hugeness.

Figure 5: Coffin up close. Imagine the colossal amount of carving that had been done to reach Coffin to this stage, and the carvers were not yet even half finished with him. And perhaps you can understand, from this photograph, why I myself call him Coffin? Forever looking straight up into stone.

El Gigante, however, was left out in the elements by his carvers, which makes him even sadder, and which is why the girls weep so copiously for him, bounteous bosoms or no. El Gigante is by far the largest of the moai, but he is lying on his back

looking straight up at the stars (at night) and straight up at the sun (in the day) and so many days of the year straight up into the falling down rain. El Gigante is more than 65 feet tall and 10 feet across, and if he had ever been finished, he would have been so huge as to weigh perhaps 270 tons. (This is merely one of many guesses, and therefore you do not need to believe it. How can anyone truly know such a thing? It is preposterous to accept any such guess.)

Figure 6: El Gigante, how he looked in the time of Thor Heyerdahl, 1957.

Figure 7: El Gigante, how he looked in the time of Bahn and Flenley, 1992.

Figure 8: El Gigante, how he looks today. See how his features are so quickly vanishing, for example his chin. And see how the mountain is reclaiming him with grasses in soil. One day will he be covered again and not naked to the elements? Most certainly. Then will the girls of the world no longer weep for him?

Do you know how big a ton is? It is 2000 pounds. Do you know how big 2000 pounds is? A car might weigh 2000 pounds. Remove the wheels of that car and try to transport it across an island, up and down hills. Then think of El Gigante and multiply that car by 270.

So if our people had ever finished carving El Gigante, how could they ever possibly have transported him off the mountain and down to the shore, like the rest of the moai on their ahu all around the island? Indeed, it would not have been possible. The largest of the moai that was transported to its ahu was Paro, 32 feet high and 10 ½ feet across the shoulders, and estimated as weighing 82 tons. Much smaller than El Gigante. But still, that would be like transporting 82 cars in one pile the four miles from Rano Raraku to Ahu Paro. Imagine that. Imagine, too, lifting that 82 tons up onto its ahu, which was a stone platform nearly ten feet high on which Paro once stood.

Then there is the pukao that was once atop Paro. His pukao—or you might say in English, "topknot"—is nearly as high as it is across, about 6 feet and weighs between 11 and 12 tons. And so now imagine how our people lifted such a stone onto the head of Paro after they had achieved lifting Paro onto his ahu. These are all myssssssssteries of the moai, and I think that you will agree that it is quite mysteriousssssss.

Figure 9: Here are four of the fifteen moai at Ahu Tongariki. See how much more imposing is the moai with its pukao. Oh, what a beauteous invention, the pukao, and I wonder how it came to be.

During the dark period of the downing of the moai, this largest of the moai to be placed on its ahu—the great Paro—was also the last to be downed. That is very funny, I think, but not funny in the comical sense, but in the weeping sense. I will show you a picture of Paro as he looks today. But not just here. There will be a more judicious placement, with better framing, on a later page, I do believe, for your enjoyment.*

*By this time the astute reader will have discovered already four instances wherein I have informed you that I will tell you more at a later point. When one ends up writing a book, when that was never the intention at the outset—as is the case with this book**—one may end up putting very many informations of very many different kinds into that book. At a very late time when putting the final book together, one may then find oneself face to face with a person called an "editor" who says to one, "Toromiru, this is very annoying to me that you keep breaking up the thread of your thought by inserting this other thought here in the middle of your thread."

One may end up saying to this editor, "Well and good, but perhaps this is the best place for this parenthetical thought. Imagine that I am taking you upon a tour of my island, and we are at the location of our great crater, Rano Raraku, for example, and I want you to remember, let us say, this particular kind of rock when we arrive later at the crater at the southeastern end of the island, Rano Kao, because you will find a different kind of rock altogether there. These are informations very important for you in your comparisons, and I must break you momentarily away from my thread of Rano Raraku for this parenthetical thought about the different geology of Rano Aku. You see? It is a tour. It is a go-around of the island, step by step forward, yes—that is in a linear fashion—but often with little hops, and sometimes large hops, both forward and backward, and sometimes even up high in the sky for a bird eye view of the island, perhaps a map, you see?"

"But this is very bothersome to me personally, Toromiru," the editor might insist, "to keep having the thread of thought broken in these parenthetical ways."

And so this editor and I have worked out a plan whereby these parentheticals are sometimes accomplished with parentheses and dashes, sometimes with footnotes—sometimes marked by an asterisk * or sometimes with the notation N.B., which means "nota bene" or "good note" in the dead language of Latin (very important to Spanishers and Englishers)—sometimes in boxes, if it is a very long or complex parenthetical, but most often in figures, which may even be on completely different pages and simply referred to in the manner of a reference: "See Figure 8."

**You may be wondering how it is that Toromiru has ended up writing a book when that was never my intention at the outset. You shall learn more about that later (at a more appropriate breaking of the thread).

Figure 10: El Gigante from his foot.

But let us return to El Gigante. Let us stand at his foot and look at him, so very large lying in front of and above you. I think you begin to think that perhaps El Gigante was never intended to be transported, never intended even to be finished with his first carving. Perhaps those people who worked on El Gigante intended him always to stare up at the sky. I can see in the eye of my mind those people working on El Gigante, and all around them the people working on Coffin and all the other moai, all at the same time. Today when you go to Rano Raraku you can see all the moai there just as the people left them in a single moment how many centuries ago.

Figure 11: How many moai can you distinguish in this picture, in their stages of being carved, their chins and noses and brows sticking out of the mountain?

On the outside face of Rano Raraku, today, you can see perhaps two hundred fifty moai that are in some state of being created. On the inside of the crater, you can see perhaps eighty more. Some scientists say more; some say less; I myself have never counted them. Can you not imagine all those workers, busy at his or her own job? The noise of them, and the singing?

Figure 12: On the outside of the crater, you can see moai against the backdrop of nearly the entire island (the eastern two thirds) with several volcanic cones like Puna Pau, from which cone comes the red stone for the pukao, also Maunga Orito,

from which cone comes the black, hard and sharp obsidian, also other volcanic cones.

In Figure 12 what you cannot see, lying beyond Puna Pau and Maunga Orito and the other cones, is the great crater of Rano Kao at the southeastern tip of our island and which, as you now suspect, you will get to see in some detail later. From this photo that I myself took, using a camera given to me by some friends whom you yourselves will meet later, you now can see how beautiful is my island, and why I will never leave here, for long.

Figure 13: On the inside of the crater, Rano Raraku, you can see also some of the horses who like it here because of the delicious lake that they are always going down to drink from. As you will come to understand, the horse is a recent arrival on our island, but an arrival old enough to have gone wild.

The tufa, the stone from which all moai all over the island were carved, is a soft stone. Well, indeed it is *not* soft. Indeed it is very hard when you put your hands on it, or knock your head against it, for it is stone. But it is not so hard as the obsidian, or even the basalt, which is the kind of stone we used to make the tools for carving the moai. The obsidian we collected from the other end of the island, from Maunga Orito which is very close today to our landing strip of the airport. The obsidian we used for mataa—weapons

against enemies, our neighbors—because it is so hard and the edge is so sharp that it cuts through skin very nicely, very deeply, very jaggedly, about which I shall tell you more later. We would put the mataa on a spear, and that was a very good, very deadly weapon. But here, I am continuing to put myself ahead of myself, and so let me return to the basalt rock.

All around the quarry, then, you could find these basalt tools as though thrown down in the same instant by all the people. What made the people throw down their tools all at once? Some say that this was the beginning of the wars on the island, the wars between the clans. This does not make much sense to me, however, because if you are going to fight people in the quarry, why throw down your tool, which you could now use as a weapon? I think it was something different, and I will tell you what that was. But first I must tell you other things so that you will understand all of it at once.

The next job, the cleaning. Actually, the cleaning was going on at the same time and same place as the first-carving. When the people would carve the tufa there would be much garbage rock that would need to be hauled away. We can not tell now just where this garbage rock was hauled because through so many years of rain, the garbage rock was washed down the hillside by the rushing water coming down from the top of the crater during the rains. This water has great force and can move small rocks easily.

Indeed, all the moai that you see standing on the inside and outside of the crater, perhaps fifty in number, have been buried neck-deep through years of rushing water washing garbage rock down upon them. Now many of those moai that you see there, you can see only their chins and upward, but I have often wondered how many moai have

been completely covered by the washed down garbage rocks and soil, now grown over with grass. There might be as many that you can *not* see as that you *can* see. Many hundreds more, perhaps. Who knows? Who will undertake to find out? And how?

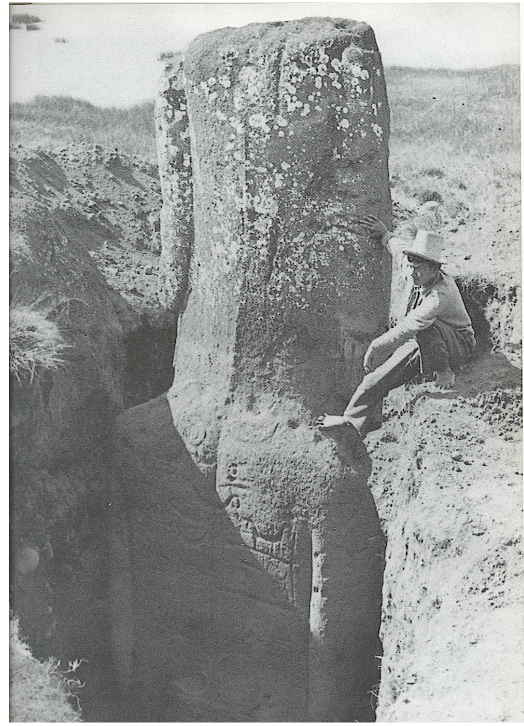

Figure14 and 15: Here are two photographs taken by Mrs. Routledge, about whom I shall tell you more, showing how she had our people dig out from around some of the moai to see how deeply they were buried.

At the same time that some people were working on the first-carving and the cleaning, there were other people who were doing the first-transporting of the moai that had now been finished with their first-carving. This is a very dangerous step because the moai are so heavy and the sides of the crater are so steep. The people must have had very good rope. From what material did they make this rope? Probably from the bark of many trees, and from the fronds of the leaves. There must have been trees, although there

are no trees now. I will tell you more about this later, too, because it is one of the saddest things of all.

Figure 16: Another photograph by the redoubtable Mrs. Routledge. After the moai was carved to the point of resting on a "keel" (as on a ship), the keel would be broken through and the moai would be lowered carefully, but with great weight, down the outer face of the crater with ropes.

After the moai were somehow transported down the steepest part of the mountain, then the final-carving would begin. The moai were stood upright on their bases, just as they would be when they would finally come to their last standing place on the many ahu all around the shores of the island. These final-carvers were probably not the same carvers as the first-carvers. Their carving would be more polished, and they would make the designs of the hands on the front and the designs on the back of the moai. All the

moai standing at the base of Rano Raraku, two-thirds buried now with garbage rock, were in the process of being final-carved on the day when all work stopped.

Figure 17: Here you can see that much of the carving—for example the long hands and fingers—was completed before the statues were transported. See, too, how nicely the garbage rock that washed over this moai preserved this carving through the centuries.

Figure 18: The backs of some of the moai were also very finely carved. This moai was taken off the island in the 1800s and put in the British Museum, with the consequence that the stone is not nearly so worn away by wind and rain as the moai found on our island today. I wonder if I might one day go there to the British Museum and see this moai. I think he must be very lonely among the Englishers with no one from home to be at his side to speak our language to him. This I would like one day to do, yes.

After the final-carving, the moai would be somehow transported to their ahu which might be a mile away or seven miles away, at the other end of the island. They would have to be moved up and over and down hills. You can still see—when the light of

the rising or setting sun is shining at just the right angle—the ancient roads that were used for the transporting of the moai. Now those roads are covered with grass, of course.

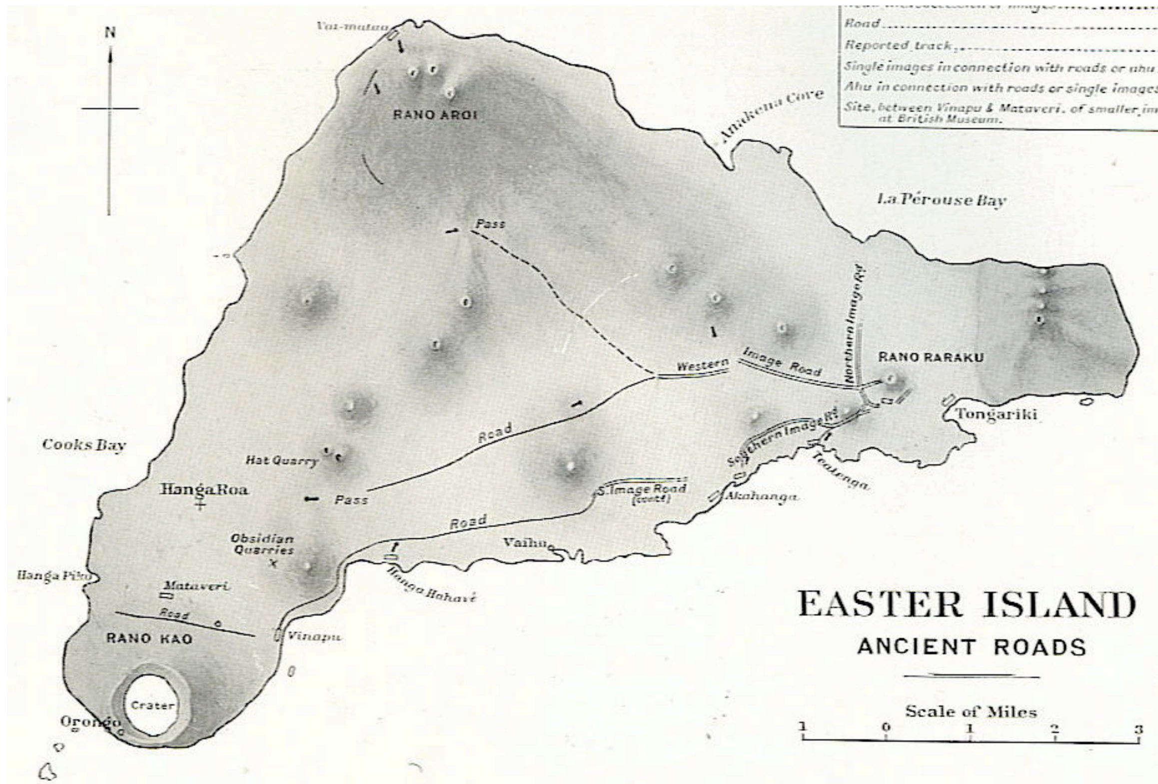

Figure 19: This is a map Mrs. Routledge drew to show the ancient roads, the first of which she discovered with great surprise one morning as she was standing on Rano Raraku, admiring the sunrise. Turning west, she saw the dim outline of the road because only in certain lights can they be seen. These are the roads by which most of the moai were transported to their ahu.

How was it possible to move such huge and heavy moai so far, up and down and between hills? This, as you surely can recite for yourself by now, is a myssssssssstery. It has been written many times that the people of our island, when asked this question, will answer, "They walked." Everyone who is not from our island always thinks this is comical of us as they believe this could not possibly be true. Our people believe in mana. Mana is an inner power that—it is written in the rongorongo—Hotu Matu'a had. It was

the mana of Hotu Matu'a that enabled him to reach our island with his two double-canoes filled with our people, chickens, rats and plants. Perhaps if Hotu Matu'a had had more mana within him, he would have managed to land with our pigs and dogs, also. Or perhaps I only joke when I say that. Or perhaps not. It must have been very hard to live on an island for many hundreds of years with only chickens and rats. Perhaps that is why our people felt the need to make the moai in the beginning, because we were all alone on this island for so long.

But why so many moai? There are nearly one thousand, all over the island. One moai was perhaps a very interesting idea. One man, or one woman perhaps, got this first idea to carve this first moai. Perhaps that man or woman attracted the interest of another few people who joined in on the work; no doubt there was little else to occupy them through so many years. Perhaps it was one of the smaller moai, so that it did not take so long to carve. And perhaps it was in the rock at the foot of the crater and they did not have to move it so very far to its intended ahu. Perhaps they moved it only as far as Ahu Tongariki which is rather near Rano Raraku, and all downhill. From Rano Raraku, you can clearly see today the fifteen moai of Ahu Tongariki, and you can imagine for yourself the first moai being transported there from the quarry. (See Figure 20.)

Perhaps, indeed, this very first carving by this first man or woman was the moai that I call "Lonely Fellow" because of his situation. Lonely Fellow was discovered—totally buried—and was excavated by a scientist called Thor Heyerdahl, about whom I shall tell you much, much more. Why would Lonely Fellow be totally buried? Yes, one wonders. An effort to control a mana of a different nature, perhaps? Or perhaps to

preserve him? This is the only ancient carving of its kind on our island and perhaps, therefore, it should be not be termed moai. Some say it is the first moai ever carved, around 1000 A.D.; others say it is the last, around 1700 A.D. Ha! They know so much. I think they are all wrong. I think it was carved in 1331. (Ha!) Today Lonely Fellow kneels at the base of Rano Raraku and, if you look eastward behind him, you can see the fifteen moai of Ahu Tongariki in the distant background. Do they not look a far-off crowd?

Figure 20: This figure is called simply "the kneeling statue" by most people because he has no traditional name by our people. I call him "Lonely Fellow" for the reason that must be obvious.

Figure 21: This is the ocean side of Ahu Tongariki. This figure is placed here so that you may try to imagine raising even one of the moai onto its ahu, let alone all fifteen. Oh, yes, with a modern crane, not so very difficult, perhaps. But without? Weeks? Months? How? These fifteen moai had been carried far inland in 1960 by a tsunami, or tidal wave as they are sometimes called, and kind people with cranes came from around the world and returned them to their ahu, which they also restored at that time. Notice the pukao atop only one moai. They were not so kind as to place the other pukao atop the other moai? Hmmm.

Ahu were not a new idea to our people. Ahu must have existed on our old island, before Hotu Matu'a brought us to this island. Indeed, on all Polynesian islands there are ahu in all the marae. Indeed, that same word ahu is used in all of Polynesia, which I find very strange, over so many centuries of so many people moving to so many islands. The word marae, however, is not in our language on this island. I have wondered if—through the centuries since we left the rest of the Polynesian people behind us—the word marae became the word moai. The two words are sounded similarly. I have never read anyone ask or answer that question. However, Mr. Peter Buck, an important anthropologist of the 1900s who wrote a book about our Polynesian navigators called *Vikings of the Sunrise*, said of marae (Beaglehole footnote, 344):

> …a roughly paved area represented the paved court of the maraes of other groups. The entire enclosure was called ahu, a term used in central Polynesia to designate the raised platform at the end of the marae court. (Buck, 234)

In any case, I can imagine this first moai carved by this first man or this first woman near Ahu Tongariki—whether or not it was indeed Lonely Fellow—and then proposing to the other people in the clan, "Let us transport this beautiful thing that we have created, and that we now call a moai, to the ahu where we have buried our ancestors as an honor to them." I think this must have happened, perhaps, at about the year 1000 A.D., in the way that we tell time today.

Our people had been on the island, by this time, a long five hundred years or so, and we were probably very bored because we could no longer get off the island, even to fish the deep waters. The enormous canoes of Hotu Matu'a by this time had rotted away, and perhaps none of the trees on this island were of a kind that would make a suitable ocean-going canoe. (I will tell you more about this idea later.) And now, thanks to the inventiveness of this man or this woman we had a wonderful new and wonderfully artistic as well as wonderfully time-passing activity. What joy! This is a good thing when you are going to be living for many centuries on an island.

The dates I gave you above? For landing here on this island, about 500 A.D., and for beginning work on the moai, about 1000 A.D.? Those are merely my guesses, but they appear to be as good as the guesses of anybody else. When you read all the books, it is astonishing how the guesses vary. So you may take my easily memorizable guesses, or

you may leave them. But you must certainly know that the guesses of my sister, "… between 2000 and 3000 years…" are most certainly wrong. Ha!

The ahu, you must be sure, took as much work as, or perhaps even more work than the moai. The ahu are platforms made of very large, squared-off rocks, with terraces leading up to them. Since the rocks are stacked upon and against one another, and since they must be perfectly flat on top so that the moai can stand upright and surely upon the ahu, the stones must be very carefully carved and fitted and then lifted into place. Trying to do this with even small stones in a garden, you can begin to see the immensity of doing it with stones that weigh many tons, with only the muscles of men and women, no horses or oxen.

Figure 21A: One ahu, many stones, some more than five feet tall.

And so then, at some time a first moai was carved and transported and put into place on its ahu. But when, then, did the idea occur to make a second moai? Immediately? Perhaps. Perhaps even before the first moai was completed, the next man or woman from the next clan came by to look at the work, and that man or woman went back to his or her clan and said, "Ai! Do you know what they are doing over at Ahu Tongariki? That is a very good idea they have over there. I think we should do that same thing, and carve a moai of our own and put our moai onto our own ahu." And so the second moai was started. And then a third, and a fourth, and then pretty soon, it was all a frenzy.

How long did it take to carve a moai? Some people say that with many many people working on a moai, perhaps it might be carved in several weeks. Some people say several months. Some people say years. The truth, as you will come to understand, is that nobody knows truth.

And then to top everything, the pukao. The pukao, you will doubtlessly remember, is the large circular stone carved of red scoria that was put atop the moai, as a hat might rest on the head of a man, or on the head of a woman, one might say, except for the fact that all but one of the moai are men.* Did the pukao come later, or were the pukao made at the same time as the moai? How were the pukao raised all the way up, not only to the top of the ahu, but all the whole way up the height of the moai, and then moved over to rest atop the heads of the moai? Yet another myssssssssstery.

One day at Rano Raraku I heard one American woman say in a whisper to her husband—when my brother was explaining to her group about how all the clans would be

working on their moai all at the same time in the quarry, making bigger and bigger and bigger and more and more and more moai—"Sounds like keeping up with the Joneses." Ha! I thought to myself. This is a curious thing to say.

*Is this not an interesting fact for the feminists among us? I have myself wondered who that lone woman was in our history, and just what it was that she did in our history that she and she alone was deemed deserving of a moai in her memory. Ah, but alas, our legends do not tell us the answer to that question.

Later I made sure to be next to this woman when we went back down to Ahu Tongariki, and I asked her "keeping up with the Joneses" might mean. She seemed embarrassed that I had overheard her. I think she thought I did not speak English because I am always remaining mum. But whether or not she was embarrassed, anyhow she did make answer, saying that "keeping up with the Joneses" was trying to be better than the neighbors.

This is, perhaps surprisingly, a very accurate assessment, in my estimation, about the people on our island and their frenzy at the quarry. They ran amok, trying to keep up with the Joneses. Each clan wanted to make the best and biggest moai and erect them on the best and biggest ahu, and then top their own off with pukao. They did not think much about what they were doing. They just "put their noses to the grindstone." (This very comical locution is another toothsome I heard yet another American say one day, and so I marked it down for playful usage, as I find these Americanisms very droll indeed. But, to

explain, to put your nose to the grindstone is to work without looking up or around; it is not putting your actual nose to an actual grindstone. Ha!)

And while no one was looking up, or around, we began to come to the end of our trees. We must have used our trees—scientists now think—to transport the moai. How else did we get them from the quarry to their final resting places on their ahu, but by using logs as rollers? There was no one standing atop Maunga Teravaka—the tallest and most central of our three largest volcanoes—to look around and say, “Ai! Slow down! Come up here and look around; we are using up all of our trees to transport the moai. Ai, only one hundred more trees. Ai, only ten more trees. Ai, stop, only one more tree.”

I wonder how many people from how many clans went to watch that last tree be cut down. And when they carried it to the foot of Rano Raraku, what did they say to the carvers and cleaners? “Ai, this is it. This is the last one. You may as well stop now.” And was that the day that they threw down their tools? Or did they keep carving and keep hauling the garbage rock even after that? When did they learn?

People always talk about how smart the people on this island must have been to be able to transport all of the moai onto all of the ahu. I think instead, perhaps, they were very stupid.

Chapter Three

The Joneses

I told you about The Cave Where Men Are Eaten and how Daniel, the English islander boy, wanted to go there that night, and how I left him there. There was someone else who was very interested in The Cave Where Men Are Eaten: a man. Well, I have to say that this man had a wife, and she seemed interested, too, especially because she had seen pictures of the paintings on the roof of the cave. But the wife did not want to go down to The Cave Where Men Are Eaten because it is a steep climb and there are many big and small rocks over which you must clamber, and the wife was very frightened to go and perhaps fall and break an arm or leg or skull. And so I took only the man. I will not tell you the name of the man for a reason. Nor the name of the woman. In fact, I have decided to name them, for your sakes, "The Joneses, Mr. and Mrs."

I think perhaps the Joneses are a little famous, although they would never tell me this, nor do I or would I recognize their names from any reading. I think, however, that there must be many famous people whose names I would not recognize.

The reason that I am even writing this account is because of the Joneses. That is, the Joneses told me to go ahead and write it, and they have helped me, and I believe they will help me to further the account when I have finished writing it—if even ever!—although they have made no promises of that.*

*The astute reader will have noticed that indeed I did finish writing this account, and that it is indeed now even a quite thick book. But the editor that I told you about earlier has decided that there are certain sentences and sentiments that I wrote during the writing of this—that has now become a book—that should stay as they were originally written, during the time that I did not even know yet, while I was doing the writing of it, that this indeed would become the book that indeed it did become. The editor tells me

that there is a certain charm in the writer not knowing what the writer is doing even as the writer is doing it. That, it seems, is the province of an editor.

What I told the Joneses, the germ that got them started thinking about this account of mine, was that of all the books that I had so far read about our island, I liked and trusted none. The things that were chosen to write, and the ways to write those things, were not, I thought, the things that should have been chosen, or the ways to write them. I told the Joneses I wished someone would one day write a very good book about our people on this island that I love so much.

When the Joneses first met me, they did not pay me any special attention because, as I told you, I always keep mum. But then little by little over the three days of touring with my brother, they became friendly to me, and they found out that I could speak a little English, and that I would tell them things that my brother would not. That was the key for them. What I mean by this? I would tell them things that may be true or things that may not be true, but they are true to me because I do not lie, even if I may be mistaken or confused: in short, my thoughts. And the Joneses liked that. Then, on the day that the Joneses were supposed to fly away, they suddenly decided to stay an extra time on our island. That shows you how rich they are. They seemed to have no occupations that they needed to return to, at their home. They seemed to think nothing of paying the extra hotel bill or the extra meals bills. They told me that they wanted to see more of the island than they could see on the regular tours in which my brother and sister take all the other peoples, but I knew that the reason they wanted to stay was … ME! I was to be their "informant" as they began jokingly to call me. They now rented their own car, and they

hired me, and paid me money, paid it right into my hand. And they indeed sometimes even let me drive the car!

Because the Joneses somehow understood that we were doing something that perhaps it would be best that my brother and sister did not know about, we never told anyone. I knew the schedules of my brother and sister and the other tours, and I took the Joneses at different times and in opposite directions. Since my mother works all day at the hotel, cooking the meals, she has no idea where I am or go. School? My teacher and I have … an understanding. Without modesty, or the need for it, I may declare that it is recognized by all that I am far advanced over the other pupils. I always finish all the assignments on my own, and so my teacher does not require me to be always going to class. Also my teacher appears to understand what I myself believe, that I probably learn more from so many peoples from so many places as I go with them around the island than I could ever learn sitting in class. This is a good teacher, do you not think so?

I was very sad when the Joneses did come to the end of their extended stay and did fly off the island because I grew to love them in those ten days. They were so interesting, and they were interested in every thing, every little corner of our island. And for every question that I answered for them, they answered as many for me. When you live on an island, and when you have not lived even seventeen years yet, there is so much not to know.

One of my questions to them? One that made them laugh, even though they pretended not to… I said, “And so, where you come from, you have no moai?”

This question was hard for me to understand, and I had never asked anyone else for fear of seeming stupid, no matter which way their answer might go. You see, the moai were here when I was born, in all of my memories, and they are just as much a part of our island as the stones on the seashore or the stones on the mountainside. Yet all of the many peoples who fly here on the airplanes do fly here from all around our planet just to see our moai—not to see our island, or our people—and therefore the only conclusion I could reach was that all these many peoples indeed have no moai in all these many lands from which they come. But this was as impossible to believe as that they have no stones in the lands from which they came. The Joneses tried to make me understand that the moai are what makes my island, and my people, special. Special to all the world, where there is so much to wonder at, but no other moai. It seems impossible; yet there can be no other conclusion.

The Joneses are mainly the reason for why I am speaking such good English. Not just those ten days that they were here with me on the island, but also in my writing to them, and in their writing back to me. Both of them take turns writing to me, or both will write their own sections in the letter. And do you know what they do? They always enclose a check. The first time I had no idea about what a check was, or what to do with a check. No one had ever given me a check before, and even in the hotels, people use plastic cards, not checks. Who would even accept a check? It was Mrs. Jones who put the check in the letter and explained that it was a gift. There was no occasion for the gift, but that did not seem to matter to her. She said that she treasured the letter that I had

written to her. So perhaps that treasury was the reason for the check. In any case, I found out from a Chilean money-changer how I can deposit the check in a bank in Chile.

You are exclaiming, "Deposit?!?" You probably think that somebody my age would want to cash the check and spend the money. But I have a dream. The dream is to one day catch one of those airplanes that fly here—one every other day from the east and one every other day from the west—and fly myself off the island. Not forever. I love this island. I want to live on this island and die on this island and mix my bones with the bones of my ancestors. But I also want to see something else of the world besides, and I want to go to university. I do not know if I can save enough money for all of that, because it is truly expensive, I understand. But that is my dream.

And the Joneses keep providing me with money. Every letter another check. I will not tell you how much. I think this is a private thing between the Joneses and myself, as private a thing as when I took them around the island, and we never told my brother or sister or mother. And the Joneses continue to write me. You would think they would be bored with me since I have not yet lived seventeen years and live on an island more than two thousand miles from anywhere. But no. They still ask questions. And they still answer all my questions. And they say they look forward to my account, here, when I am finished writing it, if even ever. I tell them I am continuing with it, and they say that makes them glad, for whatever reasons they have for it.

Their questions? Oh, they want to know everything about the people on our island, and how we feel about everything. I think they may be writing an account, too, of their own, because they are very open. Or perhaps they feel that by my writing answers

to their questions in my letters to them, they help me form my own thoughts that will help to keep my own account clean. I think perhaps they are right about that because I find that after I write a letter to them—answering their questions—that when I sit down to write this account, it is much easier. That must be a phenomenon.

My questions? Oh, everything in the world. Also, I sometimes ask them about their family, but they do not really answer those questions very well at all. I think they have no children—because they have never mentioned children, and when they traveled here to our island, they brought no children—but I think that question is too rude to ask. I wonder, too, if perhaps they collect people in their travels the way they collected me. When you are rich and worldly, I think it must be nice to collect young people, perhaps especially if you have no children of your own. But I wonder about these other "children" they might be collecting. I wonder if they write to the Joneses the way that Toromiru writes to the Joneses. But these are the questions that I *cannot* ask, not the questions that I *do* ask. The questions that I *do* ask are about the places they travel to. And about their home, which is San Francisco, California in the United States of America. Did you know that San Francisco is practically on the exact same longitude as my island? I am merely thousands of miles directly south of the Joneses. This fact thrills me in a way that I cannot explain.

But to my story… when I took Mr. Jones to The Cave Where Men Are Eaten, I felt very warm to him even though I was embarrassed to be showing him a place that had such a dreadful and even embarrassing name. He had brought a book with him, though I had warned him the climb was steep. It looked like an old book, but when he

accidentally dropped it down the cliff—as I knew he would—it did not break apart. They made books very well in the olden days. Fortunately the book fell into the rocks and not into the waves, and when I reached the bottom of the cliff, I rescued it.

The first thing Mr. Jones did when he got down to the shore with me was to open up the book to a picture and hold it up in front of him to compare the picture to the cave. He said, "It looks exactly the same as it did in 1914!"

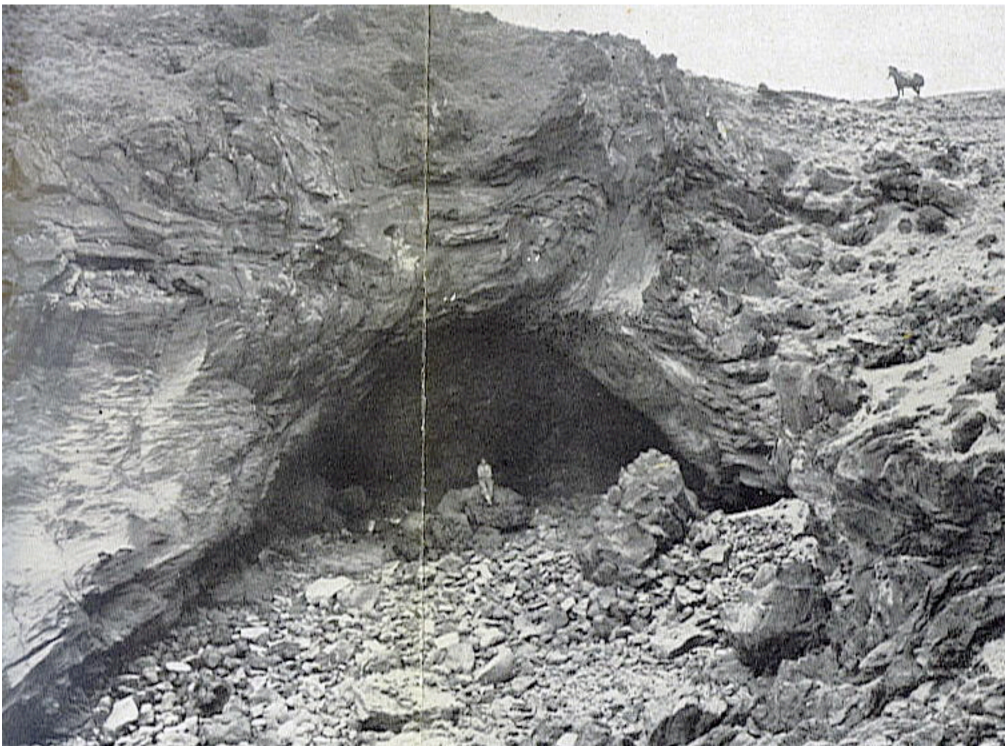

Figure 22: Outside The Cave Where Men Are Eaten, or Eat-man Cave, or Ana Kai-Tangata. Photograph by Mrs. Routledge.

The old book so examined by Mr. Jones was a book by the Mrs. Routledge that I mentioned earlier that I will tell you more about later. Mrs. Routledge was on this island for several years beginning in 1914, and she wrote this book. Mr. Jones read a little in the book and looked up, saying, "Ah, yes, here it is. Mrs. Routledge calls this cave Eat-man Cave."

"Ana Kai-Tangata," I said. "In our language."

"That name, Eat-man Cave! What do you think of that?" he asked me.

"It is too brutal," I said, and he nodded his head to show that he agreed.

Then he said, "In fact, this woman Mrs. Routledge seems to me to be…" and he paused as though looking for the right word where a wrong word might embarrass. "She seems to be insensitive, too often. Some of the things she says … are—in your fine word—brutal." This was the first time that I knew that a person could defy what he reads. "Oh, Mrs. Routledge writes beautifully, to be sure, but, well listen here to this." And he read aloud from Mrs. Routledge:

> Naturally the months passed at Mataveri were occupied by the residents in feasting as well as in dancing, and equally naturally the victims were human… It is told that the destined provender for one meal evaded that fate by hiding in the extreme end of a hut, which was so long and dark that she was never found. Some of these repasts took place in a cave in the sea-cliff near at hand ... known as "Ana Kai-tangata" or Eat-man Cave. (Routledge, 259)

"Is your English good enough, Toromiru, to understand that she is mocking, making light of, even making FUN out of such … horrible things … such tragedy, where your people are having to hide for their very lives?"

I nodded my head yes, though I was perhaps not altogether sure that my English was indeed good enough, at that time, to understand. Now, however, I do understand. Words like "provender" and "repasts" are joking words in a context such as this, it now appears to me. And I must relate to you that, therefore, I now have something of an enormous bias against everything that this famous Mrs. Routledge ever wrote about us.

“But then," Mr. Jones went on, "this description that follows is why my wife wanted to come to this cave in the first place.”

> The roof is adorned with pictures of birds in red and white ; one of these birds is drawn over a sketch of a European ship, showing that they are not of very ancient date.” (Routledge, 259)

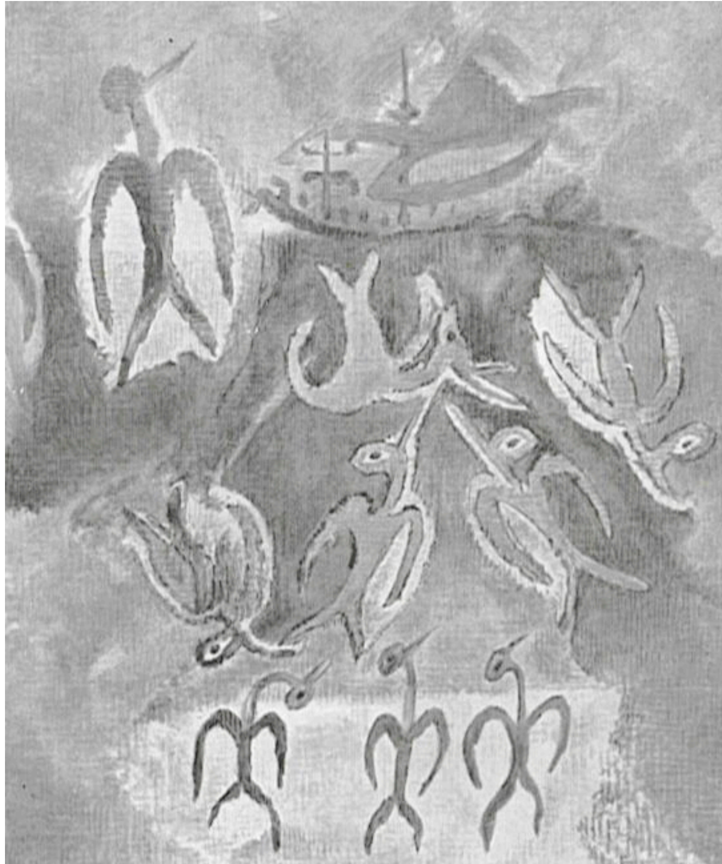

Figure 23: Drawings in Ana Kai-Tangata. Photograph by Mrs. Routledge.

The picture in the book was black and white, but in some ways it was easier to see the designs in the book than on the roof of the cave itself. That is probably because so many years have passed since Mrs. Routledge took that picture, and the pictures have now faded.

I liked it very much that Mr. and Mrs. Jones had brought books with them about our island. And do you know what they did? When they left, they gave me all of their books about our island. That was the kindest things that I ever heard about.

And after that, whenever I would read in one of those books about another book—in the bibliographies at the ends of those books—I would write to the Joneses about that new book, and I would say how I wished I could have it. And what do you think I would get in the mail the next time? That book. Or sometimes, if they could not find that book—say for example the accounts of Captain Roggeveen or ANON. or Mr. Behrens that I will tell you about soon—then the Joneses would somehow manage to get those books from one of the libraries they have near San Francisco, California, and they would make copies of the pages and send them to me in the mail. This is legal in the United States of America, I believe, or the Joneses would not do it, I am sure. So this is fine of them, is it not? And that is how I have become a person with resources!

Chapter Four

Europe Comes to Our Island

Before I received books of my own, I read the books that my brother owns. These books are not the best books. These books are the books that someone without other resources could get on an island more than two thousand miles away from anywhere. These books are for sale at the P. Sebastian Englert Anthropological Museum in Hanga Roa on our island, and that is where my brother bought them. Father Sebastian was a missionary who came to live on our island with our people in 1935, and he died in 1969. He was very important to us, I am sure, although I was born long after his death.

Most of our people do not visit this museum or buy these books because they are the people that this museum is all about, and so they do not feel the need to know. That is how my people are different from me; I do want to know. There are two rooms in this museum. The larger room has the exhibits about our people and the moai, and the smaller room has the books and the T-shirts and "curios for sale" as my auntie labels them. Auntie manages the curios, and she lets me into the museum for free because that costs her nothing. But if I, or my brother, want to buy one of her books, we must pay for them just like the many peoples from their many lands who enter the museum, curious about our people and our moai.

These books are the “popular” books, so called because they appeal to "people" who then buy them. These popular books are not very good for research, however, or for knowing very much at all, really. These books tell all the “popular” facts about our island, but they may not always tell the truth.

That is why—once I became a person of resources and could get books of my own, or legal copies of pages of books—I was very happy. Now I was able to read many more things. Now I could go back and read the first words of the first peoples who came to our island. Their own words. Not quoted by someone more than two hundred years later. Not summarized. Their own words, from their own time.

Those first peoples knew nothing, and they knew it. Most people who know nothing do not know it. But these first peoples, the Dutch, the Spanish, the English, the French, what they saw, they wrote down. And they wrote down only what they saw. Or, mostly. But you can very easily see the ones who wrote down more than they saw—that is, lied—or who did not understand what they did see. Those first ones did not speak our language; so they could not say to us, “Ai, Toromiru," (for example), "tell me what you think about this or that, and I will write down your words.” That would be hearsay, of course, but hearsay can be telltale. Those first visitors, however, could not write down hearsay because they could not hear hearsay spoken since they did not understand our language of Rapanui.

Well, sometimes they tried. They did try to ask us questions, and our people did try to answer. But when you read those parts today, you can laugh because it was like deaf people asking mute people for answers, and then writing down what they thought they would have heard if the question had been really asked and really answered. It was very like in those very amusing Tarzan movies where Jane punches her chest and says, “Me Jane,” and then punches Tarzan on his chest and says, “You Tarzan.” Then Tarzan imitates her and punches his own chest and says, “Me Jane,” and punches Jane on her

chest and says, “You Tarzan.” Then she laughs and says, “No, no, no,” and punches her own chest harder and says louder, “*Me* Jane, *you* Tarzan.” And Tarzan punches his own chest harder and then her chest harder and says louder, “No, no, no, *me* Jane, *you* Tarzan.” Language can be funny when you do not know it.

For example, the name of this place. William Wales, one of the first people who wrote some of the first words about our island, tried to find out the name of our island, but he had this problem with language. He wrote in his journal:

> We have been equally unfortunate in our enquiries concerning the native Name of the Island; for on comparing Notes I find we have got three several Names for it, viz. Tamareki, Whyhu, and Tuapij: They have but few words common with those of Otahitee, and did not appear expert at conversing by signs. (Beaglehole, 827-8)

Well, I suppose our people were at least as good at conversing by signs as his people were, but that is not my point. The point is that William Wales probably did indeed have success when he pointed all around him and asked his English question, “What is the name of this place? The name? This place? All around us? The name?”

He no doubt finally made himself clear, and no doubt the people did say to him, “Ah! Vaihu. This part of the island is called Vaihu. Vaihu. The name of this place. Vaihu.” And he wrote down “Whyhu” because that is what he heard.

Then later on, in a different part of the island, he asked the same people or other people, just to confirm the name, “And the name of this place again?” and pointed all around. And whatever they said, he wrote down, “Tamareki” and “Tuapij” but without knowing what he was writing. Also, it is so very comical to see the different spellings these English people gave to the same word because their English ears could capture only

the sounds that their English tongues were used to speaking, and their English alphabet is so confused, and confusing. “Tamareki” might be, for example, Tongariki. “Tuapij” might be, for example, all the sense that his English ears and English alphabet could make of Tua Poi O Piripi.

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Pronunciation of our Language

I am now going to give you a lesson in how to say words in our language, so that you will have no excuse for pronouncing things the way the peoples who come here pronounce them, which is badly. Never worry; it is easy and fun.

Our language is much simpler to learn than English, the writing of which makes little if any sense at all. Take your English word “neigh” which is not really a very good word at all to stand for the sound that a horse makes. How is anyone going to know how to say "neigh" just by looking at it? All those silent letters. And then what will you think when you find out that there is another word spelled “nay” and even with a very different meaning indeed? In our language, that simple sound is spelled simply “ne” and that is the only way to spell it, and that is the only way to say it, and there is only one meaning for it. We have no “silent letters” or “helping letters" which, indeed, are not at all helpful.

In our language, every sound has one symbol, and every symbol has one sound, quite unlike in English where you use the same letter "a" for “ah”—"at"—"ate"—"are"—"am"—"aim"—"all" and perhaps a dozen other sounds.

In our language there are only five vowel sounds and only five vowel symbols: a, e, i, o u. (Forget "sometimes y and sometimes w" please!) But our vowel symbols are not said the way vowel symbols are said in English. Our vowels are said as you would say the musical notes "do re mi fa…". That accounts for four of them. The fifth one —"u"—is just as simple as it looks: like the "u" in Lulu or Humuhumunukunukuapua'a..

What is also easy in our language is that instead of having twenty-one consonants, as you have in English, we have only nine: g, h, k, m, n, p, r, t, v. And this other one ' which I will tell you more about. And you never have two consonants together in what the English call a "blend" like "bl" or "nd" or so many others. So once you know those simple facts, you can say any of the Polynesian words when you see it written.

Figure 24: Humuhumunukunukuapua'a. A pretty fish deserves a pretty name.

Take the word Humuhumunukunukuapua'a. I will wager that you have heard that word already because it is a comical word and all peoples around the planet always like to say it for the fun of it. The Humuhumunukunukuapua'a is a kind of fish that lives around Hawai'i. That word, Humuhumunukunukuapua'a, is not a word we have in our

Rapanui language because we do not have that kind of fish in our waters, and therefore how could we know about it and give it a name? That word is a word from Hawai'i but it is a typical Polynesian word in its structure and pronunciation. Now you might well ask why the people of Hawai’i bothered to call this fish Humuhumunukunukuapua'a? Why did they not call it simply humu? Or humuhumu? Or humunuku? Or anything shorter than Humuhumunukunukuapua'a. The reason is that when you live on an island for 1500 years, you have very much free time, and you can take as long to say a word as you want to. And it is fun to say Humuhumunukunukuapua'a. Try it out loud.

Humu-humu-nuku-nuku-apu-a’a.

You see? It *is* fun. And you must remember the story I told you about toward the beginning of this account, the story that the Englisher Daniel wanted me to tell him about, the story of the warrior who said, "Give me the body of the warrior with such a splendid name. I should like to eat him, because his name is sweet in my ears." That name was Hanga-maihi-tokerau, and does it not indeed have a splendid sound?

And one final thing: do you see that apostrophe near the end of Humuhumunukunukuapua'a? That ' means that you shut off the air in the back of your throat in order to say the two vowels separately: a'a. It is as if, in English, you are admonishing someone for doing something naughty, and you say to them, "Ah Ah!" Do you feel the stoppage in the back of your throat? That, in fact, is called a "glottal stop" because you stop the air momentarily with your glottis in the larynx in your throat, yes. Simply, the glottal stop works in our language like a consonant that stops or changes the air flow between two vowel sounds, yes. Notice the difference, for example, in

pronouncing Hotu Matu'a and Hotu Matua—where you do not stop the air flow but let the two vowels slide together.

Now you know how to say everything in our language.

(End of box.)

Another reason you have to be careful when you read these first words by these first Europeans is that you may not be reading their actual words. It might be a translation from one language to another. Among the first words ever written about us were the German words of a man named Carl Friedrich Behrens, whose account was first published in 1738. Well, first of all, Mr. Behrens landed on our island in 1722 with the Dutch expedition led by Captain Roggeveen, but he did not publish these words until 1738. So what happened in those fifteen years in between? Was he writing this 1738 account from notes he took in 1722, or was he writing from his memory? No one knows.

Then there is this language translation problem. This account by Mr. Behrens was published in German and translated first into French, and then this Englishman named Alexander Dalrymple translated the French words into English. Since neither French nor German is a language that I can read, then I must read the translation of a translation of a fifteen year old document written nearly three hundred years ago. So I must remember all of this, perhaps with some distrust, as I read this account of Mr. Behrens.

Second, the English of Mr. Dalrymple is a very old kind of English, and he uses words and expressions that you do not hear out of the mouths of many Englishers today. Also, these early men spelled differently. And sometimes they misspelled. For example,

James Cook, who was the English captain who brought William Wales to our island, was a very smart and kind and noble man, but his spelling is dreadful.

And sometimes, as with Mr. Dalrymple, these early writers use a funny "f" instead of "s" in some words, but not in all words. Mr. Dalrymple says, for example, in translating the German account:

This laft was by Charles Frederick Behrens, ferjeant of the troops aboard the fquadron. I have not feen the German original, the French transflation is therefore followed. (Dalrymple)

I find that quite funny. (Not sunny, funny.) I find particularly funny the words ferjeant and fquadron.

Another thing of which you must be careful when you are reading any of the things written about our island, is lies. There were, for example, three accounts of the Dutch expedition of Captain Roggeveen of 1722. The log of Captain Roggeveen himself was not discovered until more than 100 years later, and so for more than a century we had only two accounts to believe, or disbelieve. One of those accounts was written by Mr. Behrens, as I have told you, and the other was written by ANON., which stands for "Anonymous" and means that we do not know who wrote it. How much can we believe this anonymous person? More than that, ANON. writes what one can tell at very first glance are downright lies, even what Americans may call "whoppers" on account of their largeness and audacity. For example, he wrote:

> I muft declare that all thefe favages are of a more than gigantic fize, for the men being twice as tall and thick as the largeft of our people ; they meafured, one with another, the height of twelve feet, fo that we could eafily—who will not wonder at it! without ftooping, have paffed betwixt the legs of thefe fons of Goliah. According to their height, fo is their thicknefs, and are all, one with another, very well proportioned, fo that each could have paffed for a Hercules ; but none of their wives came up to the height of the men, being commonly not above ten or eleven feet… I doubt not but moft people who read this voyage will give no credit to

> what I now relate, and that this account of the height of thefe giants will probably pafs with them for a mere fable or fiction ; but this I declare, that I have put down nothing but the real truth, and that this people, upon the niceft infpection, were in fact of fuch a furpaffing height as I have ever defcribed. (Dalrymple, 113-4)

I cannot say that I like it that this anonymous person calls our people thefe favages. Perhaps you can begin to understand why my brother and I are perhaps a little mad. But I also must say that I rather admire the way he swears up and down that he is telling the truth when he is so obviously telling a whopper. I think liars often do that. It might be one of the best ways of judging whether someone is lying, by how much he swears he is telling the truth.

How do you know what is true, anyway? You talk to people, and they all tell you different things. Say that you wanted to find out something about your great grandparents: you talk to your mother or father, and they perhaps cannot tell you much about their grandparents; so you talk to your grandparents, and they perhaps can tell you a great deal more about their own parents, but it is from a long time ago, and perhaps they are no longer sure. How can you yourself be sure what is the truth, then, about your great grandparents, especially when these informants may perhaps begin saying contradictory things, or perhaps changing the story that they told you just last week? Say, then, to take this example further, that a book is written about your great grandparents. Ho! And another, and another. And say the books begin contradicting each other. And say that you go to your parents and grandparents and tell them the various things that you have been reading about your great grandparents in these books, and then your parents and

grandparents begin saying, "Oh, yes, I remember now, that *is* the way it was. Oh, *yes*." Well, how do you know that they are not just saying that because it is written down in a book, perhaps by someone you have never met, and who wrote these things down on the other side of the planet from you?

That is our trouble on our island. All these peoples come here because of all the mysteries and enigmas, and they write all these things and do all this studying and experimenting, and make all these judgments and statements, and people start believing it all, even when it may not be true.

This is all I know for sure: we are here. Our people got here somehow on our island as far away from any other land as you can get on this planet. How did we get here, so far from anywhere? Well, I will tell you what I know about that, but indeed for what purpose since the simple fact is that we are here?

The moai? How did the moai—in all their hugeness and heaviness—get moved from the mountain to the shore? Oho, there is a question for us indeed! And oh, so many answers have been conjectured and speculated and—I am sure—very simply made up.

But for now the only truth I know for sure is that, as unbelievable as it may seem, we are here, and our moai are here, all of us together. So take our picture, if you want to.

Figure 25: These are some of our people in our present day life standing among some moai. Can you tell which are the moai? (Ha!) Also in the background is our town of Hanga Roa. Do you see? We now have trees again in our town. They give wonderful shade from the sun.

1722

The Mysteries Begin

Now I am going to give you a date: 1722 A.D. I told you about that date already, but now I am going to tell you more. 1722 A.D. is an important date in our history. This is the date that the first sailors from the other side of the world found us and wrote the first words about us.

These were Dutch sailors, which means they had sailed from Holland, which was a country in Europe. Holland has changed its name, now, to the Netherlands, although I do not know why, since it is still the same place. Nor do I know why the people from Holland are called the Dutch instead of Hollanders or Hollandese, but so it is. Our island has changed its name many times, too, but it is the same place. Different peoples call it different things in different languages, Davis Island, Easter Island, Isla de Pascua, Paásch Eyland, Ile de Pacques, Isla San Carlos. Now we call it Rapa Nui, but we used to call it Te Pito O Te Henua. Or that is what the books tell us. So what? It is the same island in the same place on the same planet. Lonely island. Lonely planet.

The name of the Dutch captain was Roggeveen, and he was sailing around down here in the South Pacific because he had a mission. He wanted to find the "great Southern Continent" but if you ask me why, I cannot tell you. It is nothing but water and ice down south of our island. But that was when the Dutch and the English and the Spanish and the Portuguese and all those other countries on the continent of Europe were trying to own the world. They sent out explorers and conquistadores to claim other

territories in their name. So, if there really was a great Southern Continent, then they would definitely want to claim that, and own it, too.

It is clear from the final words of Carl Friedrich Behrens that these imperialist objectives of claiming for gain any available islands and countries and even continents in the name of the home country were foremost in the minds of all captains sailing around the world in those days. Mr. Behrens wrote about our island:

> This island is a suitable and convenient place at which to obtain refreshment, as all the country is under cultivation and we saw in the distance whole tracts of woodland [ganze Walder\. It should be possible to grow corn all over it, and even to plant vineyards, which might be very serviceable in the event of a new discovery of the South Land. (Corney, 137)

For whose purpose would be this planting of corn and vineyards? Oho!

The reason Captain Roggeveen and Mr. Behrens and ANON. were looking in these longitudes and latitudes for this South Land? There had been an earlier captain from England named Davis who had sighted what he thought might have been this great Southern Continent, and from his log it was thought that he might have been sailing somewhere in these environs when he made the sighting. So Captain Roggeveen had his eyeballs peeled. When he first saw our island, he thought it was Davis Island, but when he got closer he saw that it did not fit the description. That is when he gave it his own name, Easter Island, because he sighted us on his Easter Sunday, April 2, 1722. But Captain Roggeveen called it Paásch Eyland, naturally, because that was his language.

Our people lit many fires, which Captain Roggeveen took as a sign of welcoming his ships. Perhaps he was right, since everyone says how friendly we are. Or perhaps it was the way the people on the eastern end of the island were able to call, in a fast way, to the people on the other parts of the island to come and see the three strange canoes that were coming to them out of the blue. In any case, remember those fires when, later, I tell you about the wood.

For me, instead of wondering so much what kind of impression our island and our moai made upon the Dutch, my question has always been what on earth my people must have thought when they saw these three ships coming out of the vast ocean from where the sun rises. Certainly they knew about large canoes because we had our own legends about Hotu Matu'a and how he had sailed here from Marae Renga, an island in the direction of the setting sun. The canoes of Hotu Matu'a, we knew, must have been very large because he brought three hundred people with him, our legends told us. His canoes, like these Dutch ships, would have had sails to catch the winds. All this we knew. But still, we had lived on our island for more than forty generations without seeing anybody from the outside world, no ship, no sails. And then that day in 1722… what a surprise it must have been. It must have been—for us then, as if, for you today—a space ship were to arrive on the planet. Yet from what Captain Roggeveen wrote in his log, our people showed, remarkably, no fear.

There was one man—I wish that I knew this man personally because I think he must have been very brave—who paddled his canoe out to the three strange ships when they were two miles offshore. This must have taken a great effort on the part of that

single man. His canoe was a little, leaky thing made up of bits of boards, and this man had to spend as much time bailing out the ocean as he did in paddling. But he reached the nearest of the big ships and climbed aboard. I am going to call this unknown man Ure o Pea, and I will tell you later why I call him that. But for now, please remember him as Ure o Pea as you read what Captain Roggeveen wrote about him:

> The man seemed to be very glad to behold us, and showed the greatest wonder at the build of our Ship. He took special notice of the tautness of our spars, the stoutness of our rigging and running gear, the sails, the guns—which he felt all over with minute attention—and with everything else that he saw ; especially when the image of his own features was displayed before him in a mirror, seeing the which, he started suddenly back and then looked towards the back of the glass, apparently in the expectation of discovering there the cause of the apparition. (Corney, 8)

Not only was this man brave, but he was intelligent. That *is* intelligent it seems to me, if you have never seen a mirror or your own face before, to look at the backside of the mirror to see what it is that you are seeing.

Mr. Behrens also wrote about this lone, brave man, Ure O Pea:

> We took him aboard our vessel and gave him a piece of linen cloth to wrap about his body, for he was quite naked ; and we offered him beads and other trinkets, all of which he hung round his neck together with a dried fish. He was very cleverly and regularly painted with all sorts of figures : he was of a brown tint, and had long ears which hung down as far as his shoulders as if they had been stretched to that length by being weighted, after the fashion of the Mongolian Moors. He was fairly tall in stature,

> strong in limb, of good appearance, and lively in mien, as well as pleasing in speech and gesture. We gave this South Lander or foreign visitor a glass of wine to drink ; but he only took it and tossed it into his eyes, whereat we were surprised. I fancy he thought that we designed to poison him by its means, which is a common usage among Indians.... After he had taken his meal our musicians treated him to a specimen of each one of their instruments; and whenever any person took him by the hand he began at once to caper and dance about. We were much pleased to see his enjoyment... He parted from us unwillingly: and held up his hands, cast his glances towards the land, and began to cry out loudly in these words, O dorroga! O dorroga!... I make no doubt that ... he was appealing to his god, as we could see great numbers of heathen idols erected on shore. (Corney, 132-3)

Europeans liked to call us heathens and savages in those days. If you did not believe in their Christian God then you were a heathen or a savage. I think there are no heathens left on this island any more. Except perhaps me. But I am not even sure of that. I may call myself a heathen, and then laugh at it. But I do not like others calling me a heathen just because I may—or may not—believe differently from them.

So these are the words, then, of the Dutch upon finding us. But what of the words and thoughts of our island man, Ure O Pea, upon greeting the Dutch?

"Such wood, and so much of it!" Ure O Pea must have exclaimed. "O dorroga!" (which means nothing in our language, by the way). "The hugeness of the timbers, the height of the masts. Such cloth and so much of it in the hugeness of the sails. Such length and thickness of rope. The smell of the ship. The smell of the men. Such men in their strangeness, the sounds of their speech, the paleness of their skin, and the

sewn cloths in which they wrap themselves. The taste of their foods. The four-legged animals they carry with them on board. The music these strange men make, on strings and pipes and squeeze-boxes, so merry, so new, so different."

And the questions that must have burned so in this inquisitive, gulping mind of Ure O Pea who so bravely paddled his leaking canoe over two miles of deep ocean to greet these men. "From what world have you come? From what distance over the horizon from which our sun rises? What lies out there, so unknown and, indeed, so completely unsuspected?"

And so Ure O Pea danced and sang and threw wine in his face and wanted not to leave when the sun was going down.

And what did Ure O Pea tell our people when he indeed did return that night to our island? "Wait until the morning, when you will see for yourselves. Go to their ships as I did, board them and see for yourselves the wonders. Give them welcome here on our island." And did he think to add the idea now, for perhaps the first time: "Our lonely island."

The next day Captain Roggeveen moved his ships in closer to the shore and let down their anchors. Now, according to Mr. Behrens:

> The natives swam off in the water in thousands; some with small dinghies or skiffs brought us uncooked and baked hens, together with many roots; while on the beach they were running up and down like deer... Our former visitor came on board together with many others of his people, bringing us a quantity of dressed fowls and roots. (Corney, 133)

See? Friendly. And Captain Roggeveen added:

> A great many canoes came off to the ships; these people ... were so daring that they took the seamen's hats and caps from off their heads, and sprang overboard with their spoil. (Corney, 11)

Yes, but you see also? We were thieves. Heathens, savages *and* thieves. That is the report that was made about us by all the explorers and conquistadores. We gave them chickens and all kinds of good things to eat, and perhaps we wanted a few hats in return, but that made us thieves. What these Dutchmen did not understand was that it was a game to us, snatch-as-snatch-can. When you have lived on an island for hundreds of years, you do like to find a new game to play. Here were all these Dutchmen in their funny clothes. So, of course.

But the Dutch crew made up for it when they went ashore, all very orderly with their guns while my people were running around them like—what did he say?—like deer. Captain Roggeveen wrote that his men:

> ...all armed with musket, pistols, and cutlass ... proceeded in open order, but keeping well together... making signs with the hand that the natives, who pressed round us in great numbers, should stand out of our way and make room for us... when, quite unexpectedly and to our great astonishment, four or five shots were heard in our rear, together with a vigorous shout of "'t is tyd, 't is tyd, geeft vuur," ["It's time, it's time, fire!"]. On this, as in a moment, more than thirty shots were fired, and the Indians, being thereby amazed and scared, took to flight, leaving 10 or 12 dead, besides the wounded. (Corney, 12)

This was the first time—but unfortunately not the last time—that my people were repaid for their friendliness with bullets. Mr. Behrens wrote:

> Many of them were shot at this juncture; and among the slain lay the man who had been with us before, at which we were much grieved. (Corney, 135)

Today, I picture this man, whom I am calling Ure o Pea. I picture him dancing so happily with the strangers on their strange ships. And I picture him lying dead on the shore, killed by strange weapons in the hands of strange men. Mr. Behrens wrote more:

> ...even their children's children in that place will in times to come be able to recount the story of it. (135)

So, here am I, recounting it.

1770

The Spanish

In that same book with the accounts of Captain Roggeveen and Mr. Behrens is a different recounting of a different voyage that I like to read because it is quite comical, and yet at the same time makes me quite angry. This is the voyage of Captain Don Felipe Gonzalez whose two ships arrived here in 1770, forty-eight years after Captain Roggeveen arrived here in 1722. This was but the second visit to our island from the outside world.

What makes the account of the Spanish expedition so comical is that these Spaniards claimed our island in the name of Spain, just by saying so. What makes it so angering is the same thing. This captain and his crew actually dared to come here and say, “All right, this island and all these people on it now belong to King Carlos of Spain.” I think I have never heard of anything so silly or arrogant.

But I also like very much the description of our people by the man writing the account for Captain Gonzalez. We do not know the name of this writer although we have his words still. On the title page, it says only "By an officer of the said Frigate." There is a footnote that says this officer is probably Don Francisco Antonio de Agüera; and so I will always refer to this unknown writer as Don Agüera.

I also admire the reactions of my people to these Spaniards, especially after the massacre forty-eight years earlier by the Dutch sailors, with their blazing, thunderous, murdering sticks of fire and death. Any elderly person on our island would have remembered that day from their youth, but also all of the younger people would have had

recounted to them countless times the story of the Dutch and their massacre. It would not have escaped our attention, too, that these new visitors came from the very same direction of the rising sun, and dropped anchor in the very same bay as the Dutch ship, today called La Pérouse Bay, at the northeastern end of the island.

I am going to quote the account of the Gonzalez adventure at some considerable length (95-104 passim.) because it does make me laugh and chuckle and laugh again. I am hoping you will laugh, too.

> Friday, 16th November, 1770. We passed within about a mile of the eastern point of the bay and saw a considerable number of natives posted on the heights, who collected nearer to the middle of the bay as we sailed towards it, so that by the time we let go there must have been more than 800 people, divided in batches, all wearing cloaks of a yellow colour or white. There was not the least appearance of hostility, nor of the implements of war about them ; I only saw many demonstrations of rejoicing and much yelling… (Corney, 95-6)

> Their physiognomy does not resemble that of the Indians of the Continent of Chile, Peru, or New Spain in anything, these islanders being in colour between white, swarthy, and reddish, not thick lipped nor flat nosed, the hair chestnut coloured and limp, some have it black, and others tending to red or a cinnamon tint. They are tall, well built and proportioned in all their limbs ; and there are no halt, maimed, bent, crooked, luxated, deformed, or bow-legged among them, their appearance being thoroughly pleasing, and tallying with Europeans more than with Indians. I believe, from their docility and intelligence, that it would be easy to domesticate them and to convert them to any religion which might be put before them. (Corney, 96)

Ha! I say, "Ha!" I will tell you more about this domestication and conversion later.

> …We never saw their bravery put to the test, but I suspect they are faint-hearted ; they possess no arms, and although in some we observed sundry wounds on the body, which we thought to have been inflicted by cutting instruments of iron or steel, we found that they proceeded from stones, which are their only [weapons of] defence and offence, and as most of these are sharp edged they produce the injury referred to. (Corney, 99)

Wounds. I shall tell you more about these wounds at the appropriate time.

> I made a bow and arrow, duly strung, by way of experiment, and on handing it to one of those with the scars he instantly stuck it on his head as an ornament, and then hung it round his neck with much joy, being totally ignorant of its use and effect.
>
> They did the same with a knife and with a cutlass, which they took hold of indifferently by the point or by the hilt… (Corney, 99-100)
>
> Sunday, 18th. The natives continued to gather on board in greater number than on the preceding days, so that on this day there have been more than 400 in the frigate. What with men and women they collected in such crowds that it became necessary to send away some in order to make room for others, as we could not contain them on board… (Corney, 100)
>
> Monday, 19th. We spent the evening in making ready for the succeeding day, on which we were to formally disembark and take possession of the island, and to erect upon it three crosses

> which had been got ready for the purpose. (Corney, 100-1)

Ha! I say, "Ha!" again.

> Tuesday, 20th. ...250 men, troops and seamen, were detached to go ashore, well armed and... with other officers and subalterns, and instructions to pass inland towards the western side of the island in order to make a reconnaissance of the country-side thereabout, and to draw the attention of the natives in that direction while the three aforementioned crosses were being set up on three hillocks which are at the eastern end.
>
> This precaution was not taken through any fear that the natives might offer opposition to the execution [of our project] but only in order to avoid the tumult with which they proceed about all their operations, as they would have been so much in our way as to considerably retard us. While the launches and boats conveyed the first section of people to the shore, the second batch was being got ready, consisting of a similar number... (Corney, 103)
>
> When the boats of the first party returned we set out in the same order, escorted by troops from this frigate, accompanying the three crosses with colours flying and drums beating. In this manner, and in excellent order, we arrived at a small bay... and were received by a considerable gathering of natives, who manifested much merriment, with a great deal of yelling. On the party forming up, together with those bearing arms, we set out on the march, accompanied by the natives, who lent a willing hand in carrying the crosses, singing and dancing in their fashion as they went.... At half-past one we arrived at

> the place at which the crosses were to be set up, and this was concluded with full rejoicings, after the benediction and adoration of the holy images, by the whole concourse of people, on seeing which the natives went through the same ceremony. (Corney, 103-4)

These seem to be jolly hosts, these islanders who make their guests at home by adopting their ceremonies. At one point Don Agüera also says that we were able to make the sounds of their language exactly as they were made to us: thus, we were very good mimics, even then.

> On the crosses being planted on their respective hilltops the Spanish ensign was hoisted, and the troops being brought to 'Attention!' under arms, Don Joseph Bustillo, junior Captain, took possession of the island of San Carlos… (Corney, 104)

Ah, San Carlos. No longer Paásch Eyland or Easter Island. No longer Davis Island. But now, Isla de San Carlos.

> …with the accustomed ceremonies in the name of the King of Spain, our lord and master Don Carlos the Third, this day, the 20th of November, 1770. The procedure was duly witnessed with the proper formalities ; and for the greater confirmation of so serious an act some of the natives present signed or attested the official document by marking upon it certain characters in their own form of script. Then we cheered the king seven times, next to which followed a triple volley of musketry from the whole party, and, lastly, our ships saluted with 21 guns. (Corney, 104)

Does that not make you laugh and chuckle and laugh again? Or is it only I? I picture our people having such a good time as they give away their island to the King of Spain. I think of what they must have thought, especially when the twenty-one cannons went off. The paper they signed or attested in confirmation of so serious an act ? This is how it read:

> I certify that … this island… has on the day and date hereof been examined by sea and by land, and there has in so far as is possible been made known to and recognized by its native inhabitants their lawful Sovereign, and his powerful arm for their defence against foreign enemies…

Foreign enemies? How apt that term is to become. And how kind and thoughtful of the King and his powerful arm. And here, by the way, are the signatures of our people who so happily gave up our island to this kind and thoughtful and unknown king.

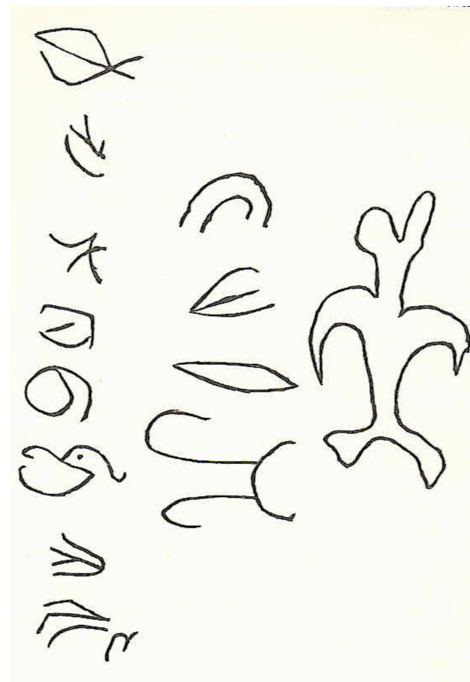


Figure 26: The "signatures" of our people on the Spanish document.

What do you think? Did my people know what they were signing? Or that these were even signatures? Or was this more playful mimicking? Some of these marks, by the way, are similar to marks on the rongorongo tablets that I am going to tell you about later; so bear that in mind. Ha!

Before finishing up with the visitation by Captain Gonzalez, I am going to quote a few other short paragraphs from the account of Don Agüera about the moai so that you can see what sort of impact the moai had upon this second group of outsiders to see them. The Dutch had been very impressed by them, had called them "idols" and wondered much at how and why they had been created.

> It is difficult to understand how they can have set up such superb statues, and maintained them properly balanced on so many small stones as are placed in the base or plinth which sustains their great weight. The material of the statue is very hard stone, and therefore weighty ; having tried it myself with a hoe it struck fire : a proof of its density. The crown is of a different stone which is plentiful in the island ; but I have not seen any like that of the figure... The diameter of the crown is much greater than that of the head on which it rests, and its lower edge projects greatly beyond the forehead of the figure ; a position which excites wonder that it does not fall. I was able to clear up this difficulty on making an examination of another smaller statue from whose head there projected a kind of tenon, constructed to fit into a sort of slot or mortice corresponding to it in the crown ; so that by this device the latter is sustained notwithstanding its overlapping the forehead. That a people lacking machinery and materials for constructing any should be able to raise the

> crown or headpiece on to a statue of such height causes wonder, and I even think that the stone of which the statues are made is not a product of the island, in which iron, hemp, and stout timber are absolutely unknown. Much remains to be worked out on this subject. (Corney, 94)

Much indeed. I find it interesting that Don Agüera is more struck by the pukao on top of the moai than by the moai itself. And it is amusing to me, too, that he even thinks that the stone of which the statues are made is not a product of the island. Where did he think it might come from? He had sailed the more than two thousand miles from the nearest land to reach our island.

The Spanish sailors appear to have explored the island to some extent. Captain Gonzales sent two launches around the entire island for map-making, with many stops at many places. They started from the anchorage of the ships and proceeded counterclockwise. The second of the two overnight stops was at Vinapu, and the sailors must have walked from Vinapu up the side of Puna Pau.

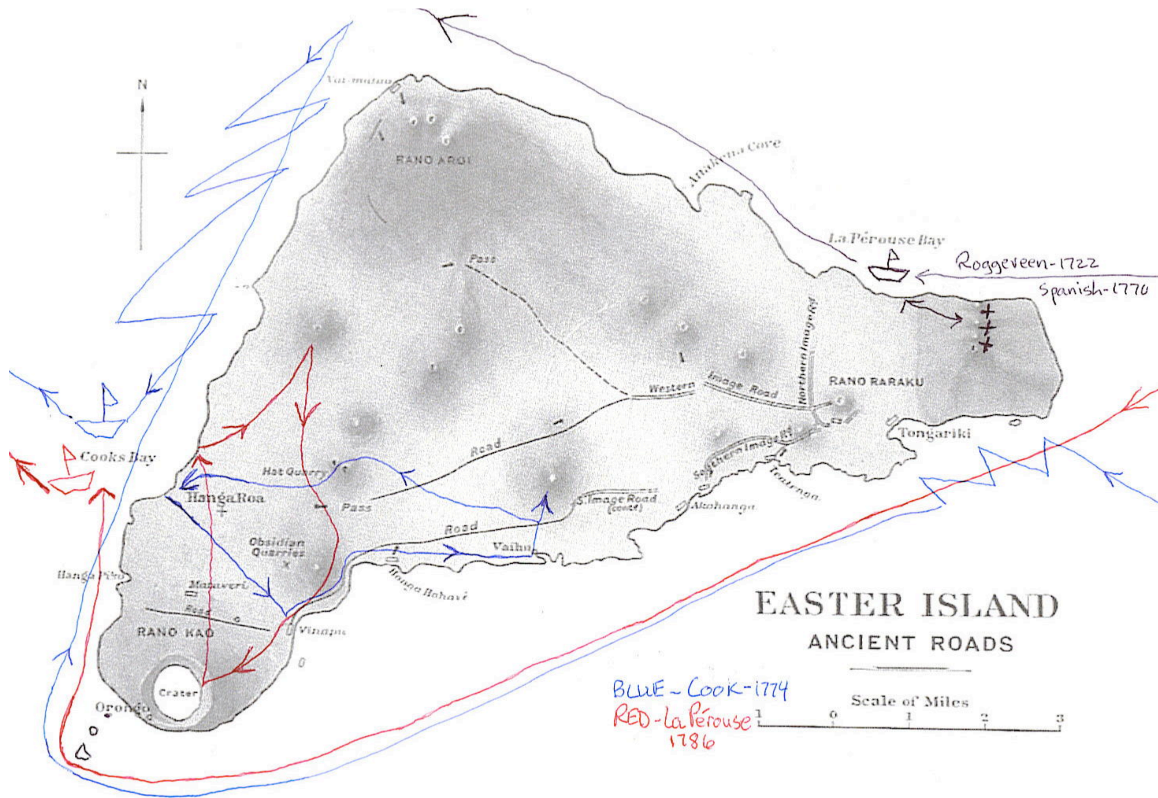


Figure 27: This is a map of our island showing the routes of the ships and feet of the early explorers of Europe. Also marked are the three crosses that the Spanish put up on three hills of Poike.

Why I say this? Don Agüera mentions: The crown is of a different stone which is plentiful in the island. In fact, this stone is the red scoria that comes mainly from only one quarry on the island, in the crater of Puna Pau, which is at some distance from where the ships were harbored, but not far from Vinapu. Being of red stone, atop the gray moai, the pukao must have been very pretty freshly carved. Our people love red. And as you read about Polynesia, you find that Polynesians on all the islands treasure most the red feathers of birds. I believe this love must be inherent in our DNA, which is something very small but prominent and telltale in all of us.

Another thing you must notice here, please, is that this Spanish writer makes no mention of any downed moai. By downed, I mean fallen, or perhaps pushed over, toppled. I will come back to this fact, because you will find it important when I tell you soon about the wars and murders and the beginning of the eating of the people. For now, just keep in mind that in 1770, when the Spanish visited our island, all the moai appeared to be upright on their ahu. In spite of their explorations, the Spanish mentioned no downed moai. And now, compare that fact with what William Wales says, next, of the English expedition.

1774

The English

If you can add and subtract, you can see that 1774 is fifty-two years after the Dutch and four years after the Spanish. Also, if you are from America, you can see that 1774 is just two years before your War of Independence in 1776. That is just for your reference. On our island, we no longer have independence.

So what happened in 1774 that I am making of it such a hugeness? A man named Captain Cook arrived at our island with three English ships. These Englishmen were hungry and thirsty when they got here because they had been voyaging all around in the ice down around what they now call Antarctica. Why did they want to do that? I think they thought they had a good reason and, in any case, they were on the business of their king.

> How are we to reconcile these two accounts? (Beaglehole, 353)

That is what Captain Cook wrote in his log on March 17, 1774. He was talking about the first lies and also half-truths that were told about our people and our island from the Dutch ANON. and from Carl Friederich Behrens (remember them?) about the 1722 voyage of Captain Roggeveen. Captain Cook did not have access to the log of Captain Roggeveen himself because that log was lost in the files of the Dutch West India Company until 1836. The reason it was lost? The voyage of Captain Roggeveen was made for the Dutch *East* India Company, not the Dutch *West* India Company, and so no one thought to look in those files all those hundred and fourteen years. Ha! and how sad.

Captain Cook also did not have the account of the Spanish landing on the island and their claiming it in the name of Don Carlos, King of Spain, because that voyage was supposed to be top secret. He did hear rumors about that voyage, however, so it was not so top a secret as the toppest of secrets. And he did see the evidence of the Spanish sailor caps on the heads of our people four years later, which did verify the rumors that he had heard. But he did not see evidence of the three crosses that the Spanish put up on the three hills, even though Captain Cook made his entrance to the island almost in the same way as the Spanish. (See the blue ink in Figure 26.). How could Captain Cook not have seen the three gigantic crosses, if they were still on their three little hills on Poike? I imagine those three crosses were taken down by our people before the Spanish sails had disappeared over the horizon.

Wood!

And so, that is why Captain Cook had only the two accounts of ANON. and Mr. Behrens as a guide. Now why he did not know how to reconcile those two accounts is another question. Well, remember, please, that ANON. had said our men were twelve feet high, and our women ten or eleven feet high, and that those Dutch sailors could walk between our legs without bending. (Ha!)

> The first of these Authors (I believe) is right in his description of the Canoe, but in allmost every other thing seems to have written with no other view but to impose upon the world, and the other has asserted many things at random or else the State of this Isle is very different now to what it was then... (Beaglehole, 353)

Wood!

> One of the accounts of Roggeweins Voyage, in describing one of these Canoes, says the whole was patched together out of pieces of wood which could hardly make up the largeness of half a foot. The other account says every part of the Island which is not cultivated is full of Woods and Forests… Would the natives prefer such pieces of wood for building their Canoes to larger, or did this Forest produce no larger tree than would make a board half a foot square… (Beaglehole, 353)

Now, you should know that Captain Cook had already been to Tahiti (these English at this time usually spelled it Otahitee or Otaheiti) and many other Polynesian islands, as well as islands in what is now called Micronesia. He had been able to see many great canoes. So when he looked at these canoes on our island, he understood something very important: however our people may have managed in the beginning to reach our island, we could now never leave this island in any canoes that we could now possibly build.

> Not more than three or 4 Canoes were seen upon the whole Island and these very mean… and seem not to be able to carry above 3 or 4 men and are by no means fit for any distant navigation: as small and mean as these Canoes were it was a matter of wonder to us where they got the wood to build them on, for in one Canoe was a board 14 Inches broad at one end, but not so much at the other, and Six or Eight feet long whereas we did not see a stick on the Island that would have made a board one half this Size, nor could we conceive it to be Possible in such Canoes to bring wood from any other Isle, suppose any lay in the neigherhood. (sic) (Beaglehole, 352-3)

The Spanish crosses. Ha! Wood!

And what, Captain Cook wondered, could Mr. Behrens have been talking about when he said that he saw in the distance whole tracts of woodland? If indeed there were whole tracts of woodland only fifty-two years earlier, why did ANON. describe the canoe of our brave and dancing man as a very remarkable conftruction, the whole patched together out of pieces of wood, which could hardly make up the largenefs of half a foot. (Dalrymple, 111)

And what—Captain Cook also wondered, quite hungrily I am sure—about all the fine plantations? In his translation of Mr. Behrens, Mr. Dalrymple wrote:

> It is certain that they draw all their maintenance and fubfiftence entirely from the fruits of the earth. The whole of it is planted, fown, and tilled. The enclofures are feparated from each other with great exactnefs, and the limits formed by line. At the time we were there almoft all the fruit and plants were at maturity. The fields and the trees were abundantly loaded. I am convinced that if we had taken the trouble to have gone over the country, we fhould have found plenty of good things. (Dalrymple, 93)

Food!

The 1722 Dutch expedition was here in early April (Easter Sunday) and the 1774 expedition of Captain Cook was here in late March. The same crops should have been producing the same food. But Captain Cook was greatly disappointed. His men were very sick from the scurvy, being so many weeks at sea to search among the icebergs for the non-existent Southern Continent. They needed fresh food. Indeed, Captain Cook himself needed fresh food, as he was down with the scurvy, too, and could not explore

the island properly, being too weak. He had brought with him sauerkraut, an experiment of his own invention that he himself undertook with his crew to see if their scurvy might perhaps be staved off. And indeed the sauerkraut did help. But upon arrival here his men needed fresh food.

And water!

Being so sick, Captain Cook sent a party of about thirty men, headed by one Lieutenant Pickersgill, out onto our island to bring back water and food. Included among those men was Mr. William Wales, the astronomer of the expedition and a man Captain Cook relied upon heavily to supply him with great accuracy all details of the expedition. I will quote the trusty Mr. William Wales at some length because he is a man I admire very much in his observations. He saw our people clearly, and not with that European bias as did so many others, but with good, open eyes. I am first going to quote Mr. William Wales in his relation of an incident that shows very well his admirable character:

> We landed without the least ceremony, for we saw not a weapon of any sort in the hands of any of the Natives: and as soon as we had done so they crowded round us & brought us roasted Potatoes, & sugar-cane, both of which were very acceptable; but the latter did not contain much juice.

A clue. Not much juice means not much water.

> We presented them with some Nails and Trinkets in return; but I observed that when any one gave to us… there were at least half a dozen others ready to beg it of us again, and I had one snatched out of my hands: from whence I concluded that property is not quite equally divided here any more than in England.

Ha! A sense of humor in addition to his other admirable qualities.

> They were exceeding loving, and desirous of walking arm-in-arm with us; but we were not long in discovering their drift in doing so: my handkerchief was gone in an Instant, and one of our people detected another of them taking away a small brass achromatic spy-glass which I had in my Pocket. (Beaglehole, 821)

Well, had we not brought the sailors roasted potatoes and sugar cane? Did we not deserve an achromatic spy-glass or two, whatever those may have been?

> We had not proceeded far before the Natives became too troublesome to venture farther, so we turned again for a Musquet, which those People have by some persons or other been taught to pay a great deal of difference to... (Beaglehole, 822)

The trusty Mr. Wales meant deference, his character being more trusty than his spelling. Yes, oh, yes, these people did remember the Dutch firing their muskets on the people in 1722—"It's time, it's time, fire!"—and killing some kind people, including that once lively dancing man Ure o Pea. Also, these people had heard the guns and cannons of the Spanish, four years earlier. Yes, a gun they indeed *had* been taught to pay a great deal of difference to.

> After we had done what we were about I got up to return & took up the Musquet, when the Man walked past Mr Hodge snatched his hat off from his head & ran away with it. I cocked and pointed the Musquet without thought of any thing but firing at him; but when I saw a fellow Creature within 20 Yards of its muzzle I began to

> think his life worth more than a hat, and as to
> the Insult, rot it! (Beaglehole, 822)

Yes, I do like this Mr. William Wales. Unlike so many Europeans, he saw not a savage but a fellow Creature. In fact, I like both Mr. William Wales and Captain James Cook very much indeed because of the way they treated the people not just on our island, but on all the islands they visited. These are two men that I would like to have been able to meet and with whom I would gladly have spent many a merry night journeying around the islands of the Pacific. These two men sailed around the world together more than once, and I mean all the way around it. That would be like, today, flying to Mars and back. They saw many strange and wonderful things and wrote about them in a way that makes you believe everything they say. Captain Cook showed much respect for the peoples he met on his journey. He had not many years of school education, and his command of English was much worse than that of Mr. Wales, but he was a very able commander of his ships, and Mr. Wales was his good and faithful sidekick.

A bit of gossip…

Chapter Five

The English and Good Gossip

I think gossip is very important, although I believe it has a rather negative connotation in English, am I correct? Gossip is a way, and perhaps the only way, for society to begin to understand itself and to regulate behaviors, both of individuals and of groups.

> "What (for crying out loud!) do you think of the outrageous behavior of Toromiru? Has Toromiru not gone too far this time? I believe Toromiru should be corrected, do you not agree?"

Now this applies to the English in 1774, how?

Also along on the expedition of Captain Cook, parenthetically, were the infamous Forster father and son—John Reinhold Forster and twenty-two year old George Forster—who appear to have made the life of everyone a veritable misery on the long voyage. Oh, the complaints! The Forsters were botanists (supposedly, but one does wonder) and their contrary dispositions affected not only every day and night of the voyage but also the work—back home in England—of putting together the monumental journals of the voyage.

If you are not interested in gossip, then you may skip to the next chapter, but you will be missing good particles. If you are like me, and adore gossip, you will enjoy reading about these funny English sea-voyagers of 1774 from the introduction to *The Journals of Captain Cook.* This introduction is written by the very humorous and insightful J.C. Beaglehole, the editor of the three volumes who himself carries about such a wonderfully comical name (a beagle is a kind of dog, you see). About the younger

Forster and his publication of his own two volume work (see my wonderful bibliography, with gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Jones) Mr. Beaglehole writes:

> These volumes arose out of the quarrel between the Admiralty and the elder Forster over his contribution to the official account of the voyage —a quarrel into which Forster dragged everybody conceivable, to general distress and embarrassment. The documentation is formidable; the Forster claims fantastic; his accusations preposterous.... There was nothing to do but break off negotiations, and forbid Forster to publish anything till after the official volumes had appeared. Thus propelled off the official stage, he remained as a fury denouncing vengeance from the wings. As a sort of vengeance, he set his son to work at once. George had no journal, but he had not been interdicted from publishing. George's father had kept a journal, and as a civilian he had not had to deliver it up to the Admiralty. George's task therefore was to produce a book from Reinhold's journal as fast as possible, and get it on to the market before Cook's...
>
> Whatever may be thought of the Forsters, and their relations with their fellow human beings, it must be admitted that this is a remarkable performance for a young man of twenty-two. It is remarkable even though based largely on the record kept by his father; for J. R. Forster could not write like this...
>
> We get lively accounts of episodes in which George himself was implicated. We get some very good pictures of Cook. We get a certain amount of the romantic, but nothing as ridiculous as some of the pages of the elder man's Observations... All in all, the discriminating reader will not be sorry that George wrote the book, though as a moralist he may wish it had been written under other

> circumstances, and that the paternal figure that superintended the writing had shown less venom.
>
> The Forster temper and the Forster recklessness being so prominently displayed in certain passages, it could hardly escape criticism. This was applied by Wales, 'our accurate and indefatigable astronomer', in an octavo pamphlet of 110 indignant pages, entitled Remarks on Mr. Forster's Account of Captain Cook's last Voyage round the World (1778). Wales frankly disbelieved that George had written the book, its prejudices were so much and so transparently those of Reinhold... Not only did he spring to the defence of the 'poor seamen' but he took a series of specific statements that outraged him and rebutted them with a vigour and heat that are still alive, far removed from the genial fun he had poked in the private pages of his journal.... George could not let this attack go unnoticed, and produced a quarto Reply to Mr. Wales's Remarks (1778).... Thus the 'accurate and indefatigable astronomer' has now become something quite unpleasant, eaten up with envy over the Forsters' salary... (Beaglehole, cxlviii-cxlix)

Personally I am on the side of Mr. Wales and Captain Cook, but I must say indeed that Mr. George Forster does have his own way with the English language, and he does indeed provide details not provided by either Captain Cook or the trusty Mr. Wales. Here below is merely a part of his far more detailed and scientific description of our people than elsewhere, with comparisons to other Polynesian peoples whom he had already met:

> The general appearance of the natives seemed to argue a great sterility of the country. They were inferior in stature to the natives of the Society and Friendly Isles, and to those of New Zeeland,

> there being not a single person amongst them, who might be reckoned tall. Their body was likewise lean, and their face thinner than that of any people we had hitherto seen in the South Sea…. Both sexes had thin, but not savage features, though the little shelter which their barren country offers against the sun-beams, had contracted their brows sometimes, and drawn the muscles of the face up towards the eye. Their noses were not very broad, but rather flat between the eyes; their lips strong, though not so thick as those of negroes; and their hair black and curling, but always cut short, so as not to exceed three inches. Their eyes were dark brown, and rather small, the white being less clear than in other nations of the South Seas. Their ears were remarkable for the great length of the lap, which frequently hung on the shoulder, and was pierced with so large a hole, that the extremity could be tucked up through it. In order to bring it to this size, they wore a leaf of a sugar cane, which is very elastic, rolled up in it like a scroll; by which means it was always on the stretch. (Forster, 303-4)

Captain Cook, on the other hand, appears to me to have been more interested in the human character of the peoples he met than he was in their outward appearances. Before he arrived on our island, Captain Cook described the people of the islands around Tahiti (the Society Islands):

> …the more one is acquainted with these people the better one likes them, to give them their due. I must say they are the most obligeing and benevolent people I ever met with. (Beaglehole, 236)

And so then, knowing how much Captain Cook admired the Tahitians, it made me feel very good to read his words about us, after he visited our island:

> In colour, Features, and Language they bear such affinity to the people of the more Western isles that no one will doubt but that they have had the same Origin, it is extraordinary that the same Nation should have spread themselves over all the isles in this Vast Ocean from New Zealand to this Island which is almost a fourth part of the circumference of the Globe, many of them at this time have no other knowledge of each other than what is recorded in antiquated tradition and have by length of time become as it were different Nations each having adopted some peculiar custom or habit &c[a] never the less a carefull observer will soon see the Affinity each has to the other… As inoffensive and friendly as these people seem to be they are not without offensive weapons, such as short wooden clubs and Spears, the latter are crooked Sticks about Six feet long arm'd at one end with pieces of flint—they have also a weapon made of wood like the Patoo patoo of New Zealand. (Beaglehole, 354-5)

But about weapons, more later. Here, the point is how very nice Captain Cook considered Polynesians, including us which, to me, is very important. Indeed, we are a good people, and were once long ago, also and alas. And if we could provide Captain Cook and Mr. Wales with more pleasant company than the Forster father and son, bravo.

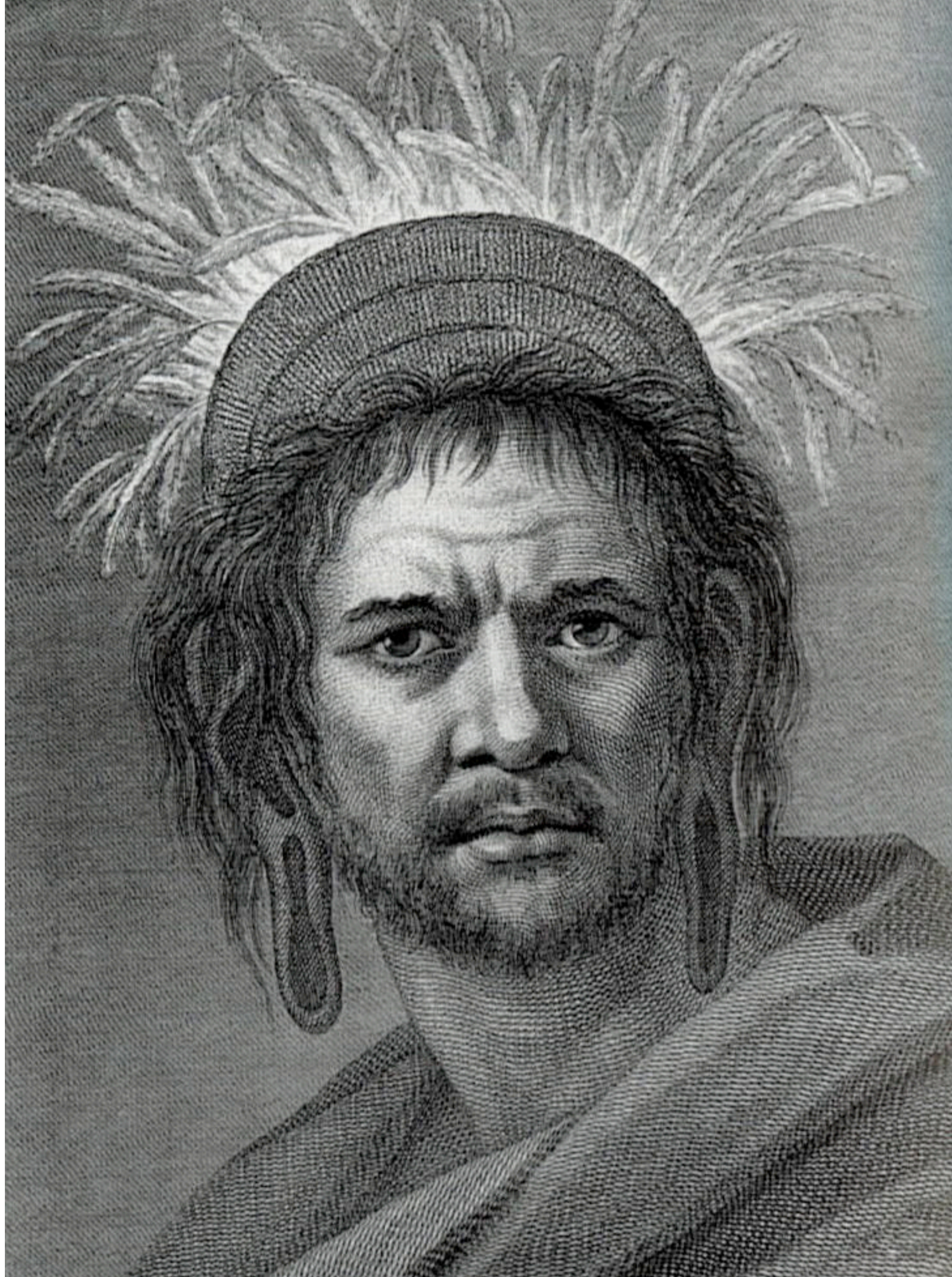


Figure 28: This is a man of our island as drawn by Mr. Hodges, the artist on the expedition of Captain. Cook. You can see by his visage the handsomeness of our people then, and now. Notice, too—and however—the ears.

Chapter Six

The English Trek

Mr. William Wales was the astronomer and mapmaker for the two ships in the expedition of Captain Cook, and that probably accounts for why he has such a clear and careful eye for detail and truth. On the map in Figure 27, in red, you will see the route of his trek across our island, as I believe from his notes that he and his band of thirty traveled it. He himself did not make a map of his journey, but if you carefully follow his words—as I did, to make my map—then I think it is fairly clear where he traveled. You can also see from this map the route Captain Cook took in his ships around the island looking for harbor, which they finally found in the bay facing Hanga Roa. In fact, today that bay is called Cook Bay.

> We set out about 9 oClock in the Morning, and crossed directly from the little Bay where the ship was at Anchor to the southwest side of the Island followed by a great Croud of the Natives who pressed much upon us... (Beaglehole, 823)

So it appears they walked first across the flat land between Maunga Orita and Rano Kao—where the airport now cuts across our island from one shore all the way to the other—and soon found themselves near Vinapu. We have further evidence that they stopped at Vinapu from Mr. Forster the Elder, who made the trek along with Mr. Wales, because he listed the names given to him for all the moai they found at this ahu, and one of them was called Weenaboo (Forster, 317).

It is at Vinapu that William Wales gives a description that is fraught with significance:

> We met with three Platforms of Stonework, or rather the ruins of them… On each of these had stood four of those large Statues but they were all fallen down from two of them, and also one from the third, every one except one were broken with the fall and otherways defaced. (823-4)

These words are the first mention of downed moai. More than half the moai at Vinapu were down, broken at the necks, and defaced. Yet on the coast at Hanga Roa, the moai were all still standing. How did these moai at Vinapu come to be fallen down? This, unfortunately, is not one of our mysteries on this island. We know too well how the moai were downed.

But more of this later. First let us look at what other clues to mystery Mr. William Wales turned up on this trip. No trees:

> We saw no sort of wood on the Island but one... very crooked and small: we saw none above 6 or 7 feet high. The Natives call it Torromedo*. (Beaglehole, 822)

So sad, the significance of what Mr. Wales recounts here about Torromedo? The only kind of tree that the English came across in their many hours of walking over a large part of our island was the scrawny Toromiro tree instead of the whole tracts of woodland they had expected to find. What happened to the trees?

*Do you catch my name here? Torromedo is in actuality Toromiro. Now do you understand? Or perhaps not altogether, yet? My father, you see, wished to call me Toromiro at my birth because I was thin and my limbs were twisted, like our Toromiro tree, and everyone declared that I would die before the day was out. Knowing even then, however, that the future of the Toromiro was threatened—a dying thing, the last of its kind on the planet, its roots clutching the cliff of Rano Kao—my father would not consign me to such a grim future, and so he called me instead … Toromiru … ending in

u, which is an unclosed circle, you understand. My father knew from a dream that he would be dead within the year, which he most certainly was. Yet he saw for me a new and long life: Toromiru, A New Name for an Old and Dying Thing. And then of course, too, my father understood from his dream the question of gender, and its answer, and he foresaw that my limbs would grow stout and straight and strong, and I would be able to dance as no one else on our island. And so, Toromiru, with u.

No trees. No chickens. Not much food. Not much water. Remember how Mr. Behrens and Captain Roggeveen talked about how generous our people were with their food? Mr. Behrens wrote in 1722:

> ...they brought us more than 500 live fowls... together with many roots... a good lot of potatoes... some hundreds of sugar-canes, great quantities of pisang.... (Corney, 135)

Pisang is a Malayan term for bananas. A good lot of good food. And Captain Roggeveen added that the sugar cane was of remarkable thickness, meaning that there was a good lot of water for the growing of the cane. Yet Mr. William Wales said that the sugar cane did not contain much juice. No water? Drought?

Captain Cook wrote from the ship:

> Got on board a few Casks of Water and Traded with the Natives for some of the produce of the island which appeared in no great plenty and the Water so bad as not to be worth carrying on board. (Beaglehole, 339)

And Mr. Wales, on his 9:00 am to 7:00 pm trek around half of the island looking for fresh water and food, wrote:

> We saw not one Animal of any sort, or bird, except a few tame fowls... of which they seemed very fond and Careful.... We passed through many Plantations of sweet-Potatoes; but most of

> them poor and small, and one or two Plantain-Walks; but saw no fruit on any of the Trees. We met not with one drop of water in all this circuit, and on the whole the Island seemed to us scarce sufficient for the sustenance of Human Nature. (Beaglehole, 822-3)

Mr. Wales continued that at one point on the trek…

> … the Natives twice or thrice brought us water, which although brackish, (I might say salt) and intolerably stinking, our excessive thirst made very acceptable. (Beaglehole, 824)

On the return to the ship, walking over the steep hills in the hot sun, and without any shade from any trees of any kind, Mr. Wales said:

> We met with another Well; but the water was a very strong Mineral, had a thick green scum on the Top and stunk...; necessity however made it go down, and I drank a pretty large draught of it; but had not gone One hundred Yards before I got eased of it the same way it went down... (Beaglehole, 827)

Oho, another bit of the humor of the redoubtable Mr. William Wales. I believe there is a certain tongue in a certain cheek as he remembers his vomiting our water. I wonder if he ever imagined that there would be someone more than two hundred years later who would be reading his words and chuckling, so far from his home. I think not.

Another of his descriptions that makes me laugh is this pathetic one:

> Towards the eastern end of the Island we met with a Well whose water was perfectly fresh; being considerable above the level of the sea; but it stunk much, owing to the filthyness, or cleanliness (call it which you will) of the Natives who never go to drink without washing

> themselves all over as soon as they have done, and if ever so many of them are together, the first leaps right into the middle of the hole drinks & washes himself without the least ceremony, after which another takes his place and does the same. This water however, as being perfectly fresh, was highly acceptable to us, notwithstanding, at least twenty of them had drunk & washed themselves in it immediately before we came up. (Beaglehole, 825)

Ha! I have such a comical picture in my head of my people leaping into the pool, because we still do it today. My people love to be in the water. We swim in the ocean, we swim in the lakes at Rano Kao and Rano Raraku, and when it rains, and there is plenty of fresh rainwater in all the holes and caves all over the island, we love to splash about in the pools.

But to Mr. William Wales, hot and thirsty from his trek across the island, and after so many weeks at sea among the icebergs with all the casks of water on board the ship being rationed, it must have been the opposite of comical—i.e., extremely vexing—to see us frolicking in water he would rather be drinking. (Ha! And how sad.)

Figure 29: Here is a place on our island that could provide such a pool of water after a good rainfall. It is where the roof on one of our many caves has fallen in. Notice that we plant banana trees and taro in such a sheltered, wet spot.

And my point here is: no water; no trees; few chickens; few potatoes; dry sugar cane. Drought. Hunger setting in on the island. Moai being downed. Unrest, hmmm.

Here is another description of both a downed and standing moai at this eastern end of the island. Had the party reached as far as Rano Raraku? I think not, from the description of the moai that they met here at the farthest end of their trek:

> This side of the Island is full of those Colossean Statues which I have mentioned so often, some placed in Groups on platforms of Masonry others single and without any being fixed only in the Earth, and that not deep; these latter are in general much larger than the others. I measured one which was fallen down & found it very near 27 feet long & upwards of 8 feet over the breast,

> or shoulders and yet this appeared considerably short of the size of one which we dined near: its shade at a little past 2 oClock being sufficient to shelter all our party, consisting of near 30 persons from the Rays of the sun. (Beaglehole, 825)

It would have been one of the tallest of the standing moai to cast a shade that would cover so many people so early in the afternoon, the only shade on our island now that all the trees were gone.

It is at this point, while describing the moai, that Mr. Wales admits to one of my own frustrations: the fact that you can believe no one in what they say. Here the trusty Mr. Wales says:

> In the Accounts which we have of Roggewein's Voyage, they are said to be Idols and that the Natives were seen paying adoration to them at sunrise: How these Gentlemen could see this I must confess I cannot tell, it is certain they were not then on Shore, & I am confident few People would venture to anchor less than a Mile & half from any of the shores of this Island.—a long distance to speak so positively of what these people were doing! But be this as it may it is very certain They have now gotten much the better of those Idolatrous Practises seeing that not one Person amongst them was observed to pay them the least reverence or respect whatever. Was I to hazard a conjecture I should rather think they have been erected to the Memory of some of their Ancient Chiefs & possibly may mark the places where they were buried: It is certain that we found Human bones amongst the ruins of some of them... They give different Names to them, such as Marahate, Haderego, Arrahoa &c &c to which they always prefix the word Moi, and sometimes annex Areki: the former, as near as we could gather

> signifies a burying place, and the other a Chief... (825-6)

Mr. Wales was quite correct that the moai were in honor of our ariki. That is why our people gave to the moai the names of the ariki who had died. They were not idols, however, and although I do not have the obvious prejudices of Mr. Wales against Idolatrous Practises, yet I also believe with him that the Dutch were incorrect, or perhaps making up stories that they thought European readers would like to read about our "savage" religious practices. Later, when you learn some of the things that Mr. Thor Heyerdahl claims about the discoveries of Captain Cook, please remember these doubts of Mr. Wales about the validity of the two Dutch reports of 1722.

Figure 30: This is a reproduction of a watercolor by Mr. Hodges. The moai of Mr. Hodges, unfortunately, do not much resemble our moai, except that they are tall.

And one final remark here about the English perceptions of how our island had changed in the fifty-two years since the Dutch had put in here… Remember to look for —when you come to them in the next chapter—these three words by Lt. Pickersgill:

…bad men coming…

Chapter Seven

Bad Men Coming

These three words were not written by Captain Cook or his trusty Mr. William Wales, but by Lieutenant Pickersgill, who was in charge of the overland trek. Remember that Captain Cook, because of the scurvy, could not undertake this expedition himself, remaining quite weak and ill aboard one of the ships. Not only did Mr. Wales make a report to Captain Cook upon the return of the expedition, but Lt. Pickersgill did also. Here is the way Lt. Pickersgill ends his report:

> As we had no occasion to go farther we stop'd, dined and prepared to return over the hills, just as we were going away those few which were with us ran off and said there were bad men coming, and looking we saw a number of men coming in a body with the same flag they had before, but what terms they were coming upon we had not time then to wait to know, so takeing our road a Cross the hills for the ship.... (Beaglehole, 342)

These bad men coming were very dangerous to our island. They were the matatoa I will be telling you about later, and this is the first mention of them in the written histories. You will see in the paragraph of Mr. Wales below that the flag they bore was attached to a spear, a significant detail not mentioned by Lt. Pickersgill.

> …we had not proceeded far before a middle aged Man punctured all over from head to foot and painted, or rather daubed with a sort of white earth on his face appeared with a spear in his hand and walked along side of us, making signs to his Countrymen to keep at a distance and suffer us to walk unmolested and when he

> had pretty well effected this he hoisted a piece of white cloth on his spear and carried it before us stopping when we stopped, and when he saw us preparing to set forward he placed himself in the front & led the way with his Ensign of Peace, as we interpreted it to be… (Beaglehole, 823)

This man clearly took responsibility as host and guide for the strangers. Perhaps, too, the white flag was not so much an Ensign of Peace towards the strangers as it was towards the people of the island that these strangers would be meeting along their trek.

> …we were obliged to fire a load of small shot at one man, who was so audacious as to snatch a bag which contained every thing we had brought with us from the Man who Carried it. The shot hit him in the back, on which he droped the Bag, ran a little way & then droped; but he afterwards got up & walked, and what became of him afterwards I know not, some of the others led him off. As this affair stoped us some little time the Natives gathered together & presently we saw the Man who had led the way hitherto & one or two more come running towards us when they came up to us they did not stop but run round us repeating in a kind of recitative manner a few words, and they continued to do so until we set forwards again when our old friend hoisted again his Cloth & led the way as before, & none ever attempted to steal from us the whole day afterwards. (Beaglehole, 824-5)

European justice: the musket. But here, I believe, the actions of my people, especially those of the man who carried the flag, are important to look at. They took care of the downed man, shot by the famous musket of Mr. Edgecumb. Then the man with the flag, who surely was the ariki of this district came forward on the run to try to make

things right with the English and their muskets. It was brave of him, also understanding, and wise. Here were men of great power—perhaps he even thought of them as gods, since they came so strangely, dressed so strangely, acted so strangely, with their strange, incomprehensible language, and their angry muskets that somehow meant death and injury, though no spear was thrown—and it was best to run and run and run around them, pleading for mercy. My people had met with the Spanish only four years earlier—which is perhaps how they knew to use a white flag, which is a traditional European sign of peace, or truce, I believe—and they had heard the thunder of their muskets and cannons in the salute to the signing of the declaration. Although the Spanish make no mention of turning the weapons on my people, there is no doubt my people remembered the stories of the massacre by the Dutch. This was a wise ariki here.

> About the Mid-way, on this side, on a small eminence we met with several of the Natives amongst which was one whom we soon discovered to be a Chief amongst them: to him our friend, after some ceremony, delivered his white flag, & he gave it to another who carried it before us the remainder of the day: some presents of Nails, Otahitee Cloth, &C. were made to the Chief, by the Officer who commanded the Party, after which we took our leave, & proceeded on our way. (Beaglehole, 825)

It was good of Lt. Pickersgill to gift the good ariki in this way, with the cloth from Tahiti and the nails from Europe. (What use nails? Still, they must have been very interesting to our people.) The ariki deserved the gifts because he had led them faithfully to this point, which appears to have been a boundary between his district and the district of the next ariki, who carried the white flag onward. This was very civilized, because it

shows co-operation between our clans. At the same time, however, it shows, too, that this island now pehaps had rivalries, borders, perhaps some warrings and negotiations between clans.

Here is what Lt. Pickersgill said about this boundary, and some of the things he says I will be writing about in more detail later, when I bring you to the wars:

> After passing this vally we saw a number of men collected upon a hill some distance from us and some with spears but on the people which were with us calling to them they dispers'd except a few amongst them which was a man seemingly of some note, he was a stout made man with a fine open countenance, his face painted, his body tatowed and some thing whiter than the rest and he wore a better ah-hou, he saluted us before we came to him by stretching out his arms with both hands clinch'd lifting them over his head, opening them wide and letting them fall gradually down to his sides, they told us he was the arreeke of the Island, which they call'd Wy-hu, this they seem'd all to agree in.

The clues here? Wy-hu, this was clearly Vaihu—written Whyhu by Captain Cook—and not the name of the island at all, but the name of this district. The Ariki Mau, the greatest of the ariki on the entire island, would certainly not have shown himself in this way. The Ariki Mau was a man with great mana, great spiritual power. No one could even physically touch the Ariki Mau, and the Ariki Mau could physically touch no one. Still, this new ariki who took the flag from the ariki of the first district bore himself well in front of the strangers.

Now, if you look back again at the map in Figure 27, you can see that the expedition first reached the southern coast at Vinapu, and by this time had proceeded east

to Vaihu. The vally that Lt. Pickersgill refers to is not really a valley—because we have no valleys on our island, nor rivers nor streams which would carve a valley—but a low place between two volcano cones. Vaihu must have been the boundary between two districts, or perhaps even three. Figure 31, below, is a historical map of the clans that Mrs. Routledge provided in her book of 1919. If you compare Figure 27 to Figure 31, you can see that Vaihu is very near the borders of the Haumoana, Ngatimo and Marama clans. In fact, according to this map, the bad men coming from over the hills may very well have been of the Marama clan.

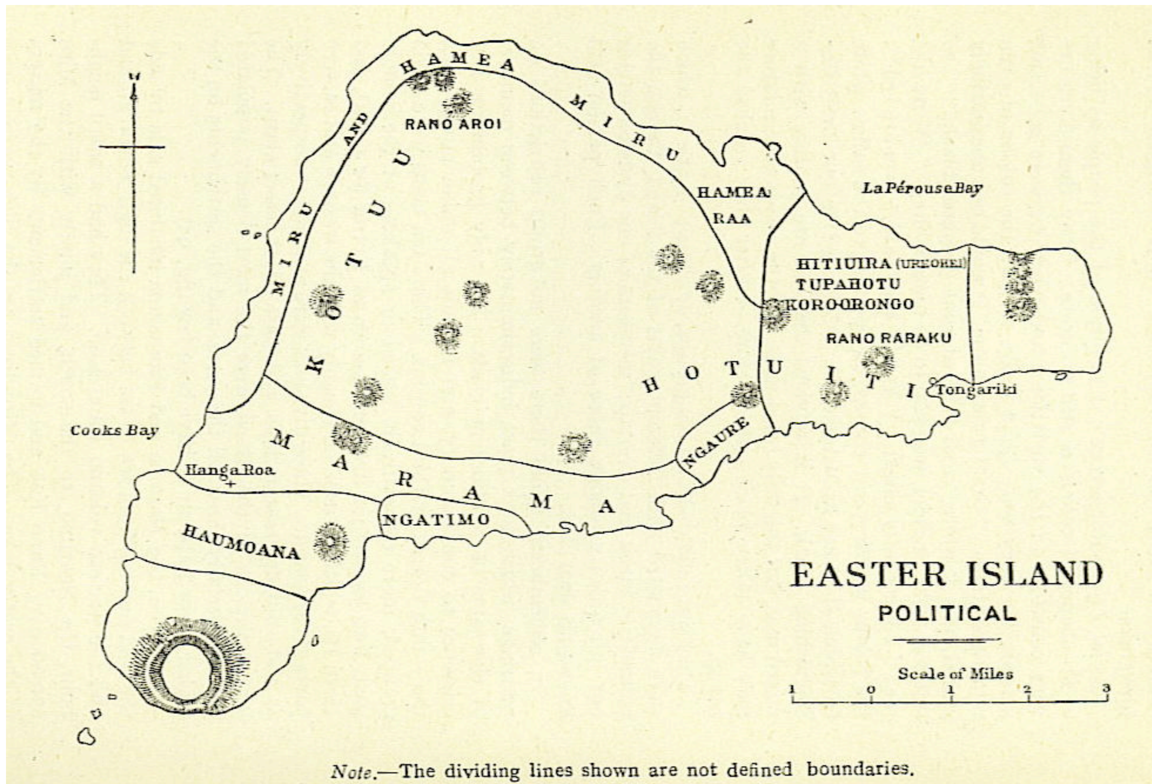


Figure 31: The clans map drawn by Mrs. Routledge based upon the informations of her informants.

Some with spears. These are three more words of Lt. Pickersgill that are very significant. The Dutch of fifty-two years earlier, you remember, mentioned that the people on this island carried no weapons. The Spanish only two years earlier mentioned that we carried no weapons but—do you remember?—that some of the men had wounds, as though from sharp stones. Here, now, are weapons. These people, now in 1774, are people who know war.

Before we leave Mr. William Wales, allow me to include one last observation by that good and trusty man so that perhaps you will see why he is so dear to me:

> We also passed four or five Huts, the Owners of which came running out to us with roasted Potatoes & Sugar Canes & having placed themselves ahead of the foremost of us, for we all walked in a line, on account of the Path-way, gave to each as he passed by one. They observed the same method in distributing the water which they brought us, and were very careful that the foremost by drinking more than his share should not leave none for the Hindmost. At the last day, when the Widow's two Mites are remembered, may this hospitality of the poor Easter Islanders not be forgot!—It was relieving the thirsty & hungry indeed!

Later in this book, when you will be reading from Mr. Thor Heyerdahl about how miserable were my people during this visit of Captain Cook, remember these words by Mr. William Wales, please. If you look in a Bible, you will find that the Widow's two Mites were what she gave to Jesus Christ: all that she possessed.

Further, you remember the unpleasant old Mr. John Reinhold Forster? He trudged along on this trek, which is much to his credit, and he paid dearly for it because it is not easy to walk on our island because of the very many rocks all over the land that forced

the men to walk single-file for much of the trek. In the evening, wanting to make a more direct path back to the ship, the company headed inland to cross the island. Mr. Forster the Elder explained that they…

> …found the path more rugged and fatiguing than ever, the country being strewed with volcanic cinders, and desolate all round us, though we found many remaining proofs of its having been formerly cultivated. I now felt how much I had been weakened by the long continuance of the rheumatism, which had crippled all my limbs, and was hardly able to keep up with the rest, though I had formerly, upon similar occasions, been indefatigable. The natives seeing us strike into a difficult path had all left us, except one man and a little boy. Finding that our officers with their party, went too much out of their way, my mistaking the direction of our ship, I left them; and with Dr. Sparrman, a sailor, and the two natives, pursued the nearest path, which the latter had plainly pointed out. The man seeing me very faint, offered me his hand, and walking on the loose stones by the side of the path, with amazing dexterity supported me for a considerable way; the little boy going before, and picking up the stones which obstructed the path…. The sun set very soon … so that we continued our walk downwards for more than two hours entirely in the dark, during which my Indian's assistance was particularly valuable to me. I waited for Mr. Pickersgill and the rest of the party, having gained near three miles upon them, and arrived safely at the sea-side with them, after walking at the lowest computation, at least five and twenty miles on the most detestable roads, where not a single tree appeared to give us shelter from the scorching sun. I rewarded my friendly conductors with all the Taheitee cloth, and iron ware, which I had about me, and arrived safely on board with the party.

Mr. Forster the Younger was no doubt very happy to see his father arrive back on board safely. For his part, he had spent the day in the vicinity of Hanga Roa and the western end of our island because he was still quite ill with the scurvy. He wrote as follows about that disease:

> I who went out in the morning with my legs excessively swelled, and so tender that I could hardly stand upon them, returned on board much better; the swelling was something reduced, and my pains at least were gone. I could not attribute this sudden change to any thing else, than the exercise I had taken on shore, and perhaps to those salutary antiscorbutic effluvia of the land, which it is said, are alone sufficient to recover those, who have contracted the scurvy on a long cruize at sea.

By salutary antiscorbutic effluvia Mr. Forster the Younger meant—in his elevated way—our sweet potatoes, more about which I shall tell you later.

You find me somewhat disdainful of the Messrs. Forsters and their elevated ways? Oh, yes, I am afraid that, like the trusty Mr. William Wales, I have taken the side of Captain Cook in the Forster disputes with him. However, perhaps I have been too harsh with them because you can see in the account of Mr. Forster the Elder above—regarding the sweet-natured man and boy who made such efforts to take such good care of the old man at the end of his trek—and in the account below of Mr. Forster the Younger, these two men did have at least some compassion and gratitude.

> The encreasing heat of the day had entirely exhausted us, when we had still a considerable way to make down to the sea-side. Fortunately we passed by a native who was at work, gathering potatoes in one of the fields. We complained of great thirst to him, upon which,

> though he was an old man, he immediately ran to a large plantation of sugar-canes, and brought us a great load of the best and juiciest on his back. (Forster, 312)
>
> …there is a mildness, fellow-feeling, and good-nature in their disposition, which naturally prompts them to treat their visitors kindly, and even hospitably, as far as their wretched country will permit. (Forster, 316)

But let us end now with Captain Cook, as he ended with us: a summary of this visit by the English. Even as he was sailing away from our island, with the people of the island watching him go and wondering when and from where the next ships might come, Captain Cook seated himself before his log in his cabin and wrote his final words about our island:

> No Nation will ever contend for the honour of the discovery of Easter Island as there is hardly an Island in this sea which affords less refreshments and conveniences for Shiping than it does; nature has hardly provided it with any thing fit for man to eat or drink, and as the Natives are but few and may be supposed to plant no more than sufficient for themselves, they cannot have much to spare to new comers. The produce is Potatoes, Yams, Taro or the Eddy root, Plantains and Sugar Cane, all excellent in its kind, the Potatoes are the best of the sort I ever tasted; they have also Gourds and the same sort of Cloth Plant as at the other isles but not much, Cocks and Hens like ours which are small and but few of them and these are the only domistick Animals we saw a mong them, nor did we see any quadrupeds, but ratts which I believe they eat as I saw a man with some in his hand which he seem'd unwilling to part with. Land Birds we saw hardly any and Sea Birds but a few, these were Men of War birds, Noddies, Egg Birds, &c[a]. The Sea seems as barren of fish for we could not

catch any although we try'd in several places with hook and line and it was very little we saw a mong the Natives. Such is the produce of Easter Island... For this and other ilconveniences already mentioned, nothing but necessity will induce any one to touch at this isle.... (Beaglehole, 349-50)

Chapter Eight

1786 — A Gentleman of France

And yet Capitain Jean François Galaup de la Pérouse did touch at this isle. Capitain La Pérouse is another man—like Captain Cook and Mr. William Wales—that I would like to have been able to know, a real gentleman, or un vrai gentilhomme as he would be called in the French language, if I spoke it.

French is one of my favorites of the languages that come today onto our island. But it is impossible to read because it has even more silent letters than English, and you know from my lesson on pronunciation of our language how I do disdain silent letters. It is not just the French language itself that I so admire, in the listening of it, but it is also the character of the French people I admire, in the watching of them. They are very passionate, yet cool. They can be very arrogant, yet so out-reaching and generous. When I arrive at the chapter about Monsieur Pierre Loti, a charming child of France, you will understand exactly what I mean here. Their passion? I see it in their excitement as I go with them around the island. The French are as likely to choose the Englisher tour as they are the Spanisher tour, and you can pick them out from others, even before you have heard them speaking their entertaining language, by their exuberance. They are usually on their way home to France from Tahiti. Tahiti and the other Society Islands now "belong" to the French and are now called French Polynesia. Tahitians will speak French as easily as their own Polynesian language of Tahitian in the same way that our people will speak Spanish as easily as Rapanui. Therefore Tahiti is a popular vacation spot for

the French. And then they say to themselves, in that remarkable French intonation that sounds like, "But of course! Any fool knows that! Mais bien sûr!"

"Why do we not go home through Ile de Pacques and South America? But of course, it is longer! But what are we made of, if not money? And when again will we come to the Pacifique du Sud? But of course! Any fool would do the same!"

But these sentiments, of course, were not the sentiments of Capitain La Pérouse when he came here in 1876, twelve years after the visitation by Captain Cook. Capitain La Pérouse came here on a mission of the French king, Louis XVI, who probably wanted to make us French like the Tahitians. But Capitain La Pérouse did not give a favorable report of our island, or of us. But he was a gentleman, anyway. He was kind to us. He brought us seeds of all kinds of good plants, and he even brought us animals that would have been so wonderful here, if we could have found a way to let them live. But the seeds did not thrive, and we killed and ate the animals probably before the ships of Capitain Pérouse had disappeared over the horizon.

Here are some of the reportings of Capitain La Pérouse:

> Four or five hundred Indians were waiting for us on the shore; they were unarmed; some of them cloathed in pieces of white or yellow stuff, but the greater number naked: many were tattooed, and had their faces painted red; their shouts and countenances were expressive of joy; and they came forward to offer us their hands, and to facilitate our landing. (Dos Passos, 55)

You see again how friendly we were to these visitors. You may be beginning to be bored by how happy we were; but that will change; you will see. Captain Cook had been here twelve years earlier, the Spanish had been here sixteen years earlier, and the

Dutch sixty-four years earlier. How wise was this Capitain La Pérouse! He saw at once, from his anchorage, that ours was an island without trees, and he analyzed our situation with great science and prescience:

> This space is covered with grass fit for the feeding of cattle; among which are large stones lying loose upon the ground… these stones, which we found so troublesome in walking, are of great use, by contributing to the freshness and moisture of the ground, and partly supply the want of the salutary shade of the trees which the inhabitants were so imprudent as to cut down, in times, no doubt, very remote, by which their country lies fully exposed to the rays of the sun, and is destitute of running streams and springs. (Dos Passos, 55)

You see his wisdom? None of the other early visitors made mention of what had actually happened to the trees on our island, even as every one of them made much of the fact that indeed there *were* no trees to be found here. But Capitain La Pérouse went even farther to describe these "imprudent" inhabitants and the results of their destruction, which would amount to their own self-destruction:

> They were ignorant, that in little islands surrounded by an immense ocean, the coolness of land covered with trees can alone stop and condense the clouds, and thus attract to the mountains abundant rain to form springs and rivulets on all sides. Those islands which are deprived of this advantage are reduced to a dreadful drought, which by degrees destroying the shrubs and plants renders them almost uninhabitable. M. de Langle and myself had no doubt, that this people owed the misfortune of their situation to the imprudence of their ancestors; and it is probable, that the other islands of the South Sea abound in water, only because they fortunately contain mountains, on

> which it has been impossible to cut down the woods... A long abode in the Ile de France, which so strikingly resembles Ile de Pâques, has convinced me, that trees never shoot again in such situations, unless they are sheltered from the sea winds, either by other trees or an enclosure of walls; and the knowledge of this fact has discovered to me the cause of the devastation of Ile de Pâques... (Dos Passos, 55-6)

> I have no doubt, that formerly these people enjoyed the same productions as those of the Society Islands. The fruit trees must have perished from the drought, as well as the dogs and hogs, to whom water is absolutely necessary. But man, who in Hudson's Streights drinks the oil of the whale, accustoms himself to every thing, and I have seen the natives of Ile de Pâques drink the sea water like the albatrosses at Cape Horn. We were there in the rainy season, and a little brackish water was found in some holes on the sea shore; they offered it to us in their calabashes, but it disgusted even those who were most thirsty. I do not expect, that the hogs which I have given them will multiply; but I have great hopes, that the sheep and goats, which drink but little, and are fond of salt, will prosper among them. (Dos Passos, 61)

The disgust of my sister is always very comical to me when, on her tours, she shows the people the springs near the ocean where our people do indeed find a kind of fresh water to drink. My sister will say with anger, "Some of the first European explorers say that they saw us drinking ocean water. Pah! They saw us drinking from these springs that run into the ocean! It is fresh water! Taste it for yourselves." You can be sure that not one of her Spanishers ever does taste it. Well, they would have to go down to the edge of the ocean and kneel down between the rocks and put their faces into the water,

taking care not to get swamped by incoming waves. People on the tours today have their own bottles of water that they carry with them in their backpacks. No one today is thirsty enough to do as our people did in the days of Capitain La Pérouse.

Capitain La Pérouse had read of the journey of Captain Cook and, knowing how impoverished we were on this island, made sure that he brought with him the best of supplies, as well as of attitudes:

> …we only desired of these people the privilege of doing them good: we brought them goats, sheep, and hogs; we had seeds of orange, lemon, and cotton trees, of maize, and, in short, of every species of plants, which was likely to flourish in the island. (Dos Passos, 56)

Here, at last, was a man who indeed did try to supply our people with good things to make our future better, instead of stopping with their beads and trinkets and nails (of all things that we did not need but at which we were no doubt agog). I am sure the heart of this captain was of gold.

Monsieur de Langle was in charge of the gardener who was to go around the island and find favorable places to plant the seeds. M. de Langle wrote that his party of eight…

> …visited many plantations of yams and potatoes. The soil of these plantations consisted of a very fertile vegetable earth, which the gardener judged proper for the cultivation of our seeds: he sowed cabbages, carrots, beets, maize and pumpkins; and we endeavored to make the islanders understand, that these seeds would produce roots and fruits which they might eat. They perfectly comprehended us, and from that moment pointed out to us the best spots, signifying to us the places in which they were

> desirous of seeing our new productions. We added to the leguminous plants, seeds of the orange, lemon, and cotton trees, making them comprehend, that these were trees, and that what we had before sown were plants.... (Dos Passos, 65-6)

About the condition of the moai that M. de Langle and his party met on their route? You remember that Mr. William Wales had found some of the moai had been somehow downed? M. de Langle reported back to Capitain La Pérouse:

> After having gone about two leagues to the east, we returned southward towards the shore which we had coasted the evening before, and upon which, by the assistance of our telescopes, we had perceived a great many monuments; several were overthrown, it appeared that these people did not employ themselves in repairing them; others were standing upright, their bases half destroyed.... (66)
>
> In the morning we visited seven different terraces, upon which there were statues, some upright, others thrown down, differing from each other only in size... (Dos Passos, 67)

Perhaps more moai had been downed in the twelve years since the English had been there, or perhaps not. We cannot tell from this report of M. de Langle. This would reflect on the state of the wars among the clans, the bad men coming and doing their bad things. But here is troubling evidence from M. de Langle:

> Having perceived a small village, I directed my course towards it; one of the houses was three hundred feet in length, and in the form of a canoe reversed. Very near this place we observed the foundations of several others, which no longer existed... (Dos Passos, 66)

The description of the existing house is not surprising because this is the same description that all earlier visitors gave of the houses on the island. In fact, all over the

island, still, you can see the foundations for these old-style houses of our people, with all the blocks and all the holes for the poles. What is beginning to distress, in this account by M. de Langle, is the foundations of several others, which no longer existed. What happened to those houses, and to the people who once lived in them? Bad men came?

All over the island the French expedition found human bones and skulls. This, too, was nothing new. All the early visitors talked about the bones and skulls that they found in the ahu and also in all the burial mounds of rocks that are all about the island. Indeed, if you look more closely at the drawing by Mr. Hodges in Figure 30, you will see some of these bones that the English saw and Mr. Hodges depicted. Well, one must put the dead body somewhere, and ours is a very rocky island. Of course, we put the dead in the rocks, and there they rotted and left their bones behind. Today we have a beautiful cemetery just north of Hanga Roa.

Figure 32: Here is our cemetery today. It is in Hanga Roa and provides a new home to many important people. Notice the moai with pukao in the distance? That is one of the hundreds of old homes for our dead.

But examine here below in this account of M. de Langle, wherein he offers us new informations that we have not had from previous visitors, about these bones of our dead and about our beliefs of those times:

> An Indian explained to us, by very expressive signs, that they deposited them there, and that afterwards they ascended to heaven. We found upon the sea-shore pyramids of stones, ranged very nearly in the same form as cannon balls in a park of artillery, and we perceived some human bones in the vicinity of those pyramids, and of those statues, all of which had the back turned towards the sea. (Dos Passos, 66-7)

Capitain La Pérouse adds to the observations of M. de Langle about our probable beliefs, particularly in regard to the moai:

> All the monuments which are at this time in existence, and of which M. Duche has given a very exact drawing, appeared to be very ancient; they are situated in morais (or burying places) as far as we can judge from the great quantity of bones which we found hard by. There can be no doubt that the form of their present government may have so far equalized their condition, that there no longer exists among them a chief of sufficient authority to employ a number of men in erecting a statue to perpetuate his memory. These colossal images are at present superseded by small pyramidal heaps of stones, the topmost of which is whitewashed. These species of mausoleums… are piled up upon the sea shore; and one of the natives shewed us that these stones covered a tomb, by laying himself down at full length on the ground; afterwards, raising his hands towards the sky, he appeared evidently

> desirous of expressing that they believed in a future state. I was upon my guard against this opinion but having seen this sign repeated by many, and M. de Langle, who had penetrated into the interior of the island, having reported the same fact, I no longer entertained a doubt of it, and I believe that all our officers and passengers partook in this opinion; we did not however perceive traces of any worship, for I do not think that any one can take the statues for idols, although these Indians may have shewed a kind of veneration for them. (Dos Passos, 59)

This looks to me like an idea of a heaven. Would you not agree? This was long before the Christian missionaries arrived on this island and did all the good and bad that they are known for. This observation, it seems to me, is worth remembering, about our people, in those times.

M. de Langle found several more women and children on the island than any of the previous visitors. Indeed, all three of the preceding accounts noted that there was a great discrepancy between the numbers of men as compared to the numbers of women and children. They suspected that the men had hidden the women in the many caves of which the visitors saw only the mouths, but the depths and contents of which they were kept from investigating by the diligence of our people.

> Continuing to bend our course to the west, we met about twenty children, who were walking under the care of some women…
>
> At the south end of the island we saw the crater of an old volcano, the size, depth, and regularity of which excited our admiration…
>
> Night obliged me to return toward the ships. We perceived near a house a great number of children, who ran away at our approach: it appeared to us probable, that this house was the

> habitation of all the children of the district. There was too little difference in their ages for them all to belong to the two women who seemed to be charged with the care of them….
>
> The most probable conjectures that can be formed as to the government of these people are, that they consist only of a single nation, divided into as many districts as there are morais, because it is to be observed, that the villages are built near those burying places. The products of the earth seem to be common to all the inhabitants of the same district; and as the men, without any regard to delicacy, make offers of the women to strangers, it is natural to suppose, that they do not belong to any man in particular; and that when the children are weaned, they are delivered over to the management of other women, who, in every district, are charged with the care of bringing them up. (Dos Passos, 67-9)

On this question of sex… I have not wanted to talk about sex, not much. It seems to me that in writing a book, the writer should be careful of all that he or she says, in not wishing to offend. And so many people, I have found, are so often offended by sex. But it certainly was true that all of the early visitors did indeed spend quite a lot of their own words describing the sexual attitudes of my people during those encounters. Well, sailors come ashore after many weeks at sea… well… they find that the women are invitational? Well… dot dot dot, period.

And then there is the question presented by Mr. Thor Heyerdahl—on whom I will expend quite a few words presently—of mixed race on our island. And so, you must know at least some small something about the way our women (and men) received these

white men so long at sea, and make a few surmises of your own. Here is what Capitain La Pérouse says about this matter:

> They were at least eight hundred; and in this number there were certainly a hundred and fifty women. The faces of these were many of them agreeable; and they offered their favours to all those who would make them a present. The Indians would engage us to accept them, by themselves setting the example. They were only separated from the view of the spectators by a simple covering of the stuff of the country… (Dos Passos, 56-7)

Well, and so? Dot dot dot, exclamation point! Indeed, yes. But later we see a somewhat different description, and with a different significance:

> They brought to us by force young girls of thirteen or fourteen years of age, in the hope of receiving pay for them; the repugnance of those young females was a proof, that in this respect the custom of the country was violated. (Dos Passos, 63)

Bad men coming.

It is curious to me, and perhaps very revealing of the changing state of our island during these times of the early visitors, that this is the first mention of coercion that is seen from the outside world. Young girls, and defenseless, were brought to the French sailors against their will. Keep this in mind when I talk about something even more dreadful, happening too soon on our island. But not only Capitain La Pérouse appeared outraged by this humiliation of the young girls, but so too did his men:

> Not a single Frenchman made use of the barbarous right which was given him; and if there were some moments dedicated to nature, the desire and consent were mutual, and the women made the first advances. (Dos Passos, 63)

Capitain La Pérouse makes the same remarks about our propensity for thievery as do all the other early visitors, but there is something of a difference here. Read on:

> …while our attention was attracted by the women, we were robbed of our hats and handkerchiefs. They all appeared to be accomplices in the robbery; for scarcely was it accomplished, than like a flock of birds they all fled at the same instant; but seeing that we did not make use of our firelocks, they returned a few minutes after, recommenced their caresses, and watched the moment for committing a new depredation… The Indians were unarmed; three or four only, out of the whole number, had a kind of wooden club which was far from being formidable. Some of them seemed to have a slight authority over the others: I took them for chiefs, and distributed medals among them, which I hung around their necks by a chain, but I soon found that these were the most notorious thieves; and although they had the appearance of pursuing those who took away our handkerchiefs, it was easy to perceive that they did so with the most decided intention not to overtake them…. (Dos Passos, 57)
>
> An Indian who had assisted me to get down from a terrace, after having rendered me this service, took away my hat, and fled at full speed, followed as usual by the rest. I did not order him to be pursued, not being willing to have the exclusive right of being protected from the fun… (Dos Passos, 61-2)

Fun! You see, Capitain La Pérouse, unlike the Dutch, Spanish and English before him, did understand that this was a game to be played. I think it must have been great fun indeed to make the pretenses of chasing the thieves, only to turn around and commit your own thievery. Bravo!

Capitain La Pérouse wrote something else that showed very well that he very well understood our games:

> …they swim so expertly, that in the most tempestuous sea they go two leagues from the shore, and in returning to land, often, by way of frolic, choose those places where the surf breaks with the greatest fury. (Dos Passos, 64)

"By way of frolic." This is a lovely locution, and an excellent description of our people. By way of frolic is how we mostly are, mostly always. And, from what I read, this is not always so true of most other peoples? Or perhaps, or very likely, I am wrong in this assessment? When one is an autodidact who has lived always on an island, one easily mistakes these kinds of things, you can understand. But now that I have come across this lovely locution I am determined that, by way of authorial frolic, I will use it often, and well. And from this quotation, you see, that having no wood with which to make surf boards, our people merely used their bodies, by way of frolic. What fun!

Yet, I regret so much, our games did grow wearying for this kind French gentleman. Here are the last words he wrote about us, upon sailing away:

> …we landed on the island only with an intention to do them service; we heaped presents upon them, we caressed the children; we sowed in their fields all kinds of useful seeds; presented them with hogs, goats, and sheep, which probably will multiply; we demanded nothing in return; nevertheless they … robbed us of every thing which it was possible for them to take away. It would, perhaps, have been imprudent in other circumstances to conduct ourselves with so much lenity; but I had resolved to go away in the evening, and I flattered myself that at day-break, when they no longer perceived our ships, they would attribute our speedy departure to the

> just displeasure we entertained at their proceedings, and that this reflection might amend them; though this idea is a little chimerical, it is of no great consequence to navigators, as the island offers scarcely any resource to ships that may touch there… (Dos Passos, 64-5)

Poor Capitain La Pérouse. Poor people of my island.

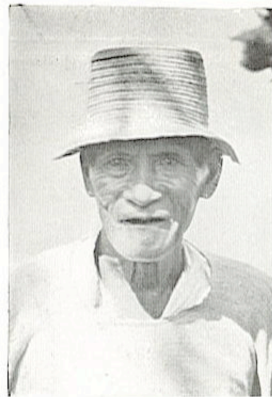
You should know, finally, that the two ships of Capitain La Pérouse were lost at sea in a storm only perhaps weeks or but a few months afterwards, somewhere in the islands far west from here. The part of the log of Capitain La Pérouse up until that point had been sent back to France at a port some time meanwhile, which is why his words about our island survived.

Years later some explorers found evidence of a ship that they thought might have been one of the two of the expedition of Capitain La Pérouse. It had been driven onto the reefs of an island, and the people of that island did have memories of white men who survived the shipwreck. The people of that island fought with and killed many of the French sailors, but some of the sailors managed to survive and live in peace, ultimately, with the islanders. And then, like all living creatures, those Frenchmen finally died. I hope that among those survivors were M. de Langle and Capitain La Pérouse. Perhaps their own seeds live on, on that island so far away.

Chapter Nine

Mrs. Routledge and the Cannibals

Before my great grandmother died, she was the oldest person on the island. She was so old that she had seen all her children die before her, and even some of her grandchildren. She did not know exactly how old she was, but she remembered she was a young girl when Mrs. Routledge was here, and she remembered Mrs. Routledge and all the Englishmen who came here with Mrs. Routledge. That was in 1914; so very old people like my great grandmother could remember it, and tell about it, but now they are all gone.



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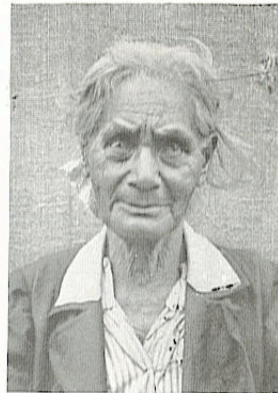

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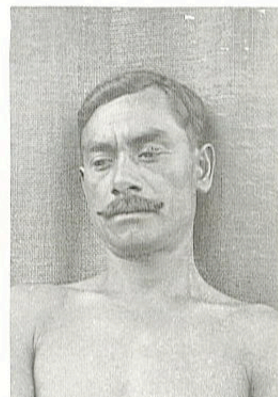


JUAN TEPANO.

Figure 33: Here are photographs of four informants of Mrs. Routledge.

My great grandmother used to go with her great grandfather when he would tell his stories to Mrs. Routledge. Mrs. Routledge was interested in the old people on the island in 1914 just the way I was interested in my old great grandmother. The reason why? They remembered things that happened a long time ago, and they could tell you about them. Unfortunately, none of the informants in Figure 33 is the great grandfather of my great grandmother. Why Mrs. Routledge included no picture of him in her book? I can not say.

Mrs. Routledge would write down the stories of the great grandfather of my great grandmother. But she would never read the stories back to him; so he never knew if Mrs. Routledge was writing them down correctly. He did not know how to write, and my great grandmother did not know how to write. But he remembered when there was a man on the island who could still read the rongorongo tablets, and Mrs. Routledge found that very interesting, which was in turn very interesting to the great grandfather of my great grandmother, that Mrs. Routledge wanted to hear about the stories of the rongorongo and perhaps write them down, perhaps correctly or perhaps not.

I can feel in the bones of my fingers that it is going to grow very tedious to continue typing "the great grandfather of my great grandmother" and so I will continue instead by calling them by their names, which does seem disrespectful perhaps, but however. Of course I could say great great great great grandfather, but names will be wisest for best understanding. The name of my great grandmother was Angata-iti, called

in honor after one Angata who was a powerful and important seer of those times. Angata-iti means Little Angata. The great grandfather of Angata-iti was Petro.

Figure 34: This photograph by Mrs. Routledge is of Angata, the woman after whom my great grandmother was named. You can see for yourself, from her wild eye, that she had powerful mana. She had dreams that foretold the future, as do many of our people, but the dreams of Angata were especially significant. I believe there were no photographs ever made of my great grandmother, Angata-iti, or at least none have come down to me.

Angata-iti is the one who told me not to believe everything I hear, and so if you have been wondering why I am such a "Doubting Thomas" in my own beliefs and non-beliefs, now you know. The way Angata-iti told me not to believe everything, however, was even more in the negative, rendering therefore an even greater impact on her great grandchild: "Child! Believe nothing you hear!" The reason for her saying this? Angata-iti had heard many things she did not believe, even though she might not be able to prove they were lies. Angata-iti was not sure about Mrs. Routledge and the things that Mrs. Routledge wrote down. She was also not sure that Mrs. Routledge would not return to

her people in England and receive much money for the investigations that Mrs. Routledge and her husband and the other men were making on our island. Mrs. Routledge assured Angata-iti that no, this was not true. But Angata-iti always would say to me, so many years later, "Why were they here, if not to make money?" Yet still Mrs. Routledge declared that they were here on a “scientific expedition” which, of course, Angata-iti could not really understand. We have had so many scientific expeditions here since those times that it is easier now to understand; scientific expeditions are "philanthropic" and therefore are paid for by philanthropists who think little or nothing of money, we understand. And the scientists get very little in the way of salary, or so we are told. But I do not believe anything, much, because of Angata-iti.

We were just beginning to understand “money” in those days. Having no money ourselves, it was strange to us to see people give little bills and coins for whatever they might want to "buy" from us, as they called it. But we knew that the people who came here did "make money" in their pursuits. There were the ranchers who brought cattle and sheep here to eat our grass, which is plentiful. They made money when they sold those cattle and put them on the ships that were now beginning to stop here on a more regular basis, even perhaps a schedule. We saw the money exchanged for the cattle, even if we still did not use the money ourselves.

We were happy to have the cattle—at last!—because we liked to eat them, and we enjoyed licking the grease off our lips. Some of the old people of the time of Mrs. Routledge could still remember when there were not any cattle, not any sheep, not any pigs, no meat to eat. Not any dogs even. We do not eat dog any more, but once we did.

But not on this island. We never had dogs on this island, or pigs. Only chickens. I am talking now about our people before our people came to this island more than 1500 years ago, our people when they were still living on our home island, Marae Renga. On our home island of Marae Renga, we did indeed have dog to eat. But our dogs never reached our new island home.

Actually, I tell an old lie here. Yes, indeed, some ancient bones of dog were indeed found recently at Anakena, the beach at the north end of the island. But there were not many bones. In fact, I believe there were the bones of only one dog, but of this I have no proof, only belief. Anakena was where Hotu Matu'a landed the two canoes with all our people, in the sand of the Anakena beach, our only beach on this island. The people had been at sea for three months and were indeed very hungry, as were any dogs still with them, no doubt. I picture that single dog—the only one to survive the three month trip—jumping out of the canoe, oh so happy and with his tail no doubt a-wag. I believe that the mate of this dog must have just died on the canoe, or was in the process of dying. And then, of course, her puppies inside her would have died, too. Perhaps this dog ate his mate and her puppies; we can never know now. And I picture that last dog, then, jumping off the canoe, his feet hitting the sand, and right behind him the people, also quite famished from their long journey and saying, "Well, the bitch and pups are gone and we have nothing to lose now. Kill that dog and let us lick grease off our lips again!" That is how I picture the bones of that dog got onto Anakena, in order to be found 1500 years later.

And so ended the brief history of "the best friend of man" on our island, until recently. Now we have very beautiful and friendly dogs. If you come here, you can pet them when you sit on the wall of the park in Hanga Roa, because that is where they like to run in bunches, and they come up to you very friendly, asking to be petted.

It used to be when our people sailed from one island to the next, farther east, we would load the double-canoes with dogs and pigs and rats and chickens to have for food when we would reach the next island. We knew from centuries upon centuries of sailing eastward that the islands we would reach would have no animals on them. Animals cannot get from one island to another without the people bringing them.

This is what would happen, island after island, over so many centuries that they cannot be counted, except by the scientists on their scientific expeditions, but even they disagree. They have new ways of "dating"—which means not for a boy and girl to go out and have fun together, but to try to determine how old any given thing might be. That is altogether a different definition, do you not agree? The scientists look at the evidence that has been covered up by dirt over the many centuries, and they count the layers of different kinds of dirt and debris and bones, and then they run tests to find out about the "carbon" therein, I believe. I think you will have to excuse me for not knowing more about the exactitude of these methods, but it is very scientific, and I am not. You may believe in "carbon dating" or you are also free not to believe in it.

I know, however, from stories and from common sense that our people from far back in time would arrive on a new island, and oh how happy we would be. We would start the animals multiplying, the dogs and pigs and chickens and rats. And we would

plant the important plants we had brought with us, bananas and coconuts and taro and so many good things to eat and to have as medicines. We would eat none of these foods we carried with us until they were well multiplied but instead would eat only the fish from the ocean and perhaps any other foods already on the island.

But then, what would happen? After many years, and many generations of people came to pass, the island would get too crowded with the people, and the people would begin to fight. Such is the nature of people, I believe. Often it would be the sons of the Ariki Mau who would fight because each son would want control of the island when his father would die. There would be war. And then one of the sons—usually the younger son who had not so many followers as the older son—would flee in one or more of the large double-canoes, and his followers would go with him. They most often sailed eastward toward the rising sun, but sometimes northward in which case they did find and settle the islands of Hawai'i, which are now a part of the United States of America, although quite separated by half an ocean. Also they would sail sometimes southward, in which case they did find and settle New Zealand. They knew that the islands westward, toward the setting sun, already were overcrowded with people. After all, the islands in the setting sun were where their people had come from in the first place; so why go back, when you can go forward?

On and on eastward, clans of people moved. Always there were more, empty islands for them to fill up. But at the time of Hotu Matu'a and his wars, there were no more islands nearby to the east. Well, everyone assumed that there must be many still, because there had always *been* many, but indeed there was only one, this one. But there

was no one, not even Hotu Matu'a himself, who had any idea how very, very far away it was.

The legends about Hotu Matu'a are uncertain, and there are contradictions and unbelievabilities in the legends. These are some of the stories that Mrs. Routledge wrote down from Petro and his friends who were also very old. According to one story, Hotu Matu'a was supposed to have sent his good friend Haumaka—who had been the one to tattoo Hotu Matu'a—to scout out the island first before Hotu Matu'a set sail from Marae Renga with his people. Haumaka had a dream in which he flew over the island, first over three little islands—which are Motu Nui, Motu Iti, Motu Kao Kao that you see in Figure 36. Then as he came to the island itself, first he flew over a "big hole"—which, indeed, was the crater of Rano Kao—and then over the entire island, where he saw that everything was good. You can see that, like old Angata, Haumaka was a man of great dreaming prowess, to have seen our island so clearly from so far away and in a dream.

So Haumaka was supposed to send six men to settle the island first, before Hotu Matu'a arrived. Perhaps this happened, or perhaps it did not, but so it was told to Mrs. Routledge, according to her book (278-80), and so I am putting it here for you to know about. You are free to believe it, or not.

But you really should believe that Haumaka did have his dream, and it was very real. You should know that our people do have dreams, and when we dream we can sometimes see the future. This is known. I think, however, that this is not true of other peoples around our planet? The reason for my saying this? The different peoples who come here to investigate our island never believe us when we tell them that we see true

things in our dreams. You can tell this by the smiles on their faces, and the way they nod their heads up and down, as though they understand when they really do not. And for this reason I believe they must have no knowledge of such a thing as dreaming the future. But I assure you, it is true. My people often dream the future. Not myself, yet, but it is a thing I believe comes with age and wisdom, both which I do not yet possess.

Dream or not, Hotu Matu'a was satisfied with the appraisal of Haumaka of our island, and he and his three hundred followers put themselves and their supplies into their two great canoes, lashed together and with a great platform between them to steady the canoes on the long journey. Inside the cavities of the canoes were all the stores. On the platform lived all the people, day and night, with all the animals. And Hotu Matu'a set sail with his three hundred followers toward the rising sun, sure that they would come upon another empty island, just as their legends told them their people had done for centuries.

But this is what happened. I will tell you as much as I can, but you must always remember the words of Angata-iti, "Believe nothing." Only, at the same time, just know that if you believe nothing, you are taking a most dangerous road. As I said to Angata-iti, "Believe nothing? How, then, can I believe *you* when you tell me to believe *nothing*?" Believing nothing is the rockiest path to knowledge. There are too many pitfalls. The same is true of believing everything.

As the double-canoe arrived at the three islets at the west end of our island—Motu Nui, Motu Iti, and Motu Kao Kao—Hotu Matu'a ordered that the two canoes should be cut apart. He took one to the south of our island, and Hinelilu took the other canoe on the

west side of the island, and they were to meet on the northwest coast at the beach of Anakena. Haumaka, you see, in his dream of flying all over our island did finally reach the beach of Anakena and knew this to be the only landing spot for canoes on this island.

Do you see a problem here already with this story told to Mrs. Routledge? If the two canoes were cut apart, what would be done with the platform lashed between them, and all the people on that platform? And how would either canoe be balanced now, without platform or outrigger. And so, here I insert what is called a rationale. That rationale is that indeed there were *two double-canoes*, four canoes in all, each double-canoe connected by its own platform. That, also, is more believable if we wish to believe that there were indeed three hundred people on this journey by Hotu Matu'a.

You are free to believe what you wish, but, in either case, the race was on!

It was hardly a fair race, however, since Hinelilu had much the shorter distance to travel—you can see on a map—because he had essentially only one side of the triangle to complete, and a short side at that. Hotu Matu'a in his canoe had the long southern coast plus almost the whole of the northern coast to travel. And so, when Hotu Matu'a came close enough to see the beach of Anakena, he saw that Hinelilu was coming close to beating him there. And so, with his mana, Hotu Matu'a called up a big wind, adverse to Hinelilu but very favorable behind Hotu Matu'a, pushing him onto the sands of Anakena before Hinelilu.

And just in time, because no sooner had Hotu Matu'a landed than his wife, Vakai-a-Hiva, gave birth to a son, the first birth of the first new generation on our island. This son of Hotu Matu'a and Vakai-a-Hiva was named Ko Tuumaheke.

But wait, and guess what! When Hinelilu landed the other canoe, no sooner had they landed but his own wife, Averepua, also gave birth. The story written down by Mrs. Routledge does not say whether this second birth was a son or a daughter, but I have decided for myself that it was a daughter, and that she and Ko Tuumaheke grew up and married and gave birth to the first child of the second generation to be born upon our island. It is as good a story as anyone will tell you, and I encourage you to believe it as well. It does no wrong, and is fun.

Hinelilu was a master of the rongorongo and he brought those writings written on paper. Another man from the canoes, the ariki Tuukoihu was a master of the wooden carvings. This was the beginning of the writing of the rongorongo boards on our island. Two of the sons and two of the grandsons of Tuukoihu have their names as four of the land subdivisions of the Miru clan of people on our island, and so Tuukoihu must have been almost as important to our people as Hotu Matu'a. Perhaps, when you learn about the clan wars much later in our history, you will remember that Tuukoihu was the progenitor of some clans, and Hotu Matu'a was the progenitor of others. It may make more sense that their descendants would be rivals and fight each other. Or perhaps not. Who knows, now?

For the rest of the story of Hotu Matu'a, I will quote directly from the book of Mrs. Routledge—where she writes down the words of Petro—because this story of how our island was first divided among the sons of Hotu Matu'a will become very important for you to understand what happened later.

> Hotu-matua had many sons from whom the different clans are descended, and whose names they bear. He

quarrelled with the eldest, Tuumaheki, and with his own wife, Vakai; the two having behaved badly to him, he finally gave up his position to Tuumaheki and retired to the top of Rano Kao, where he lived on the south side of the crater, that opposite to Orongo.

He was old and blind and became also very ill; his elder sons came to see him, but he kept asking for Hotu-iti, the youngest, who was his favourite. When Marama appeared, the old man felt the calf of his leg, and said, "You are not Hotu-iti, you are Marama; where is Hotu-iti?" Koro-orongo answered as if he were Hotu-iti, and said, "I am here," but he lied, and his father took hold of his leg, and said again, "You are not Hotu-iti " ; and the same thing happened with Ngaure, and Raa, and Hamea, and the others ; and at last came Hotu-iti, and Hotu-matua knew him, for he was small, and his leg was slight, and said to him, "You are Hotu-iti, of Mata-iti, and your descendants shall prosper and survive all others." And he said to Kotuu, "You are Kotuu, of Mata-nui, and your descendants shall multiply like the shells of the sea, and the reeds of the crater, and the pebbles of the beach, but they shall die and shall not remain." And when he had said this he left his house, and went along to the cliff where the edge of the crater is narrowest, and stood on it by two stones, and he looked over the islet of Motu Nui towards Marae Renga, and called to four aku-aku in his old home across the sea, "Kuihi, Kuaha, Tongau, Opakako, make the cock crow for me," and the cock crew in Marae Renga, and he heard it across the sea ; that was his death signal, so he said to his sons, "Take me away." So they took him back to his house, and he died. Thus Hotu-matua came to his end and was buried at Akahanga. (Routledge, 280-1)

It will be important to remember, when the discussion of Mr. Thor Heyerdahl and his theories comes about, that at his death Hotu Matu'a…

looked over the islet of Motu Nui towards Marae Renga.

Hotu Matu'a looked *west*, into the *setting* sun, toward his old home, where still lived the four aku-aku, or gods of Marae Renga. He did not look east; he looked west. And the seven moai at Ahu Akivi, the only ahu that is inland and not on the coast, face the same direction, west. It is said that Ahu Akivi is situated thusly in remembrance of the last wish of Hotu Matu'a to face his home and hear the cock crow in Marae Renga. (It does seem to me, however, that that must have been one loud cockle-doodle-doo. Ha! But perhaps Thomas should not doubt so much?)

Figure 35: Here is the uncle of one of my friends looking southeastward over Rano Kao. To his back and in our direction, then, would lie Marae Renga. I believe the uncle of my friend is here contemplating something, perhaps something very deep, perhaps not. Perhaps he is contemplating nothing, which we are quite free to do.

In another place in her book, Mrs. Routledge said about Rano Kao—and how its seaward edge is breaking down year by year because of the rains—that one day it will make a “lovely harbor” thousands of years from now and if the planet still exists. What she means is that one day that edge will be so eroded that the fresh rainwater of the lake will break through the thinning outer wall and pour into the ocean, and then the salt waves of the ocean will crash into the lake and fill the circle. Yes, then we might be able to bring big boats safely into their harbor—of which we have none now—yes, indeed, but our greatest supply of fresh water will be gone. Perhaps that will not be so "lovely" after all. Mrs. Routledge sounded happy about that, but that thought makes me so very sad. Yes, I know that thousands of years from now I will be dead. My descendants, if any, will be long dead, or departed from this island. Perhaps the whole world will be rid of all its peoples through other catastrophes, but these are things upon which I try not to ponder, and I wish Mrs. Routledge would have sometimes shut up. Perhaps, indeed, all of this is what the uncle of my friend is contemplating as he sits beside Rano Kao.

Figure 36: If the uncle of my friend were to contemplate over his right shoulder, he would contemplate these three tiny islets of Motu Kao Kao, Motu Iti and Motu Nui. We are looking, now, just as Hotu Matu'a looked, toward Marae Renga. You see, too, a rock carving here? Remember this rock carving when you learn about the Birdman.

Figure 37: This is Ahu Akivi. It is nowhere near Rano Kao, but instead is north of Hanga Roa. It is the only inland ahu, and the only ahu that faces the ocean instead

of the land, because it is facing west toward Marae Renga, in remembrance of the death of Hotu Matu'a.

The scientific expedition of Mrs. Routledge was just one of many scientific expeditions that have come to our island since her time. Some of these people are called engineers, which means that they have special knowledge. They try to figure out how to transport the moai the way our people long ago transported them. Although our people always tell whoever asks that our moai "walked" to their ahu, these engineers do not believe that. It is the same way that no one believes that we can dream the future. Engineers also do not believe the people who write books that say that aliens from outer space (ha!) came here and built the ahu and created the moai and transported the moai onto the ahu with their flying saucers. That *is* a rather convenient explanation, however, and you may believe it or not as you choose.

Me? Why should I disbelieve what my people always say. I believe, indeed, that the moai walked. The moai have great mana, even today. I told you how I can feel the mana emanating from the moai at Rano Raraku, at night in the moonlight as I walk among them. And yet it was long long ago that they were created. They were created, you see, with very great mana. And so, yes, indeed, there is no reason not to believe that they walked.

And yet of course the engineers do not believe that because they do not believe in mana at all which, of course, is quite ridiculous. But what is to be done about that? What the engineers do when they come here is to argue rather a lot. This is great fun, of course, to watch and listen to, especially if you are able to speak English, the language in which most of them communicate to each other. The engineers bring many equipments,

including their own wooden logs, usually. Usually their experiments in moving the moai employ many logs, of which we have none any longer on our island. They also usually fashion a moai of their own out of cement, or some kind of liquid rock. This "simulates" a real moai. The engineers will build a frame, or perhaps several different kinds of frames, and they will tie their simulated moai onto the frame. And then they try in various ways to roll their moai on their frame over the logs, and sometimes they are successful, for a short distance on flat land, but never on the slopes. This is great fun for our people because they always hire us to do all of the pulling on all of the ropes. Oh, it is like a party, and there is much laughing and singing for all of us, all the while that the engineers are growing very angry every time nothing works properly, their ideas.

Then the engineers stop everything and argue some more. You would be so amused if you could come here and watch this. In all the books about our island, you will always find plenty of pictures of all the different schemes and experiments, and you will always see the photographs of our people laughing and singing and pulling and pushing. We always look forward so happily to the next engineer.

One of the things that puzzles the engineers is that the moai already had their final-carving completed before they even began their long trips to the ahu. You can plainly see that fact from all the standing moai, half-buried at Rano Raraku. The carving is completed at the outside of the quarry. And so how do you move the moai the many miles, up and down hills, without damaging the carving? (If you *do* believe that they did *not* walk.)

Also, where did the logs come from, the engineers always ask themselves, since from the first accounts of the island there were no forests here. Well, perhaps that is one mystery of our island that has now been solved. Evidence discovered by new scientific expeditions shows that there once were, indeed, forests on this island. A man named John Flenley came here in 1977 and did many investigations and offered up many informations in his book, written with a Mr. Paul Bahn, called *Easter Island Earth Island*. This is a very good book filled with informations of all kinds about our island. And the book was so good that Mr. Flenley and Mr. Bahn published a second edition of the book in 2003, with even more informations about even more recent experiments; that new book is called *The Enigmas of Easter Island: Island on the Edge*.

What Mr. Flenley began to do in 1977 was to take what are called "core samples" out of the bottom of the lake in the crater of Rano Raraku. These core samples allowed Mr. Flenley to look at all the pollens from plants that had fallen into the crater, floated on the surface of the lake, and then sunk to the bottom to be buried in layer after layer of mud. All this was going on for all the centuries that our island had been here, and these long cores of pollen form a timeline for Mr. Flenley to study. For example, Mr. Flenley found that in the most recent centuries, pollens from grasses are the predominant pollens. Previous to that, pollen from the Toromiro tree were most predominant. Previous to that pollen from palm trees was most predominant.

What that means was that first there were so many palm trees that they dominated over most of the fertile land of the island, so that there was not much room for Toromiro or for grasses. But then our people came and started cutting down the palm trees, and so

the Toromiro began to thrive and spread. Soon there were no more palm pollens that drifted into the crater muds, but now the Toromiro pollens became very plentiful in the higher levels of muds. But now our people turned to cutting down the Toromiro to use its wood for cooking and for warmth, and for the carving of kava kava and rongorongo. And then, when the people had all but finished off the Toromiro, only the grasses grew any longer.

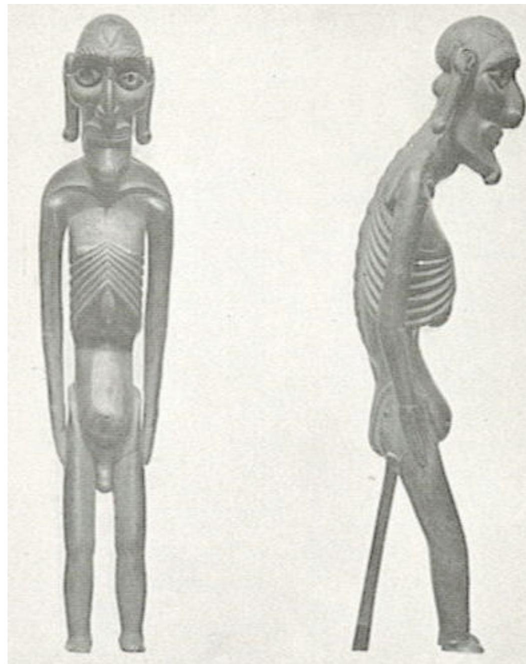


Figure 38: These are kava kava, carved from Toromiro. Nobody knows when. But you see how thin and starving these men are? Wait and see the explanation for this.

And who tells you this about the Toromiro? Toromiru tells you! Alas, in one of the books by Mr. Heyerdahl there was a very beautiful photograph of the yellow blossoms of the last remaining Toromiru tree, along with this legend:

> Blossoms of a tree which was so rare in 1956 that only one specimen remained on our planet. The Toromiro tree, Sophoro Toromiro, was once common on Easter Island, though it did not grow

> anywhere else in the world. It was always the preferred choice of Easter Island woodcarvers, who used the hard red wood for all their religious emblems and statuettes. The islanders showed the author the last surviving Toromiro tree as a curiosity in 1956. All that was left was a dying stump inside the crater of Rano Kao, with a few seedpods on the last living branch. Dr. Selling took charge of these, and planted the seeds in the botanic gardens in Göteborg, Sweden. (Heyerdahl, 247)

Alas.

Mr. Heyerdahl also said that some of our people were keeping their eyes on this tree because, should it die, they were eager to collect the wood and carve it and sell their carvings to the tourists. Alas.

So now, going back so long ago, those palm trees that used to be on this island? Where did they come from? How did they get here? Messrs. Flenley and Bahn found out that the pollen grain was very like a pollen grain of a palm tree found in Chile called *Jubaea chilensis*, which is the Latin language for the Chilean Wine Palm. They also found some nuts in some of our caves, and guess what! With the three holes in the top, they are very like the nuts of *Jubaea chilensis*!

So, this is what I think happened. Hundreds of thousands of years ago—after our island was formed by three volcanoes, and then cooled down, and then started the erosion process of the volcanoes with all the rainfall breaking down the rock into dirt and sand—a single palm tree in Chile, 2400 miles away, fell into the ocean. Because it was wood, it floated on top of the ocean waves. The ocean currents, and the winds, carried that palm tree over all of the more than two thousand miles to our island, where it washed up onto

our shore. Still on that tree were some nuts that managed to cling on, all the whole distance, and now those nuts fell onto the soil of our island. And they started to grow into trees. And through the hundreds of thousands of years they multiplied, just as the people did after they arrived on this island. And, anon, the island was covered with the trees.

And then, isolated away from the *Jubaea chilensis*, our trees grew rather apart from their parent tree and gradually morphed into their own species of tree, known only here on this island, and nowhere else on the planet, or even in the universe. And then Hotu Matu'a brought his people here, and they collected the hard nuts from the tree for food, also the wood of the tree for fire. Perhaps our people gave this tree a name, but we have no knowledge of that. And so, I believe it is up to me to give this species of tree a name, even though it no longer exists anywhere on the planet. I will name this tree *Jubaea te pito o te henuensis*, after the name that we have learned Hotu Matu'a gave to this island, Te Pito o te Henua.

Think what paradise Te Pito o te Henua must have seemed to the people of Hotu Matu'a who had been sailing on the open sea for so many weeks, this island covered with thousands of *Jubaea te pito o te henuenses* growing tall, giving shade from the sun, at last. Palm nuts to eat when they had been starving themselves on the canoes, saving their chickens and rats and dogs and all the plants for whenever they would finally reach the next island.

So I think now you begin to see the outline of the picture of the history of this island. I will now fill in that outline somewhat. It was three volcanoes that erupted out of the surface of the ocean many thousands or even millions of years ago. Or that is what

they say, the scientists. They say that far below the rocks on which we stand, long ago, there was a crack in the floor of the ocean. In fact, if you want the facts, it was 10,000 feet below our feet on the floor of the ocean, and it was longer ago than anyone knows. What they say they know is that the first volcano that built up high enough to erupt out of the water and form the island was about two and a half million years ago. That, I think, is rather astonishing. That volcano is now the northeastern corner of our island that we call Poike, and yet Poike does not even resemble a mountain any more, and you can see hardly any evidence of the volcanic crater because it is so old and has been so worn down by the rains and winds. The next oldest volcano is the one that made Rano Kao at the southwestern end of our island, and because it is newer it still has the deep crater that you have already seen in Figure 35, with the uncle of my friend sitting beside it, in modern thought. The newest of the three big volcanoes is the one that made Maunga Terevaka, which is the highest mountain of our island and the one that forms the top angle of our triangle and the northwestern corner. The scientists say that Maunga Terevaka was made around 240,000 years ago.

"That recent?!?" you exclaim.

They say that there have been many other volcanic eruptions through the thousands of years, making all the smaller cones and craters of our island, and that the most recent eruptions were perhaps about 12,000 years ago. So that indeed *is* rather recent, if you think about it in terms of the two and a half million year old Poike. But if you think about it in terms of your own life, especially when you have been alive not yet seventeen years, it does seem quite long ago. But then when you think about the next

volcano, which may come tomorrow, or perhaps next year, a volcano that might make our triangle into perhaps a square or a rectangle, then perhaps you think about it a little more seriousssssssssly.

In any case, now you can see that our island is really one very large mountain with three major peaks, the highest of which is 10,000 feet high when you measure it from the floor of the ocean, but which is only 3500 feet high when you measure it from the shoreline. The rest of the 6500 feet of our mountain is all under water. Though that is somewhat difficult to believe, yet that is what they say, the scientists.

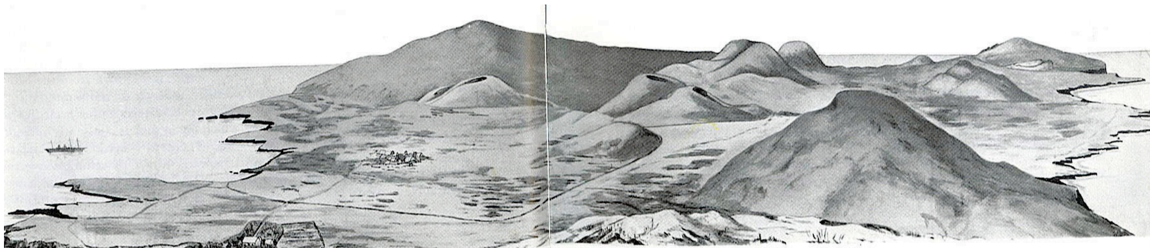


Figure 39: Here is a drawing that Mrs. Routledge made of our island, sitting atop Rano Kao and looking north and east.

Figure 40: And here is a photograph I took just the other day, almost from the same spot, except including the crater of Rano Kao.

And then over the thousands of years that followed, the rain fell and wore down the rocks of the mountains into soil and sand. Little by little the seeds of many kinds of plants blew onto our island on the high winds, or they floated here on the waves, or the

birds flew them to our island inside their feces. (Do you not find it extraordinary that birds can fly such long distances? And yet they do, or how could they arrive here, and then leave from here, and then arrive here again the next year?) Plants began to grow because volcanic soil is rich and a good place for seeds to grow. During the thousands and thousands of years, the island became covered all over with forests and grasses. In the two lakes of Rano Kao and Rano Raraku, totoro reeds grew.

By the time Hotu Matu'a and his three hundred arrived here, this island was a beautiful place for them to live. Scientists have told us that that was around 500 A.D., in our current method of telling time. That was also just about the time when the Polynesians also went to the southernmost point of New Zealand—where they call themselves Maori—and their northernmost point of Hawai'i, where they killed our dear Captain Cook on his last of three voyages around the world. With our island as the third point—along with New Zealand and Hawai'i—this is called by geographers the Polynesian Triangle. And I think it risible that the Polynesians have a triangle of islands and we have an island of tri-angles.

The Polynesians went north, south and east all at about the same time. Why? What was happening on their home islands that made them take to the seas in their double-canoes? Wars? Probably yes, because we appear to be a warlike people, but how will we ever know?

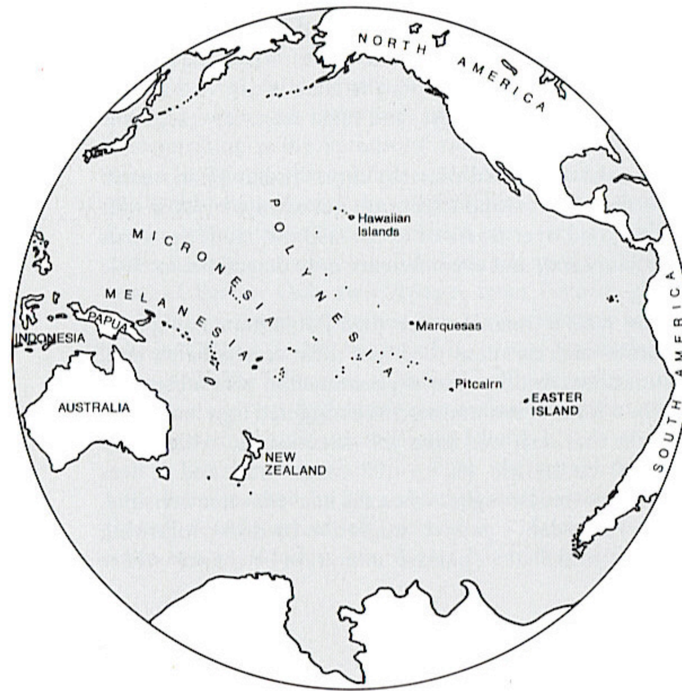


Figure 41: Here is a map of the Pacific Ocean with the Polynesian Triangle evident. The dot that is our island? Oh, this is far too great and heavy a dot for our speck of an island. This is one of the ways in which a map may deceive.

We know about Hotu Matu'a because we have legends about him. But we have no legends about what happened before Hotu Matu'a. Also I find it rather amazing that we can keep telling the story about Hotu Matu'a all these 1500 years after he brought his people here. That is what you do on an island; you tell stories. And the best stories are the old stories. Those are the stories that survive.

We know also what our people ate in the early years, and how that changed. For example, by digging down into the soil where the people threw the bones from their meals—what were probably the garbage pits of the people—we can find something very strange and, perhaps, revealing. It used to be that our people ate the meat of the porpoise, rather a lot and rather often. We know this because the scientists found many bones of

the porpoise in their diggings. Up until a certain time. But after that time the bones of the porpoise became more rare in the diggings. And so that means that our people stopped eating the porpoise. That cessation of the eating of the porpoise was around 1000 A.D., in our current way of telling time. That was about 500 years after our people arrived on the island.

Why did the people stop eating the porpoise? Well, the porpoise is a fish that swims in deep water. To catch porpoise, our people would have to go out miles from the island and into the deep water of the ocean. That would require sturdy canoes. If the people no longer had sturdy canoes, they could not go into the deep water to fish for porpoise.

What happened to the sturdy canoes of Hotu Matu'a? Perhaps some of our people took them and sailed eastward looking for another island? Perhaps there was war on this island which caused them to want to leave? Or probably those canoes of Hotu Matu'a—even though they were very large and made of very good wood—had long ago gone the way of all things: perhaps they simply rotted. Why did the people not make new canoes after 1000 A.D.? Perhaps the *Jubaea te pito o te henuenses* were not large enough to make sturdy canoes or were otherwise unsuitable? Or perhaps the *Jubaea te pito o te henuenses* were already cut down by this time?

Who would cut down the trees, and why? I have told you I will answer this question, and I will, in good time. But you need to keep being reminded how important this question is as we come forward in time.

Chapter Ten

Stretching the Truuuuuuuuth

In the mail today, guess what? A new DVD from the Joneses. Now they sometimes send me a DVD because they know that at the hotel I have available to me the DVD player and television there. But this DVD is very exciting because it shows something that I had no idea about previously: flamenco. Flamenco is a style of dancing, also of music, from Spain. It is such a beautiful style of dancing, and also with a foot stamping which is very exciting to the blood. How they can dance in this style is a wonder to me. And now I desire to learn it.

On our island we have a Polynesian style of dancing that is also very good and exciting to the blood, and the people who come here to see the moai are also very entertained by our dancers, in the evening. But our dancing is nothing at all like flamenco, although it is also very good dancing. For one thing, we dance barefoot, and when we stamp, it has a thump sound on the wood floor of the hotel, not a tatatatatat sound as in flamenco, where the heels and the toes of their shoes make such a beautiful tattoo of racket.

Mr. Jones wrote a letter that he put with the DVD. In the letter he wrote: "We went to an incredible performance of flamenco last night at the university across the bay. It was a full house and a standing ovation! The applause was deafening! We remembered the dancing on your island and thought how much you would have enjoyed the performance here, and so we bought you the DVD so that you could share it with us.

All the best, Your Friends. P.S. How are you coming with the book? We are looking forward to seeing more of your chapters."

The reason I am telling you this? So many reasons. First, do you see that to Mr. Jones, what I am writing here appears to him like "a book"? With "chapters" even! I think that, yes, I will indeed divide my words into chapters now, and even give the chapters titles. This will not be a difficult thing to accomplish and then to transform what was at first but a series of letters to friends—with appropriate quotations from the resources that they provided to me—now into a book with chapters, a book that perhaps others might read! And as I see now, I am really rather far along in my book. I now have many pages and nine chapters. Well, and when this one is finished, ten. How I am impressed!

Another thing, I am agog by this flamenco. I had no idea of it, and now I do have an idea of it. I am wondering if I can learn it, but it does appear to be very talented to me.

Another thing, the Joneses included a little booklet. In her part of the letter Mrs. Jones calls this booklet "the program" but it is so voluminous to be merely a program. It has photographs and shows the biographies and doings of the dancers and the names of the dances that they perform, and many other things. One of the things that I glean from the program is that this performance was in Zellerbach Auditorium at the University of California in Berkeley, California, which is across the very large and beautiful San Francisco Bay from where the Joneses live. (They have sent me pictures of their bay, which is the reason for my knowing of its beauty and largeness.)

In the office of the hotel, if it is not busy and if my uncle is in a happy way, I can ask him to look things up on the internet. I showed him the program, and he went onto the internet and looked up Zellerbach Auditorium for me. Oh, we saw such a beautiful building, and then what do you think? The capacity for Zellerbach Auditorium is 2,089. 2,089 people watched the flamenco performance at the same time, and stood at the same time, and clapped at the same time. Can you imagine the sound of that? Do you know how many people live on our island today? If you ask my uncle to look it up on the internet, you will find the answer is "about 2000". Perhaps 2,089? Can you see all of our people in one building together? This is very difficult for me to comprehend; yet, comprehensible it must be, because I have this evidence.

Another reason I am writing about flamenco here is the observation that the dancing of a people is very interesting in the history of the people. It is especially important in the history of *our* people since our people—and by that, this time, I mean Polynesians—are spread out over an ocean space that takes so much of the globe, far greater than any other people on our planet. If you look at videos of the dancing of Hawai'i, and see their different kinds of hula, and you see the dancing of Tahiti, then you also see something very like the style of dancing we have on our island. And if you listen to the singing of the songs, their music sounds very similar to our singing. And yet if you compare this dancing and singing to flamenco, it is very different. It is a good way to show you that our people on this island are very much Polynesian.

And the reason this is important? There are certain people, and one man in particular, who have tried to say that our people are *not* Polynesian. In actuality, I am not

telling the truth with that sentence, and so let me explain more clearly. This man, whose name was Thor Heyerdahl, had a theory about our island and its people—or peoples, he would tell you—that he was very anxious for the rest of the world to believe. Mr. Heyerdahl believed that there were two races of people who came to our island at two different times, one from the islands of Polynesia and one from the coast of South America, from Peru or perhaps from Chile.

You may have seen a movie called *Kon-Tiki* that was based on a book Mr. Heyerdahl wrote about a trip he took across thousands of miles of the Pacific in a reed raft that he himself created. This movie, *Kon-Tiki*, is in the collection of videotapes at the hotel, and I have seen this movie. Now this feat of Mr. Heyerdahl was a very brave thing for him to undertake. He wanted to convince the world that, despite the lack of any evidence that the peoples of the Americas were sea-faring peoples, nevertheless some tribe of those peoples could have made a boat and could have set sail toward the setting sun and could have arrived at our island, and other islands in the Pacific Ocean. This, you understand, is the opposite direction that most historians agree upon, from east to west from the Americas, instead of from west to east. If these American voyagers did not do this on purpose—as is the legend of Hotu Matu'a—then perhaps their boat was swept out to sea and they drifted on the currents in front of the winds and—much like *Jubaea te pito o te henuensis*—they could have arrived here on our island.

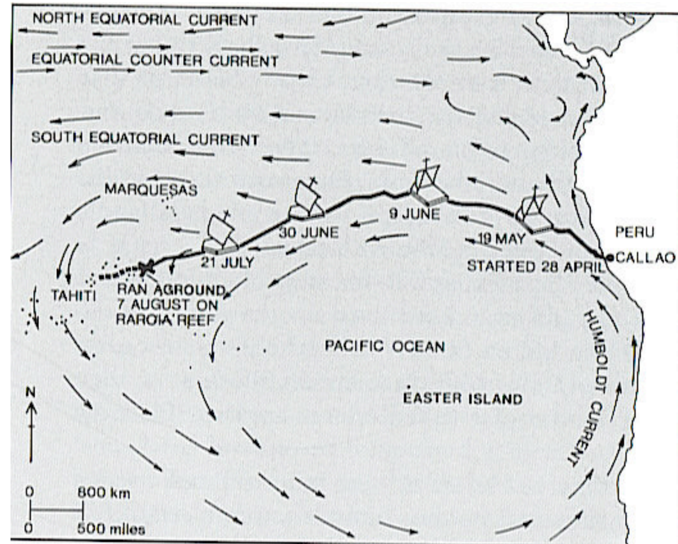


Figure 42: The journey of the *Kon-Tiki* and the ocean currents.

Mr. Heyerdahl did finally land the *Kon-Tiki* on an island far to the west and north of here, in a crash that destroyed his boat. And therefore Mr. Heyerdahl did show the world that it might have been possible. But I do *not* think he convinced the world that indeed it was the entire and true story. Most people still shook their heads.

Which direction do you think my head is going? Nodding up and down, or shaking left to right? I am going to tell you now, so that you may skip to the next chapter if you care to. My head is shaking left to right. Further, I am about to show you that some of the things that Mr. Heyerdahl wrote in some of his books are not true. Or, perhaps so that I am not sued to Kingdom Come, I should say that the truuuuuuuuth is stretched beyond belief in some of his books, and I think Mr. Heyerdahl made those stretches intentionally, to mislead. In fact, do you know what is the title of his last major book? *Easter Island—The Mystery Solved*. (Ha!)

All of that said, read what follows at your peril. To prove that someone has tried to pass a forgery requires attention to detail, and you may not wish to attend to these particular details in so detailed a manner. Where I myself find the details fascinating, and full of a kind of mystery and fun, you may not be of the same mind. And I do not wish to delay you from the murder, mayhem and carnage that follows, unless you care to attend.

The first thing you should know is that a very solid reason that Mr. Heyerdahl thought our people might first have come from South America to our island is because of the sweet potato. I know that idea might appear risible, and so I hasten to tell you about the controversy of the sweet potato. But first I must share with you what Monsieur Alfred Métraux—who lived on this island for five months in 1934-35—reported about the sweet potato:

> An Easter Islander who wished to give me an idea of the monotony of life on his island once said to me: 'Here, we are born, we eat sweet potatoes, then more sweet potatoes, and then we die.' (Métraux, 73)

I would add that it was not just "monotony of life" but life itself; without the sweet potato, how could we have survived on our island?

The controversy of the sweet potato is that it is a plant that originated in the Americas, according to most, if not all, scientists. And yet the sweet potato somehow was transported to our island and to most other islands in the Pacific. How, Mr. Heyerdahl asks, if not by the peoples of South America, the so-called Indians? You may have noticed already that some of the European explorers referred to my people as Indians. This, as you might guess, is a misnomer. When Christopher Columbus set out

in 1492 across the Atlantic Ocean, hoping to find India, he arrived in the Americas and, thinking he had struck India, he called the people there Indians. The misnomer stuck, not only with the native American peoples but also with almost any dark-skinned people anywhere west of Europe and east of India. To avoid any confusion in my own—ahem—book, I shall call the native peoples of the Americas Amer-Indians.

So much has been written on this question of the sweet potato by so many scientists with so many speculations based upon so many proofs, evidences and suppositions, all disagreeing with each other, that my own brain has curdled with it. Therefore I am not going to attempt to give you any more informations than this: it is a mystery.

If you wish to go try and solve the mystery for yourself, start with the bibliography in this book. But you may be sorry if you do because these scientists can grow very testy on this issue of the sweet potato, and you may be as confused as I am as to whom to believe. There is one book in particular (an entire, thick book!) called by a name that I find very comical: *The Sweet Potato and Oceania*, written by one D. E. Yen. When Mrs. Jones sent me that book (for which I did not even ask!) she wrote inside the cover: "Dear Toromiru: Here is a book up with which you can snuggle." That was a joke, I believe.

Indeed I did not snuggle with it so much as I struggled with it. It has very many technical informations in it, but I believe the main point was that after looking at all the controversies and all the facts and all the theories, the author decided thusly:

> The sweet potato was transferred from South America to Polynesia between A.D. 400 and 700, possibly by Polynesian voyagers. (Yen, 329)

I believe that is a fair summation. We know that Polynesians have always been dare-devil explorers of the Pacific Ocean. Indeed to sail north as far as Hawai'i and south as far as New Zealand takes rather a lot of courage and determination. There is also quite some evidence that once the Polynesians arrived in Hawai'i from Tahiti, they also made many return trips. And so it is not inconceivable that Polynesians might sail as far as South America, collect many new plants including the sweet potato, and then return with these new plants to help out the people on their home islands. But all of that is speculation, and another part of the mystery.

As that all may be—or may be *not*—Mr. Heyerdahl went forward with his *Kon-Tiki* to prove that Amer-Indians and not Polynesians were the first to bring the sweet potato to our island. To support his theory, Mr. Heyerdahl put forth evidence that some of the people on our island were seen to be light-skinned by our early Dutch, Spanish and English visitors. And, Mr. Heyerdahl contended, this was more proof that Amer-Indians had come to our island.

"Light-skinned Indians from South America?!?" you exclaim. Yes, from all I have gleaned about South America, I agree with your exclamation. However, Mr. Heyerdahl gives some assertions that there are ancient mummies from Peru that indeed have red hair, and offers this as his evidence. He says, too, that the Dutch described many of the people on our island as having red hair and pale skins (Heyerdahl, 20).

Let us examine this contention in more detail. I am going to give you the quotes that he makes, and the quotes that he quotes. You will find discrepancies, and I will endeavor to point them out to you.

> Much to their surprise, the Dutchmen observed that, the isolation of the island notwithstanding, its people were of mixed racial origin. They found some of a brownish hue, darker than Spaniards, yet they describe others as "quite white" and a few "of a reddish tint as if somewhat severely tanned by the sun."
>
> Different ethnic groups were clearly coexisting here. Both Roggeveen and Behrens mentioned how one specific class of islanders, those with fair skin, wore large chocks or disks in their artificially extended earlobes. Their ears were so long that, if they removed the disks, they had to hitch the rim of the lobe over the top of the ear to get it out of the way while they were working. Behrens stated that these long-eared individuals could easily be distinguished from those with normal ears not only by their appearance, but also because they displayed more reverence for the statues and were more devout in their ministrations. Some of the Long-ears wore feather headdresses. The islander Behrens described as the leader and assumed to be an idle priest, was "an entirely white man." (Heyerdahl, 23)

What Mr. Heyerdahl does in this passage is to very cleverly twist practically everything that Captain Roggeveen and Mr. Behrens wrote in order to support his own contention that our people were a mix of races. Notice the few actual quotations next to the rather more numerous paraphrasings and summarizings.

First, "Idle priest"? Surely Mr. Heyerdahl means "idol priest", which is the term that Mr. Behrens did actually use. But let us not quibble. Let us look further at the original texts for comparison. The actual words of Mr. Behrens, in English translation, were:

> As for their complexion they are brownish, about the hue of a Spaniard, yet one finds some among them of a darker shade and others quite white, and no less also a few of a reddish tint as if somewhat severely tanned by the sun. Their ears were so long that they hung down as far as to the shoulders. Some wore white ornaments in the lobes as a special embellishment. They were painted on their bodies with wonderful birds and animals, although some were handsomer than others. The women had their features streaked for the most part with a red pigment, which is of a much brighter shade than any we have anywhere else seen or found… (Corney, 136)

That appears to tally well enough with the characterization by Mr. Heyerdahl, although you very alert mystery readers will have noticed that Mr. Behrens thinks of Spaniards as brownish, whereas Mr. Heyerdahl twisted that to "a brownish hue, darker than Spaniards" which indeed is fairly the opposite of what Mr. Behrens articulated. Mr. Behrens wrote Their ears were so long that they hung down as far as to the shoulders but he made no mention of others whose ears were not long. Nor did he write anything about those with long ears as being those who were also pale-skinned. But more on that below.

Meanwhile, neither did Captain Roggeveen say those things attributed to him by Mr. Heyerdahl. Captain Roggeveen wrote:

> These people's ears are stretched, from their youth up; and their centre is slit open... When these Indians go about any job which might set their ear-plugs waggling, and bid fair to do them any hurt, they take them out and hitch the rim of the lobe up over the top of the ear, which gives them a quaint and laughable appearance. (Corney, 14)

Again you devoteeeeeeees of myssssssstery will have noticed that Captain Roggeveen said These people; but indeed he did not say "*some* of these people". Mr. Behrens did say Some wore white ornaments in the lobes, but indeed he did not say that *some* had long ears and *some* had "normal ears" as Mr. Heyerdahl claims he does. We can assume only—from all that Captain Roggeveen did say and Mr. Behrens did say—that *all* of the people on our island had stretched ear lobes, some with ear-plugs or ornaments in them, others waggling free, still others with their lobes tucked neatly over their ears. Nowhere do they say:

> ...long-eared individuals could easily be distinguished from those with normal ears...

Nor do they say:

> ...one specific class of islanders, those with fair skin, wore large chocks or disks in their artificially extended earlobes.

These, you understand, are not interpretations of text by Mr. Heyerdahl. Instead, these are distinct additions and changes—indeed distortions and even lies one might even go so far as to say—that Mr. Heyerdahl layers onto the original writings of these original eye-witnesses.

Now Mr. Behrens did say at another point:

> One amongst these was an entirely white man, who was wearing white chocks of wood in his ears as large as one's fist, and bore a very devout appearance, so that we took him to be an idol priest. (Corney, 134)

You see? "idol priest" not "idle priest". (Proofreading, Mr. Heyerdahl, proofreading!) But again, let me not quibble but be more serious. You may remember that most of the quotes I used for the Dutch came from the translation by Mr. Dalrymple who used the amusing effs for esses. This translation above of Mr. Behrens that is used by Mr. Heyerdahl is a different translation, by a Mr. Bolton Glanvill Corney, dated 1908. The translation of Mr. Dalrymple at this point has a slightly different flavor:

> There was amongft them one man quite white ; he wore pendants in his ears, white and round, of the fize of one's fift ; he had an extreme devout air and appeared to be one of their priefts. (Dalrymple, 91)

Mr. Dalrymple gives a footnote at quite white that informs that the French translation of the German original was tout-a-fait blanc. This is one of only two translation footnotes that Mr. Dalrymple offers his reader, and so it must have seemed important to him that his translation was not precisely on target with the French. "Tout-a-fait" means "totally" but a linguistic scientist of no great knowledge such as a Toromiru, might add that the component parts of tout-a-fait read literally "all done" so that the man might be considered "all done" white according to the translation of a Toromiru as opposed to "totally white" as opposed to "quite white" according to the translation by Mr. Dalrymple, as opposed to the translation by Mr. Corney that was picked up by Mr.

Heyerdahl: "entirely white". Is there a difference? I argue perhaps there is. It occurs to me that this man might have been painted white, head-to-toe, top to bottom, all done up totally white—tout-a-fait blanc—but not that he was entirely white, through and through, as in the racial sense.

Perhaps, again, this may indeed seem like semantic quibbling by your faithful guide Toromiru whom you might begin to suspect of having an agenda of his own, but when you read these early writings for yourself you see that neither Captain Roggeveen nor Mr. Behrens was attempting to classify the people on the island in any kind of mixed-race sense, as Mr. Heyerdahl pretends. They do make mention many times of colors, of our people being painted, or daubed or streaked with paints of red, yellow and white. Fifty-two years later Captain Cook said about that first man who carried the white flag for the expedition led by Lt. Pickersgill:

> …they had not proceeded far before a middle aged Man, punctured from head to foot and his face painted with a sort of white pigment, appeared with a spear in his hand and walked along side of them, making signs to his Countrymen to keep at a distance and not to molest our people. When he had pretty well effected this, he hoisted a piece of White Cloth on his Spear, placed himself in the front and lead the way with his Ensign of Peace… (Beaglehole, 344)

Perhaps white was the color of peace on our island? And perhaps that is the very reason that the man appeared "quite white" to Mr. Behrens on the Dutch ship fifty-two years earlier, because he was painted with this same white pigment, head to toe, as a sign that he came in peace to the ship? Mr. J.C. Beaglehole—and I do hope that you do

remember the gossipy editor of Captain Cook with his very comical name that matches his very comical wit?—suggests in a footnote about this man with the white face and white flag who joined with Lt. Pickersgill:

> The islanders painted themselves extensively with different-coloured volcanic earths dug from pits. The white pigment probably came from some unoxidised tuff. (Beaglehole, 344)

Also, as with most Polynesian peoples, the tattooing on our people was so intricate that it frequently covered almost all of the body, so that it would have been difficult indeed to tell what the original color of skin might have been. Indeed, for a man from our island to be described as "tout-a-fait blanc" as he was here, the white would *have* to have been painted over his blue-black tattoos.

Indeed, about our skin color, Captain Roggeveen wrote:

> Their natural hue is not black, but pale yellow or sallowish, as we saw in the case of many of the lads, either because they had not painted their bodies with dark blue, or because they were of superior rank and had consequently no need to labour in the field. (Corney,15)

Again, by painted their bodies with dark blue Captain Roggeveen meant tattooing. By referring to their being of superior rank, he intended to stress that they were consequently not sunburned from labour in the field. Therefore and only therefore was he able to ascertain that Their natural hue is not black, but pale yellow or sallowish. Notice that, again, he does not say "some of them" or in any other way indicate any evidence of mixed race.

But my analysis of the color of skin of this man is merely an interpretation of a translation, perhaps no better than that of Mr. Heyerdahl. Let us be generous, then, and give to Mr. Heyerdahl that this was indeed "an entirely white man" in the sense of being of a different race from the others and of being an "idol priest" (though certainly not an "idle priest", as Mr. Heyerdahl so erroneously states! Zut alors!)… Even given that very debatable notion, nowhere is there any statement by any of the three Dutch writers, even ANON., that…

> …long-eared individuals could easily be distinguished from those with normal ears not only by their appearance, but also because they displayed more reverence for the statues and were more devout in their ministrations.

This is tout-a-fait a lie, out and out, top to toe, stem to stern, totally and entirely, through and through a lie. What Mr. Behrens did write, concerning the reverence of our people to the moai, which Mr. Behrens took to be idols or gods, was:

> I took some of the people to be priests, because they paid more reverence to the gods than did the rest ; and showed themselves much more devout in their ministrations. One could also distinguish these from the other people quite well, not only by their wearing great white plugs in their ear lobes, but in having the head wholly shaven and hairless. One of them was with us on board the ship as above related. They wore a head-dress of white and black feathers… (Corney, 136)

The more devout people could be distinguished by their wearing great white plugs in their ear lobes, *not* by the lobes themselves. Again I say that there is *no*

mention of *any*one in *any* of the early accounts with*out* stretched earlobes. ("Ai, Toromiru, so many italics in but one sentence! Calm yourself.")

No, I cannot use enough italics to get this point and my *distress* about it across to you. Why am I so distressed? I detest a lie. When a man will stretch the truth, as Mr. Heyerdahl clearly does during these passages, and clearly intentionally, then it throws a great shadow over everything else that he writes. In the case of Mr. Heyerdahl, that is considerable. He wrote many books about our island, and one would like them to be full of truth. However, once you know that a person will lie, then you can never believe anything that person will ever tell you, even though the rest may be solid gold truth.

A parenthetical thing I find amusing in this long-ear white-plug business is that the sailors had thought—from the distance of their scouting launches—that these white plugs might be silver, and so, indeed, they were very eager to come ashore to investigate. Why? Well, I would say robbery, but of course they would have used the word "trade" for their motives. They would trade a nice little trinket for a pocketful of silver, yes, indeed. However, Captain Roggeveen found the disappointing answer as soon as he got on shore:

> The plates imagined to be of silver were made out of the root of some vegetable, -as one might say in Holland, of good stout parsnips or carrots…

…and therefore worth nothing to the sailors. Ha!

Figure 43: Here is a photograph by Mrs. Routledge showing a moai at Rano Raraku with long ears.

Later in his book, Mr. Heyerdahl attempted to pull together all his racial misstatements into a truism about our moai:

> …these stone colossi were funeral monuments erected in honor of deceased chiefs, and since all were carved with long ears, it would seem reasonable to ascribe their presence to the specific ethnic group that practiced ear extension. According to the earlier Dutch voyagers, these had been the ones who showed most care for the statues. (Heyerdahl, 48)

Mr. Heyerdahl clearly wishes to make it seem that white individuals were the individuals with long-ears and that they were the priests and—therefore and ipso facto and case closed—the people who created the moai to begin with. As you saw in the previous quote, Mr. Heyerdahl even began sneaking in a name for this supposed class of people: Long-ears. "Some of the Long-ears wore feather headdresses." Oh, this is such very clever manipulation.

After many more such evidences and misconstruals, Mr. Heyerdahl presents us at last with the idea that there were two landings on our island. The first group sailed from the rising sun, carrying the Hanau Epe (sic)—or "Long-ears" as he calls them—led by Hotu Matu'a, an Incan prince from the Americas in the mind of Mr. Heyerdahl. The second group sailed from the setting sun carrying the Hanau Momoko or "Short-ears" as he calls them (sick).

("Ah, but… Toromoru … tsk tsk.")

Then Mr. Heyerdahl concludes:

> The Long-ears had been the first to come to the island, and … were the architects, the artists, and the engineers behind the great works, the great statues. The Short-ears were merely laborers.
>
> The revolt of the Short-ears put an end to all work in the quarries. Some statues remained unfinished and others were abandoned while "walking" along the roads. The fatal war brought victory to the Short-ears but no lasting peace to the island. New family feuds sprung up among the descendants of the intermarried groups, and a terrible period, traditionally known as the huri-moai, or "overthrowing-of-the-statues" era, began. It was during this time that the first Europeans made their short visits to the islands and recorded their impressions. And it is the horror and havoc of these most recent centuries that is best preserved in the traditional stories remembered by those islanders living today. Their predominant memories concur with the impressions of their European observers, from Roggeveen to Eyraud, but for the most part they cover a period in which former well-regarded members of a highly organized community were reduced to the rank of miserable cave dwellers.

> The Short-ears won the battle of the trench, but lost their share in a prehistoric civilization. (Heyerdahl, 126)

The underlying premise of Mr. Heyerdahl is something for which there is no proof, that the downing of the moai was related to this battle—commonly related in the legends of our people—between the Hanau Eepe and Hanau Momoko . I am going to give you more detail about that battle—because I do know that every mystery reader enjoys such carnage—but first a question for you. If the "Long-ears" were completely killed off by the "Short-ears" and this was coincident to the arrival of the Europeans, then why is it that all these early visitors describe all the people as having extended earlobes? Would not the earlobes—along with the rest of the body—of all the dead "Long-ear" people be rotted away? Would there not be only "Short-ear" people left walking about the island? This Mr. Heyerdahl did truly make such a muck of this entire "Long-ear" "Short-ear" creation of his. Indeed, lies!

"Lies?" you say. "But was not this man, Thor Heyerdahl, a scientist? How dare you, Little Toromiru, say that he writes lies?"

Well, I will answer that, the last questions first. You remember that Mr. Jones questioned Mrs. Routledge and the way she wrote her observations? A person can do that. If a person finds that a writer has been objectionable in one way or another, a person may object. Because a thing is written does not make a thing unassailable.

The other questions… Yes, Thor Heyerdahl was a scientist, and our people and the world no doubt owe him a great gratitude for the archaeological work that he did on our island to investigate our moai, to number and catalog them, to dig them out of the earth and measure them, and the many other investigations he made when he came,

several times, to this island. At the same time, we must realize that he did tell at least some lies.

That is so sad about Mr. Heyerdahl. All of his work, and everything that he has written about his work, now bears a question mark as to authenticity. I believe Mr. Heyerdahl wanted so badly to prove his theories correct--and all the theories of everyone else incorrect—that he was willing to, at least, stretch the truth.

I also believe—though on shaky ground, and within my own personal bias no doubt—that Mr. Heyerdahl was what is known in the world abroad as a racist. (I say "was" not because I have any evidence that he has changed his mind but because he has now died.) Why did Mr. Heyerdahl want so badly to prove that not only did the creators of our moai come from Peru—not from Polynesia—but that they were also pale-skinned and red-haired? And why were we darker-skinned people in his made-up history cast as "merely laborers"?

I think it is possible, and believable, that more than one group of people reached our island before the arrival of Europeans in 1722, and the penning of those first words about us. After all, Hotu Matu'a made the journey, however stressed by the end of it, and so why could there not have been other canoes from Polynesia? Certainly there must have been many more, perhaps hundreds more, outcasts from the islands west of here who sailed toward the rising sun to try to find a new home, most of them doomed to die at sea. If a Polynesian canoe did reach here with its people still alive, they would indeed have had different genetic traits from the group brought by Hotu Matu'a, different shades of skin and hair perhaps.

Equally likely could have been one or more arrivals of shipwrecked Europeans, yes. Ferdinand Magellan first sailed around the world in 1522, a full two centuries before Captain Roggeveen set his Dutch feet on our island. Say perhaps ten to twenty white sailors did land here, perhaps after many weeks adrift in their lifeboat? Would they not have been accepted onto our island? Most certainly; we were a very friendly people. Would they not have taken wives and given birth to children? Most certainly; our women were very open to sexual embraces with men of all sorts; we have plenty of eye-witness evidence about that. (Oh, yes, heave a sigh and gasp, more about that soon.) Would not the Polynesian blood then be mixed with white blood, and would not those children have become a part of our society and speak our language, even though they might have a paler skin and reddish hair? And might those sailors not have been carrying sweet potatoes with them in their lifeboats? And would not those sweet potatoes have been welcomed and planted and multiplied by our people by the time that 1722 rolled around, two centuries later? (This, I know, flies in the face of the famous *Sweet Potato and Oceania* conclusion, but into the hopper I throw the question, if for no other reason than frolic.)

Least likely, but not impossible, is that Amer-Indians arrived here. The reason I say "least likely"? Amer-Indians were not known to be seafaring. Because Mr. Heyerdahl made and sailed his *Kon-Tiki* in the Twentieth Century, with modern ingenuity incorporating traditional boat-making materials and methods, is proof of nothing, it seems to me, except a great power of will on the part of Mr. Heyerdahl. One must remember, also, that Mr. Heyerdahl had the *Kon-Tiki* towed more than fifty miles off the

shore of South America in order to escape the strong currents that would have driven the boat northward and away from the South Pacific. Amer-Indians from many centuries ago would not, I am certain, have been able to have their boat so conveniently towed. (The *Kon-Tiki* also had radios, canned food, and oh so many other modern conveniences, "but let us not quibble, Toromiru.")

I am most certainly *not* saying that Amer-Indians did *not* come to our island somewhere in our history. I *am* saying that the "Long-ears" and "Short-ears" of Mr. Heyerdahl are what Mr. William Wales would call balderdash. And with that, now onward to an entire chapter about these fictitious warriors.

Chapter Eleven

War

Well, we have finally arrived at the chapter that I wanted never to write: the nightmare years, indeed the nightmare decades.

Although I do not believe that we ever had people on this island who were called "the Long-ears" and "the Short-Ears" (ha!) I do believe that we had clans on this island setting themselves against other clans, and I do believe that one of the many battles and raids and killings which brought us, on one bloody and fiery day, to the very worst hours in the history of our island was the Battle of Poike Ditch. In our legends, this battle was fought between the Hanau Eepe and the Hanau Momoko.

Before I tell you about that battle, however, let me give you a summary of what you already know. And as I formulate for you that summary, let me set in just a few more important points so that when the picture falls into place, it is properly framed.

What is it that men fight for? Well, women, of course, if you believe the movies. I do believe that there was once that fateful Helen of Troy, whose face looked like it launched a thousand ships. But let me not pursue that thought because Troy was nothing like our island, and Helen was nothing like our women, from what we can believe of all early reports of them. From all early reports, the women of the time of our clan wars were not owned by the men or guarded jealously, as was Helen. (And, seemingly, most women in the movies, if one can believe these movies. Do you agree that one never knows what to believe with movies? It is very like when you see in a movie that a "stagecoach" full of passengers goes over a cliff: this is a trick, and not real at all.

Furthermore, I have been told by the Joneses that they no longer even have stagecoaches, even "out west" where they live in San Francisco, California, which is as far west as one can travel in America, by land at least, which is the mode of stagecoaches. But I have lost myself in a parenthetical, here, from which I should wrest my narration in order to return to the proper subject of women vis a vis war, on our island, at least.)

One early illumination about our women and this question as to whether or not our men would go to battle over our women, is provided in the words of Capitain La Pérouse:

> Certain it is that no Indian appeared to have the authority of a husband over any one of the women, and if they are private property, it is a kind of which the possessors are very liberal. (Dos Passos)

You will remember the other narrations of Capitain La Pérouse about the easiness of the women with his sailors, but also about some of our men attempting to force some of the younger girls, against their wills, into embraces with the sailors, much to the repugnance of all except those men proffering them.

Don Agüera, writing for the Spanish expedition in 1770, also reported on this question of the lack of jealousy of our men, and also contributed more informations regarding age in respect to gender:

> …the women go to the length of offering with inviting demonstrations all the homage that an impassioned man can desire. Nor do they appear to transgress, in this, in the opinion of their men ; for the latter even tender them by way of paying us attention. As we had no opportunity of

> enquiring into the methods they observe in regard to marital affairs it can only be inferred that the women whom we saw are held in common among them, although we noticed that the older and more important men retain some preference in the matter, as these are always the ones who accompany and make offer of them, and to whom the women render obedience, and not to the younger men, with whom we have never seen them in company. So that one notices a more modest behaviour among the youths and young women than among the elders.
>
> The girls are by temperament modest, since with all their nudity they always manage to cover the breasts &c. as much as possible. The women we saw were much fewer in number than the men; from which it may be supposed that they make use of them in common, or hold their alliances secret, and I think that the more likely because on the afternoon when we came ashore, when passing near to a small hut, we saw some eight women or so all youthful and not bad looking, accompanied by an old man who only allowed them to expose their heads to look at us. (Corney, 97)

Mr. Behrens described the women of the island attempting to seduce the sailors into their houses:

> They sat down before us and disrobed, laughed, and were very friendly. Others called from a distance from their houses and beckoned us with the hand to come to them. (Corney, 136)

However, Captain Roggeveen, on the same expedition wrote:

> It is also very remarkable that we saw no more than two or three old women... young women and lasses did not come forward amongst the

> crowd, so that one must believe the jealousy of the men had moved them to hide them away in some distant place in the island. (Corney, 17)

Perhaps Captain Roggeveen did not see the seductive women that Mr. Behrens saw sitting in the doorways of the houses. Or perhaps by the time Captain Roggeveen came walking by, the women were already quite inside the houses, quite occupied with the Dutch sailors they had lured therein (and producing how many half-breed babies nine months later to, perhaps, add to the mixed-race appearance of our people as conjectured by Mr. Thor Heyerdahl)?

Captain Roggeveen added his own European moralizing and perhaps administerial flavor—since it is only ever the captains and officers, and not the sailors themselves who appeared to participate in this kind of moralizing—by writing:

> It only remains to say, in concluding the subject of these dwelling-huts, that we did not see more than six or seven of them at the place where we landed, from which it may clearly be inferred that all the Indians make use of their possessions in common, for the large size and small number of their dwellings give one to know that many live together and sleep in a single building; but if one should therefore conclude that the women are held in common among them, one must naturally expect depravity and bickering to ensue. (Corney, 19)

Depravity and bickering because of women … held in common? Certainly, this adds to the notion that the expectation of Europeans is that men may well indeed fight over women, but does it necessarily follow that *our* men would fight over *our* women, during these times? From the reports, it appears not. Indeed, at a later time

in our history, during the dark and nightmarish years of the next century, it may well be that—for grisly reasons that I will talk about appropriately in a later chapter—women might well have become scarce for reasons of … perhaps we should call it "carnal hunger" and leave it there for now, as an appetizer for what indeed will follow.

What else, besides women, might men fight for?

Men will fight for power. Indeed, women will also fight for power. Power, authority, wealth, land: these are all related, and men and women will fight for them all. But on this subject again, the wise words of Capitain La Pérouse:

> …a man has but little temptation to make himself king of a people almost naked, and who live on potatoes and yams… (Dos Passos)

But then the wise captain made the mistake of adding at this point:

> And on the other hand, these Indians not being able to go to war from the want of neighbors, have no need of a chief. (Dos Passos)

Ah, but here, the wise captain was wrong. People are always in want of a good and wise chief or captain. Capitain La Pérouse, while understanding well the concept of besting the Joneses, did not understand that one does not need a neighbor island to have all the Joneses one might want, to best. The Joneses may easily be our neighbors right here on this one, lonely island. My own postulation is that most certainly power, of a type, was part of why our clans made war.

But let us investigate other possible motivations for war.

Religious authority? Religion (along with racism) is most certainly part of what Mr. Thor Heyerdahl would ask you to believe was the prime motivation in our clan wars, and certainly it appears from the history books that religion and racism were at the bottom of many wars of the planet Earth in its long history of humankind. Mr. Heyerdahl points to the fact that Captain Roggeveen and Mr. Behrens described the reverence of some of our people to the moai; yet Captain Cook saw no such reverence fifty-two years later. You saw in the last chapter what Mr. Behrens said about how the priests who wore the white chocks in their ears appeared more devout than others. Mr. Behrens also stated:

> …they relied in case of need on their gods or idols which stand erected all along the sea shore in great numbers, before which they fall down and invoke them. These idols were all hewn out of stone, and in the form of a man, with long ears, adorned on the head with a crown, yet all made with skill : whereat we wondered not a little. (Corney, 136)

And Captain Roggeveen appears to have confirmed this notion, by writing:

> … they kindle fire in front of certain remarkably tall stone figures they set up ; and, thereafter squatting on their heels with heads bowed down, they bring the palms of their hands together and alternately raise and lower them. (Corney, 15)

Yet Captain Cook, fifty-two years later, makes it very clear that his impressions are quite otherwise:

> The gigantic Statues so often mentioned, are in my opinion not looked upon as Idols by the present Inhabitants, whatever they might be in the days of the Dutch, at least I have not seen any thing that could induce me to think so, On

> the Contrary I rather think that they are Burying places for certain Tribes or Families, I as well as some others, saw a Human Skeleton lying in one of the Platforms just covered with stones. (Beaglehole, 357)

Could the religious beliefs of our people have changed so radically in only fifty-two years? Could we have gone from worshipping our moai as "gods" or "idols" into a complete disregard for them? The trusty Mr. Wales was more scathing than his captain of the veracity of the Dutch reports, as you may remember from an earlier quote. But let me quote him further here:

> But be this as it may it is very certain They have now gotten much the better of those Idolatrous Practises seeing that not one Person amongst them was observed to pay them the least reverence or respect whatever.(Beaglehole, 825-6)

No, I think it was not religiosity or wealth or women that were the reasons for our clan wars; I think it was food—*lack* of food, actually, caused by lack of water, with food growing scarcer year after year after year as crop after crop after crop failed. Were these basic needs of food and water, felt by one and all, not the very things that appeared to be in shortest supply at the time of the visitation by Captain Cook? Was this not drought brought on by the terrible, irremediable fact that we had cut down all our trees and changed our climate? Did the good and kind and frustrated Capitain La Pérouse not explain it too succinctly? Our island no longer attracted clouds and rainfall because our people had cut down all our trees. This single fact is the cause of all the horror that was to descend upon us sometime through the decades that would follow.

We saw that the Dutch in 1722 were greeted with all manner of good food, and Mr. Behrens reported on the healthy state of our agriculture:

> As regards their subsistence it appears that it must be procured by tillage of the soil, as we saw it everywhere planted and bearing crops. Moreover the fields or lands were all measured off with a cord, and very neatly cultivated. At the time of our visit all their crops were maturing: the fields and trees were in full bearing, and I feel sure that if we had explored this country right through many good things would have been met with, since we were there in just the best season of the year. (Corney, 135)

Best season of the year? Mark that.

> …they brought us more than 500 live fowls … together with many roots … a good lot of potatoes … and some hundreds of sugar-canes, great quantities of pisang, being Indian figs as large as a cucumber a span in length and of proportionate thickness, with a green rind. When one peels this off [the pulp] tastes like figs, or as sweet as honey : there are sometimes as many as a hundred on a single bunch. The leaf is from two to three feet broad and from six to eight feet in length. It is with these that our first parents should have covered themselves in Paradise after their unfortunate Fall, because it is almost the largest and strongest leaf which one meets with in Morning and Evening lands. (Corney, 135)

Imagine waxing rhapsodic over bananas! But bananas and sweet potatoes were indeed life to our people. And remember, please, that bananas do not come, really, from trees—woody, tall trees—but from a shorter non-woody plant. We would not cut down our banana plants for the same reason that we would cut down our forests, for the wood. No, our banana plants would be growing in protected areas, as in holes or declivities that

are all over our island, where the roofs of caves have fallen in (see Figure 29). In these holes, rainwater collects best and there is protection from the big winds that sweep across our island; yet the sun shines in so that these are very good places for the growing of bananas. Woody trees, by contrast, would have grown wild on the hillsides all over the island. That is, before we cut them down.

Contrast that description by Mr. Behrens on the state of our agriculture on April 10, 1722, with the description fifty-two years later by Mr. Wales, on March 15, 1774, practically the same season as the Dutch arrived:

> There were… many large tracts of land planted with sweet Potatoes and here and there a Plantain walk ; but I saw no fruit on any of the Trees. (Beaglehole, 823)

Surely an eye as true as that of Mr. Wales would have seen fruit ripening on the trees, if any had been there to see. No bananas on the Plantain walk meant there had been no rainfall—or very little—for some extended period of time.

As important as the question of how much food and water there was—and had been in the fifty-two years passage of time between the Dutch and the English—is the question of how many people there were to partake of, and use up, the food and water available. So let us now cast our eyes at the figures of the population.

In the translation by Mr. Corney of Mr. Behrens, we read:

> The natives swam off in the water in thousands… (Corney, 133)

In the translation of Mr. Dalrymple of this same statement, we read:

> Many thoufand of thefe iflanders came thither... (Dalrymple, 91)

The reporting of Captain Roggeveen has nothing in it to contradict this number:

> A great many canoes came off to the ships : these people ... are surpassingly good swimmers, as would seem from the great numbers of them who came swimming off from the shore to the ships.(Corney, 11)

ANON., who was far less trustworthy than either Mr. Behrens or Captain Roggeveen—writing that our men were twelve feet tall!—gave a very evocative account of this visit to the ship by our people:

> ...the whole fea was covered with the favage inhabitants of this ifland, who came fwimming round the fhip in fuch multitudes, that we neither could, nor did we think it advifeable to land. (Dalrymple, 111)

And about the next day, when the sailors did go ashore, the tall-tale-telling ANON. had this to say:

> ...an innumerable multitude of favages ftood on the fea fide to guard the fhore, and obftruct our landing ; they threatened us mightily by their geftures, and fhewed an inclination to await us, and turn us out of their country, but as foon as we, through neceffity, gave them a difcharge of our mufkets, and here and there brought one of them to the ground, they loft their courage. They made the moft furprifing motions and geftures in the world, and viewed their fallen companions with the utmoft aftonifhment, wondering at the wounds which the bullets had made in their bodies ; whereupon they haftily fled, with a dreadful howling, dragging the dead

> bodies along with them, fo the fhore was cleared, and we landed in fafety. (Dalrymple, 112-13)

This ANON. is quite despicable to my taste, with his braggadocio about our fearsomeness clearly given the lie by Mr. Behrens and Captain Roggeveen. But my point in including this passage by ANON. is to show our population, which indeed did appear multitudinous in 1722, many thousands.

Captain Cook, however, estimated in 1774:

> The Inhabitants of this Island do not seem to exceed Six or Seven hundred Souls… (Beaglehole, 354)

Don Agüera in 1770 contributed:

> …lowering all our boats into the water, we passed within about a mile of the eastern point of the bay and saw a considerable number of natives posted on the heights, who collected nearer to the middle of the bay as we sailed towards it, so that by the time we let go there must have been more than 800 people, divided in batches… (Corney, 93)

Divided in batches? Does that imply that perhaps there were rivalries among clans? Don Agüera goes on to say that the two launches that were sent to explore counterclockwise around the island…

> …met with many natives with whom they held intercourse, and they observed in them the same manners, customs, and ceremonies as in those of this bay… (Corney, 102)

This indicates that not all of the people of the island went to La Pérouse Bay to welcome the Spanish ships. But we have no statement from either Don Agüera or Don Hervé—

who wrote the account of the exploration around the island in the two launches—about an estimate of total population.

Capitain La Pérouse says about the population in April, 1786, that at first sight…

> Four or five hundred Indians were waiting for us on the shore… (Dos Passos, 55)

…but that shortly after landing…

> …the soldiers soon found themselves exposed to the rapacity of the continually increasing numbers of these islanders. They were at least eight hundred; and in this number there were certainly a hundred and fifty women. (Dos Passos, 56)

It would appear, then, that as soon as the first people on the west side of the island saw the French ships arriving, they sent the word out to the rest of the people, so that men came from all over the island as quickly as they could. Capitain La Pérouse suggests as much later, when he writes about…

> …the present race of inhabitants, whose numbers I believe, without the smallest exaggeration, amount to two thousand. The number of women appeared to be near that of the men, and the children seemed to be in the same proportion as in other countries; and although out of about twelve hundred persons, who on our arrival collected in the neighborhood of the bay, there were at most three hundred women, I have not drawn any other conjecture from it, than that the people from the extremity of the island had come to see our ships, and that the women, either from greater delicacy, or from being more employed in the management of their family affairs and children, had remained in their houses; consequently that we saw only those who inhabit the vicinity of the bay. The narrative of M. de Langle confirms this opinion;

> he met in the interior of the island a great many women and children; and we all entered into those caverns in which Mr. Forster and some officers of Captain Cook thought at first that the women might be concealed. These are subterraneous habitation.... It is however certain, that the inhabitants hid their women when Captain Cook visited them in 1772; but it is impossible for me to guess the reason of it, and we are indebted, perhaps, to the generous manner in which he conducted himself towards these people, for the confidence they put in us, which has enabled us to form a more accurate judgment of their population. (Dos Passos, 58-9)

I do believe that Capitain La Pérouse here strikes upon the most reasonable explanation of why the women were not more in evidence during these early visitations by the Europeans: many, or perhaps even most of the women were unable to come across the island from their own home districts because they had the children to care for. But we will never know for certain. There is evidence that in the next century something else entirely could account for the scarcity of women but, again, save that (grisly) thought for its appropriate historical chapter.

And so, what we can glean from these four early accounts of the statistics of our population is as follows:

1722 - many thousands with few women and children

1770 - more than 800 divided in batches with few women and children

1774 - Six or Seven hundred Souls with few women and children

1786 - two thousand with appropriate percentages of women and children

Had the clan wars begun during the years between 1722 and 1770? Is that why the population was reduced by such a hugeness of degree? Did the fact that there were batches of people seen by the Spanish indicate that our people were now more clannish? Were these clans, now, possibly going to war with each other? Is the fact that our people were so much less giving of their food to Captain Cook evidence that we indeed had experienced years of drought and were now starving? Did our hunger lead to rivalries for food among our clans, the stealing of crops, wars, leading ultimately to … gulp … the eating of each other?

One of the statements of Captain Cook gives resonance to this notion:

> We had at one time a pretty brisk trade with them for Potatoes, which we observed they dig up out of an adjoining Plantation. But this trafick, which was very advantageous to us, was soon put a stop to, by the owner (as we supposed) of the plantation coming down and driving all the people out of it by this we concluded that he had been robed of his property and that they were not less Scrupulous of robbing one another than they were of us… (Beaglehole, 343-4)

Stealing food from each other, in plain sight. Yes, times must indeed have been bad.

A significant clue is this comment by Captain Roggeveen:

> These people have also snow-white teeth, with which they are exceptionally well provided, even the old and hoary, as was evidenced by the cracking of a large and hard nut, whose shell was thicker and more resisting than our peach stones. (Corney, 15)

Where could this nut have come from? One would have to guess at *Jubaea te pito o henuensis*. And so does this mean that there were still a few of the palm trees left during

the visit of Captain Roggeveen in 1722, perhaps from the whole tracts of woodland that Mr. Behrens claimed he saw in the distance? If so, one would have thought that our people would have had the good sense—particularly when we showed ourselves to be such excellent cultivators—to plant some of these nuts to regrow our trees. A tragedy, also an irony, of our island is that the rats that we brought with us from our homeland were themselves great eaters of nuts. The remains of old nuts, such as this one seen by Captain Roggeveen, have been found in some of our caves; these nuts bear the marks of rodent teeth. While we were busy cutting down our forests, our rats were busy eating up all the nuts. Finally there were no more trees and no nuts with which to cultivate more trees.

And two final remarks here about the cutting down of the trees… Remember in one of the quotes of Captain Roggeveen in 1722 that…

> A great many canoes came off to the ships… (Corney, 15)

Yet Captain Cook in 1774 wrote:

> Not more than three or 4 Canoes were seen upon the whole Island and these very mean, made of many pieces of Boards sew'd together with small line… and Seem not to be able to carry above 3 or 4 men and are by no means fit for any distant navigation… (Beaglehole, 352)

It seems as though there might still have been at least a few trees left on the island in 1722, not only by the evidence of the untrusty eyesight and estimations of Mr. Behrens, but also by the fact that there were far more numerous canoes. In the

intervening fifty-two years, much damage was done to the habitat of our island, by our people, it would appear.

And now they had begun paying for their profligacy. War.

Chapter Twelve

The Battle of Poike Ditch

Good. You have remained patient and stayed with this Toromiru who makes so many numerous points, drawing the so-called "frame" around the picture that never shows itself. By now you will have noticed that I have tricked you somewhat. I have promised so often to tell you the grisly story of the battle of the Long-ears and Short-ears, yet will I never be finished with my framing?

It is all parts and pieces of the mysteries, the enigmas, and the downright lies and half-truths through which one must sort. If you are still with me, then perhaps you too appreciate the factuality of that statement.

I began to tell you about the Hanau Eepe and the Hanau Momoko, and you will probably have taken these as two groups of people, perhaps two clans. How did we arrive at clans on our island, beginning with only three hundred or so people?

Generations go and come and go, and with new generations come new families, and those new families have new families, and eventually these families break up into groups called clans. According to Father Sebastian (Englert, 84-5), when Hotu Matu'a died, he called together his four sons. (You will notice that in the tale related by Mrs. Routledge in Chapter Nine—the one told to her by my ancestor Petro—there were many more sons than four, and those names of sons appear on her political map as the names of some of the districts on the island, see Figure 31.)

However, according to the informant of Father Sebastian, Hotu Matu'a divided our island into only four parts and gave each son his own land for the future generations

of his children. The Miru people were favored with more coastline than the other sons. The Miru people, indeed it would appear, became the most prominent clan on the island and were considered, perhaps, as nobles. They would be the ones to issue tapu on fishing, for example. The Miru would make sure that the rest of the people were restricted from fish, or from certain kinds of fish, during certain parts of the year. You probably have heard the word "taboo" that is common among other Polynesians, such as in Tahiti. In fact, I believe that "taboo" is now a word in the English language, is it not? It is true that the English language gobbles up what it likes of other languages, and indeed this word "taboo" is most certainly in my English dictionary. Tapu is the same as taboo.

The Miru people would announce which fish were tapu, and if the non-Miru people would eat the tapu fish then they could be sure that terrible things would happen to them. In this way the Miru would save tuna, turtles, seals, dolphins—all the best fish—for themselves. The more mana a clan would have, the more tapu they could put upon the other clans. Not only did the Miru have more coastline than any other clan, but they also had the favored beach of Anakena where Hotu Matu'a first landed his canoe and where his residence was built.

You can see that these tapu would cause rivalries among the clans, particularly when drought was upon us and food was hard to find.

And so, now to the famous Hanau Eepe and Hanau Momoko. Perhaps these names do not refer to the clans descended from Hotu Matu'a, because indeed they are quite different from the names of the clans given by the informants of either Father Sebastian or Mrs. Routledge. Perhaps these very names, whatever meaning you finally

agree to give them, do indeed indicate that our island was visited by two different peoples arriving at two different times.

You will remember that Mr. Thor Heyerdahl tried to establish that one group came from Peru. These, he said, were the Hanau Epe (sic) which he translated as "Long-ears" and the Hanau Momoko, which he translated as "Short-ears". The Hanau Epe (sic), Mr. Heyerdahl would have us believe, were the first group of people to come to our island, and they were the ones responsible for the raising of the ahu and the carving of the moai. He likened the precise stone work in the ahu to the stone work of the Inca people.

Figure 44: The stone work of Ahu Vinapu, we must all agree, amounts to very fine carving of very heavy rocks. And imagine the lifting! The base stones are more than five feet tall.

Then a second group of people came to our island and these were the Hanau Momoko. (Mr. Heyerdahl calls them "Short-ears" but we know that not one of the early European visitors ever described a short-eared person on this island.) According to the theory of Mr. Heyerdahl the Hanau Momoko accepted the gods of the Hanau Epe (sic), and were for many decades or possibly even centuries "merely laborers" in continuing the carving at Rano Raraku and the transporting and raising of the moai onto the ahu.

This chronology of Mr. Heyerdahl of the two groups of people is disputed by many, including Father Sebastian, a great hearted man who lived with us on our island for thirty-four years. That Father Sebastian spoke on an intimate level with so many of our people does not make his testimony necessarily any truer than that of Mr. Heyerdahl, and we have indeed seen above that Father Sebastian had his discrepancies with Mrs. Routledge in the story of the sons of Hotu Matu'a. But that he lived so long on the island and grew close to so many of our people does give Father Sebastian perhaps a little more weight. Father Sebastian said that indeed Hotu Matu'a brought his people from the islands to the west, not from the continent to the east, and that they were the first to arrive on the island, and they were to become the people who were called Hanau Momoko. This story also jibes with the story of Mrs. Routledge, wherein Hotu Matu'a stood on the western edge of Rano Kao and looked homeward over Motu Iti and the other two islets and pled to the aku aku for the cock to crow.

Father Sebastian wrote:

> The island's hundreds of gigantic stone statues and impressive outdoor altars have captured the imagination of the world, and the island is becoming recognized as the most

> spectacular museum of prehistoric Polynesian art and architecture in the whole Pacific. These noteworthy accomplishments, however, do not appear to have been conceived by the colonists brought by Hotu Matu'a, but at a later time, stimulated principally by another group of immigrants known as the Hanau Eepe.
>
> The traditions describing the circumstances under which these later arrivals appeared vary somewhat in details. I am inclined to have greatest confidence in the story as told to me by Arturo Teao, who lived in the leprosarium. I recorded his version in May of 1936.
>
> His version states that the new people appeared some time after the colonists of Hotu Matu'a were well established, and certain facts fit well with his account.
>
> Hotu Matu'a's people are said to have given the new arrivals the name Hanau Eepe, or more correctly Tangata Hanau Eepe (broad or heavy-set men). In later times the people of Hotu Matu'a by contrast called themselves Hanau Momoko. Today the word momoko is a form of duplication of moko (lizard), which carries the sense of "sharp-pointed." The word then probably expressed the idea of something slender. Thus Hanau Momoko would mean "slender people." (Englert, 88-89)

Now about the name Hanau Eepe, or Hanau Epe as I have always spelled it when referring to this group in relation to the beliefs of Mr. Heyerdahl… Mr. Heyerdahl says in a footnote to his mammoth *Archaeology of Easter Island*:

> In modern times an attempt has been made to translate Hanau eepe and Hanau momoko, the name for the two early Easter Islander people, as the "Large or bulky race" and the "Slender or delicate race" (Englert, 1948, pp. 88-89), inferring that the difference in dimensions (eepe

> and momoko) refers to the entire body build rather than to the ear-lobes only.... Routledge (1919, p.280) recorded the original name for the traditional 'Long-ears' as Hanau Epé (as opposed to Eepe), and that of the 'Short-ears' as Hanau Momoku. (Heyerdahl, Ferdon, 36)

Mr. Heyerdahl says more on this, but I have grown to find it all tedious, and if I find it tedious then you must find it doubly tedious. I have done my job now in reporting the differences. I am not sure that I believe the histories of the people that Father Sebastian interviewed any more than I believe Mr. Heyerdahl who—I have convinced myself, if not you—stretches truth to fit his theories. In summary, I shall say Hanau Eepe and Hanau Momoko when I refer to these two groups of people, and you can decide for yourselves who came to the island first, who was responsible for the moai, and who was stocky and who was thin, and whether or not the length of their ears had anything at all to do with anything.

My sister? One time she was telling the story of the Hanau Eepe and the Hanau Momoko to a group of her Spanishers, and this man from Buenos Aires, Argentina, asked her if she is Hanau Eepe or Hanau Momoko. Oho, my sister liked that one. She turned her body sideways to the asker and drew herself up with great pride and asked the man, "Do I appear stout to you, Señor, or thin? I am … Hanau Momoko!"

And then I saw the looks in their eyes—this man from Argentina and my sister—and I knew that this was their game. Oho, a game. How we love a game. And I knew that my sister would not be coming home that night.

And my brother? Many has been the time that—when we end our tour with the Englishers at the beaches of Anakena, where we swim—young women will come up to him as though to admire his tattoos. It is an opportunity for them to touch him on his skin, you see, thinking that he will think that they merely admire the tattooing as an art, which he never does think, of course. Oh, how my brother swells then! And then you might hear them ask him if indeed he is Hanau Eepe or Hanau Momoko, with their very soft voices intended only for his ears, but I am very alert, as you know. They believe this question is a reasonable one for my brother because he is at once very lean yet very muscular, of all of which he is very proud. He will then say, "Do you not see my musculature? I am descended from Ororoina, and therefore I am … Hanau Eepe *and* Hanau Momoko!"

The chances will then be that on that night my brother will also not be sleeping in our house. I explained to you, my brother is very handsome. And my sister is very beautiful.

Me? I may be Hanau Eepe *and* Hanau Momoko, or, I may not even believe that there ever *were* two such peoples. I am fully undecided.

Ororoina, from whom my brother says that he is descended? I shall tell you that story soon, for Ororoina is in the very center of the picture, but now, you see, finally you have the frame finished before you. There may or may not have been two groups of people, perhaps come in two different migrations, the Hanau Eepe and the Hanau Momoko. If so, they must have lived in harmony on the island for several generations working together on the ahu and moai, and—one can only suppose—there was at least

some interbreeding. This last thought is particularly likely if—as the informant of Father Sebastian asserts—the Hanau Eepe were all men who came in a single canoe, not a colonizing party, but perhaps a war party or fishing party that got lost or swept away from their home island and ended up here.

In any case the society or societies on our island worked very well together. Imagine the industry of the quarry, all of the workers at their individual jobs. And then there was the feeding of all those workers. And the supplying of all those workers with logs for rollers and bark for ropes. Even if all the moai did "walk" to their ahu—as our people always answer when asked—still there was much work done every hour of every day by all our population, all working in a very civilized and socialized way together.

But one day, as you know, the people threw down their tools in the quarry. Was this on the day of the great Battle of Poike Ditch?

The legends tell us that as the friction between the Hanau Eepe and the Hanau Momoko increased to a white hot anger, the Hanau Eepe retreated into the hills of Poike, the eastern end of the island where there is less water than at the western end. At that time there was a ditch, or more exactly a series of trenches, that ran nearly all the way across the neck of the Poike peninsula. No one today knows whether these were a natural feature or if they were man-made. I myself believe it is possible that Hotu Matu'a, who was such a good and sensible man who had led his people so well and who had such a vision of our future, united the people in digging out these trenches to collect rainwater, and to plant banana plants in this low and sheltered area. It is said that Hotu Matu'a indeed did have the people dig wells to collect rainwater all over our island, many of

which you can still see, though they are neglected. Perhaps these trenches of Poike, or the Poike Ditch—as it has now been called—was a much more extensive water conservation project of his.

In any case, now that the Hanau Eepe had retreated to the hills of Poike, they dug the ditches deeper, and they filled the now long and deep ditch with wood, as the stories are told. At this time, then, there was still an abundance of wood on the island. Why did they fill the ditch with wood? They had a plan of horror. When the Hanau Momoko would come around either side of the trench to attack the Hanau Eepe, then the Hanau Eepe would drive the Hanau Momoko back into the trench and set the wood on fire and burn all of their enemies to death.

Well, what do you think happened? Well, yes, you are probably correct, if you can believe the stories, and truly they are full of holes, but here is the gist. There was among the Hanau Eepe one Hanau Momoko woman, and she quietly slipped away to tell the Hanau Momoko warriors about the plan of horror of the Hanau Eepe. She arranged a signal for the Hanau Momoko. When all of the Hanau Eepe would be sleeping, then she would sit down and weave a basket. (If they were all sleeping, a doubting Thomas might ask, could she not simply have waved? "But Toromiru, you must not quibble so with a legend.")

Moko Pinge'i, as she was called, did as she promised. When all of the Hanau Eepe were asleep (very unwise, you may be sure) Moko Pinge'i seated herself on the ground and began to weave a basket. The Hanau Momoko crept around the edges of the trench and set upon the Hanau Eepe with a fury. Waking to the onslaught, the Hanau

Eepe had no time to grab up their weapons but all fled downhill straight into the trench full of the wood that they had placed there for ambush. And—ready for them with torches lit—the Hanau Momoko set all of the wood on fire and burned the Hanau Eepe to death, killed in their own trap.

All but three of the Hanau Eepe perished in the fire. Those three escaped to a cave, but the Hanau Momoko pursued them and killed them, all except one, Ororoina. Why they allowed Ororoina to live, I do not know. I suppose he had been very good to the Hanau Momoko. In any case, Ororoina later married a Hanau Momoko woman and she bore him many descendants who in turn bore many descendants. And it is this mixed bloodline from the stout Hanau Eepe Ororoina from which my brother professes to have descended in order to be the happy recipient of his, at once, lean and muscular physique, the object of admiration of so many modern ladies from around the entire planet.

Many years after the Battle of Poike Ditch, however, the Hanau Momoko decided that Ororoina had indeed too many descendants and so they put thirty of them in a house and set fire to it. But now, from this conflagration, a grandson of Ororoina named Ure o Pea managed to escape, as had his grandfather from the fire in the Poike Ditch.

Ure o Pea had a son named Ko Pea ko te Motuha o te Koro, whose son was Inaki Uhi, whose son was Ao Ngatu, whose son was Hare Kai Hiva. We know from the Christian missionaries that this last man, Hare Kai Hiva, was born near the year 1800; the missionaries were able to estimate his age while they were here during the 1860s. Hare Kai Hiva became a Christian and his name was changed to Atamu, which you may recognize as the name Adam. Atamu was the progenitor of a family very numerous on

our island today called by the name Atan, and that is the family line of Ororoina, the last of the Hanau Eepe.

But now, going back again in time to Ororoina and his grandson Ure o Pea… do you remember that I asked you to think of the dancing man who went first aboard the ship of Captain Roggeveen as having the name Ure o Pea? Now, here is the reason for my asking you that. I believe that Ure o Pea, grandson of Ororoina, is that same dancing man. It is in our tradition that a descendant of Ororoina was indeed that man—who is remembered to this day in our legends—and if you go backwards from Atamu, born just before 1800, three generations of about 25 years each, then you arrive at 1722 with Ure o Pea being a young man of about 27 years of age.

Hare Kai Hiva (Atamu), born perhaps 1795

Ao Ngatu, born perhaps 1770

Inaki Uhi, born perhaps 1745

Ko Pea ko te Motuha o te Koro, born perhaps 1720

Ure o Pea, born perhaps 1695

Unknown, born perhaps1670

Ororoina, born perhaps 1645

Why do I bother to tell you all of this? There was a date given for the fire at Poike Ditch, established by a Carlyle Smith who was an archaeologist who worked with the expedition of Mr. Heyerdahl on our island in 1955. Using a scientific method called radiocarbon dating, Mr. Smith was able to dig out charcoal from the depths of the Poike Ditch—which has been, now, almost completely filled in by the wash-down of earth and

ground from the hills of Poike. Mr. Smith was able to perform his radiocarbon testing on this charcoal from the burning of the wood in the Poike Ditch, and what date do you think he gave? 1676, plus or minus 100 years. Rather a wide open and broad pinpointing, we may say. However, when one combines the carbon dating evidence of Mr. Carlyle Smith with the genealogy of Atamu, then that means that Ororoina would have been 31 years old, plus or minus perhaps ten years, in the year 1876. The fit is good, is it not? And so, I hereby declare for easy remembering that the great Battle of Poike Ditch occurred around 1875. Ororoina would have been 30 years old, and still a young and powerful man, when he fled for his life into a cave, away from the conflagration and the burning smell of all his fellow Hanau Eepe. Perhaps Ororoina lived long enough to reach the ripe age of 77, that which no one now knows, in order to see the sad day when his grandson, Ure o Pea, was shot down by the muskets of the Dutch. Who knows?

Do you think I am gruesome? If so, then you should probably not read these next paragraphs because you may find them very gruesome, but to me—in a certain way—they are rather comical. When I was telling all of this story to the Joneses, as we stood in front of what remains of Poike Ditch—which is now merely a small indentation that is hardly noticeable—Mr. Jones turned to me quite solemnly and said, "And that is when your people first became cannibals?"

How could I know such an answer to such a question? And so I merely shrugged.

"Well," he said, "it makes good sense. Your people had never smelled cooking flesh, except that of a chicken. And now, they were very hungry, and here was all of this roasting going on in this big barbecue pit…"

Mr. Jones, I do believe, was not trying to make a joke of the tragedy of the Poike Ditch; that is not his nature. Nor did I laugh … at that time. We do have barbecue pits on our island in these modern times, and therefore I did know what Mr. Jones was talking about, even though I was quite shocked. Later, however, his remark created a great laugh when I told it to a good and happy young fellow named Ira from Tulsa, Oklahoma, which is one of the fifty states in the United States of America. Now, Oklahoma sounds like it is a Polynesian place, also Tulsa. And so I looked it up on the globe, thinking it might be one of the Hawai'ian Islands, which I already knew to be one of the fifty states. However, Oklahoma is nowhere near Hawai'i and not even an island. It is next door to Kansas, where Eden and Dorothy come from!

You will be asking, "What, Toromiru, is the point of this Oklahoma parenthetical and this Ira?" But first you now must indulge me in yet another parenthetical wherein I will discuss what I call "The Risibility Factor" that appears to permeate human life on the planet. Why, in short, do we laugh? Often, as I have come to appreciate, people—particularly different peoples from different places around the globe—do find the same things comical. Yet, equally as often, they do not. This Ira from Oklahoma was always laughing when I would take him around in the nights and show him various things, but usually I could find little or no humor in what would produce, in Ira, absolute paroxysms of laughter. Personally, I found it very comical that his name, Ira, was pronounced by all of his family as Ari, rhyming with Starry. I asked him if he spelled his name A-r-i, as we would spell it here. And he said, "No, it is spelled I-r-a," which is just backwards to my ear and mind, and therefore I smiled. However, I could see by his expression that he was

quite insulted by my smiling, rather than amused, as I was. On the other hand, he shared with me a song from his country that he found paroxysmal with risibility but which rather more impressed me as a series of unrelated idiocies. Particularly comical to him was this lyric line:

> Go get the ax, there is a flea on baby's head.

Where, I asked him, did he ever hear a song with such a grim lyric? He told me that he learned it at a place called Camp. I looked in the gazetteer for Camp, which I believed from other things Ira said must be not too very far from Tulsa, but I was not able to locate it.

Seeing that I did not laugh when he sang the song to me, Ira said, "Get it? Get it?" Then he did try to explain to me why it was comical. But I have found that when a person must explain why a thing is comical, then another person will probably never truly laugh. And so I appreciate that you may not find all comical that I do. Therefore you need not laugh, if so.

This applies to Ira the night that I drove him to see to see Poike Ditch in the moonlight. His parents were out watching the dancing and singing that night, but Ira preferred the Poike Ditch in the moonlight because he had heard the story of the killing of the Hanau Eepe by the Hanau Momoko, and it fixed in his imagination. While facing the waving grasses of Poike, and feeling the spirit of the ghosts of the Hanau Eepe who had met their deaths there, I told Ira what Mr. Jones had said about the barbecue pit. Ira laughed and laughed. I thought he would grow vomitous with laughter, as has sometimes happened to me, but not over death, you may be sure.

I waited for Ira to stop laughing, and then I asked him why he laughed. And he told me a story that his grandfather had told him, and then I had to laugh, too.

"How do you suppose we came to eat pig?" his grandfather had asked him once. "Pigs are so ugly and dirty, and nobody had ever thought of actually eating them. But then, one night there was a fire on the farm, and the barn burned down, and all the pigs in it were burned up. And then in the morning, when a man came to clean up after the fire, he pulled on one of those pig legs that was still hot, and he burned his fingers so badly that he stuck his fingers into his mouth. 'Mmmmmm, good,' the man said."

So, indeed, who am I to say that Poike Ditch was not the beginning of our cannibalism on our island, among our people? Who, in fact, knows?

Chapter Thirteen

More Killing, And Now, Eating

You might be thinking, "Well, now that the Hanau Eepe have been finished off, there is no more strife among the peoples on this island?" But lo! Not so! You remember Lt. Pickersgill and his bad men coming with spears in their hands. We had a name for the bad men: we called them matato'a, called so because they wielded the spears tipped with mataa, obsidian flakes that were designed to cut flesh. And the only flesh on our island was the flesh of mankind.

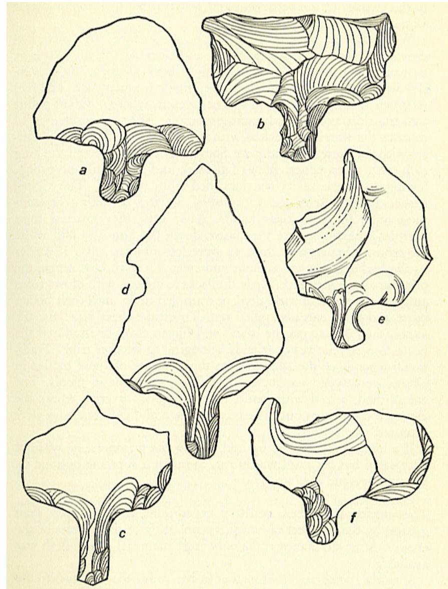


Figure 45: Here is a selection of mataa, as presented in the book of M. Métraux.

Do you remember when the Spaniard Don Agüera made comment about this?

> …they possess no arms, and although in some we observed sundry wounds on the body, which we thought to have been inflicted by cutting instruments of iron or steel, we found that they proceeded from stones, which are their only [weapons of] defence and offence, and as most

> of these are sharp edged they produce the injury referred to. (Corney, 99)

In 1770, we had no weapons but these stones—mataa—which caused these scars of sundry wounds. But by 1774 Lt. Pickersgill told his Captain Cook of bad men coming with spears, or more precisely mataa ko hou, carried by matato'a or, more precisely, tangata matato'a, "men with weapons" or also called tangata rima toto, "men with bloody hands" you may be sure.

There was now, on our island, a revolution, and civil wars. Perhaps the Battle of Poike Ditch had taught our people how to hate and go to war against each other. Now that the Hanau Eepe were gone, perhaps it was time for the descendants of Hotu Matu'a to go to war with each other. The Miru people were of direct descent from Hotu Matu'a and they were the ones to lay down the tapu. Perhaps the other clans grew very tired of the tapu which always favored the Miru. Most certainly the battles were first about food, but soon they became battles about revenge. M. Métraux, in 1934, had his own informants from the island and he wrote this:

> War, like music and dancing, must have been a powerful diversion in a world where existence tended to become monotonous. This feeling is not unknown in our own culture and was certainly even commoner in a society wherein distractions were few and unvarying. Social life demanded that passions should be held in check, and accumulated rancour inevitably found an outlet in military expeditions.
>
> The political life of Easter Island, as we glimpse it through legends and accounts left by missionaries, was a perpetual succession of wars and rivalries between tribes—particularly between the eastern and western tribes.

(I hope that you remember the trek of Mr. William Wales and Lt. Pickersgill. Do you remember that it was at the point that he was heading from west to east that the one ariki gave over the flag of peace to the other ariki? It may well be true that the party of Lt. Pickersgill was venturing into dangerous territory when they decided to return to their ship. It may also well be true that the reason that only Six or Seven hundred Souls were seen by Captain Cook was because the rest of the people remained on their eastern end of the island instead of coming into enemy land.)

> The main causes of these conflicts were often insignificant; but once blood had been spilt the struggle might go on for several generations. Easter Island sensitiveness is illustrated by a tale that is perhaps only half legendary. A young boy, having seen an eel close to the beach, asked a man standing nearby to help him catch it. The latter came and frightened away the eel by poking it with a stick. The boy went away vexed and angry. As soon as he had gone, the man caught the eel with a running noose attached to a stick. The child saw him and came back to claim the eel that he had been the first to discover. The man took no notice of his demand and walked away in the direction of his hamlet, followed by the boy, who continued to pester him with his protests. He entered a hare-hui (a large feasting-hut) where, amongst other things, a dish of eels was about to be prepared. When they were cooked and ready to be served, the child claimed his portion; but he was only given the tip of a tail. Then he went away and complained to his father: 'I come from the interior of the island, from a big hut where a feast is being celebrated, but I was only given the tail of the eel that I was the first to see. The man who caught it refused to give it to me.' Without a word, the father took his cudgel and went to the place of the feast, where everyone

> was sleeping, drowsy from the banquet. He took advantage of this to club the thief and his guests to death. This massacre unleashed a war that went on for several years. (99-100)

Where once the ariki were sensible men who led their clans faithfully and true, the matato'a were brutes and bullies. Blood was their aim; meat was their game. The matato'a took the place of the ariki, and all feared them, even members of their own clans. Out of fear, the people followed them and killed with them, out of fear. And out of hunger, they ate together. M. Métraux gives to us an excellent description of the bloodthirstiness of the matato'a and their followers:

> The power of the matato'a ... is itself a testimony to the warlike nature of Easter Island society. When hostilities had opened, the warriors stained their bodies black and spent their last night at home preparing their weapons and hiding their most precious possessions. They ate food cooked by their fathers in a separate oven. They were not allowed to close their eyes all night. At dawn the troop set out, followed by the women and children. On the way, charms were recited or chants sung that gave courage and turned the wrath of the spirits against the adversary. The procession of non-combatants accompanied the warriors to the vicinity of the battlefield and watched the triumph or defeat of their party from the top of a hill.
>
> When the two hostile troops were face to face, they provoked each other with outrageous insults and then started the battle by throwing stones. In the hands of the Easter Islanders these were a redoubtable weapon, of which they made frequent use. The hail of stones was followed by volleys of javelins, whose obsidian points tore the skin and opened gaping wounds. After this

> exchange of missiles the warriors attacked with the little short, flat club, identical with the New Zealand patu. Some, however, preferred the long club with sharp edges. Blows fell thick and fast until one group, having lost some of its warriors, fled from the field. The victors rushed in pursuit of the vanquished, slaying or taking prisoner those who fell into their hands. After this, they entered their enemies' territory where they burnt down the huts and laid waste the crops. Women and children were led into captivity. If earlier battles had exacerbated passions and created a spirit of revenge, the prisoners were tortured. Their skulls were broken with blows from an adze, they were buried alive, or trampled upon until their bellies burst and their entrails spilled out.

It is such pain to me to think that my own happy people, the happy people at the time of Ure o Pea, the dancing man of such delight, had now come to this nightmare.

> To escape these reprisals, the vanquished fled across the island and hid in caves or implored the protection of relatives or friends belonging to another tribe. Traditional legends of the island relate the outcome of these battles in almost stereotyped sentences: 'They were cut in pieces. The vanquished, seized with panic, took refuge in caverns, where the victors sought them out. The men, women and children who were captured were eaten.'

You may remember that in the chapter on Captain La Pérouse I told you about a suspicion that I had concerning the women of the island—and the children as well—as to why they were so little seen by the early visitors. Certainly in both human and animal societies where some individuals are eating other individuals, it will be the weaker

individual who is eaten by the stronger—unless the weaker individual has a better brain with which to outwit the stronger. I think perhaps the women and children were being eaten, or corralled in caves and out of sight, for eating later.

Or perhaps this Toromiru is being too fantastical, you might think? But look above at what M. Métraux has to say about the women and children. I ask you only to think about it.

> If a high-ranking chief figured among the prisoners, he was not only eaten but his skull was burnt, to inflict a supreme outrage on his memory and his family.
>
> The attraction of these military expeditions was rendered even greater by the prospect of banquets consisting of the corpses of the enemy. After all, man was the only large mammal whose flesh was available.
>
> Victoria Rapahango told us that in her youth she had known the last cannibals on the island. They were the terror of little children. Every Easter Islander knows that his ancestors were kai-tangata, 'man-eaters'. Some make jokes about it, others take offence at any allusion to this custom which has become in their eyes barbarous and shameful. According to Father Roussel, cannibalism did not disappear from Easter Island until after the introduction of Christianity. Shortly before this, the natives are said to have eaten a number of men, including two Peruvian traders. Cannibal feasts were held in secluded spots, and women and children were rarely admitted. The natives told Father Zumbohm that the fingers and toes were the choicest morsels.
>
> The captives destined to be eaten were shut up in huts in front of the sanctuaries. There they were kept until the moment when they were sacrificed to the gods.

> The Easter Islanders' cannibalism was not exclusively a religious rite or the expression of an urge for revenge: it was also induced by a simple liking for human flesh that could impel a man to kill for no other reason than his desire for fresh meat. Women and children were the principal victims of these inveterate cannibals. The reprisals that followed such crimes were all the more violent because an act of cannibalism committed against the member of a family was a terrible insult to the whole family. As among the ancient Maoris, those who had taken part in the meal were entitled to show their teeth to the relatives of the victim and say, 'Your flesh has stuck between my teeth'. Such remarks were capable of rousing those to whom they were addressed to a murderous rage not very different from the Malay amok. (100-03)

Look back at our kava kava carvings in Figure 38. These are all of wood, and very different from the moai carvings. Do these men not look hungry or—I should say—starving? Their ribs and their gaunt, hungry expressions express more than words the crying needs for food on the island.

And if you notice, when you hear our legends of the battles between our clans, the fighting will often begin over an item of food that was not properly shared. Below is another of our stories told to M. Métraux by an old man of the island named Tepano. But first, the description of dear Tepano himself. My great grandmother Angata-iti knew him well and respected him so much that she might have married him except that he was far too old for her. Any children of old Tepano and young Angata-iti would have been as small and crooked as Toromiro.

> During our stay at Anakena, Tepano dictated to us the legendary history of his people. He felt

> inspired by the royal mausoleums and he enjoyed having only to stretch out his arm to show us the spot where the events in his story actually happened. His memory was not always reliable. He hesitated over some proper names and forgot a few details; but he had a surprisingly clear recollection of the main facts. He apologized for his lapses and in the evening, when our sessions of inquiry were over, he used to walk away thoughtful and downcast at having left us only an imperfect picture of his ancestors' exploits. Tepano loved these legendary tales; he believed in them and nothing seemed to him too miraculous or exaggerated. Forestalling our scepticism, he exclaimed frequently: 'The people of the old days knew more than we and they had much more mana.'
>
> I hope this English translation may have retained something of the simple pungency of the original text, stripped of its tedious repetitions. The reader must visualize great fields of stones, a fire-blackened shore, green hills in the distance, and the sea, that old friend of the Polynesians, whose winds and waves carried the first men to the strand on which we were listening to their story. (208)

M. Métraux, I believe, was another of those good Frenchmen who cared as much for our people as for our moai. You must forgive me, however, if I edit M. Métraux possibly as much as he himself edited Tepano, in order to give you just a flavor of the nightmare. The story of Tepano goes on many pages longer, involving many more generations of our people killing and eating each other. Here is but a small part of one of the stories of Tepano, and you will recognize in it more details of the story of the man whose desire was to eat the man with the beautiful name:

Long ago—but how long ago I cannot say—the Tupa-hotu and the Miru were at war. It was a long war. This is how it began. Kainga, the Tupa-hotu chief of the western tribes, quarrelled with Toari, a warrior of the eastern tribes. In all the battles in which he had met him he had not been able to kill him.

Kainga had a son, Uri-avai, who was still a child. This son had a dream: his soul had left his body and, after wandering in the plain, found itself facing a cock. The soul took a stone and threw it at the cock, which fell dead. When Kainga heard the story of the dream he was overcome with joy: the dream foretold the death of the cock of the Tu'u, the warrior Toari.

He gathered his warriors, took the child with him, and marched against Toari's bands. When they were in the enemy's presence, he gave two javelins to his son and told him to throw them at Toari. His son's dream had not been in vain: Toari fell dead, like the cock. His desire for vengeance satisfied, Kainga left the battlefield; but the people of Tu'u, infuriated by the death of their chief charged the Tupa-hotu, who fled in all directions. Among the fugitives was another son of Kainga, Rau-hiva-aringa-erua [Rau-hiva-of-the-double-face]. The face he had at the back said to him: 'I see Pau-aure-vere coming, he has a javelin in his hand, he is going to kill me. Face that is in front, look!' But the front face replied: 'What do I care, back face, I don't want to see.' While the two faces were arguing, Rau-hiva was killed. He died because of his two faces and their argument.

The defeated Tupa-hotu took refuge, some on the islet of Marotiri, some in the cave of Ana-te-ava-nui, in the face of the Poike cliff.

(If you wish to see a picture of Marotiri, look back at Figure 20 for the tiny islet way in the background behind Lonely Fellow. It is nothing more than a rock in the sea. The cave of Ana-te-ava-nui is directly opposite in the cliffs of Poike.)

> The Miru sent canoes to the island of Marotiri to kill all the enemy within reach. They came back laden with dead, whom they put down in rows on the beach and distributed among the warriors of the tribe for their evening meal. Every day the Miru canoes returned to Marotiri and brought back fresh human flesh.
>
> A Miru warrior, named Oho-taka-tore, came from his village to the bay of Ana-havea, where the bodies were handed out every day. He came to the beach just as the canoes back from Marotiri were unloading the enemies killed during the day. Among the dead, Oho-taka-tore recognized a Tupa-hotu warrior called Hanga-maihi-tokerau. Turning to the troop of Miru warriors, he said to them: 'Comrades, give me the body of the warrior with such a splendid name. I should like to eat him, because his name is sweet in my ears.'
>
> ...This is what happened on the island of Marotiri that same night. A Miru warrior [named Vaha] was keeping watch there, killing every Tupa-hotu who ventured to the foot of the rock. Kainga, a Tupa-hotu warrior, observed him from the summit of the islet. Now, Kainga's son, Uri-avai, had taken advantage of the moonless night to swim to the islet, where his father was waiting for him. He came ashore unsuspecting. Vaha, who had heard him swimming, asked him: 'Who are you?' 'Uri-avai,' he replied, 'I am Uri-avai.' 'And I am Uri-avai's enemy,' retorted Vaha. So saying, he thrust his obsidian javelin into his throat. Kainga had recognized his son's voice and had heard his body fall. Vaha swam towards the main island, dragging the corpse along with him. Kainga followed him ...and... called out to him: 'Who are you?' 'Vaha, the enemy of Uri-

> avai,' came the reply. 'I am Kainga, the enemy of Vaha,' said Kainga, transfixing him with his javelin. Kainga took his child on his shoulder, wept his death, and buried him in a little ahu called Ainini. Then he swam back to the islet of Marotiri, dragging Vaha's corpse behind him. The Tupa-hotu who had stayed there were dying of hunger. Great was their joy, therefore, when they saw the corpse of Vaha. Alas, they had no fire! To eat it, they warmed this human flesh under their armpits and between their legs. They devoured it with relish.
>
> ...The Tupa-hotu men begot children with the Miru women. The Miru also had children. The years passed, the children of yesterday had become young men skilled in handling the javelin, when war broke out again. (214-18)

And again, and again, and so on for too many dreadful years.

"And so, Toromiru," you may be asking with great hesitation, "do your present people still eat people?" I can answer only, who knows? But no, I am joking. When my handsome brother or beautiful sister are asked about our cannibalism—in the past tense, you may be sure—they will shrug, and they will give a vague answer that is always very disappointing to the asker. You can see the disappointment, too, in the faces of all in the group who had hoped for more than a shrug. I believe that people in other places of the world are still quite bloodthirsty?

This is all that I can tell you about if the cannibalism really happened—which I am quite sure it did—and when the cannibalism stopped. Mrs. Routledge had the following to say in 1919:

> While legends record how many people were eaten after each affray, all living persons deny, with rather striking

> unanimity, not only that they themselves have ever been cannibals, but that their fathers were so. If this is correct, the custom was dying out for some reason before the advent of Christianity ; their grandfathers, the old people admit, ate human flesh, but, if there were any rites connected with it, they "did not tell." The great-grandmother of an old man of the Miru clan was, according to his account, killed on the high central part of the island by the Ureohei and eaten. In revenge for the outrage, one of her sons, Hotu by name, killed sixty of the Ureohei. Another son, who had pacifist leanings, thought the feud ought then to be ended, but Hotu desired yet more victims, and there was a violent quarrel between the two brothers, in which the peace-maker was struck on the head with a club; for, as Hotu remarked, if they had slain his father, it would have been different, but really to eat his mother was "no good." (225)

I think you can imagine the terrors of life day after day, night after night, year after year during these times on our island. The battles led to the downing of the moai, of which you have already seen evidence. This period was called the huri-moai.

You can understand the downing of the moai, perhaps. If a clan ate your mother, father, brother, sister, child, cousin, you would want revenge. After you exacted that revenge by taking the life of that murderer and all of his family that you could lay your hands on—and eating them, in turn—then you would turn your eye upon their ancestors, towering there on their ahu mocking you with their expressions of disdain. It would not be easy. You would have to arouse many people to help you. But you have already aroused those people to murder. It would be necessary now only to swell their anger against the moai, to get ropes, throw the ropes over the head of the moai, pull until the

moai began to rock on its foundations, rock and rock and rock until it finally tipped over and came crashing down.

A thing that strikes me about this revenge on the ancestors is how truly vengeful it was. It was not enough to pull the moai down from their ahu, no. In most cases the avengers made sure to place many big rocks at the point below where the chin of the moai would strike the ground. When the moai fell, then, the weak neck would strike these rocks, and the head would be broken off and lie face down in the dirt, forever. What revenge, what sweet revenge.

Figure 46: Here is a downed moai. It is easy to see the broken neck, and how this break would help to destroy the mana of the moai.

We know from the journal of Mr. Wales that he saw several downed moai at Vinapu in 1774. Yet just four years earlier in 1770, Don Hervé, the Spaniard who took two launches around the island and whose men encamped one night near Vinapu, makes

no mention of downed moai. It would have been sensational to see downed moai where all others were standing, and Don Hervé would have been sure to mention the fact—*if* he had seen it. It is a good bet, then, that this time between 1770 and 1774 was the beginning of the huri-moai. Since there are many hundreds of moai all around the island, nearly an unbroken line of them along all three coasts, it would take many long years of toppling before they were all downed. With each report by ships passing by our island, for the next seventy years, we know that more and more moai had been downed between each visit.

Figure 47: Here are two moai, face down in the dirt, forever now, the dirt building up year by year, soon to bury the heads.

The last written eye-witness account we have of still-standing moai is by a French admiral named Abel Dupetit-Thouars who, in 1838, saw an ahu with four moai still upright. By 1868, an Englishman named Linto Palmer verified that not one moai yet stood on our island.

Figure 48: Here is a row of downed moai. You can see that these were not downed properly with most appropriate revenge. Their necks were not broken. The avengers must have been in a hurry. Perhaps the enemy clan was amassing for a counter attack?

Figure 49: Here are more downed moai, and with someone from our day having a cigarette, the better by which to contemplate mortality and hugeness and a sense of

the past, left behind. You might remark upon how far the pukao rolled off the heads of the moai as they fell.

Figure 50: Here is one of my favorites of the downed moai because it is so different from the rest, and so sad, the way its eye-holes catch and hold the rainwater, for eternity, or until the outer edges of the eye craters are worn away, as at Rano Kao.

In 1915 one of the oldest people on the island told Mrs. Routledge that the last of the moai to be thrown down was Paro, on the north coast, when she was but a young girl. Guessing at the age of the islander, Mrs. Routledge thought that the year was probably around 1840. Paro was the largest of all the ahu moai. Perhaps it was exactly because Paro was the largest that he remained standing the longest; his massive weight would discourage all but the most vengeful of people.

Is it not sad that what took many centuries to create took only about seventy years to destroy?

Figure 51: Paro, the largest of the ahu moai, and the last to be thrown down. His pukao yet keeps company with him.

Chapter Fourteen

The End of the Story

And so you slap your hands together, as if to get off the dust—or the blood—and you say, "And so that, finally, is the end of this tragedy."

Hardly. We have tragedy for all ages. You will want to know what happened next, will you not?

There was once an Australian woman named Nancy who came on one of the Englisher tours of my brother, and when I heard her name I made sure that I took her aside at the point of the tour where we were examining the rock houses of Orongo on Rano Kao so that I could tell her the grisly story of The Nancy. Rano Kao is a very good spot in which to tell this story because there can be much wind there, very much sky, the broad ocean, and a view of Cook Bay and Hanga Roa, where the story of The Nancy began. See Figure 39 to appreciate this vista.

The Nancy was a schooner from the United States of America that, in 1805, put into what is now known as Cook Bay. The Nancy was filled with evil men who were filled with evil intentions. You may already know that in those days the United States of America was a country that practiced slavery. The Nancy was a slaver ship. They wanted to abduct some of our people, for slavery.

Our people must have welcomed the sailors of The Nancy, at first, as they had welcomed all the ships that had come here earlier. But then the American sailors brought out their ropes and began lassoing us, as they would cattle and horses. My people did valiant battle with the American sailors, but alas, all we had were spears with obsidian

tips, and these were no match against guns. While my people fled away to the mountains and caves, the slavers caught twelve of our men and ten of our women, tied them up, carried them on board The Nancy and set sail. The captain, understanding the ferocity of my people and their determination not to be slave to anyone, did not untie them until they had sailed for three full days.

But as soon as they were untied, the men immediately jumped overboard into the broad sea, even with their arms and legs cramped from being tied so long. The captain and his men beat the women down and tied them up again, and then the captain sent his sailors in boats to round up the men who were swimming away. But each time the boat would come up on a man, the man would dive deep and escape them. Finally the sailors gave up and returned to the schooner. The twelve men—as the captain could see away off in the water, and therefore could enter his story in his log—met together in the water to try to make their best guess as to where our island lay. The island, of course, was so far away that it could no longer be seen. The captain could tell that there was disagreement because he saw some point in one direction, and others in another direction. In the end, they swam off in two groups, headed in two different directions. And that is the last they were seen.

Telling this to the Australian woman, I did a very good job in my storytelling, so good that she kept saying, "Oh, but that *is* dreadful!" She was a woman with a very long face, like that on a horse, all nose except a thin slit for a mouth and even thinner slits for eyes, and therefore she bore little expression in her face, only in her trembling voice. Furthermore, her voice was so deep in her throat—the way of some Englishers I have met

from the island of England—that it sounded like a wailing cry from the back of some far cavern. "Oh, but that *is* dreadful!!!" And then she began to weep silently, with little tears dripping down from the thin slits that were her eyes above her long nose, and I felt very sorry that I had told my story so well. It is dreadful to make a grown woman cry.

I am telling you anyway and however. It is a part of our history, you understand, and consequently it should be recounted.

I told you above that the twelve men were never seen again. That might not be completely accurate, and I will now quote from Father Sebastian who tells us this part of the story, which may or may not be true, although I hope that it is:

> Until recently all I knew of the fate of these unhappy men led me to believe that none had been able to save himself. Even if the schooner traveled slowly for lack of favorable winds, it seemed unlikely that the captain would have released his victims until he was sure that not even a Polynesian, to whom the sea was home, would think of trying to return by swimming. Not long ago I learned for the first time through two different accounts that the impossible, or that which would seem impossible, actually happened. One of these men survived and succeeded in returning to the island. In a family which today bears the name of Pate but which two or three generations ago was called Vaka Tuku Onge, it is remembered that three of their members were among these victims. One was more prudent than his companions. While the others began to swim as rapidly as they were able as soon as they were in the water, he moved slowly in order to conserve his strength. In vain he advised his friends to do the same, but one by one they disappeared beneath the waves. The account has preserved the details that the water was cold and that the few times he was able to

> urinate he captured the warm liquid and rubbed it on his stiffening limbs in an attempt to restore circulation. His fortitude was rewarded and he reached his home. This information from a tradition that appears to have been specially remembered by members of one family was independently confirmed in considerable detail by several other people still living today, who had heard the story from an old woman named Eva a Hey who died in 1946 at an age of at least 100 years. (150–51)

The part of this story that seems to your faithful Toromiru a strettttttch? The part about the urine, since the ocean is so vast.

That said, Father Sebastian lived on our island for thirty-four years and therefore saw the births of two generations of our people—he truly loved us, and we truly loved him—and I believe that no one on this island would have deliberately tried to deceive him. He died in 1969 in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, in the United States of America, where he was journeying with an exhibition about our island. The body of Father Sebastian was returned to us and buried here in our cemetery. My mother was too young to remember that day, but my grandmother has told me that all of the people on the island wept for the loss of Father Sebastian.

There was a famous American author named John Dos Passos who was on our island that day in 1969, and here below is what he wrote of the funeral. Mr. Dos Passos here refers to our people as "Pascuenses", which comes from the Spanish name for our island, Isla de Pascua.

> The Pascuenses sang plainsong as they walked after the coffin, many of them with tears in their eyes. I've rarely heard such

> heartbreaking singing. The Pascuenses sing very true, simple hymnlike songs that resound most touchingly under the bright sky....
>
> Singing is the natural expression of the Pascuenses. The men and women of the congregation sang the entire burial mass, some of it in Tahitian, which is the church language because Christianity came to them through Tahiti, some in Pascuense. I even thought I heard a few words of Latin. There was no accompaniment. They lifted up their voices and sang their grief.
>
> I never attended a burial service where such sincere grief was so beautifully expressed. It didn't sound like any mass we had ever heard. When they stopped it was the breaking of a spell. (146-7)

It is very sad to me to have found out, while I was writing my own book here, that Mr. Dos Passos—who was so sensitive to the death of Father Sebastian and to the grief of our people—himself died within a year of writing those words above, in September of 1970, before the publication of his book about us, *Easter Island, Island of Enigmas*.

Father Sebastian, also, was in the process of publishing a book about our island when he died. The book was published the next year under the title *Island at the Center of the World*. This is another good book to read if you want to find out more about our island from someone who actually lived here. In his final chapter, titled "Final Tragedy" he tells about the terrible years of 1859 to 1862. Many slave ships from Peru landed on our island and took away between 900 and 1000 of our people to some islands belonging to Peru called Chincha Islands where they did work, digging and collecting what is called bat guano. This is a nasty job because guano is the feces of millions of bats and used for fertilizer. These poor people got very very sick while doing this work, smallpox being

the worst but not the only disease among them. The good Bishop of Tahiti worked with the French government to make the Peruvian government stop this slavery, and they did stop it, after a year or two. And they did send the people who were still alive back to our island. Nearly 100 were put onto the ship, only 100 out of so many. But of those hundred souls, 85 died on the trip, and only 15 actually set foot on the island again: only 15 out of the original 1000.

But yes, you will have surely guessed it. They were infected with disease, and they infected everyone else who still lived on the island. By the time the diseases had run their course, only a few hundred of our people were left alive on our island. Dead either as slaves or as victims of the smallpox were all of our wisest men and women, including our last Ariki Mau, Kai Makoi and his son Maurata. Also dead were the maori ko hau rongorongo, the only people who knew how to read the rongorongo tablets that were handed down from Hotu Matu'a, Hinelilu and Tuukoihu. I think of it as an hour-glass or perhaps a funnel, with a full population at the top now squeezed into a very thin neck, and only the tiniest of dribbles of our people and our history coming out beneath the neck.

Into this vacuum came first the missionaries, led by Brother Eugène Eyraud, then the traders. Brother Eyraud became much beloved of our people even though he was at first received with much abuse, and was very greatly tormented by a matato'a named Torometi who forcefully took one by one every possession of the good Brother Eyraud. If it were not so comical—the way that Torometi would abuse poor, good Brother Eyraud—it would be tragical indeed. Or perhaps I should say that if it were not so tragical, it

would be comical indeed, for the matato'a Torometi plundered and pummeled and buffeted poor Brother Eyraud who submitted to it all with the grace of an angel and iron will of a madman. When the next ship arrived, but a few months later, Brother Eyraud was found completely naked, having been stripped of everything except an old blanket and some worn out shoes. Nevertheless, Brother Eyraud persevered and even brought another priest, Brother Hippolyte Roussel, and seven converts from the distant Polynesian island of Mangareva and, in six short years from 1862-1868, Brother Eyraud had converted every single soul on our island into the Catholic faith. His dying words, in August of 1868, formed the desperate question: "Are they all baptized?"

"All," came the response. And with that knowledge, Brother Eyraud died, leaving our people to the mercies—if any—of lesser missionaries and—of course—the traders who by now were making their land-grabs. With the traders came guns and more chaos and murder and mayhem until the Bishop of Tahiti ordered our island evacuated. Three hundred of our people went to Tahiti, where they and their descendants have remained ever since, leaving on our island only one hundred and eleven souls: one hundred and eleven souls, all that was left of the once great, unknown people who had carved and erected our moai which number nearly one thousand, nearly ten times the number of living, breathing inhabitants, now, of our island. And it is at this time that Pierre Loti, a charming if wild child of France, paid us his visit.

Chapter Fifteen

1872 — A Wild Child of France

I call Monsieur Pierre Loti "wild child" but I do not mean for you to confuse him with Victor, the famous Wild Child of France who was found in 1799 near a village by the name of Aveyron. They believe that Victor, perhaps ten or eleven years of age, had been perhaps raised and nourished by wolves because he would eat only raw, even rotten meat. Now wolves, I believe from my readings, are somehow kin to dogs, but larger and much more vicious; and so for a human child to be raised by wolves is a fabulous thing indeed. But no, M. Loti has nothing to do with the famous Wild Child. I call him wild because his imagination is at once so vivid and profound that he seems to me beyond the pale, and therefore wild and untamed.

To begin the story of M. Loti, you must bring back to your mind my great grandmother Angata-iti. You will recall that Angata-iti knew Mrs. Routledge because Angata-iti used to accompany her great grandfather Petro when he would visit Mrs. Routledge and relate his stories. Well, one of the many stories of Petro concerned a Frenchman named Louis Marie Julien Viaud who came to this island in the year 1872, exactly one hundred and fifty years after Captain Roggeveen first found us. M. Viaud later changed his name to Pierre Loti and became a great writer in France. But first, he came to this island, and he wrote a very exciting account which I will include here almost in its entirety (Dos Passos, 70-95 passim) because it is fun and florid and telltale in its descriptions of my people.

Young Pierre Loti Arrives on our Island

> There exists in the midst of the great ocean, in a region where nobody goes, a mysterious and isolated island; no other land is near it and for more than eight hundred leagues in all directions empty and terrifying immensities surround it.

The island is planted with monstrous great statues, the work of I don't know what race, today degenerate or vanished; its great remains an enigma.

I went ashore there years ago in my green youth from a sailing frigate, after days of strong wind and obscuring clouds; there has remained with me the recollection of a half fantastic land, a land of dreams.

In my midshipman's notebook I noted my impressions day by day amid a lot of childishness and incoherence.

It is this child's journal which I am now trying to disentangle, in an effort to give it the precision it needs.

January 3, 1872

At eight in the morning the lookout calls land ho and the silhouette of Easter Island appears dimly in the northwest. The distance is still great, and it will be evening before we get there in spite of our speed on the wings of the trade wind.

Several days back we left—to arrive here—the common shiplanes across the Pacific, for Easter Island lies in no one's path. Discovered by chance the rare navigators who have from time to time visited the island have brought back contradictory reports. The populations whose origins are veiled in mystery is becoming extinct for reasons that we don't know. There remain only several dozen savages starving and fearful who live on roots, soon to be reduced to complete solitude, of which the giant statues will be the only guardians. There is nothing to be found there, not a spring where you can make provision of fresh water and the reefs and breakers often make it impossible to land.

We are going ashore to explore the island and to take off if possible one of the ancient statues which our admiral wants to carry back to France.

Visitors appear to have thought nothing of taking away our property. Have you, too, noticed this in these accounts?

> Slowly the land approaches. Outlines sharpen. It lifts up its red craters and gloomy rocks under a dark cloudy sky. A gust of wind covers the sea with foam.
> Rapa Nui is the name the natives give to Easter Island and in the mere sound of the word I find vibrations of savagery and night; these heavy clouds with which the land veils itself are what my imagination had expected.
>
> Finally at four in the afternoon in the shelter of the island in Cook's Bay where he anchored years ago our frigate furls her sails and lets go her anchors. Several canoes pull out from this strange coast and advance in our direction in the gusty wind....
>
> I hear something light give a bound behind me, and I turn to look. One of the rowers has had the nerve to climb aboard. What an extraordinary lean figure with a small falcon's face and the eyes too close together, too large too sad and wandering. He is naked, at the same time very lean and heavily muscled. His skin of a reddish copper color, is ornamented with blue tattooing; his hair is of an artificial red bound up with scabiosa stems to the top of his head forming a red pompadour which the wind stirs like a flame. He looks at us with all the amazement of eyes too wide open. In every move there is a sort of impish charm.
>
> And the statues?
>
> Oh the statues. There are two types, those along the beaches that have all been overturned and broken. We'll find some near the environs of the bay. Then there are the others, the frightening ones, from a different age or period. These are still standing way off over there on the other side of the island where no one goes any more.

> He's getting tamer, the savage with the red topknot. To please us he is dancing and singing. He is one of those that the missionaries baptized. His name is Petro. The wind, increasing with dusk carries off his melancholy song and tosses his topknot about.

You see now? Petro. Although we have no photograph of our great great great great grandfather, we have this very good and sorrow-happy-making description of him from the good M. Loti, and therefore we can picture our Petro in the eye of our imaginations. Decidedly, the lean yet muscular physique of my brother descends from Ororoina through Petro even to this day.

> But the others are afraid and don't want to come aboard. Their canoes surround the ship more and more shaken by the waves, buried under foam and backwash. Pointing at their naked limbs they demand by signs some exchange from the sailors for their paddles and their lances and their idols of wood and stone that they have brought to trade. The whole population has rushed out naively overexcited by our presence. The sea in the bay is getting savage. Night falls.
>
> 4th January
>
> Five in the morning, dawn is breaking under heavy grey clouds. A whale boat which was confided to me carries me ashore with two other midshipmen, my comrades as much in a hurry as I am to set foot on the strange island. The admiral, amused by our impatience, has thought up different commissions for each one; to find the best landing place, to search out the great statues,—and for his breakfast to kill some rabbits.

The sky is cold and gloomy. The wind is in our faces. The trade wind throws salt spume in our faces. The island has put on its most fantastic appearance to receive us. Against the dark grays of the sky the rocks and craters seem a pale copper color. Not a tree anywhere: desert, desolation.

Without too much difficulty we find a passage through the surf which this morning makes a great threatening racket. Once past the fringe of reefs, reaching calm water, free from wind we see Petro our friend from last night, who calls to us from his perch on a rock. His cries wake up the whole population and in an instant the beach is covered with savages. They come out of every hole from the cracks in the rock where they sleep, from huts so low they seem too small to harbor human beings. In the distance we had not noticed the straw huts; they are quite numerous, strangely flattened to the soil. They carry its color.

We had hardly disembarked at the spot Petro pointed out before we were hemmed in by the men of the village. They shake in our faces in the early morning dusk their lances pointed with obsidian and their paddles and their old idols. The wind redoubles its force, lashing and cold. The clouds seem to drag on the ground.

The whale boat that brought us ashore returns to the frigate according to the commandant's orders. My two comrades who have the shotguns go off along the beach towards the rabbit territory and I am left alone crowded between my new hosts, faces and chests blue with tattooing, long hair, strange smiles from their white teeth and mournful eyes of which the whites look whiter than ever on account of the designs in dark blue that surround them. I'm shaking with cold under my light clothing damp from the sea's wetting and I find full daylight slow in coming this morning under such a thick cloud cover. They have me closed in on all sides each one presenting his

lance or his idol, now they are singing first humming but then singing a plaintive lugubrious chorus accompanied by a balancing of the head and legs as if they were enormous bears. ... I know that they are inoffensive. Their faces under the tattooing that gives them such a fierce look really wear expressions of a childish sweetness; they inspire me with no reasonable fear; but all the same penetrating for the first time an island of the great ocean a shiver of surprise and instinctive fright comes over me at feeling all these eyes and these breaths before daylight on a desolate shore in such black weather.

The rhythm of the song speeds up, the movement of heads and thighs becomes faster and faster, voices become hoarse and deep as the song in the wind and the sound of the sea rises to a savage clamor to the rhythm of a furious dance.

Then brusquely they become quiet. The circle opens and the dancers disperse. . . . What did they want, all of them? Some childishness on their part or conjunction or welcoming good wishes. Who can know?

An old tattooed man, wearing long black feathers stuck on his head, undoubtedly some chief, takes me by one hand; Petro takes me by the other and they run with me, the whole crowd following. They stop before one of the reed houses, flattened between the rocks and the sand like the backs of sleeping beasts.

They invite me in. I have to do this on all fours like a cat going through a cat door, since the entrance, level with the earth and guarded by two divinities of evil aspect, is a round hole hardly two feet high.

Inside it's impossible to see a thing on account of the crowd pressing all around; there is no way of standing up, especially after the vivifying air out of doors it is hard to breathe. The place smells like a tannery.

I am invited to sit down on some mats beside the chieftainess and her daughter. I am made to understand

that they have no gift to offer me. They are excusing themselves in dumb show. Now that my eyes are accustomed to the light I can see that the place swarms with cats and rabbits.

During the morning I am forced to make many visits of the same sort, to please the notables of the island and I crawl into I hardly know how many obscure dwellings. The crowd follows after closing me in with a confusion of chests and thighs, naked and tattooed. I am drenched with a smell of the wild and savage.

All of them want to give me idols or clubs and lances in exchange for pieces of clothing or objects that amuse them. Money naturally means nothing to them, only good for ornaments on collars, but glass beads have a finer effect. Outdoors the aspect of things changes; the curtain of clouds is tearing to pieces. With more light the island seems more real, less sinister. I'm getting used to it. Already for trading I have given up everything I had in my pockets, my handkerchief, my matches, a notebook and a pencil: I am resolved to give up my midshipman's vest in exchange for an extraordinary war club that ends in a sort of Janus with two human faces. ... I continue my stroll in shirtsleeves.

Decidedly I've fallen in with a people of children. Young and old never seem to tire of looking at me, listening to me, following me and carrying behind me my diverse acquisition, my idols and my arms singing always the same plaintive melodies. When you think of it our presence on this isolated island must be a considerable event. The immensities of ocean hardly bring them a sail once in ten years.

Outside of the procession that keeps its distance, I have made my little friendships. There are five. Petro first, then two young boys, Atamou and Houga and two girls, Marie and Iouaritai. They are both naked except for a belt that drops down a little in the essential places. They

would be quite white without the tan from the sun and the sea which gives them that light coppery tan which seems the mark of the race. Long blue tattoo marks, in bizarre and delightful designs run down their flanks to accentuate the sveltness of their figures. Marie who as a child was baptized by the missionaries—that name of Marie applied to a girl from Easter Island throws you off a little—can only boast of her stance of a young goddess, her freshness and her teeth but Iouaritai would pass for beautiful in any country on earth, with her fine little nose and her great timid eyes. She has knotted her hair in ancient Greek style. It has been dyed a reddish tone and she has ornamented it with flowering grass.

Good god how time passes. It is already half past ten, time for us to go back aboard ship for our breakfast. I can see the whale boat jumping the lines of reef, the whale boat which is to pick us up. My comrades are returning from the hunt followed as I was by a singing procession. They have killed several white sea gulls which they distribute to the women, but not a rabbit. All three of us are pretty poor fellows to entrust with commissions. And the big statues I was going to look for. I must admit that I forgot all about them.

On board we were quite well received, all the same; the officers were interested in all the things we brought back. I was restless and by noon I was on my way back to shore to see my savage friends.

Arriving at the shore I can see that for the island it is the time for sleep, the hour for the tropical siesta. My five friends who have come down out of politeness to greet me have a very sleepy look. I could easily snooze for a few minutes, but where to find a little shade for my head in a country where there's not a tree, not a green bush. After some hesitation I go to ask the old chief a moment's hospitality, crawling on all fours into his lodging. The place is very warm and encumbered with stretched out bodies.

Under this turtle shell which is exactly like an overturned canoe the chief lives with his family: one wife, two sons, a daughter, a son-in-law, a grandson, plus rabbits and chickens and seven mean cats of elongated shape. They seem unusually tall on their legs. They have produced numerous kittens. They make room for me on the carpet of woven reeds. Politely people creep out noiselessly to go somewhere else to sleep, leaving me guarded by Atamou who fans me with a black feather fly chaser. And I go to sleep.

A half hour later when I came back to life, I was all alone amid a silence during which I could hear the distant roar of the surf on the coral reefs, and from time to time a short gust of the trade wind ruffling the reeds of the roof. Waking like that in the savages' dreary nest I felt a feeling of extreme homesickness. I felt far away, further away than ever and lost. And I was taken with that extreme anguish which comes with island sickness and no place in the world would have given it me so acutely as right here, the immensity of the austral seas round about me which suddenly upsets me, the violence of the feeling is almost physical.

By the hole which serves as a door, a ray of sunshine penetrates into the hut, dazzling, seen from the comer where I am stretched out. It projects the shadow of the idol that guards the entrance and the awkward shadows of two cats with unnecessarily long ears who dream sitting on their hunkers and looking out....

Without stirring yet I'm amusing myself checking the details of the hut while the mice in spite of the two sentinel cats go quietly about their business. The roof of reeds which shelters me is sustained by palm branches—but where did they get them since their island is without trees and has hardly any vegetation beyond reeds and grapes. In this small space, hardly a meter and a half high by four meters long a thousand things are carefully suspended;

> little idols of black wood which are engraved with coarse enamelling, lances with points of sharpened obsidian, paddles carved with human figures, feather headdresses, ornaments for the dance or for combat and some utensils of various shapes, of use unknown to me which all seem extremely ancient. Our ancestors of the first ages, when they were risking the first emergence from the caves, must have built huts like this ornamented with similar objects: one feels here a type of humanity infinitely primitive and one might say younger than our twenty or thirty thousand years.
>
> But when you think of it, all this dried out wood of their war clubs and their gods, where does it come from? And their cats, their rabbits? I'm willing to believe the missionaries brought them. But the mice that stroll around the houses everywhere. I don't suppose anybody brought them. Where did they come from? The slightest things on this isolated island bring up unanswered questions: one is amazed that there exists a flora and fauna.
>
> As for the inhabitants of Easter Island they carne from the west from the Polynesian archipelagos; there is no doubt of that.
>
> In the first place that is what they tell you themselves. According to the tradition of their old men they came some centuries ago from the oceanic island situated further east, a certain island of Rapa which really exists and still bears the same name. It was in memory of this distant fatherland that they named their island Rapa Nui (Great Rapa).

I must interject into the narrative of the good M. Loti that this statement is not accurate. We know from our legends, preserved by Mrs. Routledge and Father Sebastian and others, that the name of our original island was Marae Renga—or in some accounts,

and for some reason, Hiva—but never Rapa. I believe that our current name Rapa Nui came from some of our islanders who went off in some of the passing ships in order to see the world. Indeed, they saw with delight the little island of Rapa and said with homesickness, "Why this little island of Rapa resembles in its shape and mountains our own dear island." And therefore they returned home and spread the word that our island should be named Rapa Nui, or Big Rapa. Therefore, "this origin being admitted" by good M. Loti is really not apt.

> This origin being admitted there is still the mystery of their voyage and their exodus. The region of the Pacific between America and Oceania is itself larger than the Atlantic Ocean, the widest marine solitude, the most frighteningly desert extent of ocean there is in our world. In the center lies Easter Island, unique tiny and negligible like a pebble in the middle of the ocean. Furthermore the winds aren't changeable the way they are with us. The direction is constant and always contrary for ships coming from Polynesia with simple canoes after how many months of beating into the wind, with what victuals, with what inexplicable foresight how and why could those mysterious navigators succeed in reaching this grain of sand, lost in such an immensity. Since their arrival they must have lost all means of communication with the rest of the earth.
>
> But it is incontestable that these people are Polynesians. Maoris. Having become a little paler than their ancestors on account of the cloudy climate, they have retained the handsome stature, the handsome countenance so characteristic, the long oval face and the great eyes a little too close together. They have conserved too a number of the customs of their brothers far away, and especially they speak their language.

> It's for me one of the unexpected charms of this island that they still speak the language of the Maoris, because I have started to study the books of the missionaries, looking forward to our arrival at Tahiti, the delights of which I've dreamed since childhood. And here for the first time in my life I can try out some of those words that resound in my ears with such a novel and melodiously barbarous sound.
>
> The great statues. Tonight I shan't forget them the way I did this morning. My siesta over and done with I asked the first person I saw who was Atamou to please take me to the sepulchers. He understood, which seemed miraculous. I said sepulchers in Tahitian marae and on Easter Island marae because these colossi of stone, the object of our journey, ornament the places where they used to bury, under piles of stones, the great chiefs killed in battle. This name of marae the natives also give to the thousand figures of fetishes and idols that fill their reed houses and which are linked in spirit with the memory of the dead.

So you see here that M. Loti, with his French ears, does indeed hear "marae" when Petro and the others are saying to him "moai" in relation to these little wooden statues they have carved for trade, trade that at that time might arrive only every ten years or so. You see, too, that M. Loti has come up with this word from his studying of the Polynesian dialect of Tahiti, thusly supporting my own contention that our word "moai" does indeed descend from the ancient and ubiquitous word "marae" on all the farflung islands of Polynesia. M. Loti, however, conflates the Polynesian places of worship, marae, with our burial places, ahu, and our moai, both the "colossi of stone" and the

"fetishes or idols" of carved wood, our Toromoro trees no doubt, going, going, on the short road to gone.

> So we set forth. Atamou and I without trailing a procession behind us, all alone to visit the nearest marae. This is my first journey on the unknown island. Following the seashore we cross a plain covered by an odd grass, sad colored and faded in appearance.
>
> On our road we found the ruins of a small house.... Atamou explains it was the house of the papa farani French father, missionary. He stopped to tell a tale, with an excess of mimicry, a story probably very moving which I didn't understand very well; from his gestures I can imagine ambushes, men hidden behind stones, gunshots and lances thrown—what did the poor priest do to them? One never knows what degree of sudden ferocity may overwhelm a savage, ordinarily gentle and coaxing, when one of these primitive passions is aroused or some obscure superstition. We must not forget that an instinct for cannibalism smoulders at the most intimate center of the Polynesian nature, so attractive and debonair; also that off there in Oceania, the Maoris in spite of their charming manners will sometimes still eat you.
>
> His story told, Atamou, persuaded that I had understood every word, takes me by the hand and we continue our walk.
>
> In front of us here is a mound of brown stones like the Gallic cromlechs but formed of much more enormous blocks, it dominates; on one side the sea where nothing passes; on the other the desolate plain limited in the distance by extinct craters. Atamou assures me that this is the marae and the two of us climb up on the stones.
>
> One would say a cyclopean platform half hidden by a mass of collapsed columns, irregular and roughly carved. I'm asking for statues which I can't see anywhere.

Atamou, with a curious gesture, points down at my feet. I was perched on the chin of one of them which lying on its back stared at me through the two holes that served him for eyes. I hadn't imagined it so large and formless but to tell the truth, I hadn't noticed it at all. There must have been ten of them lying on their backs half broken. Some last quake of the adjacent volcanoes without a doubt shook them down and the noise of their fall must have been terrible. Their faces were carved with an infantine lack of experience. Arms and hands are hardly indicated along the round bodies which gives them the air of pillars in a building. But you can imagine the religious terror they caused when they were all standing, straight and colossal along the shores of this ocean without ships and without limits. Atamou confirms the fact that there are others in the distant parts of the island, many others...

When we return in a hurry to the place where our frigate is anchored it is in a burst of evening sunshine.

The environs of this bay where the reed houses are grouped have at this moment an atmosphere of life and joy for all the officers have been ashore during the afternoon, each one escorted by a little troop of natives and now as the time grows near to go back aboard ship they await the arrival of the ship's dinghies, sitting on the ground amid the grownup primitive children who were their friends for the day and who are singing to give the moment a most festival air. I take my place and immediately my particular friends come running to squeeze in beside me. Petro, Houga, Marie and pretty Iouaritai. Our presence of a few hours has alas, cast a certain amount of ridicule on the masquerade that covers a people in bitter desolation. We have almost all of us exchanged, for fetishes or for arms, any kind of old clothes, in which the men with tattooed limbs have childishly decked themselves out. And most of the women have—for decency or to show off —put on miserable Mother Hubbards of discolored

Indian stuffs which the priests must have, years ago, presented to their mothers which have slept long years carefully hung under the reed roofs.

They sing maoris: they all sing clapping their hands as if to mark the rhythm of a dance. The women emit notes as soft and fluted as bird songs. The men occasionally sing falsetto with trembly little voices and occasionally emit cavernous sounds like the growling of bored wild beasts. Their music is composed of short and heavily emphasized phrases, which they end by lugubrious vocalizations descending into minor key. One would say that these express the amazement of being alive, the sadness of life, and still it is joy that they sing, in the childish pleasure of seeing us, and the amusement of the little objects we have brought.

The pleasure of a day which tomorrow when we have gone will give way to monotony and silence. Prisoners in their island without trees and without water these savage singers belong to a race condemned and which, even there in Polynesia in their mother oceans, is extinguishing itself very fast. They belong to a dying segment of humanity; their singular destiny is to disappear very soon.

While they clap and amuse themselves mixed so familiarly with us, other types observe us with thoughtful immobility. On the rocks that form an amphitheatre, which rises above us facing the sea appears a whole different part of the population, more fearful or more suspicious, with whom we have not been able to make friends. These are heavily tattooed men, crouching ferociously with their hands joined across their knees; and women seated in statuesque poses with whitish cloaks around their shoulders. On their hair knotted behind they wear flowered crowns of reeds. Not a movement, not a manifestation. They are content to look at us from above and from a distance. And when we move away in our ship's

> dinghies the setting sun already at the edge of the horizon shines on them, through tatters in the banks of clouds, with a reddish light. It shines only on their silent groups on their rock, standing out in light against the dark sky and the brown craters.

I will stop you here, for a moment, among the beautiful and painful expressions of M. Loti, to remind you that at this time—1872—on our island, there lived only one hundred and eleven of our souls. It was only one dozen years earlier that the slavers from Peru had come and taken off nearly one thousand of us. Please remember that only fifteen of those returned, but that they returned full of disease. In the next years, so very many of us died, and those who were left—described here in the dark purple words of M. Loti—bore responsibility for disposing of the bodies. The ahu were filled with the bones of them. The smell of them was still in the noses of these people described above, and they were but one hundred and eleven in total number. But one hundred and eleven. Is it any wonder that the eyes of Petro are so wide and filled with sorrow, and perhaps terror, of being so alone and isolated with so much death? Is it any wonder that Atamu needed so desperately to tell the story of his battle? Is it any wonder that so many of the older men and women sat on guard, with their spears, at a safe distance, to watch the comings and goings of the sailors and officers of this ship? And all the sorrowful singing, and all the dancing, and this Petro—to befriend this M. Pierre Loti—all these do break my heart.

> January 5
>
> Today again we got from the commandant, one of my comrades and I, a dinghy to take us to the island in the

early morning. We leave the ship at dawn. The same wind as yesterday. The trade wind straight in our faces which makes it hard to row and wets us from head to foot. Not without difficulty we reach the shore having lost our way among the coral reefs where the waves break sharper than ever. The reefs are covered with white foam which makes them hard to distinguish.

Atamou and my friends of yesterday come running to receive us and with them some savages we don't know and from them acquire a god in ironwood with a small ferocious countenance, waving black plumes on his head.

It is the first time my comrade has been able to go ashore. I take him to see the antique marae. Today we are going to try to carry off a statue. A great troop followed us this morning across the wet grass of the plain, and once arrived they start to dance like dervishes, lightfooted with their hair blowing out in the wind, naked and reddish, delicately tinted blue by their tattooing, their slender bodies moving against the brown stones and the black horizons; they dance, they dance over the enormous figures, placing their toes against the faces of the monsters, kicking them noiselessly in the nose and cheeks. I can't understand what they are singing in the constant racket of the gusts of wind and the surf.

The people of Rapa Nui, who venerate so many fetishes and little gods, seem to have no respect for the tombs. They don't remember the dead sleeping below them.

We returned to the now familiar bay where the reed huts are. There I circulate in a less formal manner than yesterday now with a small procession of my intimate friends like someone already accepted as belonging to the place.

Current opinion now admits that the Easter Island statues were not the work of the Maoris, but the work of another earlier race now unknown. This may be true of the

huge statues of Rano Raraku of which I shall speak later. But the numerous statues that used to ornament the marae along the beaches would seem to belong to the Maori race and to represent "the spirit of the sands" and "the spirit of the rocks."

...In single file through the wet grass we head for the interior of the island which we'll have to cross from one side to the other... a place called Vaihou. In those days there was a happy tribe living on the beach, today no one. Vaihou is a desert... We can already see the crater of Rano Raraku at the foot of which perhaps we will find the promised statues different from all the others, stranger and still standing....

After leaving Vaihou we cross a mass of footpaths worn and trodden as if a great crowd passed over it every day. This in full desert.... The place we are approaching must have been, in the night of the past, some center of adoration temple or necropolis. Now the whole region is encumbered with ruins, with terraces of cyclopean walls, the debris of fantastic constructions. And the grass, now, higher and higher, covers the traces of these mysterious times...

We are now walking parallel to the sea along the beaches, on the cliffs there are terraces made of enormous stones. In the old days you climbed up to them by steps like those on the ancient Hindu temples. They formed the bases for heavy idols today all turned topsy turvy, their faces buried in the rubble....

The gods keep multiplying as we advance towards Rano Raraku. They grow larger. We measure some ten and even eleven meters high cut from a single block. We don't only find them at the foot of the terraces, the ground is paved with them. Their formless brown masses emerge from the high grass. Their headdresses which were turbans of a sort are made of a different kind of lava of a

sanguine red; they rolled in all directions when the statues fell. They look like monstrous mill wheels.

Near one tumulus a mass of jaw bones and calcined skulls seem to testify to human sacrifices over a long period. And—another mystery—paved roads like Roman roads seem to head shoreward until they are lost in the sea.

Skulls, jawbones we find everywhere. It seems impossible to scratch the ground without stirring those human remains. The country seems an immense ossuary. This comes from an epoch of which the terror is still handed down by the old people; the people of Rapa Nui knew the horror of being too numerous of starving and stifling on their island which they did not know how to leave; there followed among the tribes great waves of extermination and cannibalism. This was a period when white men didn't even suspect the existence of Oceania. ...

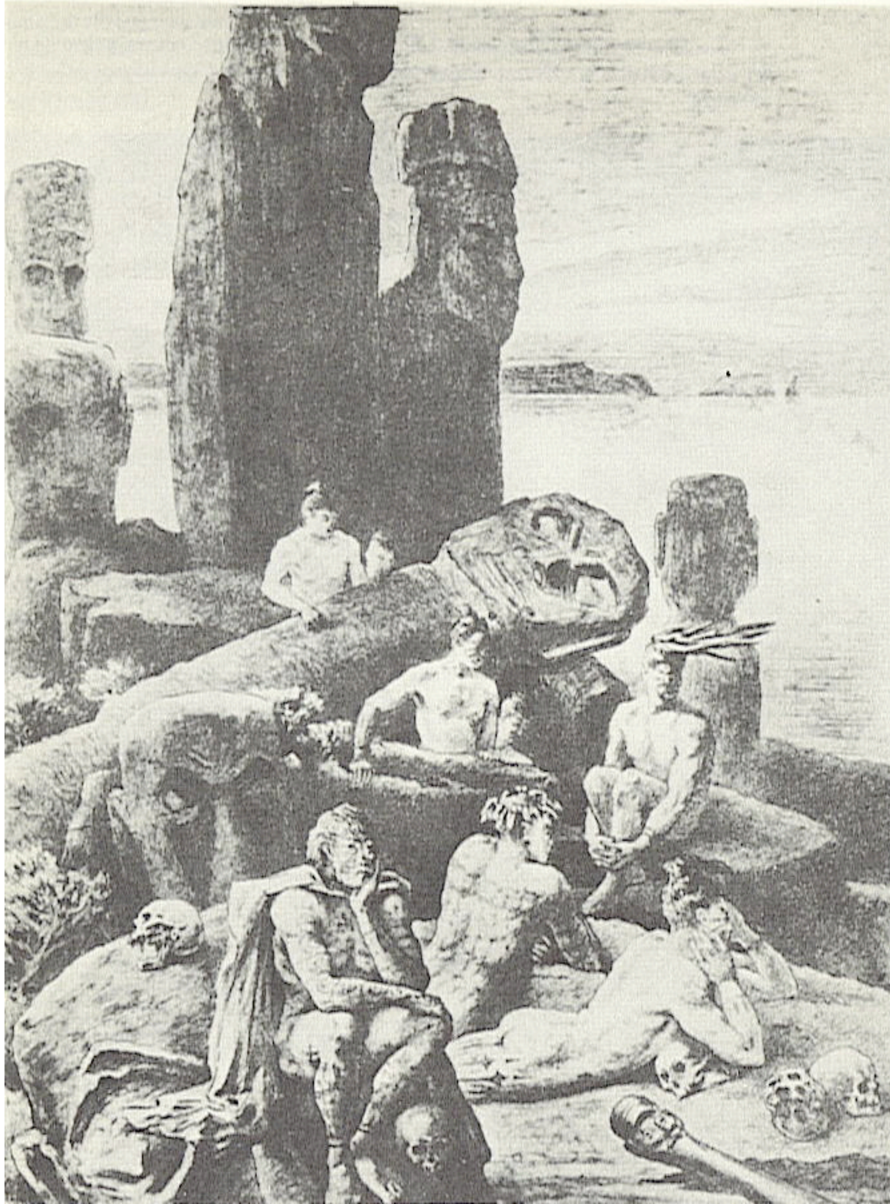


Figure 52: Here is a watercolor by M. Loti of a "tumulus" and skulls.

We find ourselves taken with a special fatigue and a special sort of anxiety caused by this endless walking in single file through the high grass along the narrow footpaths the savages have left in the midst of such desolation, mystery and silence. We already know these fallen statues which we meet at every step, each one exactly like the last, all of the same form, the same cast of countenance.

> We ask our guide for the other statues we had come to see, the different ones which are still upright.
>
> "In just a minute," he tells us, "on the flanks of Rano Raraku is where we will find them and only there is a unique group."
>
> The paths now turn in from the seashore towards the interior in the direction of the volcano.
>
> About an hour and a half after our halt at Vaihou we begin to distinguish, upright on the slope, great personages that throw outlandish shadows on the mournful grass. They are planted without order. They are looking our way as if they wanted to know who was coming. Others of the long profiles with pointed noses are looking in other directions. This time it is the real thing. These are the people we are coming to visit, our patience has been rewarded. Involuntarily we lower our voices as we approach them.

You see? Even foreign people such as M. Loti, even so long ago, could discern the mana of the moai in Rano Raraku, even though those moai were never even finished in the carving of them.

> It's a fact. They do not resemble the sleeping figures, lying by legions along our way. Maybe they belonged to a more distant period. They are the work of less childish artists who knew how to give them an expression. They frighten. They really don't have any bodies. They are colossal heads leaving the earth at the end of long thin necks, craning their necks as if to look into the depth of empty distances. What human race do they represent, with their pointed noses and their thin lips that show a pout of disdain or mockery. No eyes only deep cavities under the forehead and a vast and noble curve of eyebrows—and all the same, they have the look of observing and thinking....

> It doesn't seem likely that these are the work of Maoris. According to the tradition conserved by the old people they were earlier than the arrival of their own ancestors. The migrants from Polynesia, on landing from their canoes ten thousand years ago found the island deserted, guarded only by these monstrous visages. What race, today disappeared without leaving any other trace in human history could have lived here in ancient times and how did they become extinct?

Ha! I say again ha! Ten thousand years. M. Loti may have been listening to the tour guiding of my sister. Ha!

> And who will say how old these gods are? Gnawed by lichens they seem to have the patina of fifty centuries like our celtic menhirs. . . . Some have fallen and broken up, others with time and the crumbling of the mountain have been buried to the nose, seeming to sniff the earth.
>
> The meridian sun blasts them, the tropical sun which exaggerates their harsh expression, putting more black in their sockets and the relief of their foreheads. The slope of the terrain makes their shadows long on this graveyard grass.... We are half way up the mountain, here under the smiles of these great stone countenances, on the slope of the extinct crater, under our feet the deserted plain paved with statues and ruins, and for horizon the infinities of an ocean almost eternally without ships.
>
> These dreamy groups looking so stiff in the sunlight quick, quick. I have, since I've promised, drawn them all in my album while my companions slept in the grass. And my haste, my feverish haste in noting every aspect—in spite of fatigue and the imperious drowsiness I have to fight off; my haste is to render more exact and

stranger still the recollections that this fleeting vision left
in my head.

Figures 53: Here, a fine drawing by our M. Loti.

Is he not very amusing, this Pierre Loti? Such flights into such fancy. But do you know, I am quite in love with this man who came to our island more than a century and a quarter ago. (I know there can never be anything between us, wink. Only years, wink wink.) But he is very beautiful, I think, in the way he sees and in the way he writes what he sees, and imagines. And very tender.

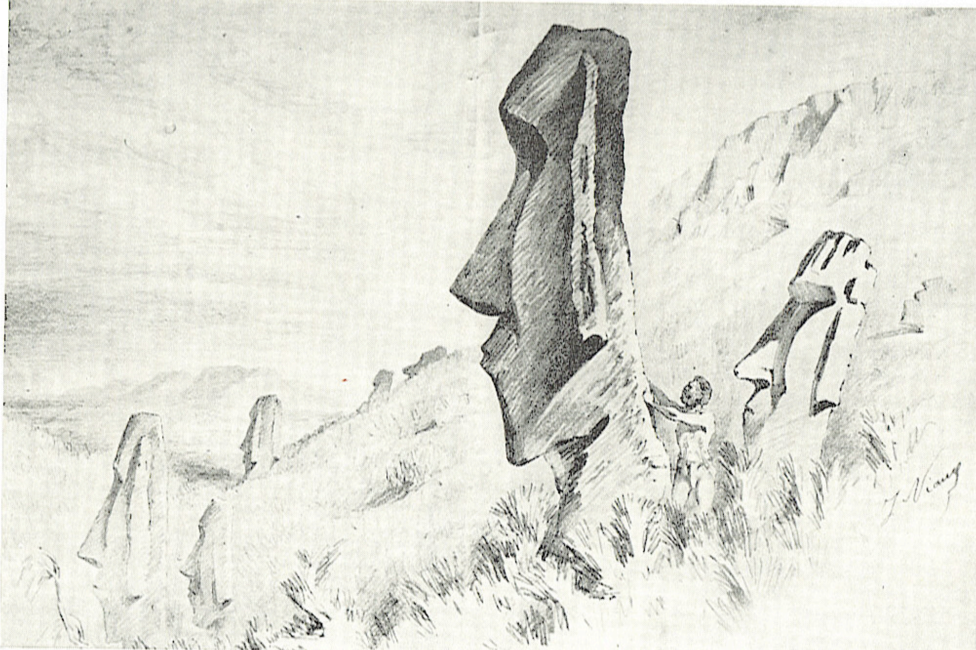


Figure 54: Another rendering by M. Loti. Notice that he includes one of our people who accompanied him on his trek, probably in order to show the relative size of the moai. Do you suppose this is my great great great great grandfather Petro?

Figure 55: You see the fine imagination of M. Loti.

Read, now, how M. Loti takes his leave of our island and our people:

> By dusk we are back in the inhabited region opposite our frigate's anchorage. The boatmen have been watching for our arrival through spyglasses and an embarcation leaves the ship to pick us up. I have just time to sit one last time opposite the sea in the fading light with my five savage friends and we are awaiting together the dinghy that will carry me off forever. They look quite shaken up by my departure and tell me sadly under the vault of clouds brought back by the evening wind several things I wish I could understand better. As for me, I feel a small heartbreak on saying goodbye. These are goodbyes forever. Between us eternity begins... and certainly I shall never come back.
>
> No time to lose. I must run down to the shore... Houga, waking in one leap, appears wrapped in a mantle of tapa cloth then I hear Atamou running behind me and then Petro the skinny little elf. These are really the last farewells, this time. In a few hours Easter Island will have disappeared forever from my eyes. And really a little friendship had come up among us perhaps from our deep differences as from our common childishness
>
> My fine friends remain among the rocks to follow me out of sight. Only the old chief who came down to the shore to say goodbye returns slowly to his hut...

Goodbye, M. Pierre Loti. It was very nice to have you here. My great great great grandfather Petro was very pleased to meet you and share time with you. If he had known how to carve an image of you—to preserve you as a moai or as your own glyph on rongorongo—I am sure that he would have done so.

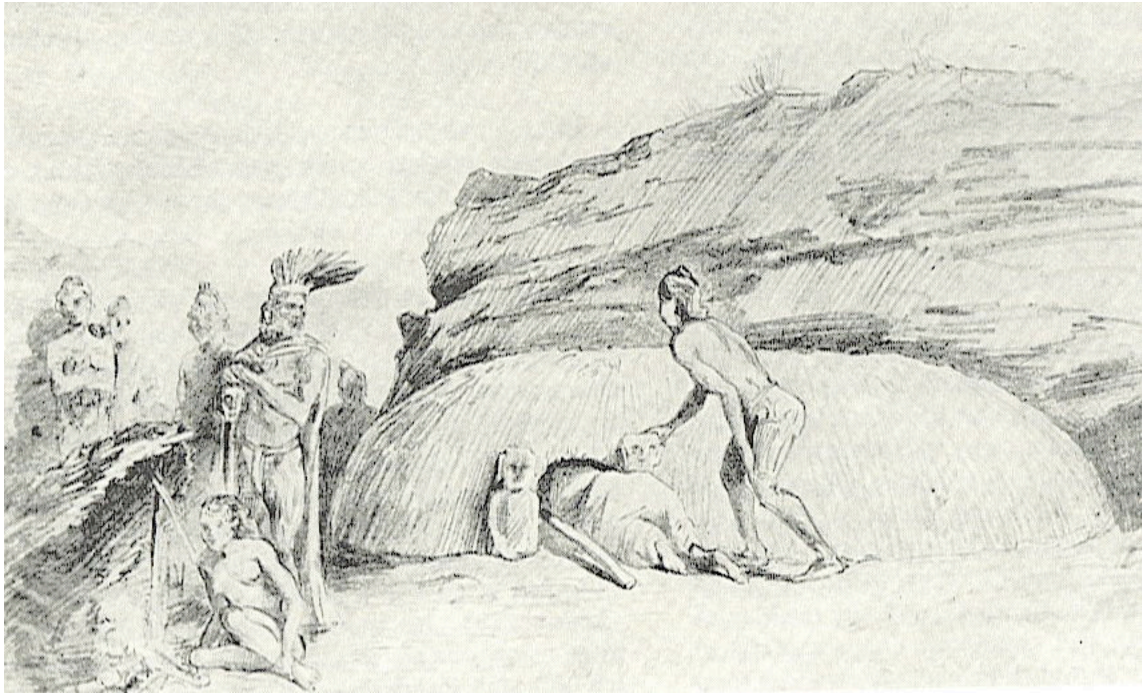


Figure 56: The people of Hanga Roa welcome M. Loti of France.

Chapter Sixteen

Rongorongo

By now you must surely have asked yourself several times, "What are these rongorongo? Why is it that Toromiru keeps mentioning these rongorongo without telling us what exactly they are?"

Precisely. What exactly are they? No one knows. It is a mystery, another enigma. Or, as my brother has now begun to say—having overheard the word from one of his bookish Englishers but being too lazy to actually consult his English dictionary—"It is an eggma." Eyes all around, wide open, heads nodding. Laughter, a little bit? And stifled. My brother, of course, does not notice. Shall I tell him? Perhaps. One day, but not yet. (Ha!)

I can inform you that whole books have been written about the eggma of our rongorongo, and not one expert is any more sure of anything than even I in all my ignorance. The rongorongo tablets do appear to be writing. And yet, are they? They are pieces of board, odds and ends of wood, a broken oar from a European boat, a piece of a gone canoe, whatever flat piece of wood that can be carved upon. And upon the wood are carved a variety of designs that may or may not be a kind of writing, very precisely drawn and quite beautiful little figures, carved very finely with perhaps the tooth of a shark. Some of the designs resemble the "signatures" that some of our people "wrote" onto the papers of the Spaniards who claimed our island in 1770 in the name of King Carlos. You remember those signatures (Figure 26) that the Spaniards took so solemnly

to mean that our people did indeed understand and did indeed celebrate the fact that we had just been annexed by this unknown king of this unknown place? (Ha!)

In fact, some scholars think that perhaps these signatures are the beginning of the rongorongo tablets. These scholars postulate that our people, so beguiled by the rows of neat printing by the Spaniards, decided that we would copy them. "Ah, a new game!" perhaps we thought. You remember that the Spaniards were very impressed by the way we could mimic their language? Perhaps we could mimic their writing, also? Myself, I can easily imagine how we admired those Spaniards standing upon the hills of Poike and reading from their fine little script: "We do solemnly declare, in all solemnity, and with voices raised to the heavens above, that we are the most wonderful people in the world, and now this island is ours in the name of good King Carlos!" And our ariki gathered around and stood winking at each other, "Oho! Tiny script, big voices. We, too, can excel at this game."

When you do not know what writing is, you do not know what writing is. And when someone reads writing to you, therefore, it is merely so much declaration and stance to you, not really the reading of the writing, not really the comprehension of the words upon the page.

But there are also legends about the rongorongo that contradict this idea that our script began with the Spaniards. Father Sebastian said (Englert, 74) that one of his informants told him that Hotu Matu'a brought sixty-seven of these rongorongo tablets with him in the canoes. The informants of Mrs. Routledge (Routledge, 279) told her that

Hinelilu carried the rongorongo on paper, and it was Tuukoihu who carved them onto wood.

Of course, and however, we have seen how fallible can be our legends in the determination of truth.

First question: if it is writing, so what? In fact, that is the very question that I asked of Mr. and Mrs. Jones. "People are always asking about the rongorongo. Why, and so what?"

Mr. Jones was rather surprised at my question, but Mrs. Jones seemed to understand me better, and I heard her try to explain my ignorance of this to her husband, without making it too evident that it was indeed ignorance. "Toromiru was born with writing all around, like the moai. There are books in the museum and in the schools, and Toromiru was taught at an early age to read these books. Naturally, then, Toromiru takes writing for granted, as though it has always existed."

Indeed, I nodded my head at this, because this was exactly the case. Mr. Jones, too, nodded his head, now seeing. And so the two of them, then, tried to put it into perspective for me. You see, writing has always come about—whether it was the Egyptians with their hieroglyphics, or the Mesopotamians with their cuneiform, or the Mayans with their script—because their societies became so complicated, with so many informations that they needed to find a way to write it all down so that when people died, their wisdom lived after them.

(To let you know, the Joneses sent me a book about the history of writing. I am afraid I was not very interested, but this book did allow me to look up the spelling of the

words "hieroglyphics" and "cuneiform", which I find to be very interesting words. And I was able to trade this book to my auntie in the Sebastian Englert Museum curio shop for a video cassette of the movie *Rapa-Nui*. Have you seen this wondrous movie? I am going to tell you more about this movie soon. But at the moment, I am being far too parenthetical from the stated chapter issue of rongorongo.)

Nowhere else in Polynesia is there any evidence of writing: only on our little island, among our tiny population. Well, perhaps the need for the writing came from Hotu Matu'a himself, to pass on the traditions of why he brought our people to this island. That would be important to Hotu Matu'a and Hinelilu and Tuukoihu. Or so the Joneses postulated, and this appears to me a sound postulation. And another thing: once you have heard of writing, writing is no big matter, to be sure; but if you have never heard of it, never even thought of it, then to create it is a very large matter indeed. It is rather like having the idea of the wheel. Once you have the idea, it seems easy enough. But until you get the idea, you go around carrying things on your back for centuries and even millennia. On our island, it seems perhaps that we did get the idea for writing, even though we never did get the idea for the wheel. If we had gotten the idea for the wheel, it might not make the transportation of the moai such a wondrous feat in the eyes of the world.

(Speaking of the wheel, again parenthetically, I must say that I have always wondered why one of our people did not strike this particular "Aha!" upon rolling the round pukao—the red topknots for the moai—down the slope from Puna Pau. "How easy," we might have said to ourselves. "How much easier than moving the moai on logs.

Aha! Let us use these round pukao, with holes in the center, and our logs for axles, and we will call this invention by the name 'vil' [which would be our way of spelling wheel, you see]. Aha!" This, clearly, never happened. [But then again, if you believe as we do today on our island, that the moai "walked" of their own mana from Rano Raraku to their ahu, then there would be no need for vil, anyway. But enough of these increasing parentheticals!]).

And back to the rongorongo. Everyone writing an article or chapter or book about the rongorongo is amazed that our people could have developed this script. They describe it in great detail, even though they cannot decide how to decipher it. The pictures—or we may call them glyphs, as in the Egyptian hieroglyphics—are all exactly the same size, and quite small. The glyph may be of a figure as large as a man, or it may be of a figure as small as a fish-hook, and yet still all the same size, and carved so delicately and evenly. The rows go from left to right, and then you must turn the board over to read the next row; otherwise the glyphs are upside down. Then you read that next row from left to right again until you get to the end of the wood, at which time you must turn the board over and start again. The books call this kind of writing "boustrophedon" which comes from Greek language meaning "ox turning". The reason for this? When you plow a field with an ox—which is a beast rather like a cow—when you get to the end of the row, you must turn around and plow the next furrow in the other direction. If you look in a book on alphabets and writing, you can find that there were ancient ways of writing around the times in ancient Greece that were also boustrophedous. But more

about this I know nothing, since I traded that book to my auntie and she is very strict about letting me use the books at the museum, even when they were originally mine.

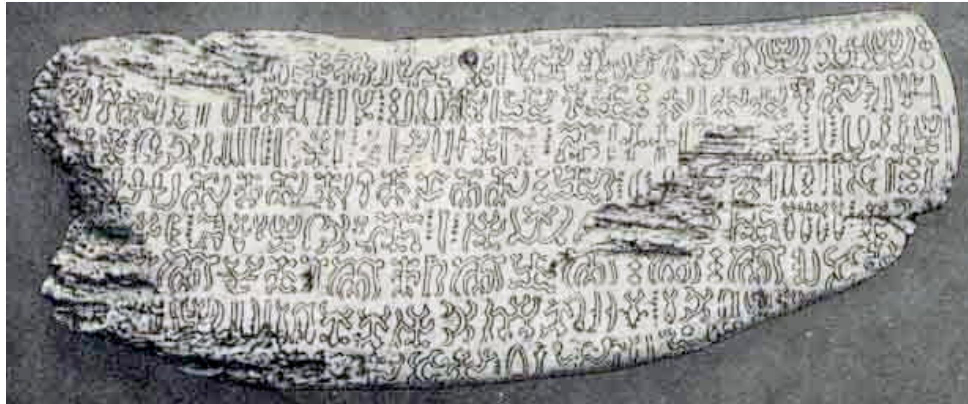
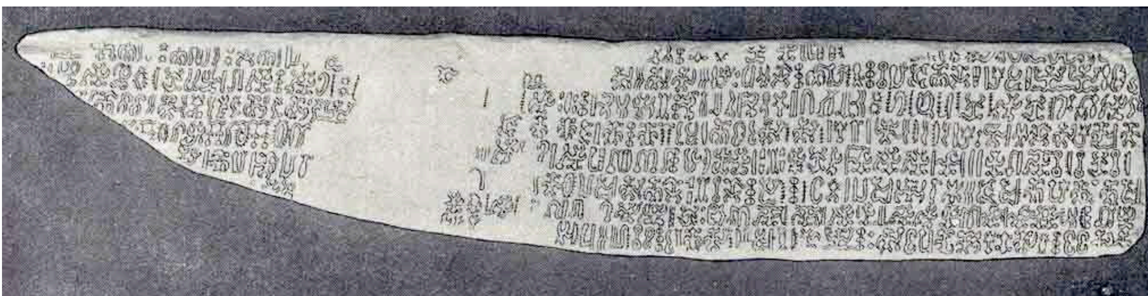
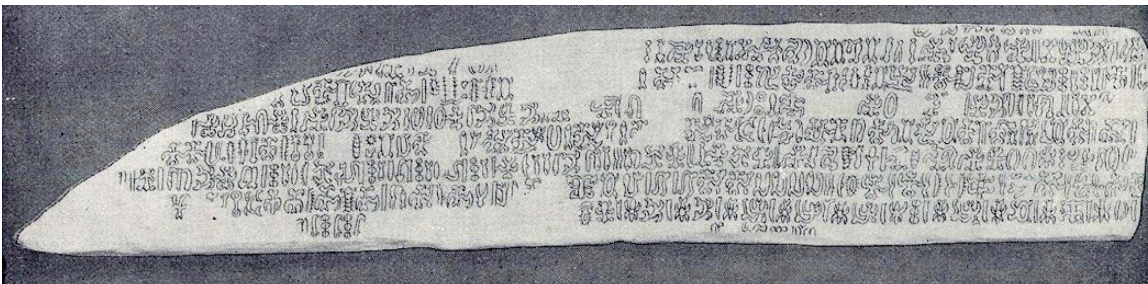


Figure 57: Here, a photograph of a rongorongo from Mr. Thomson.





Figures 58-9: Another rongorongo, this one carved both front and back.

The first written words about rongorongo that today we can understand, were scribed on paper by Brother Eyraud in a letter to his Superior of 1864, saying only…

> In all their houses one can find tablets of wood or sticks with many kinds of hieroglyphic signs.... Each figure has its own name; but the little they make of these tablets makes me inclined to think that these signs, the rest of the primitive script, are for them at present a custom which they preserve without searching the meaning. The natives do neither know how to read nor write. (Englert, 73-4)

Almost all of the people on our island who once could read the rongorongo had died of smallpox. All of our accumulated wisdom, and history, gone now, by 1864.

William J. Thomson, the paymaster of the USS *Mohican*, an American man-of-war that stopped at our island in 1886, tried to shed further light on the rongorongo. Oh, this Mr. Thomson was very interested in our island, and he worked for eleven days like a man possessed to see and learn as much of our island as possible. And he was most interested in the rongorongo, thinking that perhaps all of the other mysteries of our island might be understood if only he could find someone who could read the rongorongo. At this time, most of the rongorongo tablets had been burned by the "good" missionaries or taken—we will not say stolen—from our island and placed in various museums around the world. The Bishop of Tahiti had three such. Mr. Thomson wrote:

> While the Mohican was at Tahiti, the bishop kindly permitted us to examine these tablets and take photographs of them. These tablets were obtained from the missionaries who had been stationed on Easter Island, and they ranged in size from 5½ inches in length by 4 inches broad, to 5½ feet in length and 7 inches wide. Diligent search was made for specimens of these tablets during our visit to Easter Island. At first the natives denied having any, but Mr. Salmon

> knew of the existence of two, and these were finally purchased after a great deal of trouble and at considerable expense. The tablets obtained are in a fair state of preservation. The large one is a piece of drift-wood that from its peculiar shape is supposed to have been used as a portion of a canoe. The other is made of the Toromiro wood indigenous to the island. In explanation of the disappearance of these tablets, the natives stated that the missionaries had ordered all that could be found to be burned, with a view to destroying the ancient records, and getting rid of everything that would have a tendency to attach them to their heathenism, and prevent their thorough conversion to Christianity....

Yes, these missionaries did some good, and also some very very bad. We have no idea how many of the rongorongo tablets were destroyed by the missionaries, but at this time, in museums all around the world, there are only 29 tablets known to still exist.

> A knowledge of the written characters was confined to the royal family, the chiefs of the six districts into which the island was divided, sons of those chiefs, and certain priests or teachers, but the people were assembled at Anekena Bay once each year to hear all of the tablets read. The feast of the tablets was regarded as their most important fête day, and not even war was allowed to interfere with it....
>
> A man called Ure Vaeiko, one of the patriarchs of the island, professes to have been under instructions in the art of hieroglyphic reading at the time of the Peruvian visit, and claims to understand most of the characters. Negotiations were opened with him for a translation of the two tablets purchased; but he declined to furnish any information, on the ground that it had been forbidden

> by the priests. Presents of money and valuables were sent him from time to time, but he invariably replied to all overtures that he was now old and feeble and had but a short time to live, and declined most positively to ruin his chances for salvation by doing what his Christian instructors had forbidden. Finally the old fellow, to avoid temptation, took to the hills with the determination to remain in hiding until after the departure of the Mohican. It was a matter of the utmost importance that the subject should be thoroughly investigated before leaving the island, and unscrupulous strategy was the only resource after fair means had failed.

Unscrupulous strategy, indeed!

> Just before sundown one evening, shortly before the day appointed for our sailing, heavy clouds rolled up from the southwest and indications pointed to bad weather. In a heavy down-pour of rain we crossed the island from Vinapu to Mateveri with Mr. Salmon, and found, as had been expected, that old Ure Vaeiko had sought the shelter of his own home on this rough night.

In English, the word that you might use for this would be "trap" because yes, indeed, Mr. Thomson and Mr. Salmon did trap Ure Vaeiko and this clearly against the will of the poor old man who had tried so hard to avoid them in order to gain the salvation promised by the missionaries. Oh, the cruelty.

Mr. Salmon? Alexander Salmon was a half-breed Tahitian—though I do not know the other half, I am sorry to say—come to our island for I know not what reason in 1877. He was very important to Mr. Thomson as a guide and interpreter, and it is with Mr. Salmon that we can discover the origin of the legend that Mr. Thor Heyerdahl leaned

upon so heavily—that Hotu Matu'a sailed here from the east. In fact, Mr. Salmon goes so far as to say that our people came from the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Ecuador, which Mr. Salmon had no doubt heard of from whalers, or perhaps had visited himself in his own journeys from his homeland of Tahiti. Indeed and you may be sure, I do have my biases about this Mr. Salmon, and I announce with emphasis that I do not approve of the way that he and Mr. Thomson ambushed old Ure Vaeiko, despite that it might have been done for preservation of knowledge about to die with the old man.

> He was asleep when we entered and took charge of the establishment. When he found escape impossible he became sullen, and refused to look at or touch a tablet. As a compromise it was proposed that he should relate some of the ancient traditions. This was readily acceded to, because the opportunity of relating the legends to an interested audience did not often occur, and the positive pleasure to be derived from such an occasion could not be neglected. During the recital certain stimulants that had been provided for such an emergency were produced, and though not pressed upon our ancient friend, were kept prominently before him until, as the night grew old and the narrator weary, he was included as the "cup that cheers" made its occasional rounds.

They got him drunk. At the peril of damning his newfound soul to an eternity in his newfound Hell, they got Ure Vaeiko drunk in order to squeeze from him what they wanted. And let not their cupidity be lost upon you, in these next sentences.

> A judicious indulgence in present comforts dispelled all fears in regard to the future state, and at an auspicious moment the photographs of the tablets owned by the bishop were produced for inspection.

> Old Ure Vaeiko had never seen a photograph before, and was surprised to find how faithfully they reproduced the tablets which he had known in his young days. A tablet would have met with opposition, but no objection could be urged against a photograph, especially something possessed by the good bishop, whom he had been instructed to reverence.

Yes, indeed, this was 1880 and so no, indeed, Ure Vaeiko had never before seen a photograph, and he must have considered it a kind of magic or mana descended upon him by the Bishop of Tahiti. Trickery and connivance, indeed!

> The photographs were recognized immediately, and the appropriate legend related with fluency and without hesitation from beginning to end. The story of all the tablets of which we had a knowledge was finally obtained, the words of the native being written down by Mr. Salmon as they were uttered, and afterwards translated into English....
>
> Ure Vaeiko's fluent interpretation of the tablet was not interrupted, though it became evident that he was not actually reading the characters. It was noticed that the shifting of position did not accord with the number of symbols on the lines, and afterwards when the photograph of another tablet was substituted, the same story was continued without the change being discovered. The old fellow was quite discomposed when charged with fraud at the close of an all-night session, and at first maintained that the characters were all understood, but he could not give the signification of hieroglyphics copied indiscriminately from tablets already marked.

Trapped now in a different kind of trap.

> He explained at great length that the actual value and significance of the symbols had been forgotten, but the tablets were recognized by unmistakable features and the interpretation of them was beyond question; just as a person might recognize a book in a foreign language and be perfectly sure of the contents without being able to actually read it.
>
> Beyond doubt certain legends are ascribed to particular tablets, all of which are named, and a reference to those names will recall the appropriate story from those who do not profess to understand the hieroglyphics. An old man called Kaitae, who claims relationship to the last king, Maurata, afterwards recognized several of the tablets from the photographs and related the same story exactly as that given previously by Ure Vaeiko. (Thomson, 514-15)

And so, even though Ure Vaeiko and Kaitae could "read" rongorongo, they were not actually reading but—it appeared—reciting chants and stories that they had learned by memory. The same thing had happened in Tahiti with a man named Metoro. Metoro was one of our three hundred fifty people who had migrated to Tahiti in the exodus of 1868. When the Bishop of Tahiti heard that Metoro claimed to be maori ko hau rongorongo—or master of rongorongo—the Bishop excitedly called Metoro to him and showed him the three rongorongo tablets that he had in his possession. Metoro "read" the rongorongo very like Ure Vaeiko, chanting as he "read" the glyphs left to right, but not bothering with the ox-turning boustrophedon script, which made his "reading" suspect. Metoro tried to explain that he could indeed recognize the glyphs upside down, and so he

had no need to turn the board over at the end of each line. However, Metoro too was accused of fraud, and suffered only abuse for his efforts.

If the missionaries had not interfered and had not burned our rongorongo, perhaps we would have enough of our script left to us that at least one of the experts might be able to decipher at least some of the glyphs. Perhaps, too, we would have an idea of where our people—the Polynesians—originally came from. There was much excitement at one time when one of these experts declared that our script shared great similarities with an ancient script of over 3000 years ago from the Indus Valley. Certain glyphs appeared almost identical. Could our people have begun in India and migrated into the islands of the Pacific and reached, finally, our island out here in the middle of nowhere? Well, and why not? It is a clear navigational shot through open seas, with only thousands of islands in between, at which to stop for a brief hiatus, and again a war, and then again sail on. But this similarity with the Indus Valley script, and this theory of our origin, along with so many other theories, could not withstand the bright light of scholarly scrutiny, and the rongorongo tablets remain, perhaps for all time, now, and still, an eggma.

Chapter Seventeen

Orongo

And speaking of eggs… You will remember that I asked if you had seen the wondrous movie *Rapa-Nui*. The reason for my asking? It is all about our Birdman competition for eggs. Yes, eggs. It sounds foolish to you, such a competition? Well, and perhaps.

But this movie, *Rapa-Nui*, provides such an enjoyable and inexpensive way—and yet heartwringing, also—to see our island for yourself, with movement and color. And if you are interested in seeing many handsome and beautiful near-naked bodies, this is a very good way to achieve that goal also. Our people are very beautiful, even though they are portrayed as very mean because the movie does concentrate on the Battle of Poike Ditch and the huri-moai. There is a kind of telescoping of events, you must understand, in which many incidents of more and less historical authenticity are folded in upon themselves like an old-time telescope. And, oh! The movie-makers decided to use the "Long-ear" and "Short-ear" locutions for the Hanau Eepe and Hanau Momoko, and so now forever on popular celluloid movie film these terms are engraved, as though true. And so again I warn you, as Angata-iti warned me, to believe nothing. And yet, it is all like a great game of hide-and-seek the truth and the mysteries, and so you may feel free to enjoy the fun.

I believe that there are businesses where you may go, in most countries, to rent video cassettes and DVDs? Go there. Rent this movie, *Rapa-Nui*. See for yourself. Fun. Horror. Our beautiful island and our beautiful people.

The producer—a Mr. Kevin Costner who is also a movie star who appears in other movies—did a very handsome job of showing many parts of our island, but most especially Rano Kao and the three islets of Motu Nui, Motu Iti and Motu Kao Kao. See Figures 35 and 36. The most exciting part of the movie shows the great competition that we one time had on this island every year during the month of September. This is the season of the egg-laying and nesting of the manutara—a sea bird that flies away somewhere for most of the year, but then returns here to reproduce, which is to say lay and hatch its eggs. It is this bird and its migration that has always made us know that there must be other places—as for example more islands in the ocean, on this planet called earth. If not, then where did the manutara come from and return to?

(And by the way and quite parenthetically, I should tell you that the name that Hotu Matu'a supposedly gave to our island? Te Pito o Te Henua? That is supposed to translate in English to "The Navel of the Earth". This is a thing that Doubting Toromiru, however, doubts. My doubt arises from the fact that Hotu Matu'a could not possibly have had any idea of the hugeness of our earth, or that our earth is round like a globe, or that there are so many other islands and even continents on our earth, of which our little island should be or could be the navel. Oh yes, indeed, it is very romantic to think that Hotu Matu'a should have the prescience to create such a name for our little grain of sand, but he might as easily have called it the Navel of Nowhere. Indeed, I have seen the translation of Te Pito o Te Henua as "The Navel of the Deep" which does, to me, make far better sense. We have no reef, unlike most of the islands of the Pacific, but our shores fall right off into the deepest of deep ocean. But my own true belief is that the name Te

Pito o te Henua probably came much later than Hotu Matu'a—along with all the other bogus names put upon us by others such as Davis Island, Easter Island, Isla San Carlos, Isla Pascua, and even Rapa Nui—and that that name merely became part of legend because of much repetition.)

The exciting competition featured so blood-rushingly in the movie *Rapa-Nui*, in which many dare-devil young men fell to their deaths or were eaten by sharks, was what is now called in English the Birdman Competition. Each clan would single out one man—their hopu—to compete for the matato'a of their clan. If this hopu won the competition, then that matato'a would become tangata-manu for the entire year, possessed with so much mana that he would rule the island almost like a god, and his clan would benefit greatly. He would shave his head and let his fingernails grow as long and twisted as braided thatch. No one would be allowed in his presence except to bring him food. To me it sounds more like punishment than honor, but perhaps I bring too much modern thinking to the issue.

All of the hopu would start in front of the stone houses of Orongo atop Rano Kao—where the people of the island would be waiting and watching—and then at a signal they would begin the competition, first running along the jagged edge of the cliff, then clambering down the crags to the ocean, then swimming among the sharks on rafts of totoro reeds past the sharp rocks of Motu Kao Kao, past the sharp rocks of Motu Iti, to end at Motu Nui, the farthest and largest islet.

Look back now first at Figure 35 to see first the jagged, sharp edge of the crater along which the bare feet of the hopu would have to run, balancing more than a thousand

feet above the rocks of the shore. Then look at Figure 36 to try to understand the distance that these already fatigued runners would have to swim, among the sharks. Also, notice again in the foreground of Figure 36 the rock carving of the Birdman. This carving is only one of many hundreds of such carvings that may be found on the stones all over our island.

Upon reaching Motu Nui, the hopu must scramble to find the first egg laid by manutara, then shout back to us waiting and watching breathlessly upon the cliffs of Orongo, "Shave your head, Toromiru! I have the egg!" (They would not say Toromiru, of course, but instead declaim the name of the matato'a of the clan to whom the hopu belonged. I use the name Toromiru, here, out of exemplitude and also by way of authorial frolic since it is rather obvious that I can never be a matato'a or tangata-manu, therefore a joke.)

But then there is the dangerous return trip. The hopu would wrap the egg carefully in cloth of tapa from the bark of a plant on our island called by the English the paper mulberry. He would tie the egg softly to his forehead so that he could have his arms free for swimming back through the sharks, landing on the rocky shore amid the crashing waves, clambering up the rocky crags, running back along the jagged edge of the crater, finally to take the egg from the tapa around his forehead and place it into the hand of his matato'a who, from this moment on, would be flooded with mana for an entire year.

Do you believe Toromiru about all of this?

Precisely. Toromiru—I will confess to you, now—has told you a tall tale. But can you tell what part of the tale is tall? The mana that flooded the matato'a? No, indeed the matato'a whose hopu won the competition did get flooded with mana for an entire year. The egg? That men would vie through such dangers for an egg? No, indeed. The egg of the manutara was very important to us, and it gave us our mana. Indeed, all of the hopu who had feared the sharks on the way out to Motu Nui knew that they were indeed protected from the sharks on the way back, by virtue of the egg strapped to the head of the lead hopu.

No, it is the race that is the lie. Can you guess why? I stole it from the movie *Rapa-Nui*, yes! Plagiarism by Toromiru, you ask yourself? No, I have merely quoted the movie, just as I have quoted all of the other contributors to this book, but this time instead of using their words, I have used the images of Mr. Kevin Costner to describe the race as he filmed it. And with this, I give him the attribution required to avoid the accusation of plagiarism.

In fact the real competition was less exciting, yet no less fraught with danger. From the stories of the informants of Mrs. Routledge and M. Métraux, we can gather that the hopu, yes, would swim across the shark-infested sea to Motu Nui, that they would somehow manage to land on the little island, even though the swelling waves would crash them down on the solid rock, with no sand to soften their landing. But it was not a race. It was merely a matter of reaching the islet without getting their skulls bashed in. Then the hopu would have to wait perhaps as long as a month for the first manutara to lay the first egg.

The hopu would have carried some food and water with them, for there is nothing at all on Motu Nui to eat or drink. They would first peel the bananas they had brought on their backs and eat them a very little bit each day, laying the banana peel out to dry in the sun, and eating upon that peel after the banana itself was gone. They would catch rainwater in the crevices and depressions of rock and refill the gourd that they had originally brought containing water. They would survive the month, seeking protection in the caves at night, and searching each morning and all through the day among the manutara nests in all the crevices and crags, so that they would be sure not to miss that first egg. Then that first egg would finally be laid and found, and that is when that luckiest among all the hopu would raise his cry to the cliffs of Orongo, "Shave your head, Toromiru!" etc.

But you see, the race element is missing, and therefore less of what Mr. Kevin Costner would call "cinematic" in the locution of Hollywood where such films are famously made. So now that I have explained that, you do forgive Toromiru? And you *will* rent the movie? In fact, buy it. You will want to view it many times to see the beauty of our island in wide-screen. Many of the extras in the film are actually our people. Not Toromiru, of course, because I was a mere child when the movie was made in 1994. But my brother and sister and mother and uncle can all four be seen among the crowds. And, oh, this Mr. Kevin Costner paid our people very handsomely for being in the movie, which was so much fun in any case. Almost all of our people managed to buy an automobile with their salaries, even though there are but seven miles to drive in any direction. But what is money for, if not to keep up with the Joneses?

So then, you may be asking, more on topic… At what time in our history, among the raising of all the ahu and moai, among the razing of all the clans in the wars and the huri moai and the Battle of Poike Ditch, among the annual festivals at Anakena to celebrate with the reading of the rongorongo, did the Birdman competition take place? Well, we do not exactly know. We have evidence from the missionaries that the competitions ended in 1878. The missionaries, you may be sure, must have detested such a "barbaric" practice and they most certainly would have worked to end the competition. And from her informants (among them my great great great great grandfather Petro of then advanced age) Mrs. Routledge made a list of eighty-six sacred Birdmen which ended in 1866. (I cannot explain to you why she did not have any names of any sacred Birdmen between 1866 and 1878; I can tell you only what I have found in the books so far.) And so, and however, if you count backwards, one birdman for every year, or do a mathematical subtraction which would be a great deal faster, you can figure for yourself that the Birdman competition began in 1780. But surely—one must allow—surely the informants of Mrs. Routledge could not have remembered the name of every single tangata-manu who had ever been blessed by the toil and jeopardy of his hopu through so long a time. Surely there were at least ten or a dozen or perhaps more—how many more? —who remained unremembered. So let us say that the Birdman competition began at 1770. This would perhaps have coincided with the drought that seems evident in the reports of Captain Cook and Mr. Wales. This drought, as I have postulated, may have been the cause of the beginning of the huri moai, the downing of the moai, the first evidence of which was reported by Mr. Wales in 1774.

Among the movies in the collection of video cassettes at the hotel, you can see some that have certain team games that are played in other parts of the world, quite violent games, they appear, with men crashing into each other, sometimes wearing padded uniforms as in the case of American football and hockey, and sometimes with no padding at all, such as in the football that is played in the rest of the world. (I believe that kind of football is called "soccer" in America.) Also basketball, which does look like such a fun game. But crash! Bodies coming together violently, very much as in war, but with no mataa ko hou or even simple mataa, but only the ball over which they fight, with certain rules.

I believe the Birdman competition served very much as those violent games serve in other places around the world, to vent the hostilities of the people who play those games. Perhaps, then, there will be fewer people killed in clan wars among the various Joneses.

And therefore persists the enigma of the egg which is, after all, very like a ball.

Chapter Eighteen

And Here Am I

And so now do you think that you have been able to sort through all of the mystery and all of the enigmas to understand our little grain of sand, our island, our navel of the deep? Then you are surely more brainy than I. I am as lost as ever, even though how could I be lost on a tiny island, every square foot of which I know by heart?

And there is so much about my people—and about me myself—that I have not understood how to fit into this, that has now become a full book. (Oho! Could I have ever imagined when I first began the writing of it!) I would perhaps have liked to tell you more about the various engineers who have come here attempting to understand how our people could have transported and erected the moai, when indeed all that our people will say upon the subject is, "They walked." (Ha!) I would perhaps have liked to tell you more about the diggings and cataloguing of so many details of our history, but ho hum. I would definitely have liked to tell you more about our language, and how it differs from and is related to the various other Polynesian languages in such far away places as Tahiti, New Zealand and Hawaii. Oh, how that interests me! I would like to tell you so many things about the Polynesian peoples who are scattered upon so many thousands of islands over so many thousands of miles—or, as Captain Cook pronounced it, "a fourth part of the circumference of the Globe"—about whom so many words have been written since the days of that good Captain Cook who so admired us. But alas, I do not know these things yet myself, about these people, my people. Or peoples. By now, after all these

centuries, these different people on these different islands, so far apart, must surely classify as peoples, yes, by now.

The third gender, for example. I have not even mentioned the third gender, and this third gender so interests me, for reasons that would be obvious if you could know me well. Let me just give you this final little taste, then, before I make a "wrap" as Mr. Kevin Costner might say in his filming.

You have no doubt heard of the very famous book *The Mutiny on the Bounty*? And so many movies have been made of this one book, and how entertaining they all are. For one of the things about these movies is that you can see the befuddlement and joy of the English sailors as they arrive on Tahiti to find such beautiful, beautiful, beautiful—and very invitational—women. Oh, and that Captain Bligh is always so tied in knots while watching his white men cavorting with all the brown women. It is truly very entertaining.

Sex. Always that sex, raising its head. Oh, my, and indeed, dot dot dot, exclamation point! After all, it is well understood that these sailors were at sea for many months with only the company of the other men, sleeping shoulder to shoulder in their hammocks in crawl spaces so close that their breaths would commingle—and nature will always be served. These sailors were often rough and tumble, unshaven sorts, hungering for the soft, supple, gentle, feminine aspect, and—as is well known and often commented upon by visitors to the Polynesian islands, and our island is no exception—the most beautiful faces are not those upon our women but those upon our men. Even my brother. Certainly myself, though I am not boastful, as you well know.

The most apt, and ancient, reference I could find to our third gender was not from the visitors to our island but from those very famous visitors to the island of Tahiti in 1789: the men of the very famous HMS Bounty, with their very famous mutiny, led by the very famous mutineer Fletcher Christian in the face of the very famous Captain Bligh. Perhaps you thought this mutiny was merely fiction, but no! Those very famous men actually lived and actually did those very famous things.

What is not quite so very famous, however, is for me the most interesting part of the story. That is what happened to the nine English men and the six Tahitian men, along with the twelve Tahitian women who fled—after the mutiny—eastward in that good ship Bounty, looking for a place to hide from the wrath of English justice of the great English navy. These nine mutineers and eighteen Tahitians, following the lead of Mr. Christian, happened across lost, lonely Pitcairn Island in a latitude and longitude where no island should have existed. It had been mischarted on all existing maps! Ha! And lo! A find! A hitherto unknown island, the last of its kind in the entire world! Pitcairn Island was tiny, much tinier than even our own island, but it was habitable, and these twenty-seven people carried with them on The Bounty a bounty of plants and animals to stock their new home. Also, they found the remains of a people who had lived on the island previously, Polynesians who had arrived at and perhaps had died out on the island, or perhaps they had come, lived for a time, and abandoned the island as being too small. Perhaps these early Polynesian settlers had sailed there from the Marquesas Islands, nearly 1000 miles further to the northwest.

In any case, here the nine English mutineers stayed with their twelve Tahitian women and the six Tahitian men, not discovered again by the outside world for a full generation, and then only by accident when an American whaler happened upon the island nearly twenty years later in 1808. Imagine the astonishment of that captain and crew to be met by brown young men and women all speaking perfect English. Oho, yes, mouths agape, you may be sure!

Surely you have already begun doing the math in your own heads: nine English men, six Tahitian men, twelve Tahitian women. Hmmm. Add, subtract, divide or multiply, this is a cipher that surely would befuddle Noah with his two by twos.

And as Hamlet might wisely remark, "Aye, there is (indeed!) the rub."

Indeed, it was a rub out. Within a few years, with the nine Englishmen claiming not only all of the women but also dividing up the entire island in nine parcels of ownership, leaving the Tahitian men with nothing, the killing started. Ambush, mayhem and murder, begun by the Tahitian men but finished by the English men. But after the Tahitian men were all dead, the English men did not stop there, but continued on killing each other. After all, these were mutineers, men of hot blood and treachery. Not a night of wakeless sleep was to be had until there was only one man left on the island, a John Adams. And when the American whaler arrived in 1808, they were met by that one white man, nine Tahitian women, and a brood of twenty-five brown children, all speaking a King James English, having been schooled in the language by Mr. Adams with his Bible.

Again, you may attempt your own math, but I postulate that had any of those fifteen men, either Tahitian or English, been third gender persons, the human history of

that unhappy island might have been less carnage, and more happily carnal. But alas, it seems not so.

Third gender persons, though perhaps on the increase in the outside world, if one can believe what one sees in the movies—which indeed one cannot, as has been discussed, for example, in the matter of stagecoaches—are rather scarce, I believe, among our islands, but by no means unheard of. In my researches of the early literature, all I could find was an offhand remark by Captain Bligh—who indeed might have been quite heartstruck in perhaps a similar way by his roguish Mr. Christian, if you inspect the jealous actions of the captain with a psychological eye. Captain Bligh wrote in one of his journals during his stay in Tahiti:

> …a class of people common in Otaheite called Mahoo … are particularly selected when Boys are kept with the Women solely for the car-nesses [exquisitely sic] of the men… The Women treat [the mahoo] as one of their Sex, and he observed evry restriction that they do, and is equally respected and esteemed."

These are very happy informations that serve to answer certain questions of gender that, no doubt, have come to the mind of every reader of this, my book. And if you look back at Figure 20 of Lonely Fellow, perhaps you might see with new eyes that perhaps Lonely Fellow might perhaps and in fact be mahu? Or not? My artistic imagination? Self-glorification? For you with further interest in these questions of third gender, if you google "polynesian mahu" you can find more informations. ("Google" is now a verb in English, is it not? I think it is new to the language? But very beneficial, especially when one lives on an island 2400 miles from anywhere.) But I digress now

most certainly, and have waxed more parenthetical, perhaps, than some readers would have desired. Or thought prudent?

> N.B. When Mrs. Jones read this that I have written about "the third gender" she replied to me immediately and in some consternation—it seemed to me from the words she chose and the many exclamation marks she used so untypically—"But Toromiru, you must understand that there are many more than three genders!!!!" On the various further remarks of Mrs. Jones on this subject—and the reader must remember that Mrs. Jones appears to have some little history in anthropology—I will give no more that this pith: read for yourself, if you can, the book Mrs. Jones recommended to me, *Challenging Gender Norms: Five Genders Among Bugis in Indonesia* by a Sharyn Graham Davies. I must say, however, that this author might as easily have subtitled her book *Eight Genders…* among the Bugi tribe, or even a dozen, or two dozen, given the gender parameters she allows. But let me digress no further; the gender-ardent reader may digress at his or her—or whoever's—own whim.

Thus and therefore, in the questions of sex, if not of gender, we can be sure from the tales in the early literature that on our island there was plenty to be had. About that, no myssssssssstery.

I think you must understand by now that my intention has not been to try to explain our mysteries, but more, to place them before you. As with the mystery of the creation, transport and erection of our moai and ahu … for me it is very simple; it was done, fait accompli, end of story. The deepest mystery, for me, is why. Why would my people have made not one, not fifty, not one hundred, but nearly one thousand of these moai which now lie all about our island, their necks broken, or stand or lie lonely in their quarry?

You have seen the photographs in this book of the standing moai, and you are probably wondering how they came to be standing since Toromiru has gone to great lengths to tell you the stories of the huri moai, during which time they were each and every one, tout-a-fait, hurled down. Well, these restorations of our moai started with a Mr. William Mulloy, who first came here with the expedition of Mr. Heyerdahl in 1955 and who, when he died in 1978, had his ashes buried not at his home but on our island,

thus proving how much Mr. Mulloy loved his life here. Mr. Mulloy was also the expeditionist who made the very significant discovery of an eye of a moai that had fallen face down, thus protecting the eye from the elements through the centuries. The eye was a rounded piece of white coral. Mr. Mulloy did not, however, know exactly what this thing was that he had found. He thought at first that it was a "beautifully made coral dish" that had somehow escaped being demolished by the falling moai. In 1978 one of our own people, Ms. Sonia Hoao, discovered more fragments of white coral along with a small round piece of red scoria. When she fitted the fragments together, lo! she saw that they made the white and red pupil of an eye that fit exactly into the eye-socket of the moai! That is how we made the discovery that our moai originally stood on their ahu with eyes lifted heavenward, their backs to the sea protecting us, perhaps, from the ocean surrounding us.

Figure 60: Here is a restored moai, with eyes again in place.

In 1960 Mr. Mulloy oversaw the raising of the seven moai at Ahu Akivi. First it was necessary to reattach the heads of the moai with a kind of cement, which you can, unfortunately, see clearly when you look closely at my photograph.

Figure 61: Ahu Akivi

Other expeditions have come to our island to erect all fifteen of the moai at Tongariki, the six and one-half of Ahu Nau Nau at Anakena—four with eyes and pukao—some at Tahai, and others near Hanga Roa. We are very indebted to the many peoples of the world who have come to our island and who have been sponsored by their governments to restore our moai and erect them once again on their ahu. We ourselves, I know, could not have done it without these helps. And when I look at our moai, I catch a glimpse of who I come from.

Figure 62: Here at Ahu Tongariki we can see the fifteen standing statues, and one still prone, each reminding the other of the tragedy of the huri moai.

In the 2003 book by Mssrs. Flenley and Bahn, one of their final chapters is called "The Island that Self-Destructed". It begins with this paragraph:

> It is common and convenient in archaeology to divide cultures or periods into three, such as Lower/Middle/Upper. Easter Island is no exception to the rule... Settlement (up to AD 1000), Expansion (1000-1500) and Decadence (1500-1722)... It is reckoned that no more statues (or at least very few) were erected on platforms after c. AD 1500 … and that, economically and demographically, it was all downhill after that. (Flenley, 191)

"All downhill after that…" Does that not make you heave a dreadful sigh? Still downhill, I suppose. At least we have planted some trees again, even if those are mostly Eucalyptus trees that are very drying to the soil. But now, when you walk through our town of Hanga Roa, where some of the streets are even paved, you will walk in the shade

of trees planted along the roadside. When you go to the beach at Anakena, you can come out of the sand and sun and rest in the shade of palm trees.

Our people have learned at least some of our mistakes and, with the outside world coming here and wanting to help us, we are turning around our self-devastation.

Figure 63: This ahu clearly can never be restored to the way it was.

I may or may not ever leave this island. My savings account in the bank in Chile is growing so long as the Joneses continue their kindnesses and generosity to me. I have plans to go to university. I would like to travel the globe around, like the Joneses, like my beloved Captain Cook and his Mr. Wales. Will I ever? I hope for it so much that sometimes I tremble with it.

Meanwhile, please take this caution for yourself. My people on my island were so imprudent that they cut down each and every tree of our once great forest. They changed our island and its climate perhaps forever. Most certainly they changed the history of our people. From what Mr. and Mrs. Jones told me when they were here on this island and studying—with me in tow—I am now aware that there are many problems

in the world. There are other places where the people are felling all the trees. No one is stopping them from this terrible thing. Greed motivates them, and stupidity and not looking toward the future allows them to move forward as they use up our most precious resources on our planet.

Indeed, the Joneses have just sent me a new DVD to play on the new DVD machine at the hotel. Oh, the technology! Oh, the humanity! This DVD is of the movie *An Inconvenient Truth* which stars the unfortunate Mr. Al Gore. I say unfortunate because he lost the presidency of the United States of America, and there is shame all around that loss, as I understand it. But I am so far away here that I am helpless to fully understand such things as these. But this documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, documents such future horrors as I have never imagined, so much worse even than the bleakness of this, my island.

The planet is warming, Mr. Al Gore tells us, very convincingly. This man has such stature and intelligence that he appears in my mind to have high credibility. Also, what he explains rings with clear and utter resonance to what I know from the experience of my own people on my own island. Mr. Al Gore says that because of what people worldwide have done and are continuing to do on this planet, we are filling the top layers of the thin atmosphere of the Earth with a gas called carbon dioxide, with the result that the rays of the sun no longer bounce properly off into space but are held close to the Earth. The most impactful part of what Mr. Al Gore says is in regard to the North Pole and South Pole of the planet which once were covered far more completely with ice. The white of the ice made the rays of the sun bounce off the Earth properly for millions of

years. But now, as the ice melts and the blue sea is covering more and more of where the white ice was, the rays of the sun no longer bounce properly off the white, but are absorbed into the dark blue water, warming, warming, warming the planet more and more.

Imagine being on an island when the ice melts. Imagine the waters of the ocean rising, eating up the tiny land allotted to us farther and farther. Now imagine Toromiru looking out to sea, eyes wide, then turning my back to the sea, like the moai, but to see what? My island shrinking. The people with very little high ground left to climb to, the moai along the shores covered forever with water.

The Joneses have told me that their house, where they live in San Francisco, will be under water. They say this will be within perhaps so soon as fifty years, if we do not begin today to stop the warming right now. In his film Mr. Al Gore shows other places in the United States, in the city of New York for example, where the waters will rise and drown the land. I believe that the city of New Orleans, which I understand was once such a wonderful place, has already suffered a great flood due to a great hurricane made larger than any hurricane previous because of the global warming that has already happened. But this tragedy of New Orleans, according to Mr. Al Gore, is merely the beginning of the great tragedies that lie before us on this planet due to global warming.

This inconvenient truth is rather more, indeed, than merely inconvenient. And since I have watched this film, my mind is full of new catastrophe. From where I stand on my island, there appears nothing I can do to help. But perhaps if people in power read my words here, and see the history of my people on my island, perhaps they will open

their eyes to this inconvenient truth of Mr. Al Gore, and they will change their ways. It is the oil, you see: the oil that makes the gas that runs the automobiles that carry the people to their work in the factories, all spewing carbon dioxide into the thin atmosphere. And it is the cutting down of the trees that would absorb this carbon dioxide and convert it into healthy oxygen. Oh, Mr. Al Gore lays it out very clearly, and he states very firmly at the end that there is hope if our leaders recognize the danger now and lead us into a stopping and reversing. These would needs be leaders more wise than our leaders on this island who, alas, never did stand on the high point of our island, seeing the last of the trees being felled, and never did cry out to us, "Ai! Stop, people! Stop what we are doing. Now! Not tomorrow, not next year, not right after this last moai that we so foolishly carve and transport, but now, today."

Perhaps, indeed, the peoples of the world will be wiser than the people of my island who were too content to cut down all our trees and destroy our island, to change our climate to one of drought, to cause our food to become scarce to the point where we went to war and ate each other to try to survive.

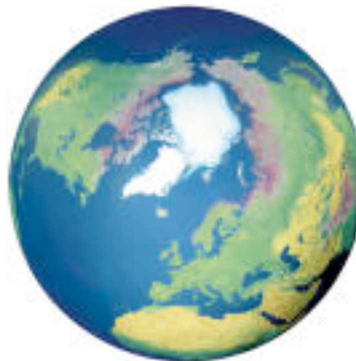


Figure 64: The Earth from Space, the Arctic Ice Cap Melting

For what is our planet but an island? Like the people of our island with no place to flee, where can the people of the planet flee? As the planet grows ever hotter, its ice caps and mountain glaciers melting into the salt waters of the ocean, with ever diminishing fresh water to drink and to sustain the plants and animals of the world, the people will begin to fight, yes. We will retreat to our caves again, in fear of our neighbors, again, coming out in the dark of night to kill and eat each other, yes.

And so, yes, we do have our Mr. Al Gore standing now on the high point, crying to us, "Ai, stop!" And Mr. Al Gore gives us some very good advices about what we can do now. And he gives us hope that mankind really can change the course we have taken. Will we listen to him, I wonder. Will we stop, and reverse? And if not … !

Dot dot dot. Exclamation point.

But, for hope, and for one example of how an island—or planet—might recover, I offer you this postscript about our little, twisted and tortured Toromiro tree that has existed here, and only here, in the loneliness of the planet. This comes from the 2003 book by Mssrs. Flenley and Bahn:

> Thanks to the depredations of the inhabitants, and the introduction of browsing and grazing animals by Europeans, the toromiro declined, so that by the time Thor Heyerdahl visited the island in the 1950s he could find only a single, almost dead specimen in the crater of Rano Kau. Since then, no botanist has recorded it; and the species appeared to be extinct.
>
> Miraculously, phoenix-like, it rose from the grave in Sweden. Seeds collected by Heyerdahl from the last surviving specimen on the island germinated in the botanic gardens at Göteborg. The species is now flourishing there,

> as well as in the botanic gardens at the University of Bonn. Attempts have been made to reintroduce it to the island; the first attempts were unsuccessful, and there was concern that perhaps some vital ingredient was no longer present in the island soil. Later attempts by the Chilean Forestry Service are succeeding, but slowly. Recently the genetic diversity of the surviving specimens has been assessed, and it is clear that several cultivated specimens survived in Chile and elsewhere. A concerted effort to re-introduce the species is underway. The outcome of the latest attempt is awaited with great interest. (Flenley, 22-3)

Toromiru is here, doing what I can for my island, for my planet. I treasure my island so. The Navel of the World, the Navel of the Deep. And I so treasure the tiny planet on which my island is such a tiny grain of sand. Lonely planet. Lonely island.

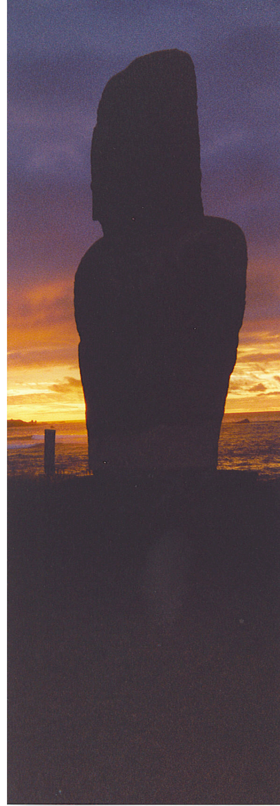


Figure 65: Sunset on my island.

The End

Bibliographies

This bibliography is a List of Works Cited. What that means is that if you want to find any of the quotations that I use in my book, then you can find them here. You can make sure, for example, that Toromiru quoted all the people correctly. You can also see for yourself the context of the quotations, to see if perhaps those writers meant one thing, yet Toromiru attributed to them a different meaning, the way, perhaps, that Mr. Heyerdahl has sometimes done. A List of Works Cited is very important for keeping a writer such as this Toromiru of yours honest.

But, oh, I have read many more books than just these few from which I have taken quotations. If you are interested in my island, go and read for yourself some of those many wonderful books, and look at the many photographs. Find out about all the undertakings of all the engineers who have come to our island to try to replicate the feats of our people in our history. A good place to start is the List of Works Cited, below; but do not stop there if you are very very hungry for knowledge. Consult the bibliographies of those books. I have been so lucky in having Mr. and Mrs. Jones in all their generosities. But in so many towns and cities around the world—I am told—there are libraries, and in these libraries can be a great many books. And even if your library in your vicinity does not have the book you want, they often have a service where they borrow the book for you from another library. This service, I am told by the Joneses, is called "interlibrary loan" and is, I believe, a miracle yet true.

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