Rapa Nui
Easter Island
Osterinsel

GUEST AUTHORS: JASPER KÖCKE AND HERMANN MÜCKLER
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RAPA NUI, EASTER ISLAND, OSTERINSEL
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Books on Pacific travel and exploration are one of the sectors which my antiquarian bookshop specializes in. Rapa Nui is one of the islands in the southern Pacific with a very special appeal – discovered relatively late, far away from inhabited parts of the mainland, a history which is, in parts, still a mystery, the Myth surrounding the Moais, a sky with stars so clear that the milky way can be seen, the scarcity of reports available by travellers.

In 2016 I was able to visit Rapa Nui in order to experience and understand this fascination and the myth surrounding this island, to understand collectors of books on this subject or to fill others with enthusiasm for it. This catalog is the result of my own enthusiasm, of my visit to Rapa Nui, of my research and of my efforts to find scientists who are prepared to contribute to it.

Your
Paul Kainbacher

The Moai’s
Almost three centuries ago a small squadron of vessels under command of the Dutch admiral Jacob Roggeveen attempted to locate a mysterious “Davis-Land” within the web of longitudes and latitudes of the Pacific ocean. On Easter-Sunday 1722 they bit upon a small island. Was this “Davis-Land”? Or part of it? Uncertain of the island’s identity with “Davis-Land” the Dutch named it “Paasch-Eyland” – that is: Easter Island – to honor the Christian feast.

For the Dutch crew landing on the shores of this island, as well as the ensuing skirmish with its inhabitants, remained but one of several new discoveries and adventures waiting for them in continuation of their circumnavigation! Thus “Easter Island” remained but a few notes in the logbook of Roggeveen, and ultimately a mere “footnote” in the rapidly developing discovery of the Pacific oceans’ surface. Although Roggeveen describes the expedition’s experiences on the shores of Easter Island in his account – published 6 years later – only a limited number of educated readers at that time took note of the small island’s existence. Neither a more popular description of Roggeveen’s circumnavigation by the German Carl Friedrich Behrens (1738) nor later reports by the famous Captain James Cook (1777) or the unfortunate French navigator La Pérouse (1787), not mentioning the increase of naval expeditions

Correspondingly, somewhat more frequent contacts with the islanders in the 19th century were short and became increasingly disagreeable for the islanders – even hostile. Curiosity of the visitors as to the local people’s life, their culture and customs, above all the mysterious human stone-images, did not really develop until the last decades of the 19th century. In the decades after 1870 a more pronounced interest in the culture and antiquity of Easter Island slowly led to more frequent visits of a different nature than those by the whalers or earlier circumnavigators. To some extend this was triggered-off by European missionaries who first established Christian faith on the island in the 1860s. First reports on the native islanders themselves, their origins, their ancestry, or on the archeology of Easter Island appeared in the last decades of the 19th century. Easter Island, and it’s fancy stone images, slowly became a better known entity for an educated international public! By that time more than a century and a half had passed since the first Dutch contact!

Publicity of Easter Island intensifies in the 20th century. Expeditions of several months’ duration, dedicated to archeological excavation, or the study of the islanders’ origins, their mysterious pictogram “writings” on wooden slabs, as well as researches into their history, social structures, beliefs and customs by and by created the foundation of our today’s knowledge of Easter Island culture and history.

Today we encounter a vast amount of literature on Easter Island. Respective publications on all possible aspects of Easter Island, from mystery-novels to serious scientific reports, soared from the second half of the 20th century onwards. Quite in contrast to this we have but a few dozen or so publications partially or entirely focused on Easter Island for the long time-span between 1722 (Roggeveen’s report) until 1962 (Heyerdahl’s publications).

And yet it is just the “historic” aspect of the “early account” which fascinates us today. The early reports of Roggeveen, or of the Spanish expedition of Gonzales y Haedo, of Cook, or of La Pérouse today permit us to take a “look-back” into a still largely pre-European existence of the Easter-Islanders. Roggeveen’s soldiers on shore of Easter Island still were able to observe the veneration of stone-statues (“moai”) by islanders, the Spanish troops witnessed the “writing” of the natives (at the occasion of counter-signing the annexation of the island by the Spanish crown). Cook’s crew saw the first toppled stone-images and numerous skeletons all around the moai-platforms, and La Pérouse believed to have observed a first “moral decline” amongst the islanders. With these old accounts in our hands we may ask: How did the islanders appear to the European soldier or sailor? What were the role and importance of the stone-giants to the natives? Were these stone-statues already scattered on the ground, or did they still stand on their original platforms? How did the islanders dress or dwell at that time? What did they eat? What ancient rites and beliefs did they follow?

Such questions are important today because in the course of the first decades of the 19th century most ancient customs of previous centuries disappeared forever. The early accounts of European navigators, until the mid-19th century, at least give us a glimpse at what later so rapidly was lost under European influence.

Even slightly later accounts, after the missionaries had exercised their profound influence on traditional ways of life and had abolished traditional beliefs in the latter half of the 1860s, again give us insights into a phase of rapid change in the island’s history. Also these decades of change quickly passed and gave way to yet another history: that of the beginning 20th century with its growing academic concern with the archeology and history of Easter Island. These accounts of the late 1800s give us the fascination of the first photographic pictures taken on Easter Island, the first archeological surveys, as well as the first very personal experiences of “life with the islanders”.

And again, all this was superseded by the first important Easter Island publications of the 20th century – devoted to analyses of the ancestry of the islanders, their origin, the archeology of their megalithic monuments, their system of “writing” (rongo-rongo) and so on. It were these scientific undertakings of the first half of the 20th century which formed the body of our today’s knowledge of Easter Island and it’s ancient culture!

It is to this more limited number of “old” literary Easter Island sources that we shall direct our attention in the following lines. Any serious scientific collection of books and articles on Easter Island must include these early sources.

We already mentioned Jacob Roggeveen as first European to visit Easter Island. His report “Tweehal奂ge Reizey rondom de Wereld” appeared in print at Dordrecht, Netherlands, in 1728. In spite of the relative popularity of reports of this kind we may safely assume the number of printed copies of this first edition to have been less than a few hundred. However, later editions of his report followed, even translations into French and German.

By mere accident it was a German corporal, chief of the small number of soldiers accompanying the admiral on his circumnavigation, by the name of Carl Friedrich Behrens who was the first European to set foot on Easter Island soil! Behrens later wrote a book – naturally in German language – which was to become quite popular by the title: “Der wohlver- sucht Südländer”. It appeared –published by Behrens himself – at Leipzig in 1738. This book quickly became so popular that a French edition came out but a year later in La Haye and turned out to be a success. In 1923 the German Brockhaus-Company published a new edition of Behrens’ book (edited by the ethnologist Hans Hirschke) under the same original title. Thus, Roggeveen and Behrens today have to be seen as our two earliest sources on Easter Island.

After the appearance of these two accounts it took another 100 years before the actual logbook of Roggeveen was published under the title “Dagverhael der Ontdekkings-Reis van Mr. Jacob Roggeveen” in 1838 at Middelburg, Roggeveen’s birth-place. And yet much later, in 1908, the first edition in English appeared in the series of the Hakluyt-Society’s publications, carefully edited by Bolton Glanville Corney. In this publication Corney joined Roggeveen’s log-book with the documents of the second European visit to Easter Island by the Spanish vessels “San Lorenzen” and “Santa Rosalia” under command of captain Felipe Gonzalez y Haedo in 1770.

Indeed, an islander who might have witnessed the visit of the Dutch ships at Easter 1722 as a small child would have become an old white-haired person before any European ship again came into view of the islanders. By November 1770 the two vessels of the Spanish colonial administration of the Viceroyalty of Peru anchored at the shores of Easter Island. The Spaniards were not looking for Easter Island – of which they probably knew next to nothing! Rather, they were looking for the same “Davis Land” which already the Dutch had been trying to locate! Ignorant of the fact that “Paasch-Eyland” actually was the island they had hit-upon they named it “Isla de San Carlos” and took possession of it in the name of the Spanish crown. The pious commander had three crucifixes planted on top of three island hills. A contract of annexation of the island’s territory by Spain was dutifully signed by the Spanish.
Guest article: Dr. Jasper Köcke

The famous British explorer James Cook visited Easter Island a mere four years later. In March 1774 he steered a course towards this island in order to replenish his supplies of wood, water, and foodstuffs. In spite of the sobering experience that this was hardly possible considering the poor resources on the island Cook nevertheless sent a group of his soldiers and sailors, accompanied by some of the officers as well as the naturalists, ashore to learn more about the population, their possible horticulture, as well as their livestock.

The naturalists were a father-and-son team: Johann Reinhold Forster and his son Georg. The latter wrote a colorful and informative account of his and his father’s excursion – covering quite a bit of the island’s territory. Back in Europe Georg later published a famous account of his circumnavigation as Cook’s junior naturalist under the title of “Reise um die Welt” (Berlin, 1778/80, Haude & Spener). Just a few years ago this wonderful book was re-edited (Frankfurt, 2007, Eichborn Verlag). This re-edition contains a large number of the Forsters’ beautiful colored illustrations of natural-history specimens – here published for the first time! Georg’s detailed account of the Easter Island visit may be read in this new edition as “Nachricht von Oster-Eyland und unseern Aufenthalt derselben” (pp 307-325).

Cook’s account (the only one written by himself) was first published two years after his return to England, 1777, in London (Strahan & Cadell) in two volumes, including 64 charts, maps, and plates. He vividly describes Easter Island, based on the reports of the visitors he sent ashore. The accounts of Cook’s three voyages immediately became so popular that several editions as well as translations into many languages followed throughout the decades after his death in 1779. Of great interest are the accompanying plates: for the first time Easter Islanders – a man and a woman – as well as a scenery showing a couple of stone-statues (“moai”) appeared “in picture” for a larger reading-audience.

After Cook’s tragic death in 1779 the leading European seafaring nations, in spite of admiring Cook’s attainments, considered that not all of the aims of the British circumnavigations under Cook had been fulfilled. Britain’s important rival, Louis XVI King of France, decided to send out yet another large expedition to finalize what Cook had not been able to complete! In 1785 two well equipped vessels, the “Astrolabe” and the “Boussole” under command of Jean François Galaup de La Pérouse left France. By April 1786, only 12 years after the last European contact, Easter Island came into view, the French anchored, went ashore and, as also had done the previous European visitors, sent a group of soldiers across the island to reconnoiter. The French stayed ashore for only one day! La Pérouse later wrote that he noticed somewhat of a demoralization among the islanders. He was as though they had gone through hardships of nature or warfare. Also La Pérouse’s account contains a beautiful plate depicting a group of gallant French surrounded by (mostly female) Easter Islanders! Also shown in this plate is a moai with its typical hair-knot balancing on its head – a view which later visitors did not have anymore!

La Pérouse was cautious enough to send interim-reports of the different stages of his circumnavigation back to Paris by help of French vessels met at different harbors touched by the Astrolabe and Boussole. It was thus possible to later publish his accounts even though the La Pérouse-expedition vanished without any trace two years later, in 1788, after a last sojourn at Botany Bay. By 1797 the available parts of his account finally were edited by L.A. Milet-Mureau and published under the title “Voyage de La Pérouse Autour du Monde” (Paris, Imprimerie de la République, 1797) in four quarto volumes and an atlas of charts, maps, and plates. It is by this fortunate coincidence that today we can relieve also this short – visit by the French expedition.

Again quoting the Hakluyt-Series: today we have a detailed and scientifically commented edition in English-language of La Pérouse’s account. Not of the edition by Milet-Mureau of 1797 (whose wording had to pay tribute to the ideals of the French revolution) but rather of the actual reports written by La Pérouse himself and sent to France by help of other ships. These authentic reports (the same which also Milet-Mureau had worked upon) were located by the end of the 1970s by a French graduate student in the Archives Nationales. They were edited by John Dunmore in two volumes in the Hakluyt publications for the year 1994. We can here read the French officer De Langlé’s report of his excursion on Easter Island on pp 53-74 for the first time in English language!

These four European visits to Easter Island in the 18th century today are our only sources which permit a glimpse back to the still largely pre-European history and way of life of the Easter-Islanders. This pre-European phase had produced the famous stone-images which today are the hallmark of this small eastern Polynesian island. Yet this phase was already nearing its end when Cook visited the island: the English were the first to see some of the stone-images, the “moai” topped, their hair-knots on the ground, human skeletons scattered around? What had happened? La Pérouse must have observed, that some mainlanders had some contact with the islanders. Today we know that the end of the 18th century brought many decades of internecine feuds or even warfare among the different leading family-groups of islanders. Was this due to increasing lack of sweet-water, or of wooden resources? We still do not yet know this today with absolute certainty. Fact is that the old customs, above all most of the stone-monuments, were abolished, toppled, destroyed. This destructive development must have lasted well into the mid-nineteenth century on the island. Nevertheless, visitors who came to Easter Island in the early decades of the 19th century still were able to notice some of the old cultural traits. And there were many visitors. Today we may safely assume that there were at least 50 contacts between 1800 and 1860 – compared to but four visits in the 18th century! Of these many were whalers tempted to replenish their supplies by means of the island’s resources. While this hardly was possible the contacts became increasingly burdensome to the islanders. Even hostilities quickly ensued. Hails of stones greeted even more peaceful visitors.

Among the latter were the more serious exploring expeditions: Lisiansky (1804), Kotzebue (1815), Beechey (1825), or Dupetit-Thouars (1838) to name but a few who came across Easter Island during the first half of the 19th century. Their accounts, still to be found in the antiquarian booktrade or auctions of today, reflect what we mentioned before: life had become more turbulent to the islanders! We have a beautiful report by the naturalist who accompanied Chamisso’s A trained zoologist and botanist, Chamisso was hired as naturalist by Kotzebue, wrote a contributi-

On the island’s population became more and more doomed! In 1862 Peruvian slave-raiders abducted about 1500 islanders to mainland South America, mainly the Guano-islands! Here most of the islanders were killed or sold into slavery. When an international uproar, initiated by the Catholic community in Peru, Chile, and Tahiti – even including the Vatican – finally resulted in the repatriation of the islanders back...
home, fate struck again: among the few individuals (less than two dozen) who finally set foot again on the island some were infected by a disease which killed most of the island’s population. By 1877 only 110 islanders still were alive!

A decade earlier, immediately after the tragic slave-raid and the beginning repatriation of the islanders also the first European missionaries arrived on the island. Brother Eugene Eyraud, lay-brother of the order of the “Sacer Coeurs de Pieus SS.CC.” arrived on Easter Island in 1872 after a short interruption, he was to spend the rest of his life with the islanders. From 1866 onwards eventually three more missionary- ers arrived to support Eyraud, who died in 1868. The missionaries’ influence on traditional island-culture was devastating: all islanders were turned Christians by 1868, much of their culture and habits of day-to-day life had been drastically changed by the missionaries. While this may have softened the internecine feuds and turmoil of island-life of previous decades, it never- less meant for the islanders a complete destruction of their past! One example of this is the missionaries’ treatment of many wooden slabs which the islanders of previous generations had covered with pictographs – the so-called “rongo-ronga” slabs. These were burned by the missionaries. Only very few were sent to the Bishop of Tahiti, Tepano Jaussen, who later sent a few of these rongo-ronga slabs to different museums and the superiors of the SS.CC in France and Belgium.

It is due to Bishop Jaussen’s intense interest in the island’s history that he collected some of the rarest and most desired early Easter Island maps, was published in 1883 in the Prussian “Marine-Verordnungssblatt” – a publication almost exclusively read by military-officials only! Fortunately a small amount of off-prints of this report were printed for use in specific research-institutions and universities. Today Geiser’s report is one of the rarest Easter Island-accounts and even today copies are available at libraries worldwide. Hardly any copy ever finds its way to the antiquarian book-trade!

Despite this, many accounts and reports have been published in the name of Easter Island. The first account of the Mohican’s endeavor was in the form of a scientific expedition to Easter Island. Captain Gana’s report “Te Pito te Henua, Or a Journey across the island by a group of the vessel’s sailors and the岛ers” (Journal of the Ethnological Society, 1870, pp 371-377). Two years later the Chilian vessel “O’Higgins” came to the island. Captain Gana wrote a detailed report in Spanish (“Descripción Científica de la Isla de Pascua”) which later was translated into French by admiral de la Pérouse and also was Lapelin who barely two years after the arrival of the “O’Higgins” himself came to Easter Island. On board of his ship “La Flore” a young naval cadet, Julien Vianu. Vianu spent a few days roaming the island, spending the nights with the islanders in their traditional stone-houses. By the pseudonym Pierre Lotti he later was to become a widely read poet. Vianu/Lotti wrote a fascinating and very personal report of his visit to Easter Island. Also Chilean historians and journalists occasionally began to look at Easter Island “from a distance”. Ramón Ballesteros, journalist and politician, wrote yet another article on the situation of the island at that time. Fortune has it, that barely a generation later, in 1903, the Chilean historian Ignacio Silva edited the three reports by Gana, Vianu/Loti, and Ballesteros in a tiny booklet under the title “La Isla de Pascua” in a series on the history of different parts of Chile. This extremely scarce little book today ranks amongst the rarest and most desired Easter Island sources!

Only a few years later, in 1877, another French ship, the “La Chausée” anchored right off Tahiti. The Mohican received orders to visit Easter Island basically with the same aim as that of the Prussian mission of 1872! The Mohican’s paymaster, William Thomson, was in charge of the expedition. Alongside the Mohican medical assistant, Linton Palmer, published several short accounts of this visit and, thus, introduced Easter Island to a growing reading community in England (Journal of the Ethnological Society, 1870, pp 371-377). TEM

During the 1870s a new social science – “ethnology” or “cultural anthropology” – slowly established itself at the universities in Europe and the US. In Germany a leading ethnologist, Adolf Bastian, already in the 1870s occasionally had approached the Prussian marine-authorities with the request to facilitate ethnological research also on far-away islands in the Pacific ocean. Fascinated by the megalithic stone monuments of Easter Island he intensified his petitions particularly with regard to a scientific evaluation of the antiquities of this island by any Prussian marine-vehicle available in the larger area. By 1882 his initiative came to bear fruit. A Prussian marine-vehicle under command of captain/lieutenant Geiser was anchored at Easter Island in September 1882. Paymaster Weisser was ordered by Geiser to undertake a reconnaissance-tour across the island, to get in contact with the population, to examine some stone-images, and to report on any antiquities of interest. Geiser’s report, illustrated with plates and maps, was published in 1883 in the Prussian “Marine-Verordnungssblatt” – a publication almost exclusively read by military-officials only! Fortunately a small amount of off-prints of this report were printed for use in specific research-institutions and universities. Today Geiser’s report is one of the rarest Easter Island-accounts and even today copies are available at libraries worldwide. Hardly any copy ever finds its way to the antiquarian book-trade!

Also in the U.S. interest in the culture and antiquity of Easter Island increased. Above all the prosperous Smithsonian Institute used its academic standing and importance to press for a U.S. visit to Easter Island. At that time the Navy Department by pure coincidence had the USS “Mohican” anchored right off Tahiti. The Mohican received orders to visit Easter Island basically with the same aim as that of the Prussian mission of 1872! The Mohican’s paymaster, William Thomson, was in charge of the expedition. Alongside the Mohican medical assistant, Linton Palmer, published several short accounts of this visit and, thus, introduced Easter Island to a growing reading community in England (Journal of the Ethnological Society, 1870, pp 371-377). TEM

Almost by accident, only and due to the ensuing of World-War I in Europe in 1914, a British couple, Katherine Routledge and her husband William Scoresby, were forced to take refuge on Easter Island. Embarked on a “tour around the world” in their yacht “Mana” they settled for an overall period of 15 months on the island. Not only was this a time of internal upheaval directed against the Chilean administrators and representatives of a “Society” on the island, but it was also the time when the last islanders who still had witnessed some of the old customs of mid-nineteenth-century gradually died away.
Katherine Routledge still was able (as was Knoche before her) to interview a few of these individuals and thus obtain valuable information as to the bygone times. Routledge also organized the first archeological examinations of some of the stone-statues applying modern archeological excavation techniques. She published her informative account and narrative of the sojourn on Easter Island in 1919 under the title: “The Mystery of Easter Island” (London, 1919, Sifton, Praed & Co.). Routledge’s book is one of the most important early 20th century sources on the past of Easter Island.

It took another 20 years before a second well prepared and organized archeological expedition -this time a Franco-Belgian endeavor- came to Easter Island from July 1934 to January 1935. The archeologist Henri Lavachery and the ethnologist Alfred Métraux spent 6 months on the island – initially to do research on the Easter Island “scripture” (the rongo-rongo pictographs) as well as to do substantial ethnographic research. When they were unable to locate any of the old rongo-rongo slabs, research quickly turned to the examination of the petroglyphs which were to be found at various rock-formations on the island. Lavachery published a seminal work on these petroglyphs in 1939, as well as more a general account of the expedition under the title “Ile de Paques” (Paris, 1935), whereas Alfred Métraux wrote the first substantial ethnographic monograph on Easter Island by the title: “Ethnology of Easter Island” (London, 1940). Both, Lavachery’s work, as well as Métraux’s profound study today belong to the “classics” of the early Easter Island sources!

Almost at the same time when the Franco-Belgian expedition began its research one of the most important persons for the population of Easter Island in the 20th century also set foot on shore at Hanga Roa. The island’s small capital village: Father Sebastian Englert. Englert became such a dominant figure of Easter Island that Thor Heyerdahl, organizer and financier of the well-equipped Norwegian Archeological Easter Island Expedition, greeted him as the “un-crowned king” of Easter Island in 1955, when Heyerdahl’s ship arrived at Hanga Roa. Heyerdahl’s expedition, which lasted from September 1955 to March 1956, continued in the same archeological vein which Routledge and Lavachery had initiated. In the years 1959/60, again at Hanga Roa, Heyerdahl and his team of scientists had the same goal: to prove the ancient existence of a prehistoric society. These investigations had been completely unfruitful. A fall of all previous hypotheses of a prehistoric culture on Easter Island had endangered complete family-clans.

Heyerdahl’s numerous publications, above all the “Reports of the Norwegian Expedition to Easter Island and the East Pacific” (Stockholm, 1961-65), co-edited by Ferdon as well as his popular book “Aku Aku” (various publication places, 1957/58) and later publications on “The Archeology of Easter Island” or “The Art of Easter Island” may be seen as the bedrock of our today’s knowledge of Easter Island’s culture and history. The publications we have mentioned in the foregoing text may be seen as basis of all more recent books and articles on Easter Island. Any public scientific library text may be seen as basis of all more recent books and articles on Easter Island. Any public scientific library

* Guest article: Dr. Jasper Köcke

He published yet another of the important earlier sources on Easter Island under the title: “La Tierra de Hotu Matu’a” (Santiago de Chile, 1866). In 1940, accompanied by an extract from Mynheer Jacob Roggeveen’s official log of his Discovery of and visit to Easter Island in 1722. Tehrhold, Hakkert Society, 1908.


Métraux, Alfred: Ethnology of Easter Island, Honolulu, 1940.


Sfrin, G. Tagebund der Entdeckungs-Reise von Mr. Jacob Roggeveen, Middelburg, 1838.

Sfrin, Jr. Dr. Jasper Köcke

Köcke, however, was not only priest and was to spend almost the entire rest of his life was priest of the order Friars of the Minor Capuchin order. In 1919 he joined the staff of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in Germany at the end of 1983. In 1981 he was accepted as Junior Professional Officer by the United Nations Development Program and the United Nations Industrial Development Orga


During his 30 years with the GTZ (today GIZ) Köcke focussed his work on the transfer of professional know-how to developing countries – particularly so in South-East Asia, the Far East, as well as Latin-America. He closely cooperated with Indigenous Organizations in developing civil societies above all in most Latin-American countries.

In recent years Köcke’s ethnological interests focused increasingly on so-called marginal areas, for example, the – today nearly extinct- native populations of Tierra del Fuego, the cultures in Papua New Guinea and Irian-Jaya, or the Aborigines of Central Australia.

Ever since his youth Köcke also had an outspoken interest and fascination with Rapa Nui (Easter Island) which he finally visited in 2010. Today he is an avid observer of Rapa-Nui political development – which includes self-administration, tourism-management, ecological issues as well as cultural heritage.

Drs. Dr. Jasper Köcke

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norities in developing countries. These minorities, from Köcke’s perspective, today face numerous problems in rapidly developing modern nation-states. Problems of legal-, economic-, cultural-, or political dimensions, to name but a few. A professional career in an international setting, related to international cooperation, thus seemed tailor-suited.

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Volcano Kano Kau
Roggeveen's voyage into the Pacific. Behrens' scarce narrative tells the story of one of the most significant of the Dutch voyages, ranking with those of Le Maire, Schouten and Tasman. Roggeveen set out to rediscover the part of Terra Australis which Quiros had led the exploring world to believe existed, but in fact added substantially to the Dutch record of Polynesian discoveries, with Easter Island and Samoa described here for the first time.

Roggeveen crossed the Pacific from the east at the head of a three-vessel expedition with largely commercial objectives. He specifically sought the fabled continent of Terra Australis, which the English privateer Captain Edward Davis claimed to have sighted in 1680: It did not materialise, but on 5 April 1722 Roggeveen landed at a previously uncharted island which he named Easter Island. They were the first recorded European visitors to the island and the uncharted island which he named Easter Island. They were the first recorded European visitors to the island and the

Apart from a conspicuously rare pamphlet published in 1727, and the equally rare Dutch Tweejaarige reyze rondom de wereld of 1728, this was the first major notice of this important voyage, not only a substantial Pacific voyage in its own right, but one which provided a direct stimulus for the search for the Southern Continent. Behrens' account of the Roggeveen voyage was originally published in German in 1735, but later released to complete 'one of the last of the great Dutch circumnavigations' (Howgego).

Although Roggeveen's voyage failed in its primary objective, it represented an important achievement in terms of its own discoveries. The Behrens account had some effect on subsequent voyages, including providing strong motivation for the authorities who sent Captain Cook out on his first voyage forty-six years later. 'Sunday 13th (March 1774). In stretching in for the land we discovered people and those Moniments or Idols mentioned by the

Sehr seltene deutsche Ausgabe.

Band 1:
I. Sir Franz Drakens Fahrt um die Welt.
II. Des Hauptmann Thomas Cavendish Umschiffung der Erde.
III. Des Hauptmann Dampiers Reisen.

Band 2: Überwiegend mit Berichten von Freibeutern und Seeräubern.
I. Des Cowley Fahrt um die Welt.
II. Auszug aus einem holländischen Berichte von Roggeveens Entdeckung der Osterinsel.
III. Bericht von Entdeckung des Davilandes.
IV. Die Reisen des Hauptmanns (Edward) Cooke.
V. Hauptmann Clippertons Fahrt um die Welt.
VI. Des Hauptmanns Shelvocks Fahrt um die Welt.
VII. Ansons Fahrt um die Welt.
VIII. Anhang. Leben des Admirals Anson.

Im ersten Band wird die Weltereise des Francis Drake und seine Kaperfahrten dargestellt. Weiters die wichtigen Reisen von Cavendish und Dampier.

Der zweite Beitrag im 2. Band ist eine Schilderung aus Roggeveens Bericht über seine Weltumsegung. Bei dieser Fahrt entdeckte er 1722 die Osterinsel (Rapa Nui), sein Begleiter Behrens gab einen Reisebericht in Deutsch heraus. Hier haben wir einen Ausschnitt aus Roggeveens auf holländisch erschienenen Berichten in deutscher Übersetzung. – Sehr selten!

Der dritte Beitrag beginnt mit einer Beschreibung des Erdbebens und des darauf folgenden Tsunami, wodurch am 28. Oktober 1746 die Peruanische Hafenstadt Callao zerstört wurde.

Schatzungsweise 5000 Menschen wurden getötet, nur 200 Einwohner überlebten die Naturkatastrophe. – Engelmann I, 96.

Bibliography: Borba de Moraes, 95, Hill, 99, James Ford Bell, 8149, Kruepelen, 70. O'Reilly-Reitman, 230; Sahin, 4379; Taylor, 77, Tiele, 933n.

**EUR 11.500,–**

**EUR 12.000,–**
COOK SEGELT ZUR OSTERINSEL UND IST WENIG BEGEISTERT
(MARRA, J.) – COOK’S 2. REISE
Journal of the Resolution’s voyage, in 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775. On discovery to the Southern Hemisphere.


EUR 12.000,-


Während seiner zweiten Südseeexpedition besuchte James Cook vom 13. bis 17. März 1774 die Osterinsel. Er war von der Insel nicht begeistert und schrieb in sein Logbuch: „Keine Nation wird je für die Ehre kämpfen, die Osterinsel erforscht zu haben, zumal es kaum ein anderes Eiland im Meer gibt, welches weniger Erfrischungen bietet und Annehmlichkeiten für die Schifffahrt denn dieses.“ – James Cook: Logbücher der Reisen 1768–1779

Dennoch brachte der Aufenthalt wesentliche Erkenntnisse über die geologische Beschaffenheit, die Vegetation, die Bevölkerung und die Statuen (die in der Mehrzahl bereits umgeworfen waren). Wir verdanken sie dem deutschen Naturforscher Johann Reinhold Forster und seinem Sohn Johann Georg Adam Forster, die an der Cook-Expedition teilnahmen. Reinhold Forster fertigte auch erste Skizzen der Moais, die, als Kupferstiche in damals typischer romantischer Überhöhung veröffentlicht, in den Salons Aufsehen erregten. (Wikipedia)

This rare account of Cook’s second voyage was published surreptitiously eighteen months before Cook’s official narrative. It records many incidents omitted by Cook and gives the reasons which caused Sir Joseph Banks and his twelve assistants to withdraw from the expedition at the last moment. Marra was a gunner’s mate on the Resolution. He was an Irishman whom Cook had picked up in Batavia during the first voyage. Marra made an unsuccessful attempt to desert at Tahiti on May 14, 1774. Marra probably supplied material from his private journal which was put into shape by some literary person in the pay of the publisher Newbery” (Hill coll. 60). The plates include the first views of the Antarctic.

Am 13.3.1774 landeten James Cook und die Forsters auf der Osterinsel und blieben dort vermutlich eine Woche. Über die Moais schreibt Forster:

„Wir erkundigten uns bei einigen, die am verständigsten zu sein schienen, was diese Steine zu bedeuten hätten und soviel wir aus ihrer Antwort schließen und erraten konnten, müssen es Denkmäler ihrer Arics oder Könige sein. Also ist das gemauerte Piedestal vermutlich als der Begräbnisplatz anzusehen, und bei genauer Untersuchung fanden wir wirklich nicht weit davon eine Menge Menschengebeine, welches dann unsere Vermutung bestätigte.“

„Selbst die sorgfältigsten Nachforschungen waren noch nicht hinreichend gewesen, ein gewisses Licht über die bewunderungswürdigen Gegenstände zu verbreiten, die wir auf dieser Insel antrafen. Was besonders die riesenmäßigen Monumente anlangt, die hier überall so häufig sind und doch die Kräfte der gegenwärtigen Einwohner gar weit zu übertreffen scheinen, so muss man wohl billig annehmen, dass sie Überbleibsel vormaliger besseren Zeiten sind.“

James Cook schrieb über die Osterinsel:

„This is undoubtedly the same Island as was seen by Roggewein in Apr 1722 altho’ the description given of it by the author of that Voyage does by no means correspond with it now, it may also be the same as was seen by Captain Davin in 1606, but this is not altogether so certain. In short if this is not the land and if it is not then his discovery cannot lie far from the continent of America for this Latitude seems to have been very well explored between the Meridian of 80 and 110, Captain Carteret carries it much farther, but his Track seems to be a little too far to the South. Had I found fresh Water on this isle I intended to have determined this point by looking for the low sandy isle mentioned by Wafer, but as I did not, and had a long run to make before I was assured of getting any and being at the same time in want of refreshments, I declined it, as a small delay might have been attended with bad consequence. 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 Shippin 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."


EUR 5.500,–
The voyage of La Pérouse is “one of the most important scientific explorations ever undertaken to the Pacific and the west coast of North America”. In 1783 the French government resolved to send an expedition to the Pacific to complete Captain James Cook’s unfinished work, and in particular to explore the passages in the Bering Sea, which had been a mystery to Europeans since the sixteenth century. King Louis XVI himself took a hand in drafting the plan and itinerary, a copy of which is in the Municipal Library at Rouen, France, and when La Pérouse was selected to lead the fleet gave him an audience before he sailed.

La Pérouse and de Langle commanding the “Boussole” and the Astrolabe, the expedition left Brest on 1 August 1785 making for Brazil. Doubling Cape Horn La Pérouse refitted in Chile, and then sailed to the Sandwich Islands. On the way to these islands the two ships passed by Easter Island. On April 10th, 1786, La Pérouse anchored off Hanga o’Hou on the island’s north-eastern shore. The French remained only for one day ashore Easter Island and continued their route to nightfall the Sandwich Islands. From these, La Pérouse steered towards Alaska, where he finally turned south exploring and surveying the coast as far as California.

After a short refit at Monterey, he sailed across the Pacific, discovered uncharted islands, and visited Macao and Manila. After six weeks re-provisioning and refreshing he left on 10 April 1787 to survey the coasts and territories north of Korea, which had been described and commented on by Christian missionaries. He sailed up the Gulf of Tarkty, naming several points on both its shores and learned that Sakhalin was an island. In September he put in to Kamchatka to replenish his supplies.

From Kamchatka he dispatched an officer, de Lesseps, overland to Paris with accounts of his discoveries, while he turned south making for New Holland. In December, at Tutuala, Samoa, which Bougainville had called the Navigator Islands when he explored them in 1768, natives suddenly attacked a party from the Astrolabe seeking water and killed de Langle and eleven others. La Pérouse left without taking reprisals and sailed through the Pacific Islands to Norfolk Island and to Botany Bay. He was sighted off the coast there on 24 January 1788 but had weather prevented his entering the bay for two days. By then Governor Arthur Phillip had sailed to Port Jackson, but John Hunter had remained with the Sirius and the transports, and assisted La Pérouse to anchor. La Pérouse established a camp on the northern shore, now called after him, and maintained good relations with the English during his six-week stay.

La Pérouse left Botany Bay on 10 March and was never heard of again. This great French expedition vanished without leaving any trace for the next 40 years. Three years after the disappearance of the two vessels, in the year 1791, the French government undertook the effort to equip another expedition under Bruny d’Entrecasteaux to look for survivors of the La Pérouse expedition. However, this search –by itself an important expedition- did not bear any results as to the whereabouts of the La Pérouse ships and crews.

Vgl. Ferguson 251, Hill 972; Lada-Mocarski 52; Sabin 38960; Smith 2109; Staton & Tremaine/TPL 596; Streeter sale VI:3493; Wickersham 6611; Zamorano 80, 49.

La Pérouse wrote about the Moais:

“All and every Denkmäler, welche dermalen dort vorhanden sind, scheinen in den ältesten Zeiten verfertigt zu sein. Sie stehen insgesamt auf Moais, wie aus dem Umstande erhellet, dass man um und neben denselben eine große Menge Totenknochen wahrnimmt. Statt jener Kolossen errichtet man heutiges Tages kleine pyramidenförmige Steinhaufen, deren Spitze mit einer Art Kalkwasser angestrichen werden. Diese Art von Mausoleen, dergleichen ein einzelner Mann in Zeit von einer Stunde zu fertigen imstande ist, trifft man besonders am Seeufer häufig an.”

“These kolosalischen Bildsäulen, denen man es ansieht, dass dieses Volk in der Bildhauerkunst noch keine großen Fortschritte gemacht hat, bestehen aus einer vulkanischen Steinart, die den Naturforschern unter der Benennung „japillie“ bekannt ist. Diese Steine sind so fein und so leicht, dass einige von Cooks Offizieren auf den Einfall kamen, sie für ein Kunstprodukt zu halten, das aus einer Art von Mörtel verfertigt und nachher an der Luft immer härter werde.”
This is one of the scarcest early scientific publications on Easter Island. It appeared only a few years after the small island had been christianized by the French lay-brother Eugene Eyraud (from 1864 onwards) and before the American paymaster Thomson published the first photographic images of the island, its people, scenery, as well as some of the famous moai-sculptures (1889). The German anthropologist Adolf Bastian had requested the Prussian Marine authorities around 1882 to call on this tiny island in the Pacific in order to advance scientific studies into its history, its sculptures and the mysterious “rongo-rongo” wooden tablets with hieroglyphs. By 1883 the ship “Hyäne” under command of captain Geiseler fulfilled this order. On his return Geiseler presented a detailed report with ample illustrative documentation to the Prussian authorities. The recipients were but a few Marine-officers, administrative officials, dignitaries of Prussian militia, representatives of trade-companies, and scientists. The small, yet highly important, publication was not intended for a larger public audience and appeared for this reason in a small number of copies. Today probably the scarcest Easter-Island item. In spite of its age it has not lost its value as an early important document on Easter-Island at the end of the 19th century. EUR 9,500,-
THE MOHICAN EXPEDITION OF 1886
HOUGH, WALTER
Notes on the Archeology and Ethnology of Easter Island.


EUR 1.200,-

This article by Walter Hough essentially is an account of the results of the “Mohican”-visit to Easter Island in 1886 (of which we have the exhaustive report by paymaster William Thomson as well as the account by Cooke). It is interesting in the fact that Hough’s article appeared almost a couple of years earlier than Thomson’s authentic account which did not appear before 1891. It may thus be seen as the first account of the famous “Mohican”- visit to Easter Island, albeit not written by someone who actually took part in this landing!

For the American audience the visit to Easter Island of the U.S. Ship “Mohican” in 1886 resulted in the earliest first-hand knowledge concerning this isolated Pacific island! Thomson, as paymaster, and Cooke as surgeon, reported from their own first-hand experience on the island. Hough, anthropologist and archeologist, undertook the effort to give a summary-report before it would take “too long” for the actual participants’ accounts to appear in press.

THE MOHICAN EXPEDITION OF 1886
THOMSON, WILLIAM J.
Te Pito te Henua, or Easter Island.


EUR 2.500,-


Next to Geiseler’s study one of the rarest Easter-Island publication at all. Monsignore Jaussen (Polynesian name: Tepano) was bishop of Tahiti in the 1880s and 1890s. Since a small number of Easter-Islanders had fled to Tahiti in the early 1880s bishop Jaussen became interested in their original culture, above all their mysterious glyphs on wooden boards (“rongo-rongo”) interpreted as an early “writing system”. As a matter of fact Jaussen’s little booklet has to be seen as the first effort at all to deal with rongo-rongo from a scientific point of view. Up until today (21st century) the issue of role and importance of the rongo-rongo boards in the original Easter-Island culture remains unsettled. Jaussen managed to obtain several rongo-rongo boards from the Pascuenses and undertook the effort to transmit them to leading museums worldwide. The value of this little (and somewhat shabby) publication can hardly be overestimated and represents one of the gem-stones of each collection of early Easter-Island literature. Extremely scarce!

EUR 5.500,–

Report by the Surgeon of the U.S. Ship "Mohican" which visited Easter Island in December 1886. Next to the substantial report by paymaster William Thomson this is the second authentic account by a participant of the Mohican expedition. Our catalogue contains altogether three accounts of the Mohican visit: the report by Thomson, the present account by Cooke, as well as an early general article, drawing on the results of the Mohican visit, by Walter Hough who was not a participant of the Mohican-expedition. These three reports reflect the increasing interest of the US-public in this small island in the Pacific. At the same time they represent valuable information of a phase of rapid change on Easter Island, its population and culture!

EUR 900,–

EUR 4.800,–

Next to Geiseler’s German-language publication of 1883 and Thomson’s account in English on Easter Island (1889) probably one of the most profound early reports on Rapa Nui. As stated: extremely scarce and possibly the most searched-after volume of the Biblioteca-series.

Table of contents at end of volume.
Account of an expedition in 1911 to Easter Island, sent out by the Chilean government in order to establish a station for meteorological and seismic research on the island. The leader, Walter Knoche (1881 – 1945), gives a general account of the expedition – years after several results had been published in individual articles in various scientific journals. A scarce and sought-after work on Easter Island.

The importance of Knoche’s expedition in 1911 rests on the fact that he was able to meet two old individuals who still remembered the pre-missionary times on the island, i.e. the years before 1864 – when Eyraud arrived on the island. Knoche was able to interview these two old people about traditional religious rites, myths, music and dances as well as pre-Christian customs and traditions. Three years later, in 1914, when Catherine Routledge arrived at Easter Island, these elderly informants had died. Thus Knoche was the last to interview the last survivors of a bygone time on Rapa Nui.
In their private yacht “Mana” Katherine Routledge arrived with her husband at Easter Island on 29th March 1914. Stranded on this island by the First World War, the couple spent almost 15 months—which Katherine spent entirely on the island whereas her husband undertook a few trips back to Chile during these months to purchase needed food and further equipment. The couple established two base camps, one in the Mataveri area, the other one at the slope of Rano Raraku, the actual “quarry” of the stone-moai. During their time on Easter Island they excavated over 30 moai, made contact with a leper-colony north of Hanga Roa, where they recorded various oral accounts referring to the pre-European history of the native culture.

One of Routledge’s findings was the cultural continuity between the statue-carvers and the Polynesian Rapa Nui people resident on the island at the time of her visit. She discovered that the designs carved on the backs of several excavated statues included the same designs tattooed on the backs and posteriors of elderly islanders in the island’s leper colony. As the tattooing tradition had been suppressed by missionaries in the 1860s this particular primary evidence was unavailable to later expeditions except through her records.

The Routledge-expedition has to be seen as one of the most important expeditions to Easter Island in the 20th century – in its importance only rivalled by the Franco-Belgian expedition during the 1930s (cf. Metraux and Lavachery) and Heyerdahl’s in the 1950s!
ROUTLEDGE, KATHERINE

The Mystery of Easter Island. The Story of an Expedition.


EUR 450,-

In their private yacht “Mana” Katherine Routledge arrived with her husband at Easter Island on 29th March 1914. Stranded on this island by the First World War, the couple spent almost 15 months—which Katherine spent entirely on the island whereas her husband undertook a few trips back to Chile during these months to purchase needed food and further equipment. The couple established two base camps, one in the Mataveri area, the other one at the slope of Rano Raraku, the actual “quarry” of the stone-moai. During their time on Easter Island they excavated over 30 moai, made contact with a leper-colony north of Hanga Roa, where they recorded various oral accounts referring to the pre-European history of the native culture.

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The Routledge-expedition has to be seen as one of the most important expeditions to Easter Island in the 20th century – in its importance only rivalled by the Franco-Belgian expedition during the 1930s (cf. Métraux and Lavachery) and Heyerdahl’s in the 1950s! 

LAVACHERY, HENRY

Île de Pâques.


EUR 120,-

Lavachery was archeologist in charge in the Franco-Belgian Easter-Island expedition of 1934/1935. He was accompanied by ethnographer Alfred Métraux who published the first most profound ethnography of Easter Island in 1940. Going far beyond the diggings and research of Katherine Routledge (1914/1915) Lavachery undertook the first extensive archeological survey of the island – years later only to be rivalled by the excavations of the Norwegian expedition under leadership of Thor Heyerdahl. His book today is a classic of the earlier Easter-Island literature.

MCMILLAN-BROWN, JOHN

The Riddle of the Pacific.


EUR 150,-

This book was written for the most part on Easter Island itself. It gives a full account of its features, inhabitants, ancient sculptors, various cults and religions. Finally, the author promotes his theory of Easter Island as part of a great sunken empire. This title is one of the most difficult books on Pacific archaeology to find. Going beyond Easter Island the author considers cults across the eastern Pacific. A valuable title – written by a man who spent 5 consecutive months on Easter Island in 1922, partially living in a small tent at the western coast of the island. McMillan-Brown got into close contact with numerous islanders who admired him on account of his age (he was 76 years old when residing on Easter Island).

ENGLERT, P. SEBASTIAN

La Tierra de Hotu Matu’a. Historia, Etnología y Lengua de la Isla de Pasqua. Santiago de Chile, Imprenta y Edita.

“San Francisco” Padre las Casas 1948. First edition, small-quarto size, original green half-cloth binding, illustrated top board, author and title on top board, spine not legible any more. Binding sturdy, overall good copy.


EUR 150,-

Father Sebastian Englert (1888 – 1969) was a Capuchin Franciscan friar, Roman Catholic priest, missionary, linguist and ethnographer from Germany. He is known for his pioneering work on Easter Island, where the local museum is named after him.

From 1935 for more than 30 years until his death, Father Sebastian worked as a missionary priest on Rapa Nui (Easter Island). At the time, he was perhaps the only non-Rapa Nui to have mastered the native language. Although he celebrated Mass in Latin, he preached, heard confessions and catechized the faithful in the Rapa Nui language. He also translated popular catholic texts into Rapa Nui and encouraged native religious song. He wrote a history of the early activity of the French Sacred Hearts missionaries who first evangelized the island. Given the isolation of Rapa Nui during the period before air travel, Father Sebastian researched the language, ethnology and anthropology of Easter Island to a very profound degree. His knowledge of Rapa Nui culture and prehistory impressed the scientific staff of the Norwegian Archeological Expedition under Heyerdahl.

Our present title is a seminal study of Rapa Nui culture by an author who –possibly like no one else– penetrated the mounds, mentality, and thinking of the Rapa Nui population before contact intensified after the building of the airport near Hanga Roa. It is a most valuable study joining the important works by Routledge, Knoche, Métraux, and Heyerdahl in its wealth of detailed information. Englert died in 1969 during a lecture-tour in the USA.
Two volumes (38 and 39) of this annual missionary-report which contain the first missionary comments and descriptions of Easter Island. Writings of Eugene Eyraud, Pacome Olivier, Albert Montiton, Hippolyte Rousseau, Gaspard Zumbohm et altera are to be found. A scarce and valuable source for the first and substantial missionary influence on Easter Island. Important for the history of Easter Island because the missionaries entirely uprooted the original customs and culture of ancient Rapa Nui.

PINART, ALPHONSE
Voyage à l’île de Paques (Océan Pacifique).

EUR 300,-

Rapanui Culture – T pati
“EASTER ISLAND” – THE FORGOTTEN BOOK BY THE EASTER ISLAND EXPLORER WALTER KNOCHE
Hermann Mückler, Vienna

Way back in the early 1990s the author of this article found out that a book on Easter Island existed, written and published in German in 1925. Nowadays available only in very few and special libraries. It practically never appears on antiquarian book markets and the information it contains is new to most people, only a small number of experts on Easter Island are familiar with it and only very few of them would actually have read the book. This book is a rather inconspicuous, small-size one, printed on bad quality, acid, woody paper with an unpretentious cover. And yet this book is very precious indeed. Not only is it a rarity on the second-hand market, but it also offers some more important information, of interest for ethnological and anthropological research in those days as well as for present day Easter Island research. The author of the book is Walter Knoche. To the title of the book “Die Osterinsel” (Easter Island) an explanatory sub-title is added to narrow down the scope of the book. It says: “The Chilean Easter Island Expedition of 1911”. Knoche had organized this expedition, which had been initiated by the Chilean government, and carried out with the Chilean Navy training ship “General Baquedano”. He was accompanied by three more scientists. To this day this expedition has not been paid much attention by the scientific community. In the historical and ethnological literature on this subject, only very few articles, written in Spanish, have appeared. So, in effect, hardly anyone is familiar with the details of this expedition. I myself, during the few months that I spent in Chile in 2009, have tried to obtain on the spot information on this Chilean research expedition in the national and regional archives, museums and libraries. The yield was very marginal. Even the Museo Naval e Marittimo in the Chilean port of Valparaiso could provide very little useful information on the Easter Island Expedition of 1911. Yes, the ship’s logbooks of that expedition are kept there, but above and beyond that the keepers of the archives were not able to provide any interesting material. Perhaps some such material is hidden away somewhere in archives, but this will be left for the next generation of Spanish speaking researchers to find out.

Walter Knoche’s book appeared in a small edition of probably not more than one hundred copies. It was published in German in Conception in Chile. The most unsatisfactory reply I got, was that no one even knew whether they had ever had such a book. So this book remained this a rarity and very special in many respects.

In 2015 my book on Walter Knoche and the Easter Island Expedition of 1911 was at last published by the scientific publishing house Harrassowitz of Wiesbaden. This hard cover book of more than 300 pages, with almost 80 illustrations is currently the only book dealing with the meteorologist, anthropologist, physicist and ethnologist Walter Knoche, and which describes historical and organizational details of the first and so far most comprehensive Chilean Easter Island expedition. An English edition of the book is currently being produced and a Spanish edition of this originally German work is being discussed. This comprehensive and commented new edition will now make the book by Knoche available to the general public, but the value of the previous original book is in no way diminished thereby.

Biography of Walter Knoche

The key data of Walter Knoche’s biography can be summed up as follows: He was born in Berlin on March 7th, 1881 and was the son of the industrialist Moritz Knoche and his wife Anna, they had seven children. His mother Anna Knoche, born in 1875, was the daughter of Ismar Ehrlich and Rosa Weigert and she had five brothers and sisters, one of them being the future Nobel-Prize winner in Medicine, Paul Ehrlich. Hence Walter Knoche decided he would study law, but instead he dedicated a number of publications to the high cordillera of Bolivia. The results of this purpose he first went to Geneva University but after one semester he left Geneva for the Friedrich-Wilhelms University in Berlin. Knoche’s fields of specialization were meteorology and geography. From the beginning of his scientific career most of his works had to do with the following two disciplines. From 1905–1907, after having briefly worked in a number of observatories for the Department for Weather Forecasts of the Meteorological Service of Prussia, he went on numerous geographical expeditions to Turkey and to various countries in North Africa and to the Canary Islands. Subsequently he went to South America to do research on the micro climate and atmospheric electricity at 5,200 m above sea level in the course of an expedition to the high cordillera of Bolivia. The results of this expedition were later published by the Instituto Central Meteorológico y Geofísico de Chile.

In 1910 the Chilean government under Pedro Montt had offered him to head and reorganize this institute and he had readily accepted this responsible position. Starting from Chile, Knoche undertook a number of expeditions to most of the South American countries in the following decades.

In 1937 Knoche moved from Chile to neighbouring Argentina with which he was quite familiar and to which he had dedicated a number of publications on former occasions. He lived in Buenos Aires and worked there as a climate advisor in what was then the Ministry of Meteorology, Geophysics and Hydrology. At the outbreak of World War II and with the increasingly precarious situation of his family in Germany, he tried to help from abroad to enable some members of his family to leave Nazi Germany. In this connection he also corresponded with the Nobel Prize winner in Physics, Albert Einstein. On July 5th, 1945 Walter Knoche died of a heart ailment. At the time of his death he had been the Head of the Department of Climatology of the Ministry of Meteorology, Geophysics and Hydrology in Buenos Aires. Walter Knoche left an oeuvre of 308 publications, which dealt mainly with meteorological, climatological, geophysical, geographical, but also medical-anthropological issues. Of these 308 publications, 39 are devoted to Easter Island – proof of the fact that Knoche’s fascination with Easter Island kept him busy in his scientific research for a lengthy period of time, and this resulted in quite a number of publications for various scientific journals (see also the second article in this catalogue).
The Significance of Knoche's Easter Island Book

The Chilean government initiated the research expedition to Easter Island in 1911. Easter Island had been under Chilean colonial rule since 1888, but had hardly attracted the Chilean administration's attention until then. This expedition marked the beginning of an interest taken in the island by the Chilean administration. This remote island in the South Pacific belongs to the greater Oceanic region of Polynesia, i.e. Rapanui. In his book we find all his own observations and surveys as well as the conclusions he drew from them.

Knoche was the first explorer who systematically tried to get information on all aspects of the life of the Rapanui. Two authors concerned with this region have given attention to Knoche as a result of my 70's anniversary of death. A stamp about Walter Knoche was issued by the Austrian Postal Service in 2015, commemorating his 70's anniversary of death. This expedition marked the beginning of an interest taken in the island by the Chilean administration. This remote island in the South Pacific belongs to the greater Oceanic region of Polynesia, i.e. Rapanui. In his book we find all his own observations and surveys as well as the conclusions he drew from them.

What is so special about this book? Knoche was the first explorer to undertake systematic field research on the island. This English explorer Katherine Scoresby Routledge went there later, in 1914, to carry out archaeological research, and only from the 1930s on we can speak of some explicit research on Easter Island in the form of an archaeological/ethnological sub-discipline. Knoche was the first and at the same time the last person able to enquire about and observe things which never more existed three years later when Routledge spent considerably more time on the island than Knoche. Knoche managed to interview two old men who were able to describe, at least roughly, the traditional customs, feasts, dances, ceremonies and other cultural manifestations. He was on the island at a time when the living conditions of the indigenous population were extremely bad. These conditions were mainly the result of the complete disinterest in the island by the questionable Chilean colonial government. As a matter of fact the inhabitants of the island, as Knoche found them in 1911, were living in abominable conditions.

Marginalized and largely deprived of their cultural roots, from the European (and Chilean) perspective, this Polynesian indigenous population was considered to be a "dying race", whose extinction could not be prevented but only delayed. The population had been massively decimated in the middle of the 19th century as a result of kidnappings by Peruvian slave traders and by imported diseases. By 1877 it had reached an absolute minimum. Only 111 islanders were still alive, among them 67 men, 39 women and 44 children, i.e. 150 people altogether. In 1911, the year of Knoche's expedition, there were already 228 inhabitants on the island, among them for the first time again since the first census, an equal number of men and women.

Knoche's main work reflects just one moment in time. This book, which is the only one that describes the Easter Island Expedition of 1911, is significant not only for the history of science as a whole, but it is also a substantial work for Easter Island research.

Regarding Easter Island/Rapa Nui he published one book about Walter Knoche and edited a volume together with Ian Conrich about recent cultural and historical perspectives on the remote island. His most recently book is about the Marshall Islands and Nauru during German colonial times.

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Ahu Tongariki and an Austrian guy
When Walter Alfred Knoche was assigned by the Chilean government in 1911 to lead the first Chilean expedition to Easter Island he certainly did not realize that this remote Polynesian island, which had been under Chilean colonial rule since 1888, would pursue him the rest of his life. 38 articles and one book are the result of his scientific preoccupation with Rapa Nui, as the inhabitants of the island themselves like to call it.

The experiences and the lessons learned from his twelve days’ stay on Easter Island in 1911 were altogether very impressive and influenced him for the rest of his life. His assignment was to travel to Easter Island on the Chilean Navy training ship “General Baquedano” and to set up a seismological and meteorological station there and in addition to find out all he could about the indigenous population. Knoche was just the person for this job considering his scientific background. He was an expert in meteorology, geophysics, geography and cultural anthropology and had some experience in physical anthropology and even – to a limited extent – in medicine. He was well suited to lead this expedition and to achieve the maximum scientific gain for all these branches of science from this short visit.

When he was invited to lead this expedition, he had already been successful in his career in Santiago, the capital of Chile. He was the co-founder and Head of the central meteorological service (Instituto Central Meteorológico y Geofísico de Chile) in Santiago de Chile, an institution which he headed until 1916. Moreover Walter Knoche, who was born in Berlin in 1881 and died in Buenos Aires in Argentina in 1945, was the co-founder of a pharmaceutical enterprise.

His articles on Easter Island prove that for his research and the publication of its results Knoche invested his expert knowledge in these many fields of science. What is so special about his scientific publications is not the large number of them, even if they are numerous indeed, but the great variety of topics and issues he dealt with. Some of these are of almost iconographic significance these days and this is shown by the fact that illustrations of tattoos taken from his book are frequently reproduced – yet very often without the source being quoted.

Below, a complete list of all of Knoche’s publications on Easter Island is assembled for the first time, and it clearly shows the wide scope of topics, ranging from research on myths and songs, ethnological treatises, local customs and rituals to aspects of natural sciences, the micro-climate, and physical anthropology. His main work of course is the book “Die Osterinsel. Die chilenische Osterinsel-Expedition von 1911” (“Easter Island. The Chilean Easter Island Expedition of 1911”), published in Concepción in Chile in 1925 in German in a very small edition. Original copies of this 300-page extremely rare book appear on the market only seldom and are therefore offered at exorbitant prices (see also the article on the book in the present catalogue).

The author of this article was able to successfully trace the circumstances of the Chilean Easter Island expedition and conducted a project thereto in the years from 2008 to 2014, in order to re-publish Knoche’s main work together with comments. Thus the information given in that book has become easily available and also the biographical background of Walter Knoche himself is presented in detail. A comment by Hermann Mückler on the largely forgotten and now re-discovered book by Knoche was already published in Catalogue XI (N.F.) of the Antiquariat Kainhänner, when one of those rare copies of the book was offered for sale.1

The articles written by Knoche on Easter Island are even less well known. Most of them were printed in scientific journals published in German and Spanish even before the book was released. This is why some of the information contained in the book of 1925 had already appeared in articles, sometimes in more detail, sometimes more concise but also, however, even identical. All the same, quite a number of articles are isolated articles and had never yet appeared anywhere else. In the course of another two-year project that was started after the Knoche book had already been re-published, the author was able to discover all of Knoche’s publications “All of” in this context means to the best of my knowledge and having tapped all the sources available presumably all the works ever published by Knoche have been discovered, however it can never be ruled out that there may be a hitherto unknown publication hidden away somewhere.

In order to render this undertaking as successful as possible, libraries and library associations the world over were visited and searched for any publications by Knoche. At the time when the commented book by Knoche was re-published, 35 articles had been found. Now, at the beginning of 2017, three more articles, hitherto unknown, and therefore not yet listed, can be added. Many of the German publications were found in South American libraries, mainly in Chilean ones. This has to do with the fact that they were published in Latin-American journals, written in German, which was a very common scientific language in Latin America up to World War II.

Knoche’s scientific articles – a few examples

Some of Knoche’s publications deal with the material culture of the Rapanui and clearly have to do with the fact that he himself collected precious ethnographical specimens of Easter Island culture while on the island. These objects, which he brought to Chile in 1911 and later on sold piecemeal, can today be found in various museums and from time to time they appear in some of the rare Easter Island exhibitions. His article dated 1927: “Waren die Toromiro der Osterinsel Marionetten?” (“Were the toromiro of Easter Island puppets?”) – is a case in point, it shows that Knoche was speculating on what could have been the function, in a ritual, religious or folkloric context, of these wooden anthropomorphic figures carved from the hard toromiro wood of Easter Island.2 Even if he could give no definite answer to this question, in this article Knoche managed to discuss aspects of ancestor worship, which was relevant not only for the Rapanui, but could also be observed in other regions of Polynesia.

Also the 1928 publication “Ein atypischer Kopf aus Pechstein von der Osterinsel” (“An atypical head from Easter Island made of pechstein”) shows that Knoche was interested in the object as such. It is striking that these two articles were published at a relatively late date, i.e. a long time after the expedition. Each of them appeared after his book had been published. Another example is “Tres Notas sobre la isla de Pascua” (“Three Notes on Easter Island), published in 1912, in this article he presented his observations on the various indigenous pictographic phenomena, described and discussed what he believed to be the last traditional tattoos, and finally he analyzed one tale and two chants as to whether they referred to actual events in history.

The indeed longest article is the one which appeared as a special print in ‘Verhandlungen des Deutschen Wissenschaftlichen Vereins in Santiago’ (Proceedings of the German Scientific Society in Santiago) in 1921. On almost 60 pages he linked historical events related to the discovery of Easter Island by Europeans with his own experience and impressions. He went into great detail about social and political characteristics of the traditional Rapanui-society, well aware that this was on the verge of disappearing on account of the colonial administration at that time. At the same time he took sides with the indigenous population by trying to explain certain forms of behaviour by the Rapanui which had been critically viewed by other travellers, because they viewed things from their own perspective. Thus he mentions that without exception all the travellers told of a ‘knack for thieving’ by the natives of the island. Knoche viewed this from a different perspective. He concluded that the reason for this behaviour was not that they had a bad character, but rather that in their traditional social system no private property existed. Knoche emphasized that the traditional social system of Easter Island was governed by ‘communist principles’. “The Easter Islanders happily brought their garden produce, fish and manufactured things on board the visiting vessels and quite unabashedly grabbed, as they were wont to do, whatever they fancied”3 Knoche was critical of the hasty condemnation of the Easter Islanders which he ascribed to the early travellers’ lack of knowledge of details regarding the islanders’ social system, values and norms. “It is certainly to be wondered why it is so difficult to shed light on all these interesting aspects. Let the following be added by way of an explanation. Numerous travellers, amongst them Boggeeven, Behrens, Cook, González, La Perouse, Forster, Krusenstern, Kotzebue, Chamisso, mostly paid only a few days’ visit to Rapa Nui, their reports often refer to curious and generally striking facts as seen by them in the times, whereby not seldom fantasy was let loose”.4
This statement is remarkable in some respects. First of all, because Knoche himself had spent only twelve days on Easter Island in 1911, i.e. not really much longer than most of the early travellers he mentions; and secondly because he is already using the indigenous name of Rapa Nui for Easter Island, which was not at all usual yet at the beginning of the 20th century and he presumably was emphasizing his affinity with and sympathy for the Easter Islanders.

The articles by Walter Knoche reveal much about the living conditions of the indigenous population of Easter Island, because he wrote about their desolate state of health and, for example, described the various stages of leprosy and its effects. But also social phenomena such as blood feud and the articles on meteorology and climatology of special interest to natural scientists, but they also present a vivid picture of some aspects of Easter Island culture, and they reflect the level of scientific research in the first decades of the 20th century.

All the scientific publications on Easter Island by Knoche

The following list contains all the publications by Walter Knoche that have to do with Easter Island (Rapa Nui, Isla de Pascua). There are 39 of them. The list covers scientific articles, publications in scientific journals, his Easter Island book and various shorter miscellaneous articles which appeared in other magazines and newspapers.

- Knoche, Walter (1914a): Algunas observaciones a la geomorfología de la Isla de Pascua (Einige Bemerkungen zur Geomorphologie der Osterinsel). In: Publicación del Instituto Central Meteorológico de Chile, no. 4, Observaciones meteorológicas de la Isla de Pascua, Santiago de Chile: Instituto Central Meteorológico de Chile, pp. 150-154.
- Knoche, Walter (1914d): Explicaciones sobre el clima de la Isla de Pascua (Bemerkungen zum Klima der Osterinsel). In: Publicación del Instituto Central Meteorológico de Chile, no. 4, Observaciones meteorológicas de la Isla de Pascua, Santiago de Chile: Instituto Central Meteorológico de Chile, pp. 155-177.
Guest article: Prof. Hermann Mückler

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