

Citing a study of Ifaluk by Laura Betzig (1988), which found that the chiefs seem to be economically better off than the commoners, Carol R. Ember and Melvin Ember caution, “Is this true in other societies conventionally considered to be rank societies? We do not know. . . . But rank societies may not have had as much economic equality as we used to think.”

— Robert Lawless

See also **Anthropology, Social; Firth, Raymond; Polynesians; Societies, Class; Societies, Egalitarian; Societies, Rank**

Further Readings

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RAPA NUI

Rapa Nui is a small (160 km) remote subtropical island in the South Pacific Ocean, 3600 km west of Chile, the nation of which it forms a part, and 1900 km east-southeast of Pitcairn Island, the nearest inhabited island. It is known to outsiders as Easter Island (Isla de Pascua in Spanish), so named by Dutch navigator Jacob Roggeveen after his visit to the island on Easter in 1722. Rapa Nui is the locally preferred name, used since the 19th century, which also refers to the people and their language. Although its large monolithic *moai* stone statues are widely recognized, substantial mystery still surrounds the origins and development of the people who erected these monuments. Reconstructing the history of migration, adaptation, innovation, contact, and survival has been the focus of studies to which archaeology, linguistics, biological anthropology, ethnology, ecology, and related disciplines have all contributed.

Oral histories tell of an original settlement of people arriving from the west from a land called Marae Rega or Marae Toe Hau, led by Hotu Matu’a—Great Parent—the first *ariki* (chief) of the island. The Rapa Nui have been considered culturally and linguistically Polynesian since their first contacts with European visitors. In the 1940s, however, Norwegian explorer

Thor Heyerdahl hypothesized that the island was first settled from South America, before Polynesians arrived. As evidence, he pointed to the sophisticated and large-scale stone work of the *ahu* (ceremonial platforms), the presence of sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) and other native South American plants, the path of ocean currents, and other ethnological and linguistic evidence. His much publicized Kon-Tiki raft expedition of 1947 attempted to demonstrate the plausibility of this theory. Most experts today tend to discount the South American origins of the stonework, but many acknowledge the possibility of contact.

Early studies relying primarily on linguistic and archaeological data estimated that the island was likely settled from Eastern Polynesia before AD 600 or as early as AD 400. More recent research based on further analyses in archaeology, linguistics, biological anthropology, and experimental voyaging has, however, led researchers to propose later settlement dates around AD 600–1000. Earlier hypotheses regarding a direct settlement originating from the Marquesas have also been revised to favor settlement(s) from the Mangareva-Pitcairn-Henderson area. Yet another hypothesis postulates that settlers may have arrived from the Marquesas via South America, and may have brought back the sweet potato.

The Rapa Nui are a testament to the remarkable achievements and migrations of the descendants of proto-Austronesian speakers originating from southern China, who over the last 5,000 years—including 3,000 years in Oceania—migrated and settled an area spanning 28,000 km on an east-west axis, with Madagascar off the east coast of Africa at its western end and Rapa Nui at the eastern end. The successful colonization of new Pacific islands and the subsequent development of complex societies depended not only on their skills as navigators but also on subsistence strategies, especially regarding food production in the sometimes limited physical environment of their new homes. Hotu Matu’a is said to have brought food crops and introduced them to the island, including pigs, chicken, bananas, taro, yams, sugar cane, ti, and even sweet potatoes. While most researchers disagree with Heyerdahl, contact with South America is considered a possible factor in the cultural development of this island society. For example, the introduction of the sweet potato is considered a major factor in agricultural intensification, which the archaeological evidence shows to have been widely adopted on the island after AD 1200.



Some time after the initial settlement, the islanders began to build sacred sites with stones and to carve statues to represent their ancestors. The natural forest woods they found on the island would have been important for their construction and transportation. Beginning around the 11th century, the construction of *moai* intensified greatly, and the scale of constructions grew and became more complex. According to legend, as he lay dying, blind and ill, Hotu Matu'a divided the island among his six sons. Social organization then followed a conical clan (or ramage) system, a typical pattern in Polynesian chiefdoms with hierarchically ranked unilineal descent groups. In each descent group, a paramount chief (*ariki mau*), the senior male in direct line of patrilineal succession from Hotu Matu'a, possessed power (*mana*) derived from gods. Each patrilocal segmentary descent group (*mata*) occupied a specific estate (*kāinga*), which included both coastal and interior zones demarcated by stone cairns (*pipihoreko*) and protected by local estate spirits (*akuaku*). Local descent groups built *ahu*, usually by the coast, and erected *moai* above them with their backs to the ocean and overlooking the villages they faced. Each *moai* represented an eponymous ancestor of a local segment of the descent group. Patrilocal extended families (*paenga*) formed the basic economic units and were engaged in reciprocal and hierarchical economic and social networks with others in the lineage (*ivi*). By the 15th and 16th centuries, the island was subdivided into 10 or 11 polities

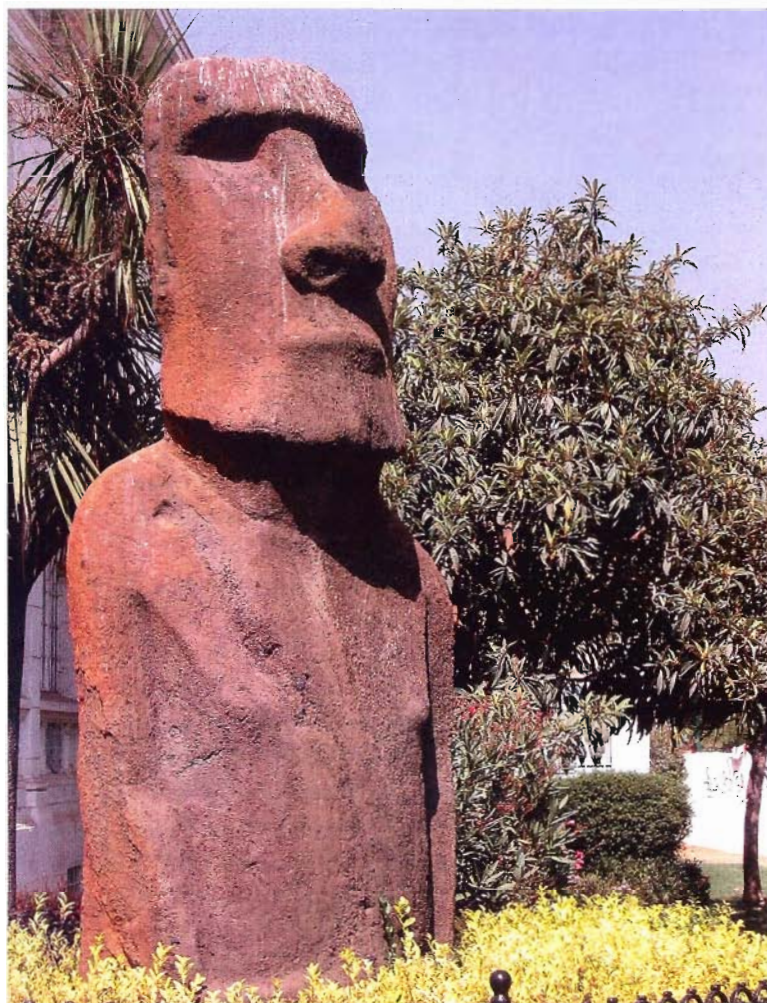
occupying all of the island, organized into two political confederacies: the *Tu'u 'Aro* (or *Ko Tu'u 'Aro Ko Te Mata Nui*, "the Greater Mata"), who occupied the north-eastern half and were named after Hotu Matu'a's eldest son Tu'u Maheke, and the *Tu'u Hotu 'Iti* (or *Ko Tu'u Hotu 'Iti Ko Te Mata 'Iti*, "the Lesser Mata"), named after his youngest but favorite son Hotu 'Iti. Comparative works on pre-historic Polynesian societies consider Rapa Nui to be similar to that of Mangaia, and less stratified than those of Hawaii, Tonga, and Tahiti, but more stratified than Tikopia, Pukapuka, Ontong Java, and Tokelau. The high levels of segmentation, stratification, division of labor, and the ability to mobilize pan-island cooperation and exchange networks are evident in the approximately 300 *ahu* and 900 *moai* left on the island, which involved the construction and transportation of large stone figures from Rano Raraku quarry and their erection on top of the platforms. Competition between local groups is believed to have led to a race to create ever-larger platforms and statues. The largest *moai* to be erected on *ahu* weighs an impressive 80 tons and measures 10 m in height; 12 m once the red scoria topknots (*pukao*) had been placed on top. The population is believed to have grown to between 7,000 to 10,000 by the 16th century. The period of great constructions, rising prosperity, and population growth was followed by a period of warfare and decline. Oral traditions tell of the outbreak of internal strife and endemic warfare among the descent groups, leading to the collapse of the process of *moai* making in the two centuries before European contact. When Captain James Cook visited the island briefly in 1774, he found that many of the statues had been overturned, and he noted that the islanders seemed rather impoverished for a people who had once erected such impressive monuments. He also noted the terrible condition of their canoes and the island's lack of forest. Pollen analysis indicates that the island had been initially well forested, but forest pollen declined to its lowest measured

values circa AD 1400. Sometime after the 15th century, the island had become largely or completely deforested.

What led to the abrupt collapse of a once prosperous society? Human activities and competition for resources between descent groups were likely the major cause of the decline of the forest and the overexploitation of other natural resources. This, in turn, led to the decline of monumental constructions, increasing warfare, and, in Malthusian fashion, to population decline. This interpretation has led researchers to view the history of Easter Island as a warning of the perils of natural resource overexploitation.

In the 15th century, a new politico-religious subsystem emerged from this period of turbulence. The new system, referred to as the Birdman (*tangata manu*) Cult, emerged with Orongo (the southwest rim of the caldera Rano Kao) as a pan-island site of annual competitions and ceremonies. Each descent group chose a representative (*hopu manu*) each spring who would have to swim in dangerous waters to the nearby islet of Motu Nui and return with an undamaged egg of *manutara* birds (sooty tern). The chief of the winning competitor's descent group was conferred the status of *tangata manu*, or the ruler of the island, for one year, as empowered by the creator god *Make Make*. The Orongo ceremonial village is today still full of rock art depicting *tangata manu* and other figures, and its stone structures were built to mirror the two political confederacies. The emergence and development of the Birdman Cult reflects a transition in the prehistoric Rapa Nui society, where the traditional hereditary, sacred power of the *ariki mau* diminished, yielding increasingly to achieved status competition and a political system ultimately dominated by a warrior class (*matato'a*). Although the importance of the *moai* and *ahu* for the islanders had declined before their contact with Europeans, the island seemed to have preserved some aspects of traditional social organization surrounding the *ariki* nobility system into the mid-19th century.

Another of the so-called "mysteries" of Rapa Nui is *rongorongo*, the only indigenous script known to



Source: © iStockphoto/Brendan O'Boyle.

have been used in Oceania before the 20th century. Today there are 25 known surviving wood tablets bearing *rongorongo* inscriptions scattered in museums and institutions around the world, and numerous researchers have been working to decipher them. Oral histories tell of *rongorongo* specialists (*tangata rongorongo*) who chanted as they read the inscription on the tablets during the annual birdman competitions and ceremonies. One hypothesis locates the development of *rongorongo* after 1770, when a Spanish expedition briefly stopped at the island and ceremoniously proclaimed the island to be Spanish by presenting an official deed signed by Spanish officers. While this suggests that writing may not have been invented on the island, the *rongorongo* system was clearly created by the Rapa Nui as an indigenous elaboration.

In the mid-1860s, Blackbirders, or slave raiders, abducted or recruited an estimated 3,000 Polynesians

and a few hundred Micronesians to work in the state-run guano export plantations on the Chincha Islands off the coast of Peru. As many as 1,500 Easter Islanders were carried away in a dozen or so ships between 1862 and 1863. Many died under the harsh and unfamiliar conditions they encountered in Peru, and, tragically, the very few who were able to return to the island alive brought with them a smallpox epidemic that killed many more. From an estimated pre-raid size of 3,000 to 5,000, the island's population collapsed to scarcely 110 survivors in 1877. The population crash led to a disintegration of existing social organization, and a great loss of cultural knowledge of the island's traditions and rituals occurred as many elders and specialists perished. Further contact with outsiders had a significant role in further cultural changes for this devastated community. For example, the Catholic missionaries who stayed on the island shortly after the slave raid until 1871 led the community-wide conversion to Christianity and led the Rapa Nui to abandon the use of *rongo rongo* and the Birdman Cult and other rituals. European planters who arrived in 1866 collaborated with the missionaries to have the Rapa Nui resettled near the Hanga Roa mission in order to develop the island commercially as a sheep ranch.

In 1888, Chile annexed the island in a naval mission led by Captain Policarpo Toro. During the first half of the 20th century, Chile established its authority over its colony primarily by delegating control to the fittingly named "Easter Island Exploitation Company," which leased the entire island as a private sheep ranch from 1895–1955 and forcibly confined the Rapa Nui to live and remain in Hanga Roa village, using the rest of the island for sheep grazing. Ethnological work by Katherine Routledge, the first anthropologist to reside on the island (for 16 months in 1914–15), recounts the living conditions of the Rapa Nui under company rule and the memory of the elders who had witnessed the functioning of society before the population crash. She was also witness to a short-lived 1914 rebellion against the company led by the prophet Maria Angata Veri Tahī a Pengo Hare Kohou, who had been trained as a catechist in Mangareva. Spanish-speaking administrators of the company—and, after 1935, the Catholic priest—acted as state representatives and mediators between the Rapa Nui and the colonial government.

Except for the attention of anthropologists and archaeologists, such as the 1934–35 Franco-Belgian expedition led by Alfred Métraux and Henri Lavachery and the 1955–56 Norwegian expedition with Heyerdahl and William Mulloy, Rapa Nui remained largely isolated from the world until the mid-1960s. Until then, an annual cargo ship had been the primary form of communication and transportation. In the 1960s, a campaign of civil disobedience led by Alfonso Rapu, a young teacher who had been trained in Chile, finally brought about the end of Navy rule, which had controlled the island since 1955. Responding to this movement, Chile established a local civil administration in 1966 and opened regular air travel from the capital of Santiago shortly after. The Rapa Nui were then, for the first time, granted rights to travel freely within and outside the island and to participate in electoral political processes, leading to the election of the first Rapa Nui mayor. The rapid integration of this community into the national and global economy in the years that followed has led to accelerated acculturation, intermarriage, and language shift from Rapa Nui to Spanish. At the same time, however, the Rapa Nui community has become actively involved in the development of heritage tourism and restoration projects of the archaeological patrimony, and have led a largely successful cultural revival movement.

The Rapa Nui's efforts to increase their local political and economic control over island resources was greatly enhanced by national democratization and decentralization initiatives that followed the 1989 end of Pinochet's military dictatorship. This has led to successful political campaigns to press the government for increased land rights and a transfer of decision-making power to islanders. Today the Chilean Congress is debating proposals to grant the island, with its current population of 3,800, a new form of administrative autonomy. Despite their often tragic history of contact with outsiders, the Rapa Nui represent a rather remarkable case of language and culture maintenance. If there has been one constant in the dramatic and eventful history of this small and remote island, it is the Rapa Nui people's amazing adaptability in the face of great odds.

— Miki Makihara

See also **Anthropology, Biological; Ethnology; Heyerdahl, Thor; Marquesas; Migrations; Polynesians**

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**RAPA NUI**

Rapa Nui is a classic example of a society that brought about its own downfall by unsound ecological practices. Several practices of the inhabitants of the island contributed to this downfall. Anthropologists have determined that the island was once heavily forested, mainly with palm trees. As the population of the island grew, more and more trees were cut down to make room for fields, where the people could cultivate crops to feed their growing numbers. Scientists speculate that the statues were moved from the quarry where they were carved to the coast by rolling them on huge palm tree logs. As they carved more statues, deforestation increased. Eventually all the trees were gone. Due to the fragile ecology of the island, they did not grow back.

The demise of the forest had more important consequences than rendering the people incapable of moving statues. They also had no wood with which to build canoes and were then restricted to the island. This made fishing difficult. Wind and rain washed away the soil, causing crops to fail. Many people starved, and scientists believe lack of food led to cannibalism on the island. The population of Rapa Nui had used up their

most important resource, one which could have been a renewable resource. If they had practiced reforestation, some of the devastation that occurred could have been prevented. Certainly the story of Rapa Nui's demise has implications for modern society.

– Pat McCarthy


RAPPAPORT, ROY (1926–1997)

Roy Rappaport, one of the leading ecological anthropologists of the 20th century, was born in New York City. He earned his undergraduate degree from Cornell University. In 1959 (at the age of 33), Rappaport enrolled at Columbia University where he studied anthropology under Marvin Harris, Harold Conklin, Margaret Mead, Conrad Arensberg, and Andrew P. Vayda. He claimed that the anthropologist who most influenced him was Gregory Bateson, whom he first met in 1968. It was Bateson who introduced Rappaport to systems theory and encouraged him to look at evolution and adaptation as informational processes.

Between 1962 and 1964, Rappaport conducted fieldwork among the Maring of Papua, New Guinea, primarily among the Tsembaga clan. His greatest contributions to ecological anthropology stem from his precise measurements of the activities of 204 Maring speakers during the summer of 1963. In 1964, Rappaport presented a paper, "Ritual Regulations of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People," at the American Anthropological Association. The 1964 paper was published in the journal *Ethnography* and has been widely reprinted. This paper contains almost all of the ideas that were to occupy Rappaport's thought for the rest of his life. In 1965, Rappaport joined the anthropology faculty at the University of Michigan, where he taught for over 30 years.

Rappaport's 1966 doctoral dissertation was published as *Pigs for the Ancestors*. His goal in *Pigs for the Ancestors* was to go beyond the arguments of cultural materialism and functionalism to focus on the adaptive value of rituals in maintaining carrying capacity, the persistence of species, human nutritional well-being, and the frequency of warfare within small-scale

reference

Encyclopedia of Anthropology. 5 vols. Sage. 2006. 2500p. ed. by H. James Birx. photogs. index. ISBN 0-7619-3029-9. \$795. REF

As noted in the foreword by anthropologist Biruté Galdikas, this is "the first comprehensive international encyclopedia of anthropology." Editor Birx (anthropology, Canisius Coll.) has made sure that thorough coverage is given to a wide range of topics in physical anthropology, archaeology, cultural anthropology, anthropological linguistics, and applied anthropology. More than 250 respected anthropologists and scholars have contributed over 1000 A-to-Z articles, most of which are relatively short (though some fill up as many as five pages). Numerous biographies of prominent anthropological researchers and theorists are included, as well as *See Also* references and "Further Reading" lists. Color photographs accompany many of the articles and lend the encyclopedia a pleasing appearance. The signed entries are written in accessible, nonscholarly language, which makes

The Greenwood Encyclopedia of African American Folklore. Greenwood. 2005. 1672p. ed. by Anand Prahlad. photogs. index. ISBN 0-313-33035-2. \$299.95. REF

Sources on African American folklore abound. Until now, however, there has been no single source that covers most aspects of the discipline. Editor Prahlad (English, Univ. of Missouri, Columbia; *Reggae Wisdom: Proverbs in Jamaican Music*) gathered the work of an impressive cast of 140-plus international scholars and researchers for this three-volume compendium of more than 700 essays. Here, America is defined as North, South, and Latin America and the Caribbean; additional attention is paid to African and Caribbean roots. The focus is on the "most important narrative and non-narrative genres and motifs, major scholars and works, representative artists' key groups, and critical historical and theoretical concepts," and topics covered range from *abakwa* (an "Afro-Cuban spiri-

motifs into their writing (e.g., Zora Neale Hurston). Recommended for secondary school, public, and academic libraries.—Mary Morgan Smith, Northland P.L., Pittsburgh

The Greenwood Encyclopedia of World Folklore and Folklife. 4 vols. Greenwood. 2006. 1972p. ed. by William M. Clements. illus. maps. bibliog. index. ISBN 0-313-32847-1. \$449.95. REF

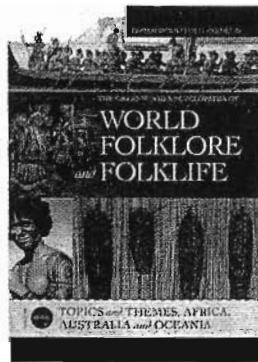
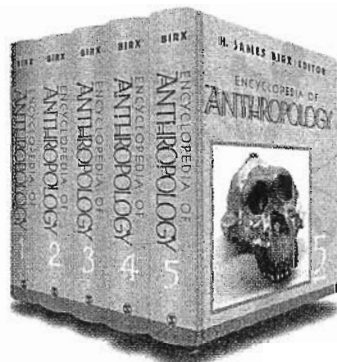
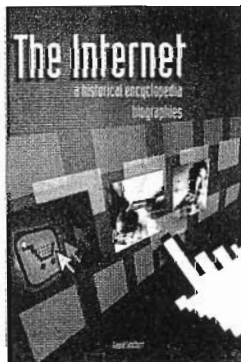
This four-volume set, edited by Clements (*Oratory in Native North America*), provides 205 lengthy essays on the folklore of cultures from every continent. Each volume focuses on a geographical region: Volume 1 covers Africa, Australia, and Oceania; Volume 2 Southeast Asia and India, Central and East Asia, and the Middle East; Volume 3 Europe; and Volume 4 North and South America. Additionally, Volume 1 begins with 39 short entries on "Topics and Themes" related to the study of folklore, such as cultural evolution, ethnography, gender, and popular culture; and Volume 4 ends with a glossary of terms, theories, and concepts and a general bibliography. Each volume includes maps and illustrations as well as a list of all entries and a complete subject index for the entire set. Contributed by more than 200 specialists, the scholarly essays make up bibliographical references and cover the important folklore of the specific society represented, including its geographical setting, sociocultural features, ethnohistorical information, belief system, sports and games, artistic expression, and the effects of modernization and globalization.

Bottom Line This work builds on the general coverage found in ABC-CLIO's *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art* (1997), citing specific cultural contexts and comparisons. A valuable reference work for students and general readers seeking an understanding of the cultural heritage of the various societies of the world.—Eloise Hitchcock, Western Carolina Univ. Lib., Cullowhee, NC

Gulla, Bob. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Rock History: Vol. 6: The Grunge and Post-Grunge Years, 1991–2005.* 322p. ISBN 0-313-32981-8.

Janosik, MaryAnn. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Rock History: Vol. 5: The Video Generation, 1981–1990.* 258p. ISBN 0-313-32943-5.

Markowitz, Rhonda. *The Greenwood*



An expanded award winner, the most inclusive international analysis, and reliable ethnography

the work suitable for undergraduate students and informed lay readers alike. Overall, this encyclopedia provides reasonably comprehensive coverage of significant topics and is based on sound scholarly research, although certain specialized areas (e.g., ethnobotany) and lesser-known cultures (e.g., Afro-Caribbean cultures of many of the smaller West Indian islands and the cultures of the islands of Micronesia) have been left out. **Bottom Line** This balanced and user-friendly resource will be a good starting point for basic anthropological research. Highly recommended for academic libraries with anthropology collections and large public libraries where there is interest in anthropology. [H. James Birx is an *LJ* reviewer.—Ed.]—Elizabeth Salt, Otterbein Coll. Lib., Westerville, OH

tual-esoteric fraternity") to zydeco (a form of music that developed in the early 20th century among Francophone Creoles). Entries are arranged alphabetically, and grouping lists of entries in topical categories such as "Characters in Black Folklore," "Food," "Quilting," and "Theoretical Concepts" simplifies searches for related topics. Extensive indexing and full cross-referencing are also helpful. An appendix listing African American regional centers, museums, festivals, and web sites extends the basic information. The approximately 150 illustrations, nine tables, and addenda in side boxes are visually appealing. **Bottom Line** This is not an exhaustive study of African American culture; writers are included only if they frequently incorporate folk