

## Oceanic Voices – European Quills

Koloniale und Postkoloniale Linguistik  
Colonial and Postcolonial Linguistics

**Band 4**

Herausgegeben von  
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Universität Bremen



Steven Roger Fischer (Ed.)

# Oceanic Voices – European Quills

The Early Documents on  
and in Chamorro and Rapanui



Akademie Verlag

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

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Ein Wissenschaftsverlag der Oldenbourg Gruppe.

[www.akademie-verlag.de](http://www.akademie-verlag.de)

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Redaktion: Cornelia Stroh

Einbandgestaltung: hauser lacour, nach einer Idee von Susanne Hackmack

Druck & Bindung: Beltz Bad Langensalza GmbH, Bad Langensalza

Dieses Papier ist alterungsbeständig nach DIN/ISO 9706

ISBN 978-3-05-006278-5

eISBN 978-3-05-006411-6

# Table of Contents

STEVEN ROGER FISCHER	
Preface .....	7
STEVEN ROGER FISCHER	
Sources of the Old Rapanui language of Easter Island .....	11
RAFAEL RODRÍGUEZ-PONGA	
Esteban Rodríguez' vocabulary of the language of Guam (1565) .....	25
PIERRE WINKLER	
Translating Father Sanvitores' <i>Lingua Mariana</i> .....	53
SUSANNE SCHUSTER	
The <i>Chamorro-Wörterbuch</i> by Georg Fritz – a contrastive description of the editions 1904 and 1908 .....	83
THOMAS B. KLEIN	
Chamorro morphophonology in the <i>Grammar</i> and <i>Dictionary</i> by Georg Fritz	103
STEVE PAGEL	
The <i>Chaifi</i> . A fairy tale from the Marianas, narrated by Georg Fritz. A commented re-edition. Part 1: Background, intercultural and intertextual aspects .....	123

## STEVE PAGEL

The *Chaifi*. A fairy tale from the Marianas, narrated by Georg Fritz.

A commented re-edition. Part 2: Linguistic aspects ..... 153

## BARBARA DEWEIN

H. Costenoble's work on Chamorro (re-)edited ..... 177

## THOMAS STOLZ

Liquids where there shouldn't be any. What hides behind the orthographic  
post-vocalic tautosyllabic <r> and <l> in early texts in and on Chamorro ..... 201

List of contributors ..... 235

Index of authors..... 237

Index of languages ..... 241

Index of subjects ..... 243

STEVEN ROGER FISCHER (AUCKLAND/NEW ZEALAND)

## Preface

The twain are Oceanic opposites, and not just in physical location. In the north-western Pacific, Chamorro – the ancestral language of large numbers of Micronesians on Guam and many further on Rota, Tinian and Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands – was the first Oceanic language to be encountered and described (1500s). In the extreme south-eastern Pacific, Rapanui – spoken today by around 1,000 Polynesians on Easter Island, Earth's second most remote isle – is not only the most isolated autonomous language but also one of the last to be described (late 1800s). Chamorro displays minor dialect variations from island to island; Rapanui, confined to one small isle (c. 170 km<sup>2</sup>), knows no dialects. Spanish richly influenced Chamorro for many centuries, but it was English that finally edged it toward endangerment; Chilean Spanish alone has all but extinguished Rapanui: only one in four indigenous Easter Islanders now speaks her native tongue. At least those inhabiting the Northern Marianas still speak Chamorro at home (whereas in Guam mostly American English is heard). Easter Islanders now struggle to keep their Rapanui tongue alive.

One thing that Chamorro and Rapanui do share, however: their origin in one of the world's largest language families, Austronesian. Before the emergence of international English, Austronesian languages were Earth's most widely dispersed, from Hawaiian in the north to New Zealand's Maori in the south, and from Madagascar's Malagasy in the west to Easter Island's Rapanui in the east. That is, Austronesian tongues intoned half the globe. Genetic classification of these languages, a process that has experienced robust revision over the past half century, allows of many subbranches of Austronesian whose precise relationships are still the subject of vigorous debate.

At our present state of knowledge Chamorro, for one, appears to represent an independent branch of Austronesian, a "Philippine-type" language whose closest relatives might be Ilokano and Tagalog. It is still not possible to determine with reasonable clarity whence the first inhabitants of the Mariana Islands hailed. The Chalan Piao site in Saipan seems to indicate, however, that a western seafaring folk, migrating from the Asian coast to the Philippines then to the Western Carolines, arrived in the Marianas around 3,500 years ago where they remained in relative isolation until Magellan's raising of the group in 1521. Subsequent murders and pandemics nearly annihilated the

indigenous Chamorro people, whereupon outbreeding with Spaniards and Filipinos, in particular, then later with other Europeans, Japanese and Americans, greatly transformed not only the language but the islanders' very genotype.

Rapanui, on the other hand, reveals an uncomplicated and, compared with Chamorro, undiluted biography. It is an autonomous language within the sub-subgroup of South-eastern Polynesian languages and the subgroup of East Polynesian languages which, in turn, belong to the Polynesian group within the greater Austronesian family. Rapanui's closest relation is the Mangarevan language of the Gambier Islands to the northwest, which historically also belongs to the South-eastern Polynesian sub-subgroup shared also with Eastern Tuamotuan. Because Rapanui displays many linguistic features lost or replaced in all other South-eastern and East Polynesian languages, it today comprises a special East Polynesian isolate indicative of an extremely early divergence. Proto-Mangarevan speakers most likely settled Easter Island around AD 600 and remained in general isolation until the island's European discovery by Dutch explorer Roggeveen on Easter Sunday 1722. Chile annexed the island in 1888, but linguistic and migrant intrusion did not turn acute, indeed threaten, until the end of the twentieth century when non-Polynesian (mostly Chilean) finally outnumbered Polynesian islanders.

Only as of the nineteenth century (in some regions of Melanesia and Micronesia only as of the twentieth) did linguistic investigation into the Austronesian languages commence in earnest, and linguistic historiography of the Austronesian languages – that is, the documentation of their linguistic study – did not properly begin until the end of the twentieth century, and this only in hesitant, probing steps. It is largely because there are still hundreds of often misfiled, forgotten and thus still unassessed manuscripts in sundry libraries, institutions and private collections – dictionaries and grammars, most of these from the nineteenth century – still to be published for the first time that the task of establishing a linguistic historiography in Oceania has remained generally secondary and peripheral for most professionals. It may surprise some to learn that the Polynesian languages' earliest grammar, for example, that of North and South Marquesan (two distinct languages in the eighteenth century) compiled by William Greatheed in 1799, only achieved first publication in 1998.

Here Chamorro and Rapanui might prove exemplary. For despite Austronesian's dearth of linguistic historiography both languages can already claim impressive corpora of linguistic material that must only encourage professional attention in this regard. The present volume aims not merely to highlight both languages' fortuitous linguistic corpora but also to suggest future paths for their studied exploitation and to point the way toward a similar address of related material in further Oceanic languages as well as in other linguistic regions farther afield.

This volume begins with the editor's own "Sources of the Old Rapanui language of Easter Island" which chronicles all early works on and in this high-profile Polynesian language. It includes the documentation of the Easter Islanders' own pre-contact and early historical attempts (such as the unique *rongorongo* script) at conveying and pre-



servicing their relic language, a perspective proposed for the first time in way of redefining the very parameters of Oceanic linguistic historiography.

Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga then offers “Esteban Rodríguez’ vocabulary of the language of Guam (1565)” that linguistically analyzes the short list of 67 basic lexical items in Chamorro, recorded by a Spanish navigator that comprises our earliest vocabulary from any Oceanic language. Comparing these words with those used in contemporary Chamorro, Rodríguez-Ponga concludes with some surprising results.

Pierre Winkler’s “Translating Father Sanvitores’ *Lingua Mariana*” includes the first translation of a study penned in Latin in 1668 which is as well our first description of Chamorro grammar. An added cultural-historical dimension is gained from the study’s transcendence of its linguistic brief to include historically significant insights into seventeenth-century Chamorro life.

Susanne Schuster’s “The *Chamorro-Wörterbuch* by Georg Fritz – a contrastive description of the editions 1904 and 1908” examines these two German-based Chamorro dictionaries and, through highlighting their similarities and differences, reveals important information about linguistic fieldwork in the region as well as about the situation of the Chamorro language over a century ago.

Thomas B. Klein, in his “Chamorro morphophonology in the *Grammar and Dictionary* by Georg Fritz”, not only affords valuable observations on vowel fronting, infixation and reduplication in Chamorro but also urges recognition of Georg Fritz’ work as one of our most important and productive sources in Chamorro linguistics.

In two articles under the title “The *Chaifi*. A fairy tale from the Marianas, narrated by Georg Fritz”, Steve Pagel presents in Part 1 a commented re-edition that treats of background, intercultural and intertextual aspects, then follows this up in Part 2 with a full discussion of the text’s linguistic characteristics. Pagel concludes that Fritz’ Chamorro narration is a unique and invaluable document of the era’s Chamorro language and its character, use and meaning, as well as of the Chamorro community’s cultural and literary transformations and hybridizations.

Barbara Dewein’s “H. Costenoble’s work on Chamorro (re-)edited” traces the story of a German who lived in the Northern Mariana Islands for 8 years then later authored a published grammar and unpublished dictionary of Chamorro. Dewein includes a helpful overview of this unpublished work and fleshes out valuable facts about the enigmatic linguist and his unique contribution to the Chamorro language.

With his “Liquids where there shouldn’t be any” Thomas Stolz discloses what it is that is actually hiding behind the orthographic post-vocalic tautosyllabic <r> and <l> in early texts written on and in Chamorro. It appears a (historical) phonological reality has been veiled since World War II by a modern orthographic standard, with predecessors that has failed to adequately convey Chamorro’s true phonology. Texts from 1668 to 1940, however, as Stolz concludes in support of earlier claims, would indeed enable a valid historical grammar of Chamorro to be written.

This volume had its inception at the “Foundation Colloquium of ChiN – Chamorro Linguistics, An International Network” that was convened in Bremen, Germany, on 27 September 2009 during the historic “Festival of Languages” (17 September – 9 October 2009) organized by the Institute of General and Applied Linguistics (IAAS) at the University of Bremen and funded by EFRE (Europäischer Fond für regionale Entwicklung), an initiative of the European Union. Inspiration for, guidance over and general direction of this volume were imparted by Thomas Stolz. Subsequent supervision, management and control were skilfully maintained by Cornelia Stroh. Special recognition is further owed to Marina Wienberg and Julia Nintemann, also of the University of Bremen.

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# Sources of the Old Rapanui language of Easter Island

## Abstract

It has long been held that the original, ancient, Polynesian language of Easter Island in the south-east Pacific Ocean disappeared with few traces, and thus today defies linguistic reconstruction. This belief is unwarranted, since many sources bear robust witness to the Old Rapanui language. These sources are both “external” (that is, from visitors to the island) and “internal” (from the indigenous Rapanui people). Many of these sources hark back several centuries.

## 1. Introduction

Rapanui is the indigenous tongue of Easter Island.<sup>1</sup> The island itself is also called Rapa Nui, a name coined in the 1860s that means “Big Extremity”: hence, “Land’s End” (Fischer 1993a: 64). A South-east Polynesian language (alongside Tuamotuan and Mangarevan), Rapanui’s forebear was brought to the island around AD 600 by first-time settlers arriving almost certainly from Mangareva in the Gambier Islands, about three weeks’ sail to the north-west of Easter Island (Fischer 2005: 17f.). The Rapanui language represents the ultimate terminus of the Austronesian language family’s great eastward expansion that had begun several thousand years earlier on the island of Taiwan, offshore from China (Du Feu & Fischer 1993: 165). The cradle of all Polynesian languages lay in this mighty Austronesian family, one of the world’s largest.

The Proto-Mangarevan language that these first settlers were speaking on their arrival at Easter Island advanced, over several centuries, to Proto-Rapanui, on whose nature historical linguists can only speculate at present (Fischer 1992: 181ff.). It was this language, or one very close to it, that quickened the tongues of those brilliant carvers who fashioned Easter Island’s iconic *moai*, the nearly 1,000 ancestral busts of volcanic tuff that still stand watch over the island’s near treeless, brown landscape. Old Rapanui, the following stage of language advancement, is the name bestowed a couple of decades

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<sup>1</sup> It has become standard practice in Easter Island scholarship to write the name of the island’s language and indigenous people as *Rapanui* in pan-Polynesian fashion, but the island’s name as *Rapa Nui* in official Chilean fashion. Chile took possession of Easter Island in 1888.

ago on the earliest documented language of Easter Island. This was first encountered by outsiders – the *ngangata hiva* – when the Dutch admiral Roggeveen and his three multinational crews arrived on Easter Day 1722 and were greeted with “*Otoroka!*”, an ancient salutation. In the 1930s, Old Rapanui was buried with the last Easter Islander to recall the arrival of the Roman Catholic missionaries in the 1860s. Already as of the early 1900s, however, most Easter Islanders were already speaking Modern Rapanui. This is a term of convenience given to the island’s most recent stage of language, one whose vocabulary is half Tahitian, whose use is usually contaminated by *castellano* (Chilean Spanish), and whose nature mutates as rapidly from decade to decade as from speaker to speaker (Makihara 1999, 2001: 191ff., and 2004: 529ff.; Fischer 2001: 313ff. and 2008: 149ff.)

Today, Rapanui remains a language of superlatives. By universal consensus, it is the world’s most isolated autonomous language. It also serves one of the world’s smallest linguistic populations. Out of around 4,000 island residents in 2010, of whom some 1,800 claim to be indigenous Polynesians, only about 500 of these latter speak the Rapanui language. A majority of Easter Islanders – some 2,200 – live abroad, mostly in Chile; of these, an estimated 600 speak Rapanui. So there are only a little over one thousand speakers of Modern Rapanui.

Old Rapanui, however, was spoken by perhaps as many as 8,000 to 12,000 Islanders at any given time in the island’s past – until the great population crashes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, caused mainly, but not exclusively, by waves of virulent disease due to intrusions. For much of the past century, scholars and journalists alike have alleged that one has little notion of the language that these earlier Easter Islanders were speaking, as this was well before writing arrived on the island. These scholars and journalists are wrong. There is in fact a wealth of sources for Old Rapanui.

Let us first review, in their chronological order of appearance, the clearly identifiable **external** sources for Old Rapanui: that is, those of visitors to Easter Island.

## 2. External sources

### 2.1. Historic voyages

1722: Old Rapanui was first documented when Admiral Jacob Roggeveen’s personal Marine Sergeant, Carl Friederich Behrens from Nuremberg, Germany, observed that an elderly Easter Islander was approaching the three Dutch ships in a small canoe and calling out “O dorroga! O dorroga!”, or Old Rapanui *otoroka* (Carl Friederich Behrens, *Der wohlversuchte Süd-Länder*, Leipzig 1738; reprinted in Friedrich Schulze-Maizier, *Die Osterinsel*, Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1926, 223.) The names of two *moai* – *Taurico* and *Dago* – were noted later by another expedition member (Alan S. C. Ross, *Fontes*

linguae Paschalis saec. XVIII, in: *Bulletin de la Société des Américanistes de Belgique* 22 [1937], 20–1).

1770: Several short Old Rapanui vocabularies survive from this important Spanish visit, the second to Easter Island. See Ross (cited above), 23–33; Alan S. C. Ross, “Preliminary Notice of Some Late Eighteenth Century Numerals from Easter Island”, in: *Man* 36 (1936), 94–95; Bolton Glanvill Corney, *The voyage of Captain Don Felipe Gonzalez*, London: Hakluyt Society, 1908, 109–110; Rodolfo A. Philippi, “Vocabulario del idioma de Rapanui”, in: *Anales de la Universidad de Santiago de Chile* (1873), 429–432; and Francisco Mellén Blanco, “Vocabulario”, in: *Manuscritos y documentos españoles para la historia de la isla de Pascua*, Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo, 1986, 111–121, and also 310–312 and 339–341.

1774: From March 13 to 17, Captain James Cook visited Easter Island in the *Resolution*; his logbook of this famous voyage contains several personal, place and *moai* names in Old Rapanui, as well as a short vocabulary. Similar linguistic information is also to be found in the celebrated accounts by the German naturalists on board, father and son Johann Reinhold Förster and Georg Förster. In addition to these three separate sources, further language information from this visit is provided by Alan S. C. Ross, “Fontes linguae Paschalis saec. XVIII”, in: *Bulletin de la Société des Américanistes de Belgique* 22 (1937), 34–39; W. W. Schuhmacher, “Un vocabulario inedito de la Isla de Pascua”, in: *Moana* (Montevideo) 1/12 (1978), 1–14; and Peter A. Lanyon-Orgill, *Captain Cook’s South Sea island vocabularies*, London: published by the author, 1979, though this latter work must be approached with caution as there is strong evidence for author tampering.

## 2.2. Sealing and whaling era

Disappointingly little evidence for Old Rapanui surfaces between Cook’s voyage of 1774 and the arrival of Roman Catholic missionaries in 1866: not much more than a few Old Rapanui words appear in various logs. Isolated Easter Island lay well outside the Pacific’s main sealing and whaling regions. Though the island might have been visited as often as a hundred times during this period (McCall 1976: 291ff.), the callers bartering for fresh water, food, small wooden carvings and sex stayed only briefly and penned scarcely a word about it. Even the handful of accounts from this era almost invariably fail to identify the simplest personal or place name, much less the island’s indigenous language. The reason for this omission was best explained by Captain William Waldegrave of HMS *Seringapatam* in 1830: “No one on board could converse with the natives” (Fischer 1993b: 67ff.). Nearly unique for this era is the information shared by Captain Charles Bishop of the *Ruby* out of Bristol, who called at Easter Island in 1795 (cited in Rhys Richards, *Easter Island 1793 to 1861: observations by early visitors before the slave raids*, Los Osos: Easter Island Foundation, 2008, 21): “Of their

language, our short stay prohibited us from acquiring much knowledge. *Pe'hee* signifies friend; *new'ee* is big; little is *mow'ee*; to lie down to sleep is *mo'ae*; fowls are –; *etta'oea* is knife and *ear'ee* is chief etc.” Not much more than such meagre, and usually garbled, linguistic fare occurs for nearly a century.

### 2.3. Missionaries

Written reports to Pape'ete, Tahiti and to Valparaíso, Chile, were dispatched by the four Roman Catholic missionaries resident on Easter Island between 1866 and 1871. Many of these reports include personal and place names in Old Rapanui, but otherwise contain little in the way of linguistic information. This is because the two priests and two brothers of the Order of the Sacred Hearts (SSCC, Picpus, Paris) actively discouraged the telling of ancient tales, singing of old songs and chanting of pre-Christian rites. A wealth of primary information, most of it unpublished, about this first Christian mission on Easter Island fills the General Archives of the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts (Padri dei Sacri Cuori) in Rome; see especially PAC 53b, Pq 75/1, Pq 75/2, Pq 75/3 and Pq 75/4.

Even so, the priests and brothers were willingly learning the then-contemporary Old Rapanui language in order to be able to communicate with, convert, and physically and morally help the Easter Islanders, as well as to translate scripture, hymns, the Roman Catholic liturgy and the Roman Catholic catechism into the Old Rapanui language. Their written results, all still in manuscript, are most curious intertwinings of Old Rapanui with Tahitian, Paumotuian (Tuamotuian) and Mangarevan that also contain many phonologically adapted Greek and Latin loans – for example: Old Rapanui *kimatiko* for Greek *schismatikos*; *peripitero* for Greek *presbyteros*; *karatia* for Latin *gratia*; *peata* for Latin *beata*; and many more. These missionary writings, most of them by the French priest Father Hippolyte Roussel, comprise in fact our largest mass of written material in the Old Rapanui language, “contaminated” though it be.

The first Old Rapanui text in the Latin alphabet is Hippolyte Roussel's 1866–67 catechism, hitherto unpublished: *E katekimo katorika Rapanui*. The oldest known version of this, dated 1869, is that copied from the original by the Frenchman Alphonse L. Pinart in May of 1877 at Tahiti. This manuscript now lies in the Pinart Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley: MSS Bancroft P-N 14. A 1935 typewritten copy of 38 pages, after an original at Valparaíso, is Pq 75-1 V (75-g), General Archives of the Padri dei Sacri Cuori (SSCC), Rome. Roussel's similarly unpublished *Evangelio no te mau tominika o te tau*, which comprises portions of the Gospels translated into Old Rapanui and copied from the original by Pinart also in May of 1877 at Tahiti, is also in Berkeley's Pinart Collection: MSS Bancroft P-N 16. Roussel's Pater, Credo, Ten Commandments and further prayers in Old Rapanui, in an unpublished manuscript titled *Ka ora to Jetu haipo tapu noa*, was similarly copied by Pinart in May

of 1877, at Papetoai on Mo'orea; this also lies in Berkeley's Pinart Collection: MSS Bancroft P-N 15.

Of singular value is Roussel's vocabulary. The oldest known original manuscript of this Old Rapanui vocabulary is the copy effected by Pinart in April and May of 1877 at Tahiti, also containing a one-page appendage of 17 additional words, now in Berkeley's Pinart Collection: MSS Bancroft P-N 13. This vocabulary was later posthumously published as "Vocabulaire de la langue de l'Île-de-Pâques ou Rapanui" in: *Le Muséon* (Paris) 27 (1908), 159–254. It also appeared in book format: Paris: Leroux (and Istas), 1908. A Spanish translation followed: Félix Jaffuel, *Vocabulario de la lengua de la Isla de Pascua o Rapanui*, Santiago: Imprenta de San José, 1917.

Between August and October of 1873, Roman Catholic Bishop "Tepano" Jaussen of Tahiti employed the services of the young Rapanui Metoro Tau'a Ure in an attempt to "read" the several Easter Island *rongorongo* tablets in Bishop Jaussen's personal possession. Though Metoro could not truly read these, he did proceed to chant for the Bishop provisional and imaginary "identifications" of the incised signs in the manner of earlier *rongorongo* experts as he had heard them – and this in a curious intertwining of Old Rapanui and Tahitian that was then beginning to be spoken among the Rapanui refugees living in Pape'ete. Bishop Jaussen's "tablet texts" remain an invaluable linguistic source that reveals the initial formation of what would soon become Modern Rapanui: Florentin Étienne (Tepano) Jaussen, *L'Île de Pâques, historique – écriture, et répertoire des signes des tablettes ou bois d'hibiscus intelligents*, posthumously edited by Ildefonse Alazard, Paris: Leroux, 1893. This is also printed as "L'île de Pâques. Historique et écriture," posthumously edited by Ildefonse Alazard, *Bulletin de géographie historique et descriptive* 2 (1893), 240–270.

Any thorough Easter Island documentation must include the outstanding works of the German Capuchin Father Sebastian Englert from Dillingen, Bavaria, who, from 1935 until 1969, served nearly without respite as the island's solitary priest. Though not strictly Old Rapanui any longer, Englert's linguistic matter does preserve much archaic material, since Englert's scholarly priority lay with Easter Island's oral patrimony. Of invaluable assistance to scholarship is his *Diccionario rapanui-español*, Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 1938. A greatly expanded version of this dictionary, printed together with the first substantial grammar of the "Modern Rapanui language" of the 1930s and 1940s, formed a substantial part of Englert's chief contribution: *La tierra de Hotu Matu'a: historia, etnología y lengua de la Isla de Pascua*, Padre Las Casas (Chile): Imprenta y edición "San Francisco," 1948, 327–513; important Rapanui narrations are here included in the "Lecturas", 377–417. This book remains the first address of any scholar interested in the "older" language of Easter Island; however, this is no longer Old Rapanui.

Further narratives in early Modern Rapanui that nonetheless still maintain much of Old Rapanui syntax and grammar can be found in Englert's contribution: "He huru o Rapanui, costumbres de la Isla de Pascua", in: *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía*

(Santiago) 86 (1939), 184–215, and 87 (1939), 202–247; and also in Englert’s *Tradiciones de la Isla de Pascua: en idioma rapanui y castellano*, Publicaciones de la Comisión de Estudios sobre la Isla de Pascua, Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 1939. Relevant posthumous publications by Englert include: *Island at the centre of the world: new light on Easter Island*, translated and edited by William Mulloy, London: Robert Hale & Company, 1970; *Idioma rapanui: gramática y diccionario del antiguo idioma de la isla de Pascua*, Santiago: Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1977; and *Leyendas de Isla de Pascua: textos bilingües*, Santiago: Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1980.

## 2.4. Post-missionary voyages

1870: The visit of the Chilean Navy’s *O’Higgins* yielded a short Old Rapanui vocabulary by Santiago’s celebrated German professor and museum director: Rodulfo (Rudolph) A. Philippi, “Vocabulario del idioma de Rapanui”, in: *Anales de la Universidad de Santiago de Chile* (1873), 429–432.

1882: Paymaster Candidate J. Weisser of the German Imperial cannonboat *Hyäne* documented many personal and place names, cultural items, a vocabulary and the three earliest attested songs in Old Rapanui: Wilhelm Geiseler, *Die Osterinsel, eine Stätte prähistorischer Kultur in der Südsee. Bericht des Kommandanten S.M. Kbt. “Hyäne”, Kapitänleutnant Geiseler, über die ethnologische Untersuchung der Oster-Insel (Rapanui) an den Chef der Kaiserlichen Admiralität*, Beiheft zum Marine-Verordnungsblatt 44, Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1883; see especially 45–47.

1886: Personal and place names, a genealogy of Easter Island’s ‘*ariki mau*’ (‘paramount chiefs’) and a substantial vocabulary were recorded by American Paymaster William Thomson during the calling of the USS *Mohican*: William Judah Thomson, “Te Pito te Henua, or Easter Island. Report of the United States National Museum for the year ending June 30, 1889”, in: *Annual reports of the Smithsonian Institution for 1889*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1891, 447–552; see in particular the “Vocabulary”, 546–552. During this visit, Thomson was also able to collect from Daniel Ure Va’e Iko various chants in Old Rapanui, three of which represent the most important monuments of the Old Rapanui language that were written down in the nineteenth century: the ritual chants *Hapai* (erroneously spelt *Apai*, 517–518) and *He aha tōrā’ua ’ariki* (*Eaha to Ran Ariiki Kete*, 523) and especially the procreation chant ‘*Atua mata riri*’ (*Atua Matariri*, 520–521) that provided the key to the recognition of procreation triads in many *rongorongo* tablets and the “Santiago Staff”, enabling the *rongorongo* script’s decipherment in 1993 (Fischer 1995: 303–321 and 1997: 258–261). A separate and slightly different handwritten copy of Thomson’s Old Rapanui ‘*ariki*’ genealogy and vocabulary, and of *Hapai* and two contemporary songs (also published in Thomson), was made in the late 1880s by William de Witt Alexander. Still unpublished, this manuscript now lies in the Bishop Museum in Hono-



lulu: Ms. Case 5 E2, William de Witt Alexander, Genealogy of the kings of Rapa Nui; Easter Island vocabularies; also microfilm reel 252.8.

1886: From the same visit of the USS *Mohican* comes William E. Safford's Old Rapanui vocabulary, in: George H. Cooke, "Te Pito te Henua, known as Rapa Nui; commonly called Easter Island, South Pacific Ocean, annual report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution for the year ending June 30, 1897", in: *Report of the U.S. National Museum, Part I*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1899, 720–723.

## 2.5. Subsequent sojourns

1911–12: For over a year Edgardo Martínez manned the new Hangaroa Meteorological Station as resident observer. During this time, he compiled his own Rapanui vocabulary, today notable particularly for its inclusion of rare sexual and scatological terms in Old Rapanui: Edgardo Martínez, *Vocabulario de la lengua Rapa-Nui: Isla de Pascua*, Santiago: Instituto Meteorológico, 1913.

1914–15: The wealth of information about earlier Easter Island life; the many personal, place and "tribal" names; songs, chants and tales; an extensive Old Rapanui and early Modern Rapanui vocabulary; a list of 147 different fish names in Old Rapanui; a list of annual "Birdmen"; and many other things that are found in Katherine Routledge's unpublished notes of her nearly seventeen months ashore, make the "Routledge Fieldnotes" perhaps the single greatest source of true (i.e., least contaminated) Old Rapanui material, most of it yet to be properly evaluated. Her book *The mystery of Easter Island: the story of an expedition*, London: Hazell, Watson and Viney, 1919, has become a classic of Pacific anthropology. Yet it is her fieldnotes above all that remain a veritable goldmine for scholars of the Old Rapanui language (provided one can decipher her script): Katherine Pease (Scoresby) Routledge, unpublished papers, mainly relating to Easter Island, 1914–15, in the holdings of the Royal Geographical Society, London; also microfilms PMB 531, reels 1–4, of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. Among Routledge's notes are also several early versions of the Old Rapanui chant "E timo te akoako", one of Easter Island's most culturally significant.

1914: José Ignacio Vives Solar arrived on Easter Island to construct and direct the island's first school (Fischer 2005: 171ff.). Interested in the oral patrimony, he collected much information, some of which he later published, also containing Old Rapanui personal names, place names, terms and phrases: José Ignacio Vives Solar, *Rapa Nui: cuentos pascuenses*, Santiago: Imprenta Universitaria, 1920; see also the small glossary on 117–119.

1917–18: The Capuchin Father Bienvenido de Estella visited Rapa Nui in 1917, then returned in 1918 to stay for eight months, redeveloping the Roman Catholic parish, laying out roads and struggling to beautify and "civilise" Hangaroa. He collected a mass

of linguistic material, much of it still Old Rapanui. He also recorded that the word *moai* was still being pronounced in 1918 as *mo'ai* (for which he writes *mohai*). See Bienvenido de Estella, *Mis viajes a Pascua*, Santiago: Cervantes, 1921; in particular the "Vocabulario", 76–131.

1922: New Zealand Professor John Macmillan Brown spent five months on Easter Island; his later book included many personal and place names, cultural terms and a short Maori-Rapanui comparative vocabulary that includes some rare Old Rapanui terms: John Macmillan Brown, *The riddle of the Pacific*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1924; see 285–288.

1934–35: The leader of the Franco-Belgian Expedition to Easter Island, Swiss ethnologist Alfred Métraux, filled ten field notebooks with early Modern Rapanui chants, songs and tales. These are deposited at the Institut für Völkerkunde, University of Tübingen, Germany; an electronic scan of this can be accessed at the Mulloy Library, Sebastian Englert Museum, Hanga-roa, Easter Island. A plethora of Old Rapanui personal and place names, terms, 'ariki lists, *moai* and *ahu* names, rituals and so forth, together with many older chants, songs and tales, some still in Old Rapanui but most in early Modern Rapanui, appear in: Alfred Métraux, *Ethnology of Easter Island*, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 160, Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1940. Helpful is also Métraux's article: "The kings of Easter Island", in: *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 46 (1937), 41–62.

1955–56: Though the Norwegian Expedition to Easter Island, led by famed adventurer Thor Heyerdahl, concentrated on the island's archaeology, films and recordings were nevertheless made of older Islanders chanting, singing and dancing, some of which was performed in Old Rapanui. This material rests in the archives of the Kon-Tiki Museum, Oslo, Norway.

1957–58: German ethnologist Thomas Barthel, leader of the seven-month German-Chilean Expedition to Easter Island (Fischer 2010), collected a mass of chants, songs, tales, *kaikai*, personal and place names and further ethnological information, much of which preserved Old Rapanui, which he published over subsequent years; see the complete bibliography in the *Rapa Nui Journal* 11 (1997), 100. His notes are deposited at the Institute of Polynesian Languages and Literatures, Auckland, New Zealand. "Rapanui Manuscript E" in the Old Rapanui of the 1890s (i.e., with Tahitian contamination), the longest published Old Rapanui text, was reproduced in: Thomas Barthel, *Das achte Land: Die Entdeckung und Besiedlung der Osterinsel nach Eingeborenen-traditionen übersetzt und erläutert*, Munich: Klaus Renner Verlag, 1974 (English edition: *The eighth land: the Polynesian discovery and settlement of Easter Island*, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawai'i, 1978). Barthel also reproduced Bishop Jaussen's documentation of Metoro's Old Rapanui chants, in: Thomas Barthel, *Grundlagen zur Entzifferung der Osterinselschrift*, Abhandlungen aus dem Gebiet der Auslandskunde 64, Reihe B, vol. 36, Hamburg: Cram, de Gruyter & Co., 1958, 173–199.

## 2.6. External scholarly

1912: The erstwhile US Consul-General in Samoa and Tonga compiled one of the most important studies of the Old Rapanui language, collated chiefly from missionary dictionaries and founded on comparative Polynesian philology: William Churchill, *Easter Island: the Rapanui speech and the peopling of southeast Polynesia*, Publication of the Carnegie Institution 174, Washington, DC: The Carnegie Institution, 1912.

Let us now turn to the **internal** sources: that is, what the Easter Islanders themselves conveyed in the Old Rapanui language that is still to be accessed.

## 3. Internal sources

### 3.1. Toponyms

That the very oldest Rapanui language on Easter Island lies in its place names is confirmed alone by the names of Mounts Tu'u and Tangaroa near today's solitary town of Hangaroa: both preserve the names of ancestral deities brought to the island by the original south-east Polynesian settlers, though both names have been extinct in folk memory for nearly three centuries. Easter Island's toponyms are a veritable treasure-trove of the island's very oldest language; Tu'u and Tangaroa are, in fact, even older than Proto-Rapanui. A main source of such early Easter Island place names is Katherine Routledge's detailed map of the island, on which she marked hundreds of names given to her by Juan Tepano as they toured on horseback for many months in 1914–15 (Routledge 1919); still unpublished, this map is deposited at the Royal Geographical Society, London (see details above). Father Sebastian Englert also collected place names; his list of 244 *ahu* appears in: Sebastian Englert, *La tierra de Hotu Matu'a*, 516-33 (plus map). A highly detailed study of Easter Island place names is: Carlos Charlin Ojeda, *Geo-etimología de la Isla de Pascua*, Santiago: Instituto Geográfico Militar, 1947. One of the most complete lists of place names was provided by Thomas Barthel, "Easter Island place names", in: *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* (Paris) 18 (1962), 100–107.

### 3.2. Rock art

There can be little doubt that Easter Island's rock art preserves Old Rapanui phoneticity (Lee 1992). Both petroglyph and wall painting had to prompt the vocalisation of an identifiable name (deity, personal, place, or "tribal"), object (bird, fish, turtle, vulva of initiate, etc.) and perhaps even longer statements: one supine and still unfinished *moai* on the mid-external flank of the Rano Raraku quarry still preserves, along its base, a long sequence of later engraved petroglyphs, perhaps an "Old Rapanui text" of some

sort. (Revealed only in early 1993, it is again subsurface.) How such rock art was meant to be “read” in Old Rapanui is still unclear; the sign(s) might prompt the recitation of a previously memorised chant or hymn, using as *aide mémoire* an incipient “logographic script” that, inspired by foreign writing around 1770, led to the creation of *rongorongo*.

### 3.3. Rongorongo

Equally manifest is that Easter Island’s unique *rongorongo* script, innovated probably in the 1770s or 1780s and actively used up into the 1860s, was read in the Old Rapanui language. Each wooden staff, tablet, *rei miro* pectoral, or other incised inscription of the 24 surviving artefacts is therefore a legible text, the very earliest in Old Rapanui. (The “Santiago Staff,” for one, probably predates Hippolyte Roussel’s Roman Catholic catechism of 1866–67 by nearly a century.) The Old Rapanui syntax (but not the exact text itself) of Daniel Ure Va’e Iko’s procreation chant *'Atua mata riri*, as written down in 1886 by the American Paymaster William Thomson in the Latin alphabet (via the Tahitian Alexander Salmon, Jr), is apparently reproduced on the much earlier “Santiago Staff”: *Te manu mau ki 'ai ki roto ki te ika: ka pū te ra'ā*, or ‘All the birds mated with the fish: there issued forth the sun.’ Indeed, the *rongorongo* texts preserve the most pristine library of Old Rapanui. This is unique in the Pacific before the twentieth century, in that Islanders are expressing themselves in an indigenous Polynesian writing system and not in the alien Latin alphabet.

### 3.4. Kaikai

Today, it is Easter Island’s oldest string-figure chants, the *kaikai*, that convey the most public Old Rapanui. Probably it is because they employ an older stage of language – which is all but unintelligible even to the most elderly and fluent Modern Rapanui speakers – that these chants are held in such high regard. In the *kaikai* each Easter Islander hears the voices of his or her ancestors; their Old Rapanui words evoke feelings close to the veneration of a holy liturgy. As public performance, the *kaikai* feature prominently on the stage of each “*Tāpati* Festival,” the island’s annual celebration of cultural patrimony. Though the *kaikai* can be found in a wide variety of publications, including Englert and Métraux (see above), and figure also among Routledge’s fieldnotes, the best *kaikai* collections, which include scholarly commentaries, are: Olaf Blixen, “Figuras de hilo tradicionales de la isla de Pascua y sus correspondientes salmodias”, in: *Moana* (Montevideo) 2(1) (1979), 100–106; Thomas Barthel, “Rezitationen von der Osterinsel”, in: *Anthropos* 55 (1960), 841–859; and Ramón Campbell, *La herencia musical de Rapanui: Etnomusicología de la Isla de Pascua*, Santiago: Andrés Bello, 1971, 413–457.

### 3.5. “Rapanui Manuscripts”

Taking advantage of a fortuitous respite from exploitative Chilean ranchers in the 1890s, a group of mostly elderly Easter Islanders – among them Daniel Ure Va’e Iko, Pua Ara Hoa, Pakomeo Ure Kino and the younger Nicolás Pakarati (Barthel 1965: 387–389, and 1974: 310–322; Fischer 1997: 113–14, and 2005: 148) – began reconstituting what they held to be ancient settlement traditions and writing these down in the Latin alphabet using the transitional Old Rapanui language of the 1890s, one intertwined with much Tahitian and some Paumotuan (Tuamotuan) and Mangarevan. The recopying of these stories continues to the present day in the homes of the few families who treasure such inherited “Rapanui Manuscripts” like holy scripture. Until now, only “Manuscript E” has been published (see Thomas Barthel, *Das achte Land*, described above). Photographed pages from several of these manuscripts, containing short Old Rapanui texts, appear in: Thor Heyerdahl and Edwin N. Ferdon, Jr (eds.), *Reports of the Norwegian Archaeological Expedition to Easter Island and the East Pacific*, vol. 2: *Miscellaneous papers*, Monographs of the School of American Research and the Kon-Tiki Museum, No. 24, Part 2, Stockholm: Forum Publishing House, 1965, photographs 96–136 at the end of the volume.

### 3.6. Chants and songs

Though US admiral Richard E. Byrd (1888–1957), when briefly visiting Easter Island in the mid-1920s, made several primitive tone recordings of Rapanui song, he unfortunately had only young people sing for him, who then sang only modern compositions influenced by Tahitian and Spanish. However, the Norwegian Expedition of 1955–56 filmed and made recordings of Rapanui singing and dancing; this footage contains rare Old Rapanui song (Archives of the Kon-Tiki Museum, Oslo, Norway). During the German-Chilean Expedition of 1957–58, Thomas Barthel also tape-recorded many chants, songs and *kai-kai*; this material can be found at the Institut für Völkerkunde, Tübingen, Germany. In January 1958, Bodo Fischer of the German Film Expedition, the Chilean musicologist Jorge Urrutia Blondel and the American cultural attaché Hartzell Dake all made separate tape recordings of Rapanui chants and songs, some which might have preserved some Old Rapanui; the location of these recordings is presently unknown (Fischer 2010). The single largest compendium of Easter Island chants and songs, very little of it containing Old Rapanui, is: Ramón Campbell, *La herencia musical de Rapanui: etnomusicología de la Isla de Pascua*, Santiago: Andrés Bello, 1971. Old Rapanui chants and songs infrequently appear in such major source books as Métraux’s and Englert’s (see above), yet abound in Routledge’s fieldnotes from 1914–15.

## 4. Conclusion

Easter Island's older language was tentatively probed by American William Churchill and Englishwoman Katherine Routledge in the 1910s; by Swiss Alfred Métraux and German Sebastian Englert in the 1930s and 1940s; by German Thomas Barthel in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s; and by several others during this time and since – Russian, American, Chilean, Uruguayan, New Zealand – with rather diverse linguistic expertise. However, the recognition of this older language as “Old Rapanui,” coupled with rigorous historical linguistic enquiry, did not truly commence until the 1990s. The belated engagement could perhaps, as is argued here, best be explained by insufficient knowledge of accessible source material. It is hoped that one can now appreciate, from this brief documentation of both external and internal sources about and from Easter Island, that the Old Rapanui language was never a bereft orphan. Indeed, for several centuries the Easter Islanders' own distilled linguistic variant constituted an impressively endowed member of the South-east Polynesian family of languages. The abundance of this historical legacy must now surely engage scholars from around the world for many generations to come.

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# Esteban Rodríguez' vocabulary of the language of Guam (1565)\*

## Abstract

This paper is a critical analysis of the first vocabulary of the language spoken on the island of Guam in the Marianas. Written in 1565 by Spanish navigator Esteban Rodríguez, it is a list of 67 words that comprised the actual basic vocabulary of the language. This linguistic analysis is based on the manuscript kept in the Archivo de Indias in Seville, Spain, and on five versions of the same text, three of which are in Spanish and two, in English. The comparison between the modern and contemporary lexicons of Chamorro is done by taking the dictionaries from the 19th and 20th centuries into account and the field interviews carried out by the author himself. The results reveal that 77% of the words from 1565 can be identified with a certain trace that survives over time, while 43% are retained as exact linguistic signs (same signified and signifier) from 1565 to present-day Chamorro. Another 61% have been replaced totally or in part by Spanish loanwords or coexist with them.

## 1. Who was Esteban Rodríguez?

Esteban Rodríguez was an accomplished 16th-century Spanish navigator. We count among his achievements the honour of having compiled the first vocabulary of the language of the Marianas.

He was the chief mate (*Piloto Mayor*) of the expedition headed by Miguel López de Legazpi, the admiral of the fleet, and Fr. Andrés de Urdaneta from 1564 to 1565. According to the instructions given by the King, Legazpi could appoint as ship pilot “*a las personas que os pareciere de más confianza, habilidad y experiencia*” ‘people who seem to thee of good repute, skill and experience’ (Valdemoro 1947: 148). We should be able to deduce that Rodríguez, a man from Andalusia, satisfied all these requirements given that Legazpi, a Basque, chose him for the position, inasmuch as the former could oversee and lead the fleet in sailing.

Esteban Rodríguez had studied in the *Casa de Contratación* of Seville. He was 31 years old then (Lévesque 1994: 79) and was certainly an Andalusian. According to one

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\* This paper, originally written in Spanish by the author, was translated into English by Marlon James Sales.