

## Rapa Nui – Easter Island

Cultural and Historical Perspectives

Ian Conrich and Hermann Mückler (eds)

**F** Frank & Timme

Verlag für wissenschaftliche Literatur

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Assistant Editor:  
Jennifer Wagner

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## Introduction

This collection has its roots in research that Ian Conrich was conducting into the popular culture myths of Easter Island. The research examined the ways in which Easter Island has been popularised and reimagined by foreign nations through visual and material culture such as comic books, computer games, advertising and household objects. This grew into an exhibition, 'Easter Island, Myths and Popular Culture', which opened at Canning House, in London, in late 2010 and which was followed over 2011 and 2012 with more extensive exhibitions at the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum, Middlesbrough, UK for six months, and then six months at the Kon-Tiki Museum, Oslo, Norway. The fullest version of the exhibition to date was held in 2015 at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre in Sydney, Australia. It is estimated that more than 300,000 visitors have seen the exhibition, which continues to be supported by an ever-evolving website called Moai Culture.

Back in 2010, in conjunction with the exhibition's opening, an Easter Island symposium was held at the Chilean Embassy in London. This was the first time in the UK that a conference on Easter Island had been organised. Twelve experts were invited to be speakers for that special event and it was decided with Hermann Mückler, soon after, that an edited collection should be formed from most of those who gave presentations. From the beginning it was a conscious decision to try and move Easter Island Studies beyond its more traditional platforms within science and social science: archaeology, anthropology (including anthropological linguistics), geography and sociology. This collection still engages with these disciplines but it also introduces considerations that are located more specifically within the humanities: literature, history, music and popular culture.

From adventurers Katherine Routledge and Thor Heyerdahl to Indiana Jones and Lara Croft, the enduring appeal of Easter Island has not only seen a dramatic increase in the number of visitors to this most isolated of UNESCO heritage sites, but it has been significantly fictionalised to a point whereby popular culture has re-presented this civilisation in ways experienced by few others. The moai (the

colossal stone carvings) are the main attraction, yet they have tended to overshadow the fact that there has been a continuous population, the indigenous Rapanui, on the island since it was first settled some 1500 years ago. Whilst the moai remain a focus of this book, the contributors have approached the island from a range of perspectives, which place its unique culture within broader contexts. Unlike previous studies, this collection considers the pre-history, history and contemporary culture of the island, with value given to the cultural production of both the Rapanui and western societies. A particular power of this multidisciplinary book is that it addresses a diversity of Easter Island topics and across a breadth of time.

In the first section, 'History and Society', Mückler describes the life and achievements of the almost forgotten German scientist Walter Knoche, who was invited to lead the first Chilean Easter Island expedition in 1911. Not only did he build the first meteorological station on Rapa Nui, but he also looked into the health of the indigenous population and pursued ethnological studies on the island. He was able to talk to the very last members of the indigenous population who were witnesses to the 'old' Rapanui culture, before it disappeared completely. Addressing a period almost one hundred years after Knoche's expedition, Maxi Haase, in her chapter, states that the voices of the Rapanui have not been present enough within Easter Island narratives. Yet there are opportunities to display both a revival and a continuity of Rapanui culture within the island's booming tourism industry of today, which Haase views as a site of cultural negotiation. Here, contemporary Easter Islanders are presented as actively administering their cultural heritage, engaged in versions of authentic cultural expression, whilst attempting to satisfy the needs of tourists and debunking the perceived mysteries of their homeland.

Such mysteries are addressed in the second section, in Dominic Alessio's chapter, in which he focuses on the 'Lost World' fiction of James Churchward, who wrote a series of books about Mu, an imagined ancient civilisation which apparently sank beneath the Pacific leaving Easter Island as a remnant of its once mighty realm. Alessio reveals the fascinating arrangements between Mu and Rapa Nui, and believes that the Mu books can be interpreted as historical markers and reflections of another civilisation, the British Empire of the late Victorian and Edwardian period. Churchward's Lost World narratives have inspired contemporary musicians and moving from Mu to music sees Dan Bendrups consider the ways Easter Island has appeared in album cover art. Like Haase, Bendrups is drawn to

the contemporary cultural production of the Rapanui and in this particular case the ways in which Rapanui music is packaged through artwork of their own. This contrasts with the album cover art for non-Rapanui musicians. For the latter, Rapa Nui conjures images of mystery and the exotic with the moai recontextualised and fetishised as visual objects; where local releases are concerned, album cover art provides a vehicle for asserting a discourse of self-actualisation.

In the third section, such questions of popular culture are further investigated with a focus on comic books and contemporary novels. It starts with Jennifer Wagner's exploration of Rapa Nui in French-language comics. She examines the various ways in which the culture and people of Rapa Nui have been depicted in fourteen Franco-Belgian *bandes dessinées* (BD). Wagner approaches the difference between American comics and the BD and highlights how many American comics often express a fascination with the moai whilst ignoring the presence or existence of the Rapanui. In comparison, in the BDs, the plots are more committed to depicting both the Rapanui and a level of detail and research that is indicative of the higher regard in which such texts are held in their country of origin. Roy Smith, in contrast, focuses solely on American comic book depictions of Easter Island and a common fiction in which extraterrestrial encounters are the fantasy of choice. Smith works from an International Relations position and considers the importance of these comics for depicting intergalactic relations, with narratives obsessed with associating extraterrestrial contact with the existence of the moai. Such narratives of first contact range from imagining the malicious intent of the alien visitors to dominate or even annihilate mankind, to a more paternal and benevolent level of interplanetary meeting.

Within popular fiction, extraterrestrials are the predominant visitors to Easter Island, whilst amongst the earthly visitors the explorer and archaeologist appear most prevalent. In the final article in this section, Conrich largely examines contemporary novels in which perpetual adventurers such as Indiana Jones, the Hardy Boys, and Doctor Who, have encountered the moai. As adventurers and scientists have long been the mainstay of the island's visitors it is perhaps not surprising that they are common characters within popular fiction. Though as Conrich notes, what is surprising is how within such fiction the archaeologist or scientist is the villain and the adventurer or explorer is repeatedly presented as the hero.

Archaeology is the subject of the fourth section, which opens with Sue Hamilton offering a detailed interpretation of ritual landscapes focusing on the

island's *ahu* (ceremonial platforms), upon which many of the moai were erected. Hamilton argues that the *ahu* were places where the worlds of the living and the dead were connected and transformed, and she proposes that the *ahu* also functioned as a metaphor for the island itself. Colin Richards considers the *ahu*, the *pukao* (topknots) and the construction of the moai as part of a ritual process of monumental construction, but in the context of 'risk'. Reflecting on the 'myth of calculability' Richards draws our attention to the forms of local 'risk management' involved in the production, movement and erection of these colossal statues. From above ground to below ground, Ruth Whitehouse in her chapter considers the caves on Rapa Nui and their functions as dwellings, refuge, workshops, and burial and/or ritual sites as well as repositories for sacred objects. She argues for more research to be conducted on the island's caves, which have been largely neglected in the past. Drawing on her previous work, she proposes that Easter Island's caves should be investigated for their symbolic and cosmological roles in addition to the distinct sensory worlds that these darkened spaces presented as so different from the above-ground environment of everyday life.

The last section deals with the *rongorongo* tablets and the on-going work into deciphering Easter Island's early writing system. Rafał Wieczorek provides a detailed statistical and structural study in support of his argument that one particular tablet, *Keiti*, should be regarded as containing astronomical information. In analysing so-called 'moon glyphs' and drawing attention to the Pleiades, known in Rapanui as *Matariki*, he compares *Keiti* with the *Mamari* tablet, which largely has been agreed to be a calendar. Despite the obvious challenges in deciphering such a complex and obscure language system, for which there are few surviving examples, Albert Davletshin suggests that the tablets can be understood. In this study he examines *rongorongo* for its combinations of glyphs and argues that the tablets should now be re-considered, as he believes they contain word-signs. Finally, Tomi S. Melka analyses distinctive sequences and the repetition of glyphs in three *rongorongo* texts. Melka employs segmentation principles for this study but in contrast to Davletshin he is more cautious seeing decipherment as a risk for a series of reasons. All three authors in this section offer significant new insights into a specific yet highly valuable aspect of Rapanui culture. In preparing this book, a decision was made to retain the words Rapa Nui for where the island itself is mentioned and Rapanui for the people, indigenous language and culture of the island.

## HISTORY AND SOCIETY



HERMANN MÜCKLER

## **The Forgotten Easter Island Explorer Walter Knoche, Scientific Leader of the 1911 Chilean Expedition to Rapa Nui**

In 1911 the Chilean government organised the first scientific expedition to Easter Island, which had been under Chilean colonial rule since 1888, but which had received hardly any attention by the Chilean government. Walter Knoche was chosen to lead the Chilean expedition. He had migrated to Chile from Germany in 1910 for the purpose of establishing a central meteorological service in the capital, Santiago de Chile. He had been appointed because of his interdisciplinary competence for meteorology and anthropology/ethnology.

Even researchers specialising in the history of Easter Island or Rapa Nui, have rarely read about or heard of the name of Walter Knoche. Knoche is hardly ever mentioned in scientific works on Easter Island and, if so, only briefly, without emphasising his importance for the exploration of Easter Island. There are just two authors of significance who ascribed some importance to Knoche: the Norwegian experimental archaeologist Thor Heyerdahl, and the Swiss ethnologist Alfred Métraux. Heyerdahl was interested in Knoche's research on Easter Island to the extent that he carefully studied Knoche's information on material culture and the archaeology of the Rapanui when he was planning his own expedition to Easter Island in 1955–56. In spite of Heyerdahl's sensational voyage on the raft 'Kon Tiki' from Callao in Peru to Raroia in the central Polynesian Tuamotu Archipelago in 1947 (see Heyerdahl 1950: 18–41), he was denied acceptance by the academic community for a long time. In addition, like Knoche, Heyerdahl was interested in investigating the cultural ties between Easter Island and South America. Heyerdahl devoted brief subchapters of only a few lines to Knoche, in two publications: his popular scientific book *Die Kunst der Osterinsel (Easter Island Art)*; Heyerdahl 1975) and his two-volume scientific publication on the

insights gained from the archaeological and ethnological findings of his Easter Island expedition of 1955–56, which he published together with Edwin Ferdon Jr (Heyerdahl and Ferdon Jr 1961). Métraux, who had already visited Easter Island in 1934–35 and had published his results, also refers to Knoche (Métraux 1940). In contrast, authors of classic publications on Easter Island research, among them the English explorer Katherine Routledge, who had visited Easter Island only three years after Knoche, and who was the first one to produce photographic documents of the island on a large scale, and the German Capuchin monk Sebastian Englert, who had engaged for a long time in pastoral work on Easter Island, do not mention Knoche at all (Routledge 1920 [1919]; Englert 1948). Other authors, like John Macmillan Brown, the New Zealand-Scottish oceanographer, simply used illustrations from Knoche's book for his own 1926 book without any reference to their origin, in particular in connection with the tattoos and Knoche's ethnographic collection. It is only recently, and initially due to the work of Steven Roger Fischer, that Knoche has begun to emerge from obscurity (see Fischer 2010a; Fischer 2010b).

For many decades Knoche's Easter Island expedition of 1911 was the only Chilean initiative for a scientific approach to the island, its inhabitants, culture and civilisation. Only the joint expedition by Germany and Chile in 1957–58, led by the German scientist Thomas Barthel and accompanied by a number of Chilean explorers but as yet not really analysed in professional literature, came close to equalling Knoche's achievements, continuing his work but with the emphasis on other aspects (see Barthel 1978). Knoche published a book of 320 pages – *Die Osterinsel. Eine Zusammenfassung der chilenischen Osterinselexpedition 1911* (Easter Island, a *Résumé of the Chilean Expedition to Easter Island, 1911*) – in which he gave detailed descriptions of meteorological, physio-anthropological, ethnological and archaeological aspects and included numerous illustrations. This book, however, is hardly known. It was published in German in Chile, in Concepción in 1925. It is hardly known in Chile because it was written in German, and in the German speaking countries it is hardly known because it was published in Chile and in a small edition only, so that very few copies found their way to Europe. Knoche published another 36 articles dealing with aspects relating to Easter Island. Below, Walter Knoche's life will be described in detail and tribute will be paid to his scientific achievement in respect of the Rapa Nui Expedition. The details on Knoche's biography as well as on the Chilean Expedition to Easter Island in 1911 were collected by myself within the framework of

a project carried out from 2008 to 2014 and, which, amongst other things, led to a new edition of Knoche's book. To this end Easter Island as well as archives and institutions in Chile, Germany, the United States, and Israel were visited. Among them were the Leo Baeck Institute, Center for Jewish History, in New York; the Leibnitz Institut für Länderkunde, in Leipzig; the Leopoldina Archive of the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina, in Haale (Saale); the Routledge Collection at the Universidad de Santiago de Chile and at the Archivo Instituto Sanitas S.A., both in Santiago de Chile; finally the Archivo Histórico de la Armada, Museo Navale y Marítimo, in Valparaiso; and the Albert Einstein Archives, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Figure 1: Walter Knoche, ca. 1936.

## Biography of Walter Knoche<sup>1</sup>

Walter Knoche, son of the industrialist Moritz Knoche and his wife Anna, was born on 7 May 1881 in Berlin. There were seven children in the family. His mother Anna was born in 1857, and was the daughter of Ismar Ehrlich and Rosa Weigert who had six children, among them the future winner of the Nobel Prize for medicine, Paul Ehrlich. Moritz, Walter's father, lived from 1853 to 1913. Walter's parents were Jewish, well off and belonged to the upper class in Berlin. Ehrlich frequently visited his sister (Walter's mother) resulting in Walter being strongly influenced by his uncle from a very early age. Paul Ehrlich was the Head of the Institute of Serum Research and Serum Testing in Berlin and later on Head of the Institute of Experimental Therapy in Frankfurt am Main, and in this capacity he had developed methods for the standardisation and valuation

.....  
1 For more on Knoche's biography see Mückler 2015.

of serums. In 1908 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine together with Ilja Metschnikow for his contributions to immunology. Walter grew up in this scientific environment and he was encouraged by his uncle to approach all things with curiosity and a scientific interest.

Walter attended the Ascanian Grammar school, the 'Lyzeum Ascanio' in Berlin and a higher vocational school, 'Superior Real Friedrich Werder', passing his finals in 1902. He subsequently studied natural sciences. To this end he first went to Geneva to attend University there, but after one semester he left Geneva for the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin. There he attended lectures by Wilhelm von Bezold, German Professor of Physics and Meteorology, and by Wilhelm Meinardus, Professor of Geography and Meteorology, who was working at the Meteorological Observatory in Potsdam, at the Prussian Meteorological Institute and at the Institute for Oceanography, in Berlin. In a brief CV which Walter added to his thesis, he mentioned the names of the following Professors whose lectures he had attended and passed exams on: Bouvier, Chodat and Guy in Geneva, Dilthey, Fischer, Helmert, Hettner, Lummer, Pringsheim, von Richthofen, Schaefer, Schumann, Slaby, Stumpf, Warburg and Zimmermann in Berlin. Walter Knoche graduated on 31 July 1905. The title of his thesis, which he completed at the Royal Meteorological Institute in Berlin, was 'Über die räumliche und zeitliche Verteilung des Wärmegehalts der unteren Luftschicht' ('On the distribution of heat in respect of time and space in the bottom layer of the atmosphere'). It had been written under the auspices of Wilhelm von Bezold and Ferdinand von Richthofen and comprised 46 pages and five illustrations.

Knoche's fields of specialisation were meteorology and geography. The combination of these two sciences determined most of his work from the very beginning of his scientific studies. As opposed to his uncle Paul Ehrlich, who spent the greater part of his career in Germany, Knoche wished to go abroad. In the years 1905–07, after having spent a short time at a number of different observatories and in departments for weather forecasts of the meteorological service of Prussia, he went on expeditions to Turkey and the Canary Islands and to numerous countries in North Africa to undertake geographical research. Thereafter, he travelled to South America to explore the microclimatic and aero-electric conditions at 5200 m above sea level within the framework 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 offered Knoche to be Head

of this Institute and to reorganise it. Knoche gladly accepted the invitation and together with his wife Editha (née Schiffer), to whom he had been married for only a few years, he emigrated to Chile and soon adopted Chilean citizenship. Later on, even after he had moved to Argentina, he regularly paid visits to Chile.

Chile was the starting point from where Knoche undertook a number of expeditions to most of the countries in South America in the ensuing decades. The most outstanding ones were his leadership of the Expedition to Easter Island in 1911 as well as a journey to Brazil on the occasion of the solar eclipse of 10 October 1912, where, on behalf of the Carnegie Institution of Washington D.C. he carried out aero-electric observations, with the aim of solving the problem of the production of ions in the earth's atmosphere – a topic on which he worked for quite a number of years. For reasons that are impossible for us to ascertain today, he stepped down as the Head of the development and restructuring Project of the Instituto Central Meteorológico y Geofísico de Chile in 1916 after having held this position for six years, but he still continued his geophysical research.

Knoche was also interested in the medical issues of his day and age. He cooperated with the most prominent physicians in Chile, such as Emilio Aldunate, Francisco Navarro, Teodoro Muhm, Mario Goio, Arnaldo Croxatto, Carlo Muños Aguayo, Mamerto Cadiz and, most especially, Eduardo Cruz-Coke and his disciples Héctor Croxatto, Julio Cabello, Jorge Mardones and René Honorato. Together with these physicians, Knoche founded the *Instituto Sanitas* (Health Institute) in 1920, a commercial scientific enterprise aiming at developing new drugs and therapies. Knoche was able to realise this ambition with the pharmaceutical company still existing today and under its original name.

On 3 July 1945 Knoche died of a heart ailment. He had until then been the Head of the Department of Climatology in the Office of Meteorology, Geophysics and Hydrology in Buenos Aires. The Argentine meteorologist Alfredo González Galmarini read the eulogy at Knoche's funeral. His colleague and friend, the geologist and specialist on Antarctica, Otto Schneider, wrote his obituary, which was published in the *Deutsche Blätter* in Santiago de Chile (Schneider 1946: 53–54). Knoche had published at least 270 scientific works, mainly on meteorological, climatologic, geophysical, geographical, and medical-anthropological aspects.

## Preparations for the Easter Island Expedition of 1911

By 1910 at the latest Knoche knew that he was to lead the projected Easter Island Expedition. A request to that effect had been submitted to him by the Chilean government. From the beginning of 1911 onwards he was involved in the preparations and in close cooperation with the Chilean Navy headquarters. The purpose of the expedition was 1) to set up a first order meteorological station on Easter Island; 2) to set up a seismological station; and 3) to improve the health and hygiene of the indigenous population. Knoche was free to decide if he wanted to carry out any further investigations and explorations to serve his own research on the island. It is most likely that Knoche was chosen to lead this expedition because of his competence for so many scientific disciplines. Knoche was also greatly interested in the ethnology and anthropology of the inhabitants of Easter Island and in their culture – it may be assumed that he mentioned this in the course of the preparations. The driving forces and main support from among the official Chilean authorities included the Commander in Chief of the Navy, Vice Admiral Jorge Montt (1845–1922). It was he who decided that the ship the *General Baquedano* was to take the members of the scientific Expedition to Easter Island. There was also the undersecretary of the Chilean Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Instrucción Pública), Moisés Vargas, who was responsible for providing the necessary financial resources. Vargas, a Professor of Administrative Law and a member of the Historical and Geographical Society of Chile, very much sympathised with the envisaged aims of research by the members of the Commission. The following four men were selected to be members of the scientific Commission: 1) Walter Knoche, leader of the scientific Commission, 2) Francisco Fuentes, botanist at the Lyceum in the town of La Serena in northern Chile, 3) Edgardo Martínez, assistant at the Central Station for Meteorology and Geophysics in Santiago de Chile, and 4) Juan Calderón, mechanic at the Seismological Service in Santiago de Chile.

Before the voyage started the fields of competence were allocated between the four members as follows: Knoche himself was to carry out the aero-electric measurements and the biologist and botanist Fuentes was to be responsible for the registration, as detailed as possible, of the flora and fauna of the island. Martínez was to carry out meteorological observations and at the same time to help supervise the seismological station that had been instigated by Fernand de Montessus de Ballore, a scientist of French origin, who was the Head of the

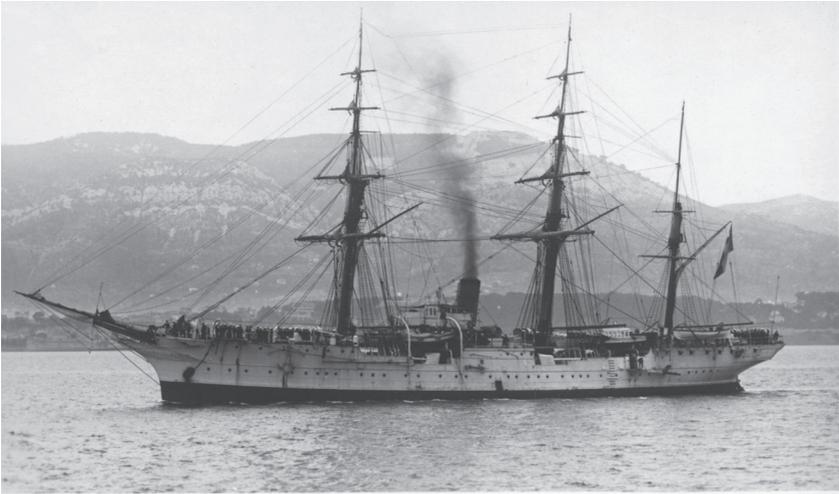


Figure 2: The ship *General Baquedano*, ca. 1905.

Chilean Seismological Service in Santiago de Chile. Calderon, the mechanic among the Commission was to see to the proper setting up of the seismological station. As it turned out, Knoche in particular undertook a great variety of other research especially in the field of ethnology, so that his findings greatly exceeded the original purpose of the expedition. Arturo E. Otaegui Swett was put in charge of the expedition by the commanders of the Navy. Swett was an experienced captain at sea, and he treated the scientists with respect looking after them as much as possible. Knoche mentions his name in the preface of his work 'Meteorological Observations on Easter Island', stating that he cooperated with his guests in the most amiable way (Knoche 1913a: 1–2). In due course, in 1926, Swett became Vice Admiral of the Chilean Navy and in the years 1926–1927 and in 1932 he was the Chilean Minister of Defence. Swett's positive attitude towards this undertaking was essential insofar as the meteorological and seismological stations could only be set up with the active help of many members of the crew of the *General Baquedano*.

The training ship the *General Baquedano* was chosen for the expedition under the auspices of the Chilean navy. It was built in the British shipyard of Armstrong Whitworth in Newcastle upon Tyne and was launched in 1898. The ship was commissioned in Chile in 1899 and on 2 March 1900 it started as

the first training ship of the Chilean Navy. The ship was named after the Chilean general and politician Manuel Jesús Baquedano Gonzales (1823 – 1897) who had fought in the Arauco War in 1851 against the Mapuche in southern Chile. He had also been the leader of the Chilean Army in the War of the Pacific between Peru, Bolivia and Chile in 1879–1883, and during the Civil War in Chile in 1891 he had been President of Chile for three days.

The most outstanding voyage of the *General Baquedano* was its first Pacific round trip. Starting from the naval base of Talcahuano on 8 April 1900, the ship, under the command of Navy Captain Arturo Navarrete Wilson, made a first stop at Easter Island. Between 1900 and 1911 the ship had sailed to Easter Island as much as eleven times. These had, however, always been only short visits; the expedition led by Knoche was the first extended stay by the ship's crew on the island. After the voyages mentioned above, the ship visited the island in the following years: 1914 (under the command of Almanzor Hernández de la Fuente), 1918 (two visits to Easter Island, under the command of Manuel Barrientos Montalva), 1921 (under the command of Felipe Wiegand Ognio), 1926 (under the command of Abel Campos Carvajal), 1929 (under the command of Edgardo von Schroeders Sarratea), 1930 (under the command of Luis Caballero Cannobio) and 1931 (under the command of Luis Alvarez Jaramillo). In the subsequent years up to 1935, the ship anchored at least once every year on Easter Island for a short visit in the course of the training voyages under the following commanders: Enrique Cordovez Madariaga, Silvestre Calderón Navarro, Arturo Young Ward and Jorge Nebel Fernández. Thereafter the ship was taken to Talcahuano and used as a hulk (a decommissioned and dismantled ship) for training purposes and remained there until after World War II. In 1959 the *General Baquedano* was scrapped, the steel hull of the ship having been sold to the Chilean steel company Compañi de Acero del Pacífico. In addition to the Easter Island Expedition it is mainly the voyage of 1914 which is of significance, because it served to end unrest on Rapa Nui which had started as a riot against the Chilean governor, initiated by the charismatic Rapanui priestess and prophet Angata.

## The Chilean Rapa Nui Expedition of 1911 and the Subsequent Results

The voyage started from the Chilean naval base Talcahuano on 26 March 1911. Easter Island was reached on 13 April 1911 after an uneventful voyage with the ship laying anchor at Hanga Roa bay. The Commission stayed on the island until 25 April 1911. As was usual during every voyage of the ship, journals were kept. These consisted of two parts: a logbook was kept giving details on the ship's departure and arrival and on the ship's movements at sea (*bitácora de mar*), and another logbook on the events taking place while the ship was anchored in harbours or in the roadstead (*bitácora de puerto*). In order to be able to reconstruct the chronology of the Easter Island expedition it has therefore been necessary to refer to both of these logbooks, because only the two of them together will give a true impression of events. Within the six volumes of the logbook-series of the *General Baquedano* aspects of the expedition are recorded. Here, the comments regarding the Easter Island expedition comprise altogether 196 pages. The greater part of the records consists of meteorological data and the movement parameters of the ship (such as speed, leeway, coal consumption, setting of sails, etc.) and information on roster, especially a list of the staff on night duty. Also there are details on additional equipment the ship had been furnished with in 1908 in the course of repairs and renovation. In the logbook it is stated that for the expedition to Easter Island 350 tons of coal were stored in the appropriate storage space and 50 tons in the boiler room of the ship. This was definitely more than was permitted when the ship was originally commissioned. Furthermore details can be found on the weapons and water and coal consumption. 9 May 1911 is the date of the return to Talcahuano and thus the end of the expedition.

So it took the ship eighteen days to travel to Easter Island, it remained on the island for twelve days, and took a fortnight to return. One member of the scientific Commission, Knoche's assistant Martinez, was left behind on Easter Island. He remained on the island until the beginning of June 1912 for the purpose of carrying out meteorological measurements and observations over the course of a whole year. Knoche mentioned that Martinez's statistical records were almost complete (Knoche 1913a: 2). The logbooks include no information at all on what the scientists were actually doing on Easter Island. The captain himself did not write a report on the expedition, at least no such records were found in the Navy Archives in Valparaiso. And Knoche, in his book and in his articles gives

very little information on the way his research progressed on the island. He tells us that setting up the meteorological station and giving instructions as to its use took place in very difficult conditions (Knoche 1913a: 2). Martinez undertook the difficult task of instructing the only European living on Easter Island, Henry Percival 'Percy' Edmunds, how to read the meteorological instruments. He was the local representative of the tenants Enrique and Numa Merlet from Valparaiso, who were running a large sheep farm on the island, controlling huge areas of land that were out of bounds for the indigenous Rapanui, which for them caused much resentment. The Englishman Edmunds was then 34 years old, he was the manager of the Williamson Balfour Company and represented their interests on Easter Island from 1904–1929 as the Head of the station.

Interestingly enough, Edmunds had started to take up photography just before Knoche's arrival on the island in 1911. During a stay in Chile he had bought a camera and developer equipment. It was a camera using photographic plates for exposure which Edmunds employed on Easter Island and of which he made prints himself. Thus he was the first local photographer on Easter Island. Edmunds must have started to take photographs already before Knoche's arrival, since Knoche included photographs taken by Edmunds in his book (McCall 1994: 88). It is pure speculation, but it could well be that Edmunds was inspired by Knoche's interdisciplinary interest in man, nature and culture and by his interviews with the indigenous Polynesian inhabitants, to devote more attention to these things in future and that in this way Edmunds' ambitions regarding photography might have been intensified. Edmunds willingly allowed visitors like Knoche and, later on Routledge and Brown, to use his photographs, and these can be found in their books. Moreover, he regularly sent photographs to his mother in England and to the art collector Captain Alfred Walter Francis Fuller (McCall 1994: 88). The majority of the photographs by Edmunds, who died in Tahiti in 1958, are now kept in the Bernice P. Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Knoche engaged the Rapanui inhabitant Juan Tepano Rano Veri 'Amo (1872–1938) as his interpreter. This 40 year old man had a good command of Spanish since he had served as a corporal in the Chilean Army. Knoche mentions how difficult it was to obtain useful information on the old oral cultural traditions of the Rapanui, because only two male Rapanui above the age of 70 years were still alive. Mostly men were the traditional bearers of oral tradition, especially the secret details pertaining to the most important religious cults and rituals with

which only a selected few were familiar. These two elderly men had different recollections especially as regards the exact place where historic events had taken place (Knoche 1915: 251–252). We have no information on how Knoche was received by the Rapanui and whether the atmosphere between Knoche and his local informers was a relaxed one, perhaps inducing the natives to disclose valuable information. Ever since Rapa Nui had been annexed by Chile in 1888, this colonial power had not contributed to any fruitful developments on the island, but rather through ignorance and disinterest it prolonged the very poor living conditions of the indigenous population. Moreover, in the years from 1897 to 1916 Rapanui who had been identified as potential critics and perturbators, were repeatedly deported from the island to mainland Chile, as has been revealed by recent archival research (Foerster 2010: 36–46).

To this day there exist no publications dealing explicitly with the 1911 expedition, the course it took or its results. True, in contributions on Easter Island and in books on the history of Chile, this undertaking is mentioned, but sometimes with incomplete or even wrong information. Thus, for example, Cristián Moreno Pakarati in an article about the rebellion, subjection and mediation on Rapanui, states that Walter Knoche had visited the island twice, viz. in 1905 and 1911 (Pakarati 2011: 85). Obviously this is wrong, since Knoche had just graduated in Berlin in 1905 and had left Germany only in 1909. Quite generally, what little Chilean secondary literature there exists in connection with this expedition it has to be treated with caution. In comparison, other events, such as the riots of 1914 on Easter Island against Chilean arbitrary rule, have been dealt with in major articles by Chilean authors (see Fuentes and Pakarati 2013: 5–19).

Knoche brought back ethnographic objects from the island, which are to be found in European museums and not just in Chile. We do not know exactly how many objects of Rapanui's material culture Knoche acquired. It must have been more than 73 objects, half of which are to be seen in a frequently reproduced photo found in the book by Brown, the other half to be found on another, less often reproduced photo; both photos were taken presumably by Brown just before Knoche's collection was scattered. Since, moreover, some objects which do not appear on these photographs are presented in museums, the collection must have been somewhat larger. For instance, Knoche had been able to obtain three pieces of tapa – dyed white, yellow and white-yellow – of which he himself said that they were the last pieces of their kind on Easter Island (Knoche 1925: 169). Their whereabouts is unknown and they are not included on the



Figures 3a and 3b: The objects Knoche acquired. The top photo is the least reproduced.