

A sepia-toned photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a river flows through a rocky bed. On the left bank, there is a traditional hut with a thatched roof. The valley is flanked by steep, rocky mountains. The sky is overcast.

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REVIEWS

KAEPPLER, Adrienne L. and Jo Anne Van Tilburg: *The Iconic Tattooed Man of Easter Island*. Melbourne: Mana Press, 2018. 64 pp., biblio., illus., index, notes. US\$19.95 (softcover).

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There is something delightful about a slim volume devoted entirely to one subject—in this case the identity and context of an iconic figure from the Pacific past—and the connections that can be made by experts in their field. Here is a book that tells stories of Rapa Nui, Rapanui tattoo practices (the authors' convention is to use Rapa Nui as a noun and Rapanui as an adjective), what they record and how they have been recorded, in a lavishly illustrated and beautifully packaged monograph by scholars with considerable expertise in precisely this area of enquiry. Adrienne L. Kaepler is curator of Oceanic ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, especially well known for her work on collections from Cook's voyages into the Pacific. Her areas of study include connections between social structure and the visual and performing arts, and she has conducted extensive fieldwork in Tonga and Hawai'i. Jo Anne Van Tilburg is an archaeologist and director of the Rock Art Archive, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA. She heads the Easter Island Statue Project, an inventory and analysis of over 900 Rapa Nui statues (*moai*). Together, they bring more than 100 years of experience to their analysis of "the Tattooed Man".

Their book aims to "reveal who he was, who illustrated him, and how he transcended the tragic events of nineteenth-century Rapa Nui to become one of the best-known, most iconic faces of the Polynesian past" (p. vii). On the first page of text the authors state their choice to call him "the Tattooed Man", despite his baptismal name, Tepano (Stephen), being known to the Swedish ethnographer Dr. Knut Hjalmar Stolpe, through whose 1899 publication he first came to prominence beyond Rapa Nui. Tepano, Kaepler and Van Tilburg explain, was a name given to many newly baptised islanders (p. vii) and is now the surname of a large Rapa Nui family (p. 1). Moreover, a contemporary of the Tattooed Man named Juan Tepano Rano (born ca. 1876) was a "famous ethnographic consultant" (p. 1); his identity has been mistakenly conflated with this book's subject. The somewhat objectifying moniker is presented as a way to overcome this confusion and brings an element of mystery to the volume as it unfolds. It is also recognisable as a device used to delineate the emergence of identity from the archives, where so often the official term populating fields of reference is simply "unknown".

The authors give immediate shape to the Tattooed Man by uniting within the first six pages of the volume two photographic engravings by Wilhelm Fredrik Meyer and Carl Olaf Sörling, both held at the Smithsonian Institution, with two photographs by Hjalmar Stolpe and Oscar Elkhorn (ca. 1884) now at the Etnografiska Museet, Sweden, and a further photograph from the collection of the Peabody Museum of

Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. The documentation of the first two refers to “Tattooed Man known as ‘Tepano’ ” while the remaining three refer only to “Tattooed Man”. Where the photographic engravings depict the bold facial and neck tattoos for which he is iconic, in the photographs these are difficult to discern. This may be due, endnote 73 explains, to Polynesian tattoo fading after several years. Another possibility has recently come to light: nineteenth-century wet-plate collodion photography barely picks up blues and greens, especially on darker skin tones. It would be interesting to know if this were the technology used to photograph the Tattooed Man; we may surmise that the photography of this era cannot be relied upon to indicate whether or not an individual was tattooed.

About that term, tattoo. The authors clarify that Rapanui tattoo is called *ta* or *takona*, and give the indigenous names for motifs and tools. Tattoo is used here in its generic sense, the European catch-all for the Polynesian face and body markings first described in 1595 by Pedro Fernández de Quirós, in Fatu Hiva, Marquesas. Wonu Veys has identified, among the earliest depictions, Tongan *tā tatau* in a drawing made by Gilsemans on Abel Janszoon Tasman’s voyage ca. 1643 (pers. comm.), contradicting Kaeppler and Van Tilburg’s claim that Westerners first depicted Polynesian tattoo during the voyages of Captain Cook.

Kaeppler and Van Tilburg attribute Dutch explorer Captain Jacob Roggeveen as the first European to visit Rapa Nui, when he landed near Miru in 1722, and associate the first depictions of Rapanui tattoo with William Hodges, in Rapa Nui some fifty years later on Cook’s second Pacific voyage in 1774. They document depictions made since and describe their contents, elaborating and filling in gaps. This includes a comprehensive unpacking of information contained within artefacts, comprising texts, illustrations and photographs, and barkcloth sculptures collected from 1839 and 1840 that are also records of tattoo. Context is fleshed out by a succinct summary of the history of Rapanui tattoo by experts (*maori*); links are made to island geography, and analysis of the artistic license of artists reveals changes made to field drawings before the publication of expedition and ethnographic accounts. The Tattooed Man is revealed in an engraving made by Émile Bayard in 1877, depicting “Explorer Alphonse Pinart meeting with Pua ‘Aku Rena ko Reto, the so-called Rapanui Queen, at Mataveri” (Smithsonian Institute), while other painstaking research connects him to further historic figures both of and visiting Rapa Nui.

Through a tattoo on his arm, the Tattooed Man is linked to the removal in 1868 of Hoa Hakananai’a from Orongo by the crew of the HMS *Topaze*—the first of 79 moai statues and figurines taken from Rapa Nui and now held in civic and private collections. This “roughly incised” line drawing appears to show a moai statue being dragged by ten men pulling on ropes. The tattoo itself was not photographed—and may not have been visible had it been so—but was drawn and described by Stolpe, who made the connection to Hoa Hakananai’a based on the timeframe in which the tattoo was applied and the Tattooed Man’s recognition of the name Palmer; Dr J. Linton Palmer was the physician on the *Topaze* and described the bringing of Hoa Hakananai’a to Europe. Hoa Hakananai’a resides at the British Museum and has been the subject of many and ongoing requests for return to Rapa Nui.

Kaeppler and Van Tilburg describe the drama they perceive in the application of this tattoo, extrapolating that the Tattooed Man was present when the moai was

removed and must have had a meaningful connection to it. They assume that the Tattooed Man tattooed himself. The tattoo being on his right forearm, they assume he was left-handed. Such are the assumptions made in order to draw together the threads of the archive and weave a story. It is precisely such informed assumptions that can lead to advances in scholarship and the re forging of connections.

Yet two of the authors' observations appear to take a leap too far, and both depend on visual analysis. The first is the photograph from the collection of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, that they reunite with their subject in the opening pages of the book, a depiction of a man in profile. Despite tantalising contextual support it seems highly unlikely that the man in question was the distinctively eagle-nosed Tattooed Man (see the montage on p. 41). The second is a stylised frigatebird tattoo discovered at the outer corner of the left eye of *Young Rapanui Man with Elaborate Body Art* (watercolour, unknown artist, HMS *Portland*, 1853). This bird is used as a bridge, along with his *pora* 'bundle of reeds', to establishing the subject's role as a participant in the important "birdman" rituals of Rapa Nui (p. 11). The tattoo seen by the authors is surely the crinkled corner of an eye in a smiling face, delineated in red-brown, as are all of the subject's facial lines. In contrast, the tattoo lines in this illustration are very clearly depicted in a dark blue-black and include, beyond the parallel vertical lines on the chin that the authors discuss, extensive body markings and marks above both eyes and in the inner corner of the right eye as well as a suggestion on the upper lip and looping beneath the nostrils.

But these are small things in a book that offers much rich detail and is a thoroughly good read with a sense of "yarn" about it—snippets of history retrieved from archives and collections worldwide, extrapolated to tell the story of a man whose countenance is iconic but whose identity has long been obscured. The authors succeed in returning to him a possible identity, Vaka Ariki of 'Anakena, born ca. 1835, and a biography that is animated by the recollections of Rapa Nui people today with whom they have worked.

CEA, Alfredo: *Ika Rapa Nui*. Translation to English by Linda Craddock. Santiago de Chile: Rapanui Press, 2016. 252 pp., illus. CLP42,000/US\$59.00.

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This is an absolutely stunning publication, the most lavish yet from the specialist Rapanui Press, managed by the redoubtable Eduardo Ruiz-Tagle Eyzaguirre, a designer by profession, who has outdone himself in putting together the late Alfredo Cea Egaña's life work. There is a much plainer and less complete version of this material from 2011, when Cea and the late John ("Jack") E. Randall published *Shore Fishes of Easter Island* (University of Hawai'i Press).

The text of *Ika Rapa Nui* is in both Spanish and English and features reproductions of Cea's astonishing watercolours and notes, making it as much an art project as a scientific one, although Cea himself modestly characterises his volume as a "travel

book". As he wrote in his introduction, *Ika Rapa Nui* is "the unassuming, simple attempt to bear witness to a personal experience, lived intensely and illustrated in my own way". So, it does begin with Cea's first 1967 travel to Rapa Nui, for a "short two-month mission" that, well, lasted a lifetime, until his death in 2016. Even last year, when I was on Rapa Nui and asked people about "Taote", as he was known locally by a word for "doctor" borrowed from Tahitian, people remembered his visits, kindnesses and work. The book features well-framed photographs of the Rapanui who helped him to understand the fauna in the sea around the island, including one of the young doctor poised with his notebook consulting master fisherman Domingo Pakarati.

Cea's enthusiasm and diving expertise matched those of his islander informants, and Taote became well-known on the island through his many visits as well as assistance given to Rapanui who turned up at his door on mainland Chile, or "the Conti", as the Islanders say. In documenting his enthusiasm for the sea around Rapa Nui, Cea included in his illustrations and notes "[t]he vernacular identifications ... linked with tales of legends, stories and traditions related to each drawing and string games (*kai-kai*), arts, talismans and fishing places, all provided by the audience during the evening meetings, together with occasional recordings of the marvellous sea songs that Kiko [Pate] gave us each evening" (p. 25). The late "Kiko" Pate is the best-known singing voice of Rapanui, appearing on numerous recordings sold in Chile, North America and Europe.

The introductory text setting Cea's work in context is by Juan Carlos Valle Lasserre, just before Cea's own "Introduction: Drawings and Notes From My Travels; Easter Island 1967 to 2012". After the glowing watercolours in the main text, there is an appreciation of Cea's legacy by Michel Garcia, once part of the team of the famous French underwater explorer Jacques Cousteau. Garcia, with his brother Henri, collaborated with Cea and ran the first commercial dive shop on Rapa Nui. Closing the volume is a short piece by Carlos Gaymar, of the Catholic University of the North (Chile), in Coquimbo, to where Cea retired, where the physician and diver founded an underwater research institute. When Cea died in May 2016 Taote's ashes were scattered on the sea, as he requested in his will. Those short essays that surround the work are in both Spanish and (mostly) well-translated English.

Where the Spanish reader has an advantage is in being able to read Cea's notes, over which his ichthyological illustrations are centrally placed. These commentaries, written in a clear, elegant hand, are from Cea's notebooks and capture his knowledge of the habits and meanings of the animals he has so carefully portrayed. The notes and watercolours together are a powerful infusion of what Cea had learned from his Islander informants.

The launch of the book in 2016 at the luxurious Hotel Explora on Rapa Nui is on YouTube and worth a look to see the quality of the publication, although the commentary is entirely in Spanish (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OPj2PPhnM>).

The Rapanui Press is a specialised Chilean publisher of old and new works about Rapa Nui. The Press publishes reprints of famous volumes by European figures such as Métraux and Routledge, as well as Chilean works such as Campbell's *Herencia*

Musical de Isla de Pascua (Musical Heritage of Easter Island), with texts in English and others in Spanish. Books published in Chile are hard to order outside that country and Rapanui Press is no exception, but orders may be placed directly on their website or by contacting the publisher: <http://museumstore.cl/tienda/>, tel. +56 2 22024312, email: tienda@museumstore.cl.

Ika Rapa Nui is a superb volume and, owing to Cea's decades of observations and study, very useful for comparative studies. Obtaining a copy will not be easy, but a Google search turns up some possible sources. Any library that pretends to have a comprehensive Polynesian collection should have Alfredo Cea's *Ika Rapa Nui*.