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Cover image: Upper blades of the ceremonial paddles 'ao from Rapa Nui (Easter Island) represent stylised depictions of a human face with a feather crown: (left) 'ao 22845 in the Ethnology Museum, Vienna; (right) 'ao E129749 in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington. Drawings by Paul Horley.

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Paul Horley started his studies of Rapanui culture after visiting the island for the first time in 2002. His research interests include rock art and portable wooden figurines, as well as 3D modelling of Rapanui objects and archaeological sites. His principal effort has been dedicated to the study of the rongorongo script (the unique writing system developed in Rapa Nui before European contact) focusing on iconographic, palaeographic and structural analysis of the surviving inscriptions. He has also worked to improve the graphical documentation of rongorongo texts.

José Miguel Ramírez-Aliaga is a Chilean archaeologist (Universidad de Chile, 1983) with a deep connection to Rapa Nui, as a curator of the Fonck Museum in Viña del Mar (1981–1992) and Administrator of the Rapa Nui National Park (1993–1999). His first contact with Rapa Nui and Thor Heyerdahl in 1987 triggered his interest in the arrival of Polynesian navigators to Chile and their effects on Mapuche culture. Twenty years later, he led an international team who found Polynesian DNA in pre-Columbian chicken bones from southern Chile. He subsequently investigated Polynesian morphological traits in human skeletons from other two archaeological sites.

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Steven Webster immigrated with his family from the USA to New Zealand in 1972. He taught courses in social anthropology and Māori studies at the University of Auckland until retiring in 1998. He continues there as an honorary research fellow. His PhD thesis, from the University of Washington, Seattle, was on ecology and kinship in an indigenous community in the Peruvian Andes. In New Zealand he took up research among Māori in the Urewera and the university. His courses developed from kinship, ethnicity, history of anthropology and Māori land history in colonial New Zealand to political-economic critique of ideologies.

