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The Treasure of Easter Island by Geronimo Stilton (review)

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Rapa Nui Journal, Volume 29, Number 2, October 2015, p. 60 (Review)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/rnj.2015.0019>

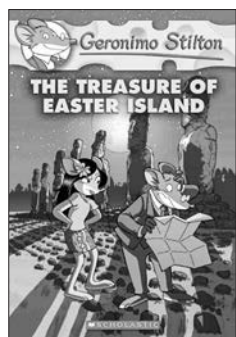


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for government cachets, along with a sampling of postcards, aerograms, and ham radio operator QSL cards, the most interesting aspect of this book is the postal covers showing the changing postal markings, especially those featuring the *moai*. Since 1972, the illustrated cancellations have changed fairly frequently. Many of the postal covers from Rapa Nui are illustrated with added graphics of *ahu*, or the island, and add to the collectible nature of this material. It was also a pleasant surprise to see letters sent by notable persons from the island, including Padre Sebastián Englert, Pedro Atan, William Mulloy, and Carlyle Smith.

The book begins with a very generic overview of Rapa Nui prehistory and history illustrated with tourist-styled snapshots. The text does become more engaging after the first chapter, especially the section about aviation and the quest to make Rapa Nui the destination on a trans-Pacific aviation route. My only difficulty was linking the discussion to the illustrations, as the figure numbers are not included in the text. Despite these small shortcomings, authors Pendleton and Maddock have done a very fine job in giving us a developed context for this aspect of Rapa Nui history.



Stilton, Geronimo. *The Treasure of Easter Island*

New York: Scholastic Inc., 2015. 106 pp., illustrations by Giuseppe Ferrario and Flavio Fausone; graphics by Paolo Zadra. ISBN 978-0-545-74614-4 US\$6.99. Reading level Grade 4. Available from www.scholastic.com/geronimostilton

Review by Antoinette Padgett, *Easter Island Foundation*

This children's book is part of the Geronimo Stilton series that helps spark children's interest in reading by combining adventure stories with illustrations and bold, colorful words highlighted in different fonts on each page. Originally an Italian book series, Scholastic Inc. publishes the popular English translation of the series in the United States.

To provide some background, all the characters in the book are mice. Geronimo works as a reporter for the *Rodent's Gazette* in New Mouse City; in every book he experiences some kind of adventure. This story begins with Geronimo at work when he receives a mysterious letter from his sister Thea postmarked with a *moai* stamp from Easter Island. The letter had been dipped in guano to dissuade others from reading it; a copy of a treasure map that Thea has found is included in the letter. The map (a fairly accurate rendition of the island, actually) contains a riddle that mentions the biggest *ahu* and its fifteen protectors [Tongariki], the Seven Young Explorers [Akivi] and the Big Black Bubble [a lava tube]. Geronimo, who is a bit timid, doesn't really want to go to Easter Island, but he is afraid his sister Thea is in danger, so he agrees to go help her, along with a photographer from the Gazette, his cousin (who is only interested in finding the treasure), and the archaeologist, Wild Willie, who also pilots the small plane that will take them there (here is where we depart into the land of fantasy; it doesn't take long at all for the plane to get to the island all the way from New Mouse City). On the way, Geronimo reads a travel guide about the island until they land at Mataverí International Airport and are met by their guide, Vaitea. They have a *mahi mahi* dinner while watching a dance show as Vaitea tells them the history of the island. A page follows in which Rapanui words are introduced. The next morning they go to Ahu Tongariki, depicted accurately in the illustration. As Geronimo's cousin attempts to climb a *moai*, Vaitea stops him by pulling his tail (a good example of proper site etiquette). They go to Ahu Akivi that evening (another very nice illustration) and at this point Vaitea realizes they are more than a typical tourist group. Geronimo informs her that they have actually come to the island to try and find his sister Thea. Just then, his cousin falls into a lava tube (while poking around for the treasure) and they all jump in after him. More fantasy ensues as the mice float along in the tunnel-like lava tube, until they are below Rano Raraku, in a secret underground lagoon where they discover a gang of pirates and a famous archaeologist. Not to spoil the ending, you will have to read the rest to learn if they find Thea. The book would be a fun read for a young person (2nd-4th grade recommended) who is going to the island. It will give some background on the island, has good illustrations and introduces the Rapanui language and encourages reading! It would be a great book for a child to bring on the long plane ride to Easter Island!