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Dale F. Simpson Jr., M. Patricia Štambuk

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Rapanui in the World and the World on Rapa Nui – A Report from Two International Scientific Conferences held on Rapa Nui during November 2018

Dale F. Simpson Jr.^a and M. Patricia Štambuk^b

This report provides synthesis and commentary about two international scientific conferences held on Rapa Nui during November 2018. The first conference, the Early Pacific Migration Conference, brought academics in the Oceanic research community together to consider Pacific Ocean and island palaeoecology, the migration of humans, fauna, and flora, ancestral navigation, and archaeology to better understand the myriad of Oceanic island cultures, environments, and legacies. The second conference, the 1st International Symposium of Rapa Nui – Heritage, Culture, and Society from a Contemporary Perspective, viewed Rapa Nui from a more current standpoint to understand Chilean state and Rapanui local relations, history, anthropology and representation, and cultural and environmental goals. Together, the two conferences produced 60 papers, conducted multiple field visits, and provided challenging and rewarding experiences, which highlighted the past and present of Rapa Nui, to prepare it for the future.

Keywords: Early Pacific Migration Conference 2018, 1st International Symposium of Rapa Nui – Heritage, Culture, and Society from a Contemporary Perspective 2018

Introduction

After eight days of activities on Rapa Nui, the Early Pacific Migration Conference (EPM) and the 1st International Symposium of Rapa Nui – Heritage, Culture, and Society from a Contemporary Perspective (HCS), closed on November 17, 2018. The two events provided intensive, challenging, and rewarding experiences that brought together local, Chilean, and international experts to discuss and interpret the past, present, and future of Rapa Nui. This report provides context and synthesis about the papers and events realized at both the EPM and the HCS during the Rapa Nui Spring of 2018.

^a University of Queensland, Queensland, Australia; College of DuPage, Illinois; Rapa Nui Geochemical Project. ^b Member of the Chilean Language Academy.

Early Pacific Migration Conference (November 10–16, 2018)

The EPM included 46 papers from individuals representing more than 10 countries, which discussed topics and themes regarding Pacific archaeology, human migration and immigration, environmental reconstructions, flora and fauna investigations, engineering, the collapse narrative, and DNA research. After morning and afternoon sessions of papers, EPM participants toured archaeological field sites to better extend theory (conference papers) into practice (field visits). Sites included Rano Raraku, Hanga Ho‘onu, and Poike (where participants planted trees alongside the community). Another evening event was the unveiling of an exposition entitled “Hands of the Past, Excavations at Rano Raraku.” Hosted by the Mana Gallery, Jo Anne Van Tilburg, and Cristián Arévalo Pakarati, this exposition documents and visually expresses the important work conducted by the Easter Island Statue Project, including *moai* conservation efforts and statue excavations. Concurrently, the Museo Antropológico P. Sebastián Englert (MAPSE) opened “Hare Tao‘a, Hare Tangata”, the sister exhibit to the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (BPBM) exhibition entitled “Rapa Nui: The Untold Stories of Easter Island.” This was a collaborative exhibition developed by Mara Mulrooney and the BPBM team, along with Paula Valenzuela and the MAPSE team, which resulted in a timely and relevant exposition.

Early Pacific Migration Conference Synthesis

As *moai* are the most recognized symbol of the Rapa Nui culture, multiple papers discussed various aspects of them, including: their forensic structure and transport (Best 2018), their documentation, excavation, restoration, and conservation over the years (Cristino & Vargas 2018; Van Tilburg 2018; Van Tilburg & Hom 2018), their use in ritual economies and landscapes (Stanish 2018), and the basalt tools used to carve statues, including adzes and picks (Simpson 2018a).

The extinct Rapa Nui palm, *Paschalococos disperta*, might still be found in Aotearoa as J. Macmillan Brown brought palm endocarps (inner parts of nuts) along with an assortment of material culture back to Aotearoa after his seven months on Rapa Nui (Brown 1924). If a copy of Rapa Nui’s ancient palm was indeed established in New Zealand, could saplings be brought back to Rapa Nui to be replanted and reintroduced (Hawarden et al. 2018)? Perhaps this work could follow examples of current research to better understand, reintroduce, and conserve *Sophora toromiro* in Chile and on Rapa Nui (Espejo 2018; Ingersoll & Ingersoll 2018; Sanchez 2018).

The German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and colleagues (Kühlem et al. 2018) discussed the results of their decade of research in Ava Ranga Uka a Toroke Hau, which includes a recently published book (Vogt et al. 2018) dedicated to the island community (written in both Spanish and Rapanui). Considered a “sacred landscape” or “sanctuary,” Ava Ranga Uka a Toroke Hau is an inland complex, found almost at the center of the island, but also includes sites from Rano Aroi south to Ahu Akahanga. Simply, these sites and features are related to water management and collection, including dams, pools, and channels. As water was one of the most important resources for cultural survival during Rapa Nui prehistory, it seems quite obvious that chiefly and elite retainers would want to oversee valuable sites and features which collected and protected water. Examining the presence of a single *ahu* with *moai* (Ahu Henua Nua Mea) and the sporadic occurrence of coral and *paenga* stones (to make dams and retention pools) found throughout the Ava

Ranga Uka a Toroke Hau area, the DAI and its colleagues argue for not only an elite presence in the complex, but also their control over the area.

Residue analysis of obsidian tools from 'Anakena finds that breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*) may indeed have been introduced by the first Rapanui colonizers, but its survival as a major horticultural crop on Rapa Nui was likely short-lived (Berenguer et al. 2018).

Based on general similarity of DNA between Oceanic peoples (Gosling et al. 2018; Ioannidis et al. 2018), along with shared economic, ideological, linguistic, and sociopolitical structures, there is enough evidence to question the validity and the use of the ethnocentric and outdated concepts of Melanesia, Micronesia, and even Polynesia, to classify and isolate the human beings of the Pacific (Spriggs 2018).

At Rano Kau, the use of a prehistoric home (1–187) was ^{14}C dated to cal. A.D. 1221–1302 (see also Vargas et al. 2006). As such, this is one of the oldest dwellings on Rapa Nui, and its early construction and usage highlights the importance of Rano Kau, even from early Rapanui colonization events (Van Tilburg 2018).

A Bayesian statistical method, which modeled 21 radiocarbon dates from Rano Raraku, establishes intensive carving within the *moai* crater between cal. A.D. 1455–1640. Additional geomorphological and environmental evidence demonstrates how Rano Raraku was not only the largest megalithic quarry on the island, but also a very productive horticultural sub-zone (a sweet potato recovered during excavation was dated to cal. A.D. 1492), and the location of one of the three main freshwater sources for Rapa Nui prehistory (Van Tilburg 2018; see also Sherwood et al. 2019). While excavations of *moai* by Van Tilburg (2018) recovered almost 1700 *toki* (adzes and picks), recent geochemical analysis sourced the majority of artifacts to Pu Tokitoki (near Hanga Ho'onu) and the island's southwest coast, highlighting the major areas for basalt tool raw material during island prehistory (Simpson 2018a).

Genetic evidence from *tapa* – *Broussonetia papyrifera* (Peña-Ahumada et al. 2018) further confirms how Rapa Nui was colonized from the ancient Polynesian interaction sphere to the west of the island, centered around the islands of Mangareva, Pitcairn, and Henderson. However, and most interesting, is that this colonization may have happened after the sweet potato was already acquired from South America. This suggests that there were various pulses of migration in the Pacific (both west/east and east/west) and one earlier pulse may have reached the Chilean mainland before later migrations made it to Rapa Nui. Accordingly, there were a number of contacts with the South American coast (Berenguer et al. 2018; Martinsson-Wallin and Wallin 2018; Solsvik 2018). Evidence for this contact include Polynesian skulls found on Mocha Island in the south of Chile, and the similarities between artifacts and lexical constructs between Polynesian and South American cultures (Berenguer et al. 2018; Ramírez-Aliaga 2018; see also Rapu 2018). The most impactful evidence for contact between Polynesia and South America is the presence of three Polynesian chickens found in Chile (Matisoo-Smith 2018).

Cutting-edge global (Delcroix et al. 2018) and local Rapa Nui (Malaizé et al. 2018) palaeoenvironmental reconstructions establish how the island experienced, and was influenced by, micro and macro climatic and weather events. These included local droughts between A.D. 700–1000 (before Polynesian colonization) and global events such as the Medieval Warm Period (A.D. 1100–1300) and the Little Ice Age (beginning around A.D. 1400). While former droughts could have motivated the migration to more auspicious lands by Polynesians to the west of Rapa Nui, the Medieval Warm Period and the Little Ice Age created both wetter and drier years for the later inhabitants of Rapa Nui. Thus, the

island's palaeoenvironment provided both favorable and unfavorable years for water collection and intensive horticultural production.

For some 40 years, archaeologists from the Universidad de Chile (UC) have completed some of the most ambitious research and restoration projects on Rapa Nui. This includes the creation, digitization, and GIS analysis of the 1981 *Atlas Arqueológica de Rapa Nui* (Cristino & Vargas 2018; Izaurieta 2018) and the excavation and reconstruction of Ahu Tongariki (Cristino & Vargas 2018). During the latter work, extensive video filming documented the thorough and meticulous work by the UC-directed project. At the moment, this video material is being transformed into a documentary that highlights the rebuilding of the largest *moai-ahu* complex on Rapa Nui and dispels common myths and misconceptions about its reconstruction. Lastly, Vargas (Cristino & Vargas 2018) signaled the difficulty in being a female archaeologist during this era of Rapa Nui archaeology, but especially during restoration efforts of Ahu Tongariki. Although she experienced both ageism and sexism, thanks to her persistence, and the dedication of the UC team, Ahu Tongariki is now the largest reconstructed ceremonial center in the Pacific.

Multiple papers further critiqued interpretations held by the “collapse narrative” for Rapa Nui prehistory (see Bahn & Flenley 1992; Diamond 2005). This included questioning the very language of “collapse” (Cristino & Vargas 2018), using historic records to show how and why the narrative could be considered “fake news” in today's language (Boersema 2018), and using archaeological evidence to demonstrate that not all refuse caves (*ana kionga*) were used for hiding and protection during the so-called “collapse period” (A.D. 1680 onward) (Stevenson & Williams 2018). Furthermore, geochemical studies of Rapa Nui's basalt archaeological industries illustrate how there was a multiplicity of economic, ideological, and sociopolitical mechanisms for the transfer of stone during Rapa Nui prehistory. These included, but were not limited to, opportunistic, communal, kin-based, and elite redistribution means (Simpson 2018a). This finding refutes a common interpretation by the collapse narrative that there was mainly competition, but little collaboration, between Rapa Nui's ancestral *mata* or clans (see also Simpson 2019).

The ancient movement of people in the Pacific is not a straight line of migration as is commonly drawn on archaeological maps. Results from the EPM highlight multiple migration “pulses” (Simpson 2018a) both from the west to the east, and of course, from the east to the west (McCoy et al. 2018). To better understand these back and forth pulses, results and future directions presented during the EPM conference urge further research in geochemistry, residue analysis, DNA analysis, and palaeoenvironmental reconstruction.

1st International Symposium of Rapa Nui – Heritage, Culture, and Society from a Contemporary Perspective (November 17, 2018)

The ultimate goal of the HCS was to reflect on the various economic, environmental, ideological, and sociopolitical changes and adaptations made by the Rapa Nui island community. As such, the symposium was divided into three themes: Chilean state relations; history, anthropology, and representation; and cultural and environmental goals. Within these themes, 14 papers and one poster (Fortin 2018) were presented. There is no surprise that the papers presented at the HCS were novel, of great quality, and produced significant interpretations for the Rapa Nui island community.

1st International Symposium of Rapa Nui – Heritage, Culture, and Society from a Contemporary Perspective Synthesis

In the two initial papers, Muñoz Azócar (2018) and Gunderman and Rojas Pantoja (2018) investigate the classic dichotomist vision between Rapanui and Chileans. Through historic, genealogical, and database research, Muñoz Azócar argues that recent land assignment and legacy does not separate the worlds between Rapanui and Chileans, with collective inheritance still acting as an important mechanism for land tenure and interaction. Gunderman and Rojas-Pantoja use current demography and tourism figures to better understand how the Rapanui, in more recent times, have controlled and directed the island's tourism industry. Their study reveals that while internal socioeconomic stratification exists within the local society, Chileans, and other island inhabitants, are mostly dependent on Rapanui for tourism and business ventures. This highlights that over time, there has been a reversal in roles, which is a very positive development for the island community.

Hawarden (2018) invites us to not forget the painful past of Hansen's disease (leprosy) in the Pacific. This includes how the disease was spread from Africa to Asia, and then throughout the world (e.g., colonization efforts and slave trading). Shockingly, leprosy has not been cured worldwide, with cases still found, for example, in Brazil and Madagascar. Drawing on a case study from a colony on Makogai Island, Fiji (which was destroyed in 2016 by a hurricane), Hawarden highlights how people afflicted with leprosy were sent to this "total institution," but were never allowed to leave. Interestingly, Hawarden notes how depending on gender and social rank, leprosy was viewed differently in the historic record. For example, at Makogai, both a priest and a nun were stricken with Hansen's disease; however, the latter was mythologized and considered a hero for his sacrifice, while the former was considered merely a victim, who "caught" leprosy. On Rapa Nui, leprosy was likely brought to the island by those arriving from Tahiti and/or Mangareva in the latter half of the 1800s. The disease then persisted for many years, even until more recent times (see [Routledge 1919](#); [Brown 1924](#); [Métraux 1940](#)). The topic of Hansen's disease drew much attention from the Rapanui in the audience, as many retold first-hand accounts about relatives and friends who suffered from this horrible condition. Rapanui families adapted to and found ways to care for those inflicted with leprosy, and still fondly remember those *tupuna* (ancestors) who have passed on because of Hansen's disease.

Through historic document review and analysis, researchers Jakubowska-Vorbrich and Vorbrich (2018a; see also Jakubowska-Vorbrich & Vorbrich 2018b) use a larger Pacific seascape approach (which includes their personal adventures in sailing) to discuss interpretations made by earlier visitors about the island, its resources, and the island's inhabitants. An interesting observation is how the meeting between Europeans and the islanders was a "strange encounter," as Polynesians, who were masters of open-ocean wayfinding (see also Tupaia & Hata 2018), were dealing with European nations who had just started long-range Pacific Ocean sailing. Another interesting observation is that the Rapanui eagerly wanted wood from the various passing ships. The Rapanui also inspected and measured the various ships and vessels which called to the island. This seems to indicate that the desire to build ocean-going canoes was still apparent at the time of contact.

Using lesser-known historical documents and illustrations, Dotte-Sarout (2018) introduced the scientific, human, and poetic scenes of Henri [Lavachery \(1935, 1939\)](#),

who accompanied the French-Belgian mission to the island from 1934 to 1935. The expedition was planned and organized by noted social scientists of the time including Marcel Mauss and Paul Rivet. Other members of the expedition included the French archaeologist Louis C. Watelin, who died in Tierra de Fuego, Chile, before reaching the island, the Swiss-Argentine anthropologist Alfred Métraux (1940, 1957), and the Chilean doctor Israel Drapkin, who was the first to study the island's leprosy outbreak. With the death of Watelin, Lavachery, who had little practice in archaeology, was tasked to survey and gather archaeological data. He would earn his experience through five months of fieldwork, focused on five areas (Tepeu, Puna Marengo, Vai Tara Kai Ua, 'Anakena, and Hanga Ho'onu). Lavachery surveyed 500 petroglyphs, recorded 70 new *ahu* (bringing the island total of the time to 200 *ahu* [Routledge 1919]), conducted rudimentary excavations around ten *ahu*, and produced scaled maps of selected sites (e.g., *hare paenga* or elite boat-shaped houses). While Métraux has been portrayed as a straightforward researcher and ethnologist, Lavachery was very interpersonal with the Rapanui, often spending great lengths of time with many so-called guides, assistants, and informants. These individuals included the seasoned informant Juan Tepano Rano, Nicolas Pakomio, Hijo Ruiz, and Victoria Rapahango Tepuku, with each providing valuable direction, testimony, and cultural information.

Ma'u Henua's lead archaeologist, Rapu (2018), discussed results from his recent undergraduate thesis. After marshaling through the current evidence for contact between Polynesia and the Americas, Rapu proposed another investigative angle for documenting human links and flows between the Pacific and the Americas. This includes an improved understanding of lithic reduction strategies to better argue that there existed a shared stone-tool making technology that originated in West Polynesia, and was possibly carried all the way to South America.

Drawing upon her 43 years living on Rapa Nui as an educator, writer, mother, and wife to the renowned Rapanui artist Bene Tuki, Arredondo (2018) asked about the contribution of non-Rapanui women to the history of the island. Calling them the "forgotten women," she brings to life important women from Chile and from abroad who made great impacts on the Rapanui culture. Some even became matriarchs for certain island families which still exist today. Arredondo's work is linked with others' papers presented at the HCS which aim to overcome a split vision between Rapanui and Chileans. As such, she stresses the importance to recognize and appreciate the mix of genes and cultures on contemporary Rapa Nui.

González and Seelenfreund (2018) scrutinized all aspects of *umu atua* (religious earth oven feast) in an investigation that reveals much more than what we can appreciate when participating in a Rapanui earth oven. While *umu* were important means for ceremonial feasting, interaction, and exchange during prehistory, today's *umu atua* are more focused on religious holidays, with many individual families taking the responsibility to feed the entire island in one setting. Interestingly, González and Seelenfreund note how the *umu* can be considered a means to control economic accumulation for the community, which in turn, abates the need for aggression and competition.

Investigating historic photographs, Arriagada (2018) and Moreno Pakarati (2018) provide vivid imagery and detailed interpretation about Rapa Nui, its archaeological sites, and inhabitants during the twentieth century. While Arriagada used a visual anthropology approach on 296 photos from the photographic collection of Henry Percival Edmunds (manager of the Williamson-Balfour Company from 1904 to 1929), Moreno Pakarati focused on the necessary and respectful identification of Rapanui individuals and groups

portrayed by different photographers whose images are in local, national, and foreign archives.

Rapu and Meza (2018) spoke about the initiatives of the Ma'u Henua indigenous community. This includes how Ma'u Henua is protecting, conserving, and interpreting archaeological sites in the Rapa Nui National Park, which assumes 43% of the island's total area (mostly around the coast). One important focus is vulnerable sites that are being impacted by livestock and biological, anthropogenic, and geoclimatic agents.

Scientist and educator Simpson (2018b) encourages, motivates, and alerts us with his passion about the tragic pollution of the sea. This included discussion as to how anthropogenic marine debris (AMD) is generated by human beings on both local and global scales. While previous work documented the quantity and chemical properties of micro- and mesoplastics found in water columns around the island, less research has focused on the distribution, quantity, types, and possible sources of AMD found in Rapa Nui's coastal and beach environments. To better understand the island's AMD problem, more than 360 individuals, who represented more than 58 local, state, and global institutions, cleaned, recorded, and removed more than 4000 kg of AMD—including 26 kg of microplastics. In the end, Simpson invites us to prevent and combat AMD by practicing the seven Rs: Reduce, Replace, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Refuse/Reject, and Rethink.

Using case studies from Canada and New Zealand, linguist Vigneaux (2018) noted that public policies could be implemented to reinforce the survival and validity of the Rapanui language. Results from her research highlight the internal difficulties to communicate in Rapanui, the lack of use of Rapanui at the family level and beyond school, the criticism of adults to younger people for their imperfections in speech, and the common insertion of a restricted repertoire of Rapanui words in phrases in Spanish. To solve these issues, Vigneaux suggests that the Rapanui language should be practiced “in the front” of the house, and not “in the back.”

Drawing upon a model for sustainable tourism developed on the Swedish island of Gotland (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Martinsson-Wallin et al. (2018) discussed the urgency for sustainability on Rapa Nui. As both islands contain small communities with vulnerable social and natural environments, along with large tourism sectors, the authors propose that Rapa Nui would be a great candidate for the application of the Gotland model which has welcomed millions of tourists over the years, but, at the same time, has protected this most important UNESCO site.

Conclusion

For hundreds of years, explorers, colonizers, missionaries, and scientists have visited Rapa Nui. Most have been interested in the island's archaeological record and unique material culture, surviving population, and enigmatic *kohau rongorongo* proto-writing script. More recently however, there has been an opposite migration, that of Rapanui leaving their island to travel the world for education, employment, and/or to explore the globe like their ancestors before them. Individuals and groups of Rapanui are found living in countries such as Australia, Chile, the United States, Germany, New Zealand, Israel, Italy, France, Sweden, and Tahiti. But, for seven days in November 2018, scientists and the new explorers of Rapa Nui's past, present, and future returned back to Te Pito o te Henua. After six days of 60 papers and multiple field visits and events, a few conclusions can be made.

It has been argued that we are currently living in the “Golden Age of Archaeology” (Petronizo 2013). By using a diversity of archaeological and environmental records, along with improvements in analytical, technological, and statistical methods, archaeologists have been able to investigate and answer even more interesting, complex, and significant questions about humanity’s (pre)history. Results from the EPM conference reveal how we may be living in the Golden Age for Rapa Nui archaeology. If we are, it would be beneficial for investigators to start rethinking their research designs so they may be more collaborative between disciplines, and so that they can provide educational opportunities and public archaeology events for the local Rapanui community (Simpson 2018a). Yet, with four separate archaeological spatial databases and accompanying atlases currently being developed (e.g., Easter Island Statue Project [Van Tilburg 2018; Van Tilburg & Hom 2018], University of Chile [Cristino & Vargas 2018; Izaurieta 2018], Ma’u Henua [Rapu & Meza 2018], and Terevaka Archaeological Outreach [www.terevaka.net]), it would be extremely useful to unite all four of these datasets into one singular master database for future research and conservation efforts.

Arguably, the future of Rapanui studies will include: (1) extensive conservation efforts of vulnerable sites; (2) GIS/3D/VR research using various types of data collected and digitized over the years; (3) the use of noninvasive technologies for field research; (4) a return to the analysis of materials that have already been excavated and stored within MAPSE and within museums throughout the world; and (5) the continued repatriation of archaeological and osteological remains back to Rapa Nui following the lead set by museums such as Te Papa Tongarewa in New Zealand and the Kon-Tiki Museum in Norway.

It is alarming to realize that of 60 papers, only four papers were presented by Rapanui individuals (Moreno Pakarati 2018; Pakarati Tepano 2018; Rapu 2018; Rapu & Meza 2018). More troublesome still, is that only five papers were presented by indigenous Polynesian scholars (the four previous Rapanui plus Tuaupiki & Hata 2018). This means that some 92% of all papers were presented by Chilean and international scholars. Therefore, future conferences should motivate local speakers to present, as this effort will help to merge interpretations between etic and emic perspectives. This includes Rapanui experts in all fields.

Interruptions took place during both conferences—one was more intrusive than the other. It demonstrates that there is always a deeper layer to life on Rapa Nui, and the more layers we understand, the better we can interpret the island as social and environmental scientists. With this being said, we must strive to understand the politics of the places where we undertake research. We must meet and discuss our projects with both the local community and the authorities. We must continue with our effort in scientific outreach and public archaeology efforts. If we, as a research community, can better understand and accomplish these points, we, along with the Rapanui, will be in a better place, for research, for the community, and for humanity.

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Spriggs, Sarah Sherwood, Christopher Stevenson, Erika Hagelberg, Bruno Malaizé, and Patricia Vargas), thank you for keeping the conference on track and chairing the very unique and stimulating sessions. Your expertise in the material better facilitated discussion and understanding. To all presenters, thank you for your new research and results. Your investigations have better articulated your particular field of research within the corpus of knowledge for Rapa Nui, as well as the Pacific.

For the HCS, our deepest appreciation and compliments to the conference planners and workers (Andrea Seelenfreund, Valentina Fajreldin, Riet Delsing, and Diego Muñoz Azócar and others) for putting together a most valuable and opportune conference dealing with contemporary issues on Rapa Nui. This symposium also counted on the participation of the Rapa Nui island community who came asking valuable questions and provided important discussion. Much thanks to the Tongariki Cultural Center, especially Francisco Haoa, and the Aukara Galeria, especially Leonardo Pakarati, Paula Rossetti, Ana María Arredondo, and Bene Tuki for their hospitality and *mana*.

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Papers presented at the Early Pacific Migration Conference

- Berenguer, P., P. Castañeda, A. Rivera-Hutinel & A. Seelenfreund (2018). Análisis de granos de almidón de plantas del Pacífico: Estudio de caso de almidones de un sitio arqueológico temprano de Isla de Pascua.
- Best, F. (2018). Forensic structural analysis of *moai* transport.
- Boersema, J. (2018). Eighteenth century fake news about Easter Island (Rapa Nui).
- Cristino, C. & P. Vargas (2018). Ahu Tongariki: Chronicle of an archaeological reconstruction 1992–1996.
- Delcroix, T., R. Abarca del Rio, T. Corregge, S. Cravatte & B. Malaizé (2018). La Niña and the drastic ecological change of Easter Island.
- Espejo, J. (2018). Recent actions in conservation: Toromiro 2000–2018.
- Gosling, A., E. Lord, D. Addison & E. Matisoo-Smith (2018). Colonization processes in Tokelau: Insights from ancient and modern DNA.
- Hawarden, R., S. Stewart, N. Ellison, H. Buckley & M. Bader (2018). The canoes and palms of Rapa Nui: Missing but not gone?
- Ingersoll, D. & K. Ingersoll (2018). The forest, tress, and wood sources of Rapa Nui.
- Ioannidis, A., J. Blanco, C. Quinto, K. Sandoval, E. Hagelberg, M. Moraga, J. Miquel-Poblete, R. Verdugo, T. Parks, M. Ávila-Arcos, A. Sockell, C. Eng, E. Burchard, A. Mentzer, C. Bustamante & A. Moreno-Estrada, A. (2018). Reconstructing gene flow across the remote Pacific.
- Izaurieta, R. (2018). Cartography and georeferencing on Rapa Nui.
- Jakubowska-Vorbrich, Z & K. Vorbrich (2018b). The Rapanui community origin as seen through the eyes of early European explorers and placed within a broader seafaring context.
- Kühlem, A., M. Tromp, J. Maxwell & B. Vogt (2018). Before and after the Flood—An assessment of the stratigraphical change at Ava Ranga Uka.
- Malaizé, B., M. Orliac, S. Haoa, A.-M. Sémah, C. Skonieczny, T. Caley, A.-L. Daniau, T. Delcroix & C. Orliac (2018). Record of environmental changes around the Rano Aroi pond (Easter Island) over the last 1200 years.

- Martinsson-Wallin H. & P. Wallin (2018). Marae and sweet potato connected: East Polynesian interactions.
- Matisoo-Smith, E. (2018). Recent advances in Pacific commensal animal studies—Implications for Rapa Nui and the wider Pacific.
- McCoy, M., M. Mulrooney & P.V. Kirch (2018). Tracking migration and interaction through geochemical sourcing studies: An example from Tikopia, a Polynesian outlier.
- Pakarati-Tepano, L. (2018). The images of Hoa Hakananai'a.
- Peña-Ahumada, B., X. Moncada, D. Seelenfreund & A. Seelenfreund (2018). Análisis genético de una tapa etnográfica de Mangareva: Revela conexión con Rapa Nui.
- Ramírez-Aliaga, J.M. (2018). Exploradores Polinésicos en el centro sur de Chile: Una puesta al día.
- Sanchez, C. (2018). Genetic analysis of the extinct *toromiro* tree as a first approach to its reintroduction in Rapa Nui.
- Simpson Jr., D.F. (2018a). Is there a golden mean to Rapa Nui's collapse narrative?
- Solsvik, R. (2018). At the end of the road of the winds: *Ahu* and *marae*.
- Spriggs, M. (2018). Has the ultimate synthesis arrived? Combining archaeological, genetic, and oral tradition evidence.
- Stanish, C. (2018). Monumentality in non-state societies.
- Stevenson, C.M. & C. Williams (2018). Modified caves on Rapa Nui (Easter Island): Architecture, chronology, and use.
- Tuaupiki, H. & T. Hata (2018). Māori navigation knowledge in Aotearoa.
- Van Tilburg, J.A. (2018). The epicenter model of Rapanui origins, Polynesian discovery and megalithic expansion.
- Van Tilburg, J.A. & A. Hom (2018). Transforming an outdoor museum into a cultural landscape: Rapanui community.

Papers and a Poster presented at the 1st International Symposium of Rapa Nui – Heritage, Culture, and Society from a Contemporary Perspective

- Arredondo, A. (2018). Las mujeres olvidadas.
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