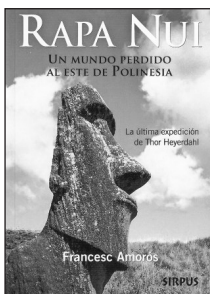


Amorós, Francesc. *Rapa Nui: Un Mundo Perdido al Este Polinesia. La última expedición de Thor Heyerdahl.*



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Review by Helene Martinsson-Wallin,
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When I first had this book in my hand the immediate reaction was nostalgia, and the title of “A lost world” seemed appropriate even for me. Because

I was deeply involved in this venture, which the author calls “the last expedition of Thor Heyerdahl,” and because it changed my life and my career in fundamental ways, it is a little difficult to be objective in evaluating Amorós’ book. To see the pictures of the four young participating archaeologists, Jose-Miguel, Paul, Sonia and myself made me realize how we, in various ways, have carried the “torch” from the Aku-Aku expedition, only moving on in our own directions with subsequent important work both on Rapa Nui, the wider Pacific area, and elsewhere. Seeing the well-known signatures of Thor, Arne and Gonzalo make me miss them, but also made me cherish the time we spent together and the memories, and what we learned from them. They were all great characters in various ways. It is also good to remember our Rapanui crew under the leadership of Don Juan Haoa. Neither before nor after have I worked with such a skilled crew who also possessed a good sense of humor. I do remember Francesc Amorós and the late Antonio Pujador very well, the two charming Spanish gentlemen, not officially part of our Norwegian-Chilean-Swedish-Rapanui team, but who visited and sometimes participated in our excavations at ‘Anakena as well as inviting us to join them on several occasions. The first thought that comes to mind

when I think of them is their very useful map of Rapa Nui signed by Thor Heyerdahl.

It is now 25 years since we started the excavations at ‘Anakena, which is an important site for the understanding of the prehistory of Rapa Nui. Initial results were published by Arne, Paul, and me in 1994. I did a re-evaluation that was published in 2002, and Paul and I published a re-dating of the early site as recent as 2010. The discovery of Polynesian rat bones in the early cultural layer should have probably been published as soon as we found them, but this finding was not unproblematic at the time; however, ongoing research on these bones will give further interesting perspectives. This certainly shows that research on the material from this site is still of importance and new methods can be applied to old materials with good results.

Since my Spanish is not proficient enough I have not been able to grasp all the details in the book, but the general impression is that Amorós makes a good account that considers the facts of the excavations, but also, in a personal way, tells the story of events surrounding the excavations. In every book there are, of course, some minor details that could be pointed out, but one major thing that I would like to mention is that it is true that this expedition was the last that Heyerdahl did on Rapa Nui, but certainly this was not his last venture. During this time Heyerdahl was in his early 70’s, and just a month before he passed away in 2002, at age 87, he climbed the Pulemelei mound in Sāmoa and thus initiated a new project there. He also carried out several other projects in between these events. In my opinion, I think that a book about the ‘Anakena expedition is justified since it was an important event for the archaeology of Rapa Nui, which is now slowly turning from memory to history. Amorós was there as a first-hand observer, and he has used relevant references to correctly state the facts. I do recognize much of the account, and the book has its place as a document of the “last expedition of Thor Heyerdahl to Rapa Nui.” We who participated have various narratives, but that is another story...