The True Story of Easter Island
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(Part II)

Translated from La véritable histoire de l’Île de Pâques

In Part I of The True Story of Easter Island we discussed the history of the discovery of the island, its amazing cultural events, and the influence it had on several major Western artists.

In Part II we will explore the official thesis on the history of Easter Island and the contradictions it has not missed generate. We will also see how these contradictions can be resolved by taking into account new elements that we have discussed in previous studies, which allow us to understand what seems to be the real story of Easter Island.
Easter Island, unique in Polynesia

Most of these cultural achievements to Easter Island detonate completely from the rest of Polynesia. Indeed, to retain only the most important:

- The *moai* of Easter Island are much more numerous and of much larger size than the few stone statues found on some Polynesian islands. In addition, the *moai* are much more refined and realistic than these Polynesian statues.

- The Rite of the Bird-man is completely unknown in the rest of Polynesia.
- Although the petroglyphs are common in Polynesia, we do not find such huge surfaces etched at Orongo.

- Paint was used on monuments, nowhere in Polynesia, with much emphasis than on Easter Island. In fact, on Easter Island it was not only used for body decoration and some wooden objects as in Polynesia, but again, the *moai* were painted, petroglyphs were enhanced with colors and large frescoes covering the ceilings of some caves.
Although we find the rudiments of almost all the cultural elements in the rest of Polynesia, nowhere we notice the refined appearance and grandiose present on Easter Island.

It seems that Easter Island culture has grown up in a very different way than Polynesian culture, so much that it stands out completely.
The official history of Easter Island

According to the theory most widely used: the inhabitants of Easter Island confined to a tiny island in a long and extreme isolation have flourished culturally in a unique, original and very distinct way from the rest of Polynesia.

Thus, Hotu Matua, the first king of Easter Island, arrived on the island with a hundred people. These early islanders, of Polynesian origin, have flourished for hundreds of years without any contact with another culture whatsoever. They would have, despite extreme conditions, experienced phenomenal growth in a variety of cultural domains and in a very short time.
An exception ...

It is generally recognized that the development of a cultural level as dramatic as what would have been the Easter Island civilization requires a large population and a minimum of complexity. Generally reaching such a level of cultural development also requires frequent contacts and exchanges with other civilizations.

On the contrary, it is almost impossible for a very small population, living in autarky, to achieve such a cultural boom.

But the islanders were few and had lived in extreme isolation.
The extraordinary cultural development of Easter Island has even been called a miracle by the anthropologist Alfred Métraux ...

"The miracle of Easter Island lies in the courage that drove the inhabitants of a small island, devoid of resources to draw on the horizon of the Pacific, monuments worthy of a great people. ".

Alfred Métraux
What is it really?

Is Easter Island really an exception in the history of mankind? Are we really dealing with a miraculous situation as claimed by Alfred Metraux?

Can a small population, with limited resources, could really only by itself develop such a level of culture, and in particular the knowledge and expertise needed to build spectacular monuments worthy of a great civilization?
Oral tradition

Collected by early explorers and those stationed on the island, the oral tradition can shed light on the mysterious past of Easter Island.

According to oral tradition, the inhabitants of Easter Island have not lived in isolation as extreme as it had been said. Indeed, they reports that other stocky people would have come well after the first colonizers whose long ears, distorted by heavy pendants, astonished the islanders.

These newcomers have brought with them extensive expertise in stone carving and the erection of great monuments. They have undertaken extensive work well and have completely transformed the surface of the island.
The people of the "Long Ears"

Who were these newcomers, where could they come from?

Could there be a more advanced civilization that pioneered the phenomenal growth experienced by Easter Island culture?

Indeed, it seems unlikely that a population spread over many islands as were the Polynesians, occupied surviving the whims of nature, often in wars and without a strong central power, could have the resources to be the instigator of the phenomenal growth experienced by Easter Island culture.

So we must look elsewhere than on the hundreds of islands scattered in the Pacific Ocean.
Thor Heyerdahl proposed that the earliest colonizers of Easter Island were South Americans and that Polynesians would have come by later.

Oral tradition does not, however, supports this hypothesis.

It is possible that South Americans are those mentioned in the Easter Island oral tradition that would have come after the establishment of the first settlers.
The Incas: great builders

On the South American continent, the continent closest to Easter Island, the Inca civilization was contemporary to Polynesian colonization of Easter Island. The Inca civilization had a large population, was controlled by a strong coercive central power and had reached a high level of complexity. The Incas also had frequent contacts and exchanges with other nations, some of which they had conquered, which has also contributed to the cultural development of the Inca civilization.

The Incas, with several specialized trades were great builders. They could build cities on the highest mountains and move heavy loads. They knew how to carve hard stone and could build walls with joints that were perfectly matched.
The domination of the Incas extended over what is now Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador.
Machu Pichu

The Incas were great builders and did not hesitate to build on the highest peaks.
The Incas had the knowledge and expertise needed to move large blocks of stone over long distances.
Cuzco

The Incas made perfect assembly of large blocks of stone to build their monuments. They also sometimes rounded out corners of some of their buildings.
The conquest of new territories

According to Inca oral tradition, around 1445, the Inca Pachacutec and his son Tupac Yupanqui extended their territory to Lake Titicaca. Pachacutec confided later an army to Tupac to submit to the Inca authority vast territories that were not conquered so far.

Thus, under the authority of the Inca Pachacutec and later as the supreme Inca, Tupac would have expanded the Inca domination on what is now Peru, Ecuador and much of Chile and Bolivia.
Lac Titicaca

The Incas conquered the region around Lake Titicaca.
Tupac eventually undertook the conquest of vast territories to further expand the Inca Empire.
Did the Incas venture onto the Pacific Ocean?

Also according to the Inca oral tradition, after these conquests, the Inca Tupac was gone, around 1465, in an expedition on the Pacific Ocean with several hundred men on large rafts. During this journey, he would have approached the islands Nina chumpi and Hahua chumpi.
The Incas had the ability to navigate the high seas

It was long considered, without proper verification, that the Incas were poor browsers. Indeed, for Westerners, the raft was a little rickety boat. It was the shipwrecked boat indulging the waves, currents and winds.

Yet the Spanish conquistadors reported having knowledge of large balsa rafts that were making regular long journeys from northern Peru to Panama.

In fact, the Incas had the ability to navigate at sea and performed, for commercial reasons or war, lengthy trips on the Pacific Ocean along the coast.
Inca rafts

The Incas had perfected the raft so much that they had made it an excellent mean of navigation.

Their rafts were made by assembling large trunks of balsa, light wood with very good flotation, thereby ensuring the stability of the vessel and allowing it to carry heavy loads, men, merchandise or food. The orientable sailing of these rafts and especially their ingenious removable drift, the front and rear, made these boats very maneuverable.
1 Voile orientable
2 Quilles amovibles
3 Abris
4 Poutres de balsa
The Kon Tiki expedition

Thor Heyerdahl has even demonstrated in 1947 that one could go from South America to Polynesia with such craft. He has made the crossing part of the Pacific Ocean on a balsa raft named Kon-Tiki, built according to ancient methods in South America. After 101 days of navigation, taking advantage of the Humboldt current and prevailing winds, this strange craft from Peru, finally reached an island in the Tuamotu Archipelago.

The Kon-Tiki has shown that a simple balsa raft could go to Polynesia, even at distances much greater than the distance between the South American continent and Easter Island.
Discovery of pre-columbian pottery to the Galapagos Islands

Later, the discovery by Heyerdahl of fragments of pre-Columbian pottery on Galapagos Islands proved that South Americans actually came to these islands and that they were possibly going back and forth regularly.
The Incas visiting two islands in the Pacific Ocean

According to Peruvian historian Del Busto Duthurburu, who traced a document prepared by the conquistador Gamboa, Inca Tupac would had actually conducted a large-scale expedition in the Pacific.

According to Duthurburu, the two islands covered by Tupac would likely be the two islands closest to the South American continent: Mangareva, the main island of the Gambier Islands, and Easter Island.
Traces of the passage of the Inca Tupac in the Gambier

Gambier Oral tradition mention of an important person called Tupa.

Similarly, a sacred place is called Otupa.

A channel between two islands to the east of the archipelago, named Teava-no-Tupa, which means "great channel Tupa" and in which, according to oral tradition, Tupa would have appear with very impressive boats.

When the first explorers arrived, the inhabitants of Gambier used, like the Incas, large rafts as a means of navigation.

Also on Gambier, there were precise and elaborate rituals of observing the movements of the sun very similar to those of the Incas.
Traces of the passage of the Inca Tupac on Easter Island

In Easter Island:

Tupa’s name is mentioned in the list of kings and important people; the clan that have carved the *moai* would be the Tupa Hotu clan. The word *tapatupa* meant to carry a heavy load by several people, stones constructions of round towers shape are called *tupa*. 
Tupa and Tupac would be the same person

We believe that all these names and words referring to Tupa are indebted to the passage of the Inca Tupac. His name was slightly modified by the Polynesians to adapt to their language and would become Tupa. Indeed, in Polynesian, no word ends with the sound 'k' and the Polynesian words never end in a consonant, but always with a vowel. Tupac would therefore become Tupa.
Who were the "Long Ears" mentioned in the oral tradition of Easter Island?

The soldiers of the elite guard of the supreme Inca were nicknamed "Orejones" by the Spaniards, which means "Long ears."

In fact, ennobled by the supreme Inca, these Orejones had the great privilege, like him, to wear pendants that allowed their earlobes to extend.

From the Andean highlands, mountaineers par excellence, Orejones had a very developed chest containing a powerful breathing apparatus essential for physical exertion in altitude. They were therefore of stocky appearance.

These Orejones, with elongated earlobes and stocky appearance would, we believe, be the origin of the famous people of the "Long Ears" reported by Easter Island oral tradition.
Orejones

The elite corps of the supreme Inca, the Orejones, consisted of soldiers, who were not only well experienced, but well educated. Indeed, these soldiers were trained at the forefront of all aspects of Inca culture.

In addition to being brave warriors, members of this elite corps possessed extensive knowledge, as in the Inca Empire, they were forced to follow a rigorous education in various fields for many years.

They mastered the most advanced technical and cultural aspects that the Inca society had produced in several hundreds years of civilization and conquest of neighboring territories. They were the true custodians of Inca knowledge at that time.
Descendants of the Incas on Easter Island

A number of Orejones accompanying Tupac Inca would have remained on Easter Island. Arrived without women, they would have taken Polynesian women companions that, over generations, would have mitigated the South American characteristics of their genetic heritage. The "Long ears" are descendants of Orejones.
The stone monuments: other evidence of Inca presence in Easter Island

The *moai*

Over the years, more than eight hundred *moai* were identified, many of which had been transported from their place of manufacture to the shores of the island.

We find at the foot of Rano Raraku volcano, the crater located at the *moai* manufacturing site, many statues erected which, strangely, are largely buried in the ground, most likely after landslides due to climate change. (1)

Although there are slight differences between the *moai* erected on the *ahu* and those partially buried at the foot of the volcano Rano Raraku, all *moai* on the island are very similar.
The *moai* are not Polynesians

Several explorers who approached the Island at different times emphasized that the *moai* face does not really represent the Easter Islanders, nor even the Polynesians in general.

Thus, Pierre Loti wondered about these great statues:

"What human race type do they represent, with their nose tip and raised their thin lips, jutting into a grimace of disdain and mockery?"

*Pierre Loti*
The face of the *moai* has always intrigued Easter Island explorers.
The *moai* represent the Andean

An interesting comparison can be made with an ancient pottery discovered on an island in Lake Titicaca during excavations conducted by researchers from the University of Helsinki in 2004.

Indeed, the character of this pottery has long ears, a long and sharp nose, wide nostrils, thin lips showing a disdainful pout and a pointed chin.

This Andean pottery looks, to be mistaken, like the faces of the *moai*. 
Pottery discovered in Lake Titicaca
The Andean turban

The turban, or *llautu*, that bears this character had a sacred function among the Incas and only the royal family and *Orejones* had the right to wear it. This turban reminds the *pukao*, the enigmatic *moai* headgear.

Note that *Hau* means hat in Easter Islander Polynesian.

*Puka* has no meaning in Polynesian, but means red in the Inca language. *Puka Hau* (*pukao*) could therefore mean red hats.
The Ahu

The ceremonial platforms called *ahu*, which the *moai* were installed on, were sometimes colossal works that had to adequately support a number of *moai*.

The *Ahu* Tongariki, located on the southeast side of the island, is the largest *ahu* built on Easter Island. It bore the greatest number of *moai*, fifteen in total.

Tons of materials were moved to build a foundation strong enough to support the *moai*. Rounded boulders and pebbles were also arranged in a cosmetic way to make ceremonial aisles for the gatherings of the islanders.
Ahu Tongariki
The *Ahu* Vinapu: Inca construction technique

The *Ahu* Vinapu, also located in southeast Easter Island, has always intrigued explorers and visitors of the island by its high quality of execution. Many of them have even mention some resemblance to the Inca constructions.

This large stone platform which supported several *moai* has massive and well polished stone slabs that fit perfectly one with each other and are assembled by a process of mortise tenon. These stone slabs are slightly curved and the ends of the platform are rounded.
A very special small stone

Very curious, a small trapezoid stone is inserted in the middle of the large stone slabs.
The Ahu Vinapu: Inca construction technique

If indeed the resemblance between the Ahu Vinapu and Inca constructions is troubling, a detailed analysis between Ahu Vinapu and a precise form of construction of the Andean plateau leaves virtually no doubt about the link between the two.

Indeed, we noticed that the Ahu Vinapu proceeds with exactly the same method of construction as funerary monuments called chullpas, located on the Andean plateau, not far from Lake Titicaca.

The appearance and mode of assembly of some monumental chullpas built during the reign of Tupac perfectly match the appearance and manner of construction of Ahu Vinapu on Easter Island: big thin large blocks of stone, well adjusted and assembled with mortise tenon process.
Monumental Chullpas on the Andean plateau
The large stone slabs of *chullpas* were assembled by a process of mortise tenon.
An uncanny similarity

We also found a small stone embedded in the structure of a chullpas on the Andean plateau with an uncanny similarity with the small trapezoid stone of Ahu Vinapu.

This small stone, also trapezoidal, is arranged in a very specific manner and is identical in all respects to the little stone built in the middle of the structure of Ahu Vinapu on Easter Island.
This is kind of a signature ...

That trapezoidal small stone embedded in the structure of a chullpas on the Andean plateau shifts the horizontal line formed by large stones forming the structure, thus providing greater resistance to earthquakes.

The same small stone built into the structure of the Ahu Vinapu on Easter Island, shifts, too, in the same way, the horizontal line formed by large blocks of stone.

Trapezoid shape and vertical lines framing are also identical.

This is somehow a signature from its builders who are obviously from the same building tradition.
Ahu Vinapu
île de Pâques

Chullpas
Sillustani
Vinapu: a Inca word

The word Vinapu which has no meaning in Polynesian language, however, means "fermented corn" in Inca language.

Lieutenant Olaondo, member of the expedition of Captain Felippe Gonzalez who explored Easter Island in 1770, specifically mentioned the presence of corn on the Island.

This plant, which was unknown at the time in Polynesia, is native of America. Corn is also, we believe, represented in several old Easter Island tattoos.

Other plants, which were also grown on Easter Island at the arrival of the first explorers also come from America, among others: the sweet potato, gourd and Chilean pepper.
The Incas, agrarian people, gave great importance to the cultivation of corn which was an important part of their diet.
The round towers of stone called *Tupa*

Reported since the passage of the first browsers, strange ruined towers, called *tupa* are distributed in different places on Easter Island. The most popular explanation is the fact that these towers have been used to observe the arrival of the turtles when they come to breed on the island, and, incidentally, a resting place for fishermen.

Turtles lay only on sandy beaches. However, there are only two small beaches, north of the island, while *tupa* are spread over a good portion of the perimeter of the island. In addition, at least three of these *tupa* are located at a distance of more than three kilometers inland. It is therefore impossible that they could have been used as an observatory for the arrival of the turtles or a resting place for fishermen.
Easter Island
Tupa
The Andean plateau round towers of stone

Some structures are similar in all respects in the Andes and on the west coast of South America. It is specifically funerary constructions, the chullpas, but of rustic style this time.

Funeral tradition in the Andes is that the body is placed in a chullpas with everyday objects and sometimes small statuettes.

However, excavations of a Easter Island tupas lead to discover more than 80 artifacts in the ground at this point, of witch a small stone statuette.

It seems that the tupas, like chullpas, have been used to pay homage to important dead people.
Chullpas rustic Andean plateau
Representations of animals unknown in Polynesia

The ancient Easter Islanders carved petroglyphs and wooden statues, painted caves frescos and even, something not very known, made a kind of mask front. We believe that among all these artistic works we can recognize several animals completely unknown in Polynesia.
Many petroglyphs on Easter Island represent a Bird-man. We believe that the Bird-man is half-man half-vulture.
The specific characteristics of some wooden statues representing the Bird-man would, we believe, identify a vulture: the Andean condor.
Representations of masks

Henri Lavachery, during the Franco-Belgian expedition of 1934, had noted the presence of representations of masks among the petroglyphs of Easter Island. According to him these masks showed a obvious faun character.

The masks are not typical of Polynesian culture, but on the other hand were widely used by the Incas during periodic festivals.
Pétroglyph
Drawings of petroglyphs by Henri Lavachery
In our opinion, these petroglyphs representing masks included feline subject, a type of animal unknown in Polynesia. It would possibly be the puma, an animal typical of the Andes.
The puma was a mythical animal for the Incas and many elements of the Inca culture relate to it.
This old mask in tapa also represent, in our view, a feline.

Forehead mask.
Petroglyphs and cave paintings would represent the monkey, an animal also unknown in Polynesia, but present in South America.
Statuette *Moko*

The enigmatic *Moko* statue have been named lizards, or lizardmen.

This kind of statues has, among other things, highly visible external ears, big eyes, a prominent nose, a pleasing countenance, a very round belly, visible sex organs and navel. Sometimes this kind of statues has a long appendix at the end of the body but not systematically. No species of lizard in the world match such a description.
Moko statuette with an appendix at the rear of the body.
Representations of *cuy*

*Moko* statuettes would in fact be an animal whose symbolism was very important to the Incas and has nothing to do with the lizard.

These statues actually represent skinned *cuy* (guinea pig), sometimes skewered, to be cooked and eaten. (3)

The *cuy* is among the oldest domestic animals of the Andes. The *cuy* was not part of the daily diet, it was sacrificed during major festivals and Incas used it only during special occasions.

Nowadays, the *cuy* is still produce in the Andes for its appreciated flesh.
Angean traditional method of cooking *cuy*: skewered with a stick.
Representations of Inca totems animals

Among the Incas, each clan or tribe believed to have a particular animal ancestor, which became his totem animal. Puma, condor and monkey were totem animals among the Incas. Thus, the condor was the totem animal of Orejones.

On the occasion of certain festivals and certain ceremonies, an important person honored the clan totem animal by wearing its strip and a mask or a representative. When he was a corpse, the head of the animal fell on the participant’s forehead as if it was a cap.

All these depictions of animals unknown in Polynesia would, we believe, be representations of animals totems. The "Long Ears", descendants of the Incas, continued to observe certain traditions brought by their ancestors.
Easter Island was divided into two confederations of clans

According to oral tradition, the island was divided geographically and politically into two confederations who shared the island, one in the northwest and the other in the southeast.

In the Northwest lived, among others, the king or Ariki Mau and the aristocratic Miru clan. In the Southeast lived, among others, the "Long Ears" and Hotu Tupa, which were the sculptors of the moai. According to oral tradition, they had a leader who was not a Ariki as in Polynesian tradition.

Both confederations of clans were constantly in competition to get the most power possible on the Island.
The major achievements of the islanders

Curiously all the great achievements of the inhabitants of Easter Island which have led some to say that there had been on the island a phenomenal cultural development, are located, or arose on the southeast side of the island.

So it is with the rites of the Bird-man that took place in the village of Orongo,

The *moai* carving was done at Rano Raraku volcano, and the cutting of pukao was done at the small volcano Puna Pau. These two sites are also on the southeast side of the island.

The *ahu* Tongariki, very impressive since it supported the greatest number of *moai* on the island, and *ahu* Vinapu, made to perfection, are both located on the southeast side.

However, we have seen that the southeast side of the island was under the control of "Long Ears" and the Hotu Tupa clan, which would be the descendants of the Incas accompanying the Inca Tupac.
The extermination of the "Long Ears"

Thus, it seems that the original Polynesian islanders have had to deal with the presence of the Incas on Easter Island. Two peoples lived aside one another on the island: the original Polynesian, sometimes called the "Little ears", and the one called the "Long Ears", of Inca origin.

The "Long Ears" after having been masters of the island for some time, saw their power eroded over the cultural and political conflicts. The descendants of the Incas gradually lost their aura of superiority, until the fateful day when the descendants of Rapanui Hotu Matua regained control of the island and destroyed the people of the "Long Ears" leaving, at the arrival of Westerners, only Inca ruins: the footprint of the Incas.
In conclusion

The extraordinary cultural flowering known as Easter Island would not have an "miraculous" origin and would not be the result of the remarkable ingenuity of a small population confined on a small island.

The sudden introduction of the Inca culture on Easter Island after the passage of the Inca Tupac explain much most of the elements that are not typically Polynesians on Easter Island. The Orejones of Tupac Inca and their descendants would, in our view, be the origin of this amazing cultural development.

The majority of cultural elements that have made the reputation of Easter Island and that stand completely apart from what is found in the rest of Polynesia would be of Inca origins.

Thus many of the mysteries surrounding Easter Island finds logical explanation when they are reviewed in the context of a Inca cultural influence. (2)
Erika Hagelberg showed in 1994 that DNA content in the bones of twelve islanders, prior to the first contacts with the West, had a typical Polynesian genetic marker.

Following this research, it was erroneously considered by all that the islanders were therefore exclusively of Polynesian origin.

It should however be noted that this research was done only in the context of determining whether the initial colonization of Easter Island was actually Polynesian, or if it was South American, as claimed by Heyerdahl.

By her own opinion, Hagelberg, could not refute the Heyerdahl thesis because she could not be certain she had in hands the skeletons of the earliest colonizers and even considered it as highly unlikely. It is therefore wrong to believe that her research has shown that the islanders were exclusively Polynesians.
According to our thesis, the Incas arrived without women, settled on Easter Island and have been companions for Polynesian women. All descendants of these mixed marriages has necessarily possess the Polynesian marker identified by Hagelberg.

Indeed, this Polynesian marker is present in the genetic makeup of the man and the woman, however, it is transmitted only, but systematically, by the female, to her male and female children, no matter if she is coupled with a Polynesian or South American partner.

Thus, the only islanders who would not have this genetic marker could only be the very first Incas arrived on Easter Island. However, it would be virtually impossible to find one of these rare skeletons dating back hundreds of years that would not have this genetic marker.
Hagelberg research does not invalidate the fact that there could be a posterior settlement from South America after the Polynesian settlement. Finally, one undeniable conclusion that can be legitimately drawn from this research is that these twelve skeletons belonged to the descendants of Polynesians or Polynesians genetic heirs. It is somewhat unfair to conclude after this research that the islanders were exclusively of Polynesian origin. Unfortunately, although her conclusions have a very limited scope, this research misinterpretation had the negative effect of limiting and delaying research on the real origins of the Easter Islanders.
Fortunately, recently, geneticists have begun new research on the origins of the Easter Islanders. In particular, Erik Thorsby research have demonstrated the presence of typical American genetic markers on Easter Island.

Thorsby believes it is likely that the presence of these Americans genetic markers predates the first contacts with the European populations.

Thus, further research on ancient bones show that Easter Island is genetically the Island throughout Polynesia that has the least of one of the typical Polynesian characteristic: the mandible rocker, and has one the most of one typically Peruvian genetic characteristics : the bone of the Incas.

Easter Island is therefore, from a genetic and a cultural perspective, the island the least Polynesian of all Polynesia. (5)
THESIS and PRODUCTION

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Mega El Niño et déforestation de l’île de Pâques, 2008

(1) Île de Pâques – La forêt disparue, 2008
(2) Île de Pâques – L’empreinte des Incas, 2009
(3) Île de Pâques – Mystérieux Moko, 2011
(4) Île de Pâques – Guerre de clans et chute des moai, 2012
(5) Île de Pâques – L’empreinte génétique, 2012
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