



Reading Between the Lines: Katherine Routledge's Field Notes and Rapanui Identity

Wednesday 26 October 6pm – 7.30pm

The 2016 Jack Golson Lecture

Speaker

Dr. Jo Anne Van Tilburg

Research Fellow, Cotsen Institute of
Archaeology, UCLA

Location

Copland Lecture Theatre

Building #25,
Kingsley St, Acton, ANU

6.00 for 6.30 start

**Lecture is followed by light
refreshments**

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This lecture is free and open to the public

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The impressive ensemble of monolithic stone sculpture and megalithic architecture on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) constitutes a unique coastal landscape. As central places and integral features of the overall settlement pattern, the main function of these complexes was funerary. Every upright statue subtly encoded and displayed a unique and localized history directly linked to individual social groups and their hereditary lands.

When Katherine Routledge, co-leader with her husband, William Scoresby Routledge, of the Mana Expedition to Easter Island arrived in 1914, fifty years of colonial exploitation had nearly erased the oral history record, and with it associated group origins and identities. Consulting with a small knot of surviving Rapanui elders who acted as interpreters and guides, Routledge recovered and then jealously guarded a precious collection of observations, testimonies and reflections that today constitute an ethnographic data archive of major research value. Collaborating closely with a Rapanui consultant known as Juan

Tepano, Routledge located and then drew outlines of what she believed were viable social group boundaries, thus lending concreteness and credibility to ownership claims. In this discussion, I evaluate and reinterpret Routledge's indigenous boundaries using recent GPS mapping data, recovering some probable associations of specific descendant Rapanui social groups with certain megalithic sites. The goal is to restore the broken linkage between land, the monolithic statues and Rapanui group identity.

Dr Jo Anne Van Tilburg is an archaeologist and Research Fellow of the interdisciplinary Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, where she has served since 1997 as Director of the UCLA Rock Art Archive. She is founding director and principle investigator of the Easter Island Statue Project (EISP). For nearly three decades she and her co-director, Rapanui artist Cristián Arévalo Pakarati, have carried out an island-wide survey to locate, document, and depict over 1,000 of the monolithic statues (moai) for which the island is world-famous. Dr. Van Tilburg is an innovative, widely published researcher with a passionate and long-standing commitment to Pacific Studies.

The **2016 Jack Golson Lecture** celebrates the contributions to modern archaeology in Australia and the Pacific made by Emeritus Professor Jack Golson, founder of the Prehistory Department in the ANU Research School of Pacific Studies.

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