Introduction

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The attendees of the Rapa Nui conferences in Berlin (2015) and Rapa Nui (2018) were already talking about the fact that 2022 would mark 300 years of the Dutch setting foot on an island that did not figure on European maps. The members of the expedition led by Jacob Roggeveen from the province of Zeeland called it Easter Island. This first European and Rapanui encounter became an obvious incentive to hold the *10th International Conference on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) and the Pacific* in the Netherlands. Leiden seemed the logical place given the expertise available at the Wereldmuseum and at the university.

After sighting the island on 5 April 1722 (*Paaschdag*, Easter Day), the Dutch landing on Friday 10 April 1722 took a dramatic course. A group of soldiers in the rear led by Cornelis Mens felt threatened and started shooting at the islanders. There were ten to twelve deaths. The leaders of the expedition were furious, called Mens to account and labelled him a 'bloodaard' (coward). But the harm was done. Strangely enough, contact with the inhabitants afterwards was thus that it allowed for exchanging linen for chickens and bananas. Several journals and travel accounts described this visit, the inhabitants and the culture. From that moment on, the island was on European maps.

After that first visit, attention to Rapa Nui in the Netherlands faded and with it the memory of the violent meeting of two worlds. Therefore, the organizers of the 2022 conference felt that there should be proper consideration for this first encounter during the opening. But how to do that? We were greatly helped by Margot Hotus Salinas who drew our attention to a letter from 2005 addressed to her father Alberto Hotus Chávez, then president of the Council of Elders on Rapa Nui (Presidente del Consejo de Ancianos de Rapa Nui). In that document, the Dutch ambassador to Chile at the time, Hinkinus Nijenhuis, described the incident and apologized for it (Fig. 1, Fig. 2). He gave his consent for us to publicly offer the letter again to representatives of Rapa Nui at the opening of the conference together with a facsimile of the page from Jacob Roggeveen's journal in which he gives the island the name 'Paasch eijland' (Fig. 3). Both documents were accepted by Leonardo Pakarati on behalf of the Rapa Nui residents present (Fig. 4). As a number of people from Rapa Nui and Chile were unable to travel to the Netherlands due to continuing Covid restrictions, the handover was confirmed two months later in Santiago, Chile by the then Dutch ambassador to Chile, Carmen Gonsalves (Fig. 5).

Ambassade van het
Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

El Embajador de los Países Bajos

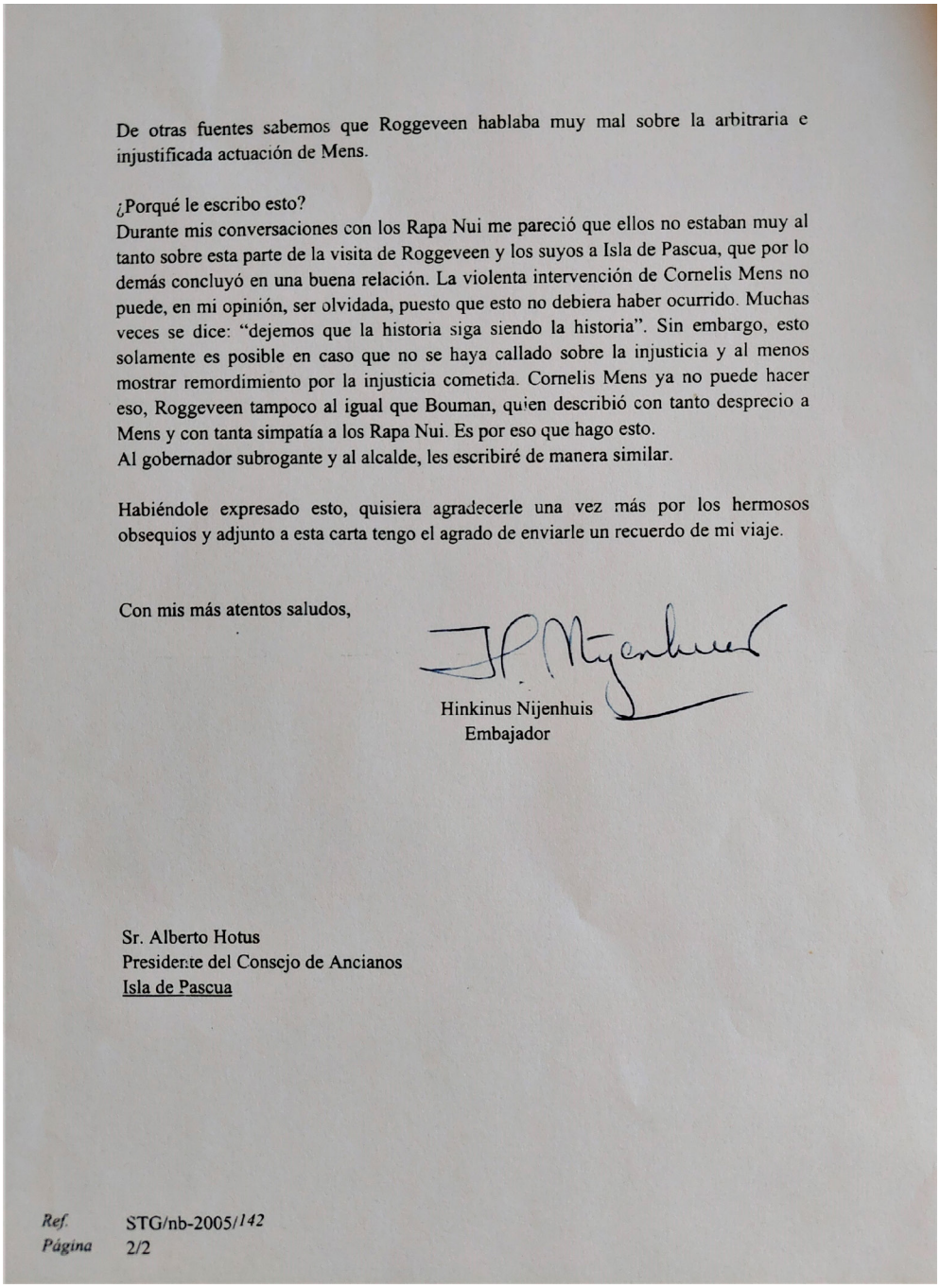
Fecha 12 de julio de 2005
Ref. STG/nb-2005/142

Estimado señor Presidente:

Con mucho agrado recuerdo nuestro breve encuentro. Admiro mucho su energía y entusiasmo para desempeñar diversas actividades como la elaboración de documentos genealógicos y diccionarios. Éstas son tareas muy útiles.

Tuvimos una muy buena impresión de la isla y de su población. Una naturaleza bellísima y habitantes muy amables y acogedoras. Solo debido a eso, ya tengo la mayor confianza en el futuro de la isla.

En cuanto a los hechos históricos vividos por nuestros pueblos, tengo a bien ofrecerle mis disculpas por el daño causado en el pasado por la muerte de tantos Rapa Nui (9 a 10) durante el primer desembarco de europeos en Isla de Pascua. Me refiero al trágico acontecimiento ocurrido el 10 de abril de 1722, cinco días después de que los barcos *Arend*, *Thienhoven* y *Africaensche Galey* habían anclado en Isla de Pascua. Ese día, el Suboficial de Navegación del Thienhoven, Cornelis Mens, dio repentinamente la orden de disparar al momento de desembarcar Jacob Roggeveen y gran cantidad de tripulantes. Que se había asustado, como él afirmaba, puede ser cierto, pero no había ninguna razón para ello, según el relato del Capitán Bouman del Thienhoven, quien entre otras cosas escribió: "....porque los habitantes, al menos la mayoría, no tenían armas sino que se nos acercaban en gran cantidad con las manos vacías para darnos la bienvenida...Cornelis Mens dijo como excusa que los habitantes habían querido agarrar su escopeta y que lo habían amenazado con tirar piedras, lo cual no cuenta con la credibilidad de los señores Roggeveen, Coster (capitán del Arend), Roosendaal (capitán del Africaensche Galey), tenientes, alféreces y por mi, junto a todos los oficiales y cuantiosos marineros. Puesto que primero desembarcamos y luego caminamos junto a un gran número de habitantes quienes nos abrían paso en muestra de amistad, pero el oficial de navegación desconocía que ellos habían hecho esto. Sin embargo todos los oficiales creían que había actuado de esa manera porque él era un villano..."



De otras fuentes sabemos que Roggeveen hablaba muy mal sobre la arbitraria e injustificada actuación de Mens.

¿Porqué le escribo esto?
Durante mis conversaciones con los Rapa Nui me pareció que ellos no estaban muy al tanto sobre esta parte de la visita de Roggeveen y los suyos a Isla de Pascua, que por lo demás concluyó en una buena relación. La violenta intervención de Cornelis Mens no puede, en mi opinión, ser olvidada, puesto que esto no debiera haber ocurrido. Muchas veces se dice: "dejemos que la historia siga siendo la historia". Sin embargo, esto solamente es posible en caso que no se haya callado sobre la injusticia y al menos mostrar remordimiento por la injusticia cometida. Cornelis Mens ya no puede hacer eso, Roggeveen tampoco al igual que Bouman, quien describió con tanto desprecio a Mens y con tanta simpatía a los Rapa Nui. Es por eso que hago esto.
Al gobernador subrogante y al alcalde, les escribiré de manera similar.

Habiéndole expresado esto, quisiera agradecerle una vez más por los hermosos obsequios y adjunto a esta carta tengo el agrado de enviarle un recuerdo de mi viaje.

Con mis más atentos saludos,

Hinkinus Nijenhuis
Embajador

Sr. Alberto Hotus
Presidente del Consejo de Ancianos
Isla de Pascua

Ref. STG/nb-2005/*142*
Página 2/2

Figure 1. Spanish letter written by Hinkinus Nijenhuis to Alberto Hotus Chávez apologizing for the unfortunate way of events on 10 April 1722.

Ambassade van het
Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

The Ambassador of the Netherlands

Date July 12th, 2005
Ref. STG/nb-2005/142

Dear Mr. President,

It is with great pleasure that I recall our brief meeting. I greatly admire your energy and enthusiasm in carrying out diverse activities like the development of genealogical documents and dictionaries. These are very useful tasks.

We got a very good impression of the island and its population. A beautiful nature and very friendly and welcoming inhabitants. Only because of that, I already have the greatest confidence in the future of the island.

As for the historical events experienced by our peoples, I would like to offer you my apologies for the damage caused in the past by the death of so many Rapa Nui (9 to 10) during the first landing of Europeans on Easter Island. I am referring to the tragic event that occurred on April 10th, 1722, five days after the ships *Arend, Thienhoven* and *Africaensche Galey* had anchored on Easter Island. That day, the Thienhoven's Non-Commissioned Officer for Navigation, Comelis Mens, suddenly gave the order to shoot at the time of disembarking Jacob Roggeveen and several crew members. That he had been frightened, as he claimed, may be true, but there was no reason for it, according to the account of Captain Bouman of the Thienhoven, who wrote, among other things: "... because the inhabitants, at least the majority, did not have weapons but approached us in large numbers with empty hands to welcome us... Cornelis Mens said as an excuse that the inhabitants had wanted to grab his shotgun and that they had threatened to throw stones, which does not enjoy the credibility of Messrs. Roggeveen, Coster (captain of the Arend), Roosendaal (captain of the Africaensche Galey), lieutenants, ensigns and mine, together with all the officers and many sailors. Since we first disembarked and then walked together with a great number of inhabitants who made way for us in a sign of friendship, but the navigation officer was unaware that they had done this. However, all the officers believed that he had acted that way because he was a villain... "

From other sources we know that Roggeveen spoke very badly about Mens's arbitrary and unjustified actions.

Why am I writing this to you?
During my conversations with the Rapa Nui, it seemed to me that they were not very aware of this part of Roggeveen and his people's visit to Easter Island, which otherwise concluded in a good relationship. In my opinion, the violent intervention of Cornelis Mens must not be forgotten since it should not have happened. It is often said, "Let history remain history." However, this is only possible if injustice was not kept silent and at least remorse was shown for the injustice committed. Cornelis Mens can no longer do that, neither can Roggeveen, nor Bouman, who described Mens with such contempt and the Rapa Nui with such sympathy. That is why I do this.
I will write to the deputy governor and the mayor in a similar way.

Having expressed this to you, I would like to thank you once again for the beautiful gifts and, attached to this letter, I have the pleasure to send you a souvenir of my trip.

With my best regards,

[signature]
Hinkinus Nijenhuis
Ambassador

Mr. Alberto Hotus
Chair of the Council of Elders
Easter Island

Ref. STG/nb-2005/142
Page 2/2

Figure 2. English translation of the letter written by Hinkinus Nijenhuis to Alberto Hotus Chávez apologizing for the unfortunate way of events on 10 April 1722.

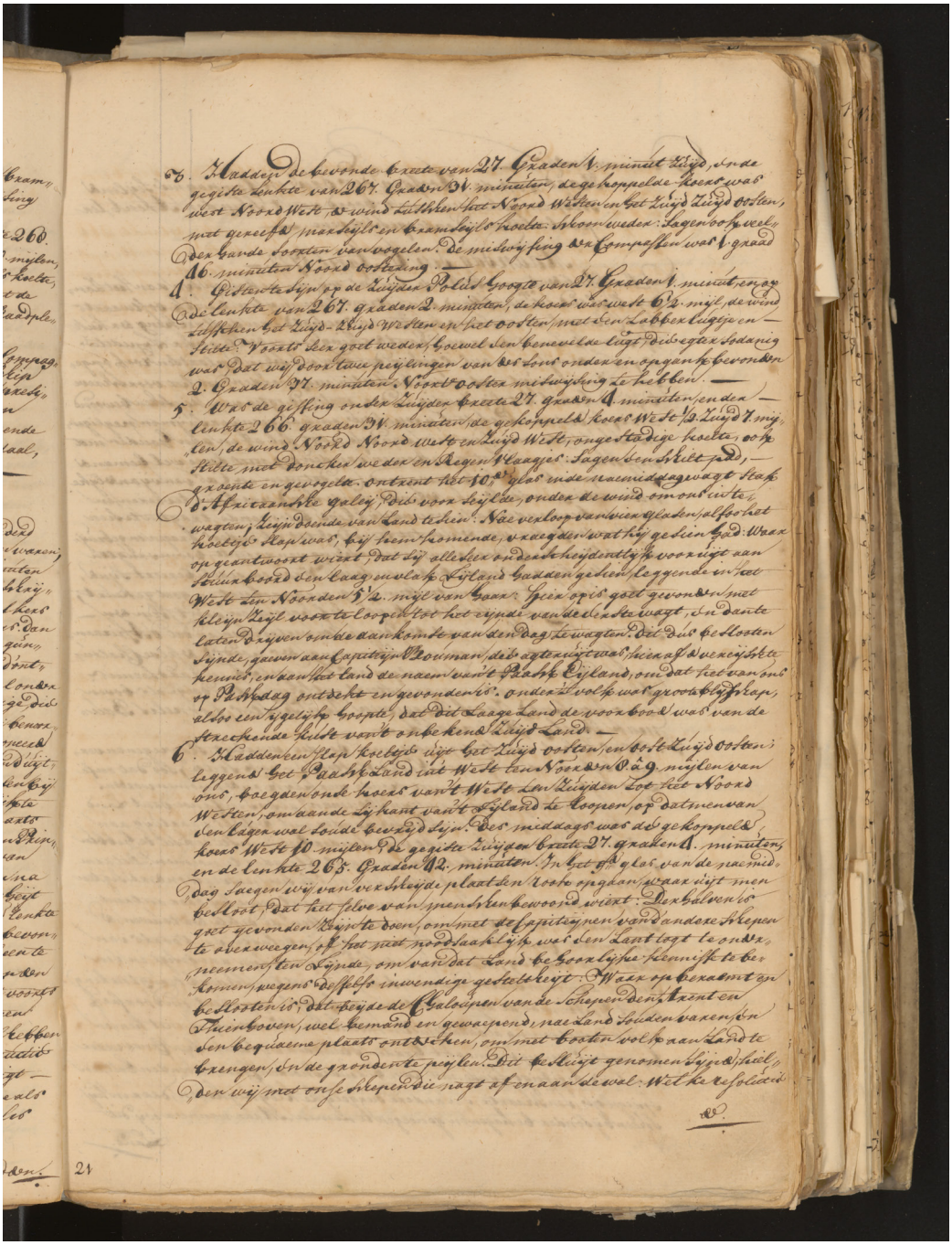


Figure 3. The facsimile of the journal page was kindly funded by the Dutch embassy in Chile (See Appendix 1 for transcript and translation).

Figure 4. Leonardo Pakarati holding the facsimile on behalf of his fellow islanders. From left to the right: Mikaela Pakarati, Ana (Betty) Haoa Rapahanga, Gabriela Hucke, Leonardo Pakarati, Sebastián Pakarati and former ambassador Hinkinus Nijenhuis.

Figure 5. Ambassador Carmen Gonsalves and Pedro Pablo Petero Edmunds Paoa at the old residence of the Dutch Embassy in Santiago, Chile.

The Conference

The conference was held at the Van Steenis Building of Leiden University from 20 to 24 June 2022. This building, named after botanist Cornelis van Steenis (1901–1986), also houses the Institute of Environmental Sciences, the main host institution of the international meeting. The organization was done by Fanny Wonu Veys, Jan J. Boersema, Michiel Verbrugge, Eli van Dam and Sietze Norder. The event location was decked out with photographs taken by Henk Kloosterhuis during his stay on Rapa Nui. Among them were some impressive moai printed in actual size. Each conference day began with a keynote lecture, after which participants divided into two parallel sessions. The film sessions were plenary. The event included an excursion. On the way to Middelburg, we visited Neeltje Jans, a small artificial island used during the construction of the Delta Works in the 1980s and turned into a visitor centre. In Middelburg, the capital of the province of Zeeland and the hometown of Jacob Roggeveen, we took a small city walk. We were hospitably received by the provincial government in the centuries-old Middelburg Abbey that houses both the provincial government and the museum which we visited. A public lecture in the Academy Building on Rapenburg—the most famous canal of Leiden—followed by a cruise on the Leiden waters closed the conference. The number of conference attendees varied between 60 and 80 from a total of 18 countries.

Research about Rapa Nui and the Pacific in general is wide-ranging and the conference reflected that diversity. Hence, the presentations were organized along nine themes: Archaeology, Education, Health, Science in Action, Comparative Studies, History, Museums, Indigeneity, Storytelling and Mythmaking. Some of the contributions focused on very recent research. Excavations at Ranu Raraku have for example provided new insights into the importance of that quarry as a ritual and cultural centre. Advanced genetic techniques are revealing complicated settlement histories. The population dynamic models make pre-modern overpopulation increasingly unlikely. In addition, papers addressed the growing resilience of different Pacific communities and the real concern about the effects of climate change, ocean pollution and overfishing. Speakers talked about the air pollution and weathering affecting archaeological heritage sites and requiring precautionary measures. Front page news nowadays concerns the restitution to Rapa Nui of unlawfully acquired artefacts as well as ancestral remains. The discussion was embedded in a broader framework of collaboration and relationship-building between museums and governments. This topical theme received attention in a keynote lecture and in the documentary *Te Kuhane o Te Tupana*. The self-awareness of Polynesians manifested itself in calls for greater sovereignty in relation to colonial powers. For Rapa Nui, the new Chilean draft constitution offered an opportunity for a formal basis in matters of rights of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, but it was tuned out at the end of 2022. The conference concluded with a public lecture *The Rapanui and the 'Culture of Craft'* delivered by Jo Anne Van Tilburg in the presence of 150 people.

Structure of the Book

Many of the contributions presented at the conference are included in this volume entitled *Change and Resilience in Rapa Nui and the Pacific*. It contains seven sections and twenty-eight chapters: Archaeology (chapters 1–5), Histories (chapters 6–12), Indigeneity and Identity (chapters 13–16), Education (chapters 17–18), Museum and Collections Research (chapters 19–23), Roŋoŋo (chapters 24–26) and Reminiscences (chapters 27–28). The book is edited by Fanny Wonu Veys, Jan J. Boersema and Gerard A. Persoon with the help of a number of anonymous reviewers. As editors we chose the most commonly used spelling unless authors explicitly stated otherwise. For example, 'Indigenous' is capitalised when talking about people and 'moai' is not italicised as it figures in both English and Spanish dictionaries. For Rapanui words we used 'ŋ' when 'ng' would have been written in older sources.

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A special thank you goes to Françoise Veys for editing the Spanish language abstracts.

Appendix 1

Transcript from Mulert (1911: 114).

5. Was de gissing onser Zuyder breete 27 graden 4 minuten, en der lenkte 266 graden 31 minuten, de gekoppelde koers West ½ Zuyd 7 mylen, de wind Noord-Noord-West en Zuyd-West, ongestadige koelte, ook stilte met donker weder en regenvlaagjes. Sagen een schiltpad, groente en gevogelte. Omtrent het 10de glas in de namiddag-wagt, stak d' Africaansche Galey, die voor seylde, onder de wind om ons in te wagten, zeyn doende van land te sien: na verloop van vier glasen, alsoo het koeltje slap was, by hem komende, vraegden wat hy gesien had: waarop geantwoort wiert, dat sy alle seer onderscheydentlijk vooruyt aen stuurboord een laeg en vlak Eyland hadden gesien, leggende in het West ten Noorden 5 ½ mijl van haer: hierop is goet gevonden met kleyn seyl voort te loopen tot het eynde van de eerste wagt, en dan te laten dryven om de aenkomst van de dag te wagten. – Dit dus beslooten sijnde, gaeven aen Capitain Bouman, die achteruyt was, hieraf de vereyschte kennis, en aen het land de naem van ' t Paasch Eyland, omdat het van ons op Paaschdag ontdekt en gevonden is. Onder ' t volk was groote blijdschap, alsoo een ygelijk hoopte, dat dit laage land de voorboode was van de streckende cust van ' t onbekende Zuydland.

Translation of the transcript from Sharp (1970: 89–90).

Entry April 5, 1722

5. The estimate of our southern latitude was 27 degrees 4 minutes, and the longitude 266 degrees 31 minutes, the mean course west ½ south 7 miles, the wind north-north-west and south-west, unstable breeze, also calm with dark weather and rain showers. Saw a turtle, greenery and birds. About the 10th glass in the afternoon watch, de Africaansche Galey, which was sailing ahead, headed into the wind

> in order to wait for us, giving signal of seeing land. Coming up to her after running out of four glasses, as the breeze was light, we asked what she had seen, whereupon it was answered that they had seen very distinctly ahead to starboard a low flat island, lying in the west by north 51/2 miles from them. Hereupon it was found fitting to run on with small sail till the end of the first watch, and then to let drift so as to wait for the coming of the day. This being thus decided, we gave to Captain Bouman, who was astern, the relevant information, and to the land the name of Paasch Island, because it was discovered and found by us on Easter Day. There was great joy among the people, as everybody hoped that this low land was the precursor of the extended coast of the unknown Southland.

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