

On most of these Pacific islands the inhabitants lived the easy life but being human, skirmishes between islands supplied the necessary excitement with cannibalism adding an extra treat. However, on Easter Island things did not turn out well. The fact that the Pacificians discovered this island shows that already between 1200 and 1500 these people must have investigated most of this vast ocean. When Jacob Roggeveen discovered Paasch Island on Easter day, 1722, he remarked the great statues in front of which the locals seemed to be praying, the absence of trees and not a single decent boat or canoe. Yet these people must have arrived there with ocean going vessels. Paasch Island's mysteries have been studied by a lot of clever people but a satisfactory explanation of the demise of its population has not been offered. Never mind, I have one.

When the original seafarers managed with difficulty to beach their catamarans on this well-wooded island they must have been relieved after a long voyage. Water, wood and a fertile soil to replenish their resources were there but the absence of a harbour hampered their movements. Apparently the people spoke 2 languages and evidence remains of a written language. Then, someone invented a religion which obliged the believers to turn into stone masons in order to produce colossal statues that they carved out of the tuff of their extinct volcano. Hundreds of these weird looking human obelisks were produced and to transport them to the contours of the island the trees that the island possessed were cut. Do not ask me what this religion was supposed to accomplish, I'm incapable to invent Mohammeds, Jesusses and Buddhas who need gods to explain human behaviour.

The little 5-10 ton gods were the cause of the death of the trees and ultimately the demise of island and its population. Of course the downfall of this island's population from tough navigators and seamen to squabbling, infighting survivors may have different surmises but the fact that the hundreds of identical statues are still there are proof that an idiotic belief was the reason for these ex-navigators' destruction.

Facts are not abundant to piece together mankind's history but it would seem probable that when the Americas became peopled by travellers from Siberia, big game animals such as the mammoths became extinct a few thousand years after the arrival of these invaders. I'm beginning to wonder whether the invention of agriculture occurred not only because global warming but scarcity of game to kill. Anyway, it appears that outside Africa, when people appeared, animals disappeared because they did not know the virulence of mankind. African animals knew, they had grown up with man and were aware what dangerous blighters they were. Which might be the reason that nothing much changed on the benign African continent where disease kept the human population in check and animals were aware of their two-legged co-inhabitants. African tribes undoubtedly indulged in local warfare and from an early age were taken into slavery by their northern neighbours such as the ancient Egyptians and later by the Arabs. Slavery appeared to have become quite a convivial business, particularly for the chiefs as they were all too ready to sell part of their brothers and sisters. Hardly any archaeological evidence exist for the last 10 000 years to give an inkling what happened to the African population but in 1960 I visited the Tibesti Mountains between Chad and Libya where I found a few indications of ancient slavery trade.