

MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Archaeoastronomy Module – AHAN7010
Week Description

Week 8: Case Studies – Oceania, Polynesia and the Modern World

Purpose of the week

The last four weeks focus on worldwide case studies. Each week your readings will focus on different regions and time-periods, as well as exemplify different “flavours” of archaeoastronomy. This week the focus broadens to include Oceania and Polynesian archaeoastronomy, but also the Modern World. Here the emphasis shifts from the alignment studies of previous week to the symbolic realm present, for instance, in Aboriginal rock art.

Tasks this week

- Plan and start to prepare a 5 minute powerpoint presentation on your chosen research project to present in class next week

Class Description

Few alignment studies have been done on Oceania or Polynesia, and even fewer for the Modern period anywhere in the world. However, archaeoastronomy is broader than the study of the celestial alignments: it is concerned with the entirety of material culture. This week’s readings showcase non-alignment aspects of Archaeoastronomy, namely its more symbolic dimensions as represented in Aboriginal rock art, in modern calendar buildings and other constructions of the Modern world.

Required Reading

Norris and Hamacher’s piece on Australian Aboriginal rock art is followed by Edwards and Edwards paper on Easter Island archaeo- and ethnoastronomy. These topics are expanded in the optional readings below. The Modern World is represented by Campion’s notes on calendar buildings.

Norris, Ray P. and Duane W. Hamacher, “Astronomical Symbolism in Australian Aboriginal Rock Art,” *Rock Art Research* (in press). Pre-print available online: <http://arxiv.org/abs/1009.4753>

Edwards, Edmundo and Alexandra Edwards, “Rapanui Archaeoastronomy & Ethnoastronomy,” *Pacific Research Institute Expedition Report* 83, 2010. Available online: http://www.pacificislandsresearchinstitute.org/Flag_83_Report.pdf

Notes on Calendar Buildings [DOC ON MOODLE]

Optional Reading

Campion, Nicholas, *Astrology and Cosmology in the World Religions*, New York: New York University Press, 2012, Chapters 3, 4.

Johnson, Diane, "Interpretations of the Pleiades in Australian Aboriginal astronomies," *Proceedings of the International Astronomical Union* 7, 2011, pp. 291-7.

Liller, W., "The Archaeoastronomy of Easter Island," *Revista Mexicana de Astronomia y Astrofisica* 19, 1989, pp. 47-53. Available online:
<http://adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/1989RMxAA..19...47L>

Hamacher, Duane W. and Ray P. Norris, "'Bridging the gap' through Australian cultural astronomy," *Proceedings of the International Astronomical Union* 7, 2011, pp. 282-90. Pre-print available online: <http://arxiv.org/abs/1103.1928>

Thought for the Week

Should Archaeoastronomy be concerned only with 'alignment studies'?