

NEW DOCUMENTARY

Savages in foreign lands

For those who are interested in the history of the Canary Islands and their original inhabitants there is a captivating documentary about to be released.

Savages in Foreign Lands is a beautifully presented insight into the history and mystery of the 'Guanches' who occupied Tenerife before the Spanish conquest.

The Guanches have always been a bit of an anomaly: a tall, white-skinned and fair-haired people living on islands off the North African shore. Some believe they were descended from the Berbers of that area, whilst others to this day suggest they were survivors of Atlantis.

The question of their origins may never be answered as, unfortunately, the majority of our information regarding the latter comes from Spanish chroniclers and from archaeological discoveries.

However, what we do know, amongst other things, is that the Guanches lived in caves and huts, were hunter-gatherers who had also had basic farming skills, and that they developed their own art: all down to earth, day-to-day practices. However, what we know little about is their spiritual side and their links to other civilisations.

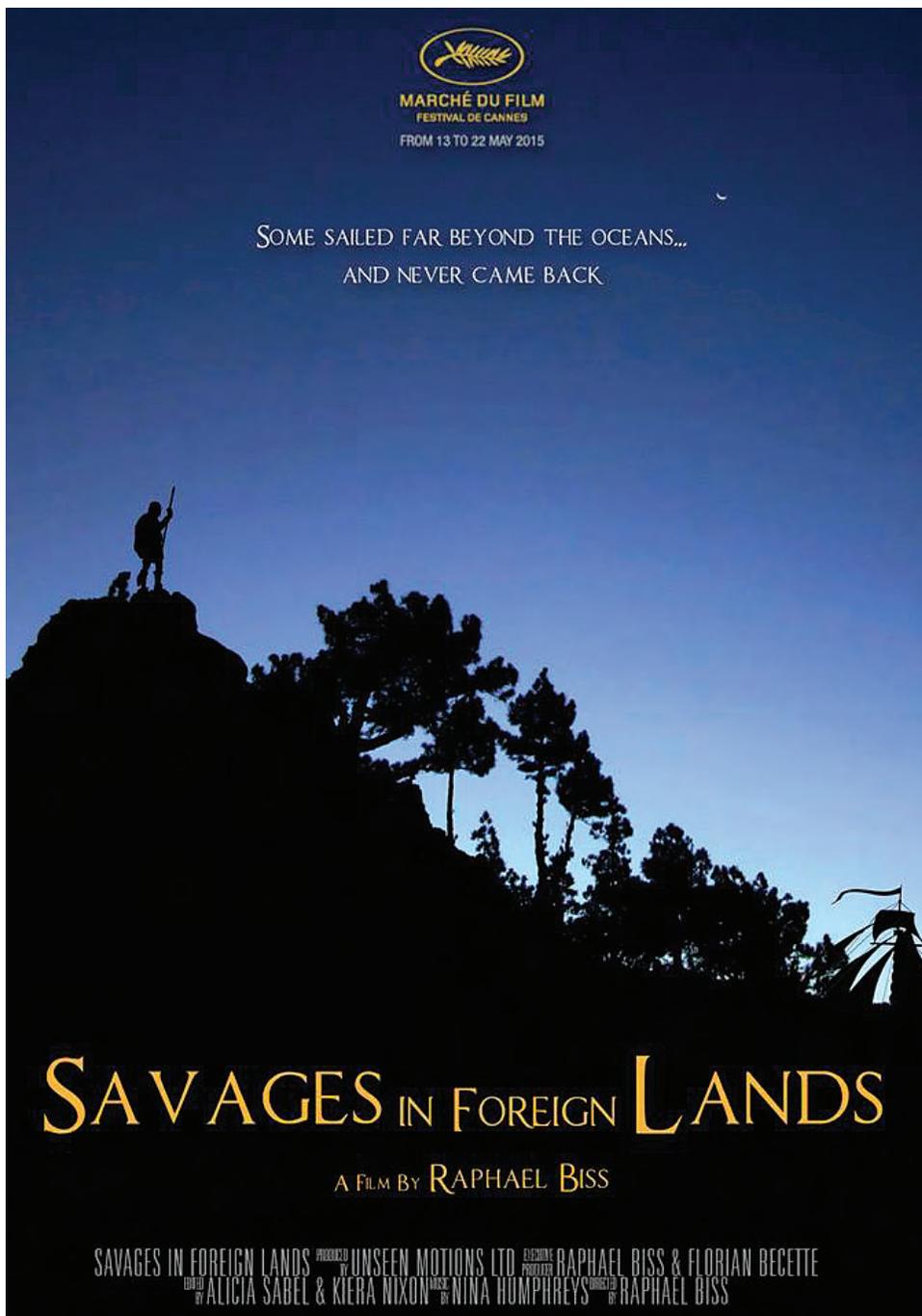
They existed in a time when it is known that there was plenty of interaction between different races of peoples thanks to surprisingly advanced sea travel. It wouldn't be too difficult to surmise that they not only had visits from other peoples, but that they also inter-

acted with them on a regular basis. One of the discoveries that, for many people, has 'proven' this premise is a number of geometric stone pyramids which are scattered around Tenerife.

The Pyramids of Güímar Ethnographic Park was developed around six of these structures. The park was constructed by renowned explorer Thor Heyerdahl after he became fascinated with them after a visit in the early 1990s. Though there are several theories on the origins of the Tenerife pyramids, Heyerdahl was convinced that their resemblance to others he had studied on his extensive travels was possible evidence of a link between the archipelago and the ancient cultures of Egypt and South America.

Though some scientists believe that the pyramids are either simple piles of stone from land clearing and only date back to the 19th century, many learned people beg to differ. For instance, members of the Canary Institute of Astrophysics have demonstrated that the long sides of some of the terraces surrounding the pyramids mark the direction of winter and summer solstices, and Heyerdahl and others believed it highly possible that the Guanches may well have been responsible for building them.

We know that the Guanches did practice embalming and mummification which may indicate another possible link to the Egyptians and, though the mystery of those pyramids and the others which still remain in the north of



Tenerife may never be solved, *Savages in Foreign Lands* takes a fascinating look at the Guanches' story.

The full-length documentary has been made by independent filmmaker Raphael Biss and features Tenerife's well

known spokesperson on all esoteric subjects, Steve Andrews, who had this to say about his involvement in the project:

"I had been fascinated by the pyramids of Tenerife and the possible explanation that the Guanches had made them. Naturally I was excited to be involved in *Savages in Foreign Lands* and was interviewed at length about what I knew by the director Raphael Biss. I also showed Raphael and his crew the pyramids on the north side of the island, taking them to see those of Santa Barbara and the pyramid construction in Camino de La Suerte near San Marcos. I am personally not at all satisfied with the academic explanation that the pyramids were made by farmers clearing their land."

Biss told *Island Connections* that the film is not yet released and there are no precise dates yet as they are still in a stage of negotiation, but "The Film was well received in the Cannes Market and caught the attention of many distributors and sales agents, especially one based in the Canary Islands for Canarian and Spanish TV distribution. The film is now being re-edited into a shorter version for television broadcast, but a longer version (director's cut) will be also released for other means of diffusion such as festivals, DVDs and theatrical representations."

The film includes some incredible views of the island and plenty of intriguing facts and suppositions which are presented in an interesting and pleasing manner. You can see the trailer at: <https://vimeo.com/129492198> and watch out for its release, coming soon. ■

RED HOUND International Bookshop

Calle Juan XXIII, 29 Los Cristianos

NEW & 2nd HAND BOOKS
in many languages

HIKING GUIDES

SCHOOL & CHILDREN BOOKS

Tel. 922 797 542

email: info@libreriaredhound.com