Publications
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

After completing my paper on Austronesian Transport (RNJ 8,3:67-70), a book was brought to my attention by Tricia Allen at the Rapa Nui Rendezvous in Laramie, Wyoming. It concerns an item in Peter Buck’s book Arts and Crafts of Hawaii (Bishop Museum Special Publication 45, 1957). In it, holua, the Hawaiian equivalent to the Rapa Nui hakape’i, is described. In Hawai‘i, sliding down a hill was not done on banana stems but on a specially constructed, very narrow sled, called “papa”. This sled is composed of two narrow runners from 7 to 18 feet long. The fore ends of the runners curve upwards in order to prevent them from digging into the runway during the slide down the mountain. The forward curve and the horizontal piece resemble the fore end of a canoe outrigger float, from which they undoubtedly were copied. The intriguing part of the description is quoted from Ellis (1839:299-300) that says, “At the foremost end there is a space of about two inches between the runners, but they widen gradually towards the hinder part, where they are distant from each other four to five inches.” So here again we find the wedge-shape! It seems that only one of these sleds is still in existence at the Bishop Museum in Hawai‘i. But Buck (1957:379-384) reports that traces of the old runways can still be seen throughout the Hawaiian islands.

Herbert von Saher, Netherlands

In regard to the moai “sighting” in the June issue of RNJ (Vol.8,2:49) to which your reader in England, Paul Bahn, took exception, he should realize that moai continue to work in mysterious ways around the planet and that they may be evolving into a new, non-conventional design manifestation!

Calvin Malone, San Francisco.

Canadian Rapamuniphile, David Foot, recently provided us with some articles regarding Easter Island stamps and postal markings that appeared in Pacifica, The Journal of the Pacific Islands Study Circle of Great Britain. They provide a fascinating glimpse of history, ranging from the Canadian Medical Expedition of 1964 to the recent furor over stamps from French Polynesia that were perceived to be some sort of political plot. The articles are:

• Vol.26(104):48 for July 1988;
• Vol. 27(107):32 for April 1989;
• Vol. 29(117):138-9 for October 1991, titled “Easter Island Postal Markings, Additions to Original Article” by Rufus Barnes;
• Vol. 31(122):7-8 for January 1993 titled “Easter Island Notes” by Bill Newport; and
• Vol. 31(124):104-5, for July 1993 titled “Easter Island Update” by Bill Newport.
•Hagelberg, Erika. 1993/4. Ancient DNA Studies, Evolutionary Anthropology, Vol. 2(6):199-207. [The bottom line: analysis of skeletal remains of 12 individuals from 2 sites on Easter Island revealed that all contained the Polynesian haplotype--characterized by base substitutions in the hypervariable portion of mtDNA--thus confirming their Polynesian ancestry.]


•Kirch, Patrick V. and Joanna Ellison. 1994. Palaeoenvironmental evidence for human colonization of remote Oceanic islands. Antiquity 68 (259):310-321. [This is an important paper, it serves as a rebuttal to the arguments of Spriggs and Anderson (1993) who argue that there is no evidence for human colonization in this area prior to AD 300-600. Kirch and Ellison provide excellent documentation for a Polynesian presence in the southern Cook Islands by c.2500 BP.]

•Krämer, Augustin. The Samoa Islands, Vol.1. Originally published as Die Samoa Inseln, this is translated by Theodore Verhaaren. Text is in English and Samoan. Volume II is expected out by early 1995. Contact: the Polynesian Bookshop, PO Box 68-446, Auckland 1, New Zealand.


•Pacific News Bulletin. 1994. Vol.9, No. 9 for September, No. 10 for October. Published by the NFIP Movement, PO Box 489, Petersham, NSW 2049, Australia.


•Pouesi, Daniel. 1994. An Illustrated History of Samoans in California. KIN Publications, 558 E. Double St., Carson, California 90745; $18.50 plus $2 shipping; 86 pages, paperback, black and white photographs, maps.


•Rongorongo Studies: A Forum for Polynesian Philology. 1994. Vol. 4 (2). This issue contains the winner of the Polynesian Literary competition (Samoa) as well as articles and reviews. Note: Rongorongo Studies has a new address: PO Box 6965, Wellesley Street PO, Auckland 1, New Zealand.


EXPEDITION TO EASTER ISLAND AND SALAS Y GOMEZ ISLAND, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1995

A multipurpose, multidisciplinary expedition to Salas y Gómez and Easter Island is now in the planning stages. The expedition will involve natural science, amateur radio, and computer and communications technology.

The expedition is being planned by Cordell Expeditions, a nonprofit oceanic research group based in California. A base camp will be established on Easter Island and then an advance team will move to Salas y Gómez. A total crew of 24 is planned and onsite arrangements will be facilitated by local groups in Chile and on Easter Island.

A major goal is to bring worldwide attention to the usefulness of existing advanced technology to document and monitor the natural resources at remote sites and preserve and protect cultural heritage.

For more information about this project, contact Dr. Robert Schmieder, Director, Cordell Expeditions, 4295 Walnut Blvd., Walnut Creek CA 94596 USA. Fax: (510) 934-3735; email: cordell@ccnet.com.