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Rapa Nui. Histoire de L 'île de Paques (Review)

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a bizarre non-translation of the Dutch word 'arts' which means general practitioner?) but in medicine.

3) Slauerhoff was indeed a "poète maudit", he was much too undisciplined and unconventional to become a doctor in a tidy Dutch village, so he applied for a job as a ship's doctor and in 1925 was accepted by a shipping company running a service between Java, China and Japan, that is along the Western shores of the Pacific. During stopovers in Shanghai and Macao he visited and got his inspiration in the seedy parts of the harbour front: opium dens and brothels. This ruined his health, so in 1927 he returned to Holland for recovery. In 1928 he became a ship's doctor again, this time for a company running a service between the Netherlands, the Caribbean and the Atlantic Coast of South America. One can be sure that these shipping companies running commercial services on a timetable basis never touched Easter Island. Therefore it is too romantic to say that Slauerhoff "traveled around the South Seas for most of his life." He was a ship's doctor on vessels running a regular service between big ports until he died in 1936 from malaria and pneumonia.

4) One can therefore only conclude that Slauerhoff must have got the data for his poem on Rapa Nui from publications by others and the author of the article must certainly be complimented that he found one with a date and Slauerhoff's signature on it that he had read when only 15 years old.

That Slauerhoff is still being read today and greatly admired comes from his restlessness, dissatisfaction with normal life, and passionate times which he showed by his identification with vagabonds, discoverers and pirates. One of his titles: "Foam and Ash" may be considered symbolic for his work.

Herbert von Saher, Bloemendaal, The Netherlands

REVIEWS



Rapa Nui. Histoire de L'île de Pâques. Text by Georgia Lee, photographs by Toni Catany. Editions Olizane, 11, rue des Vieux-Grenadiers, CH-1205, Geneva, Switzerland. 1995. In French.

Review by Paul G. Bahn.

Books on Rapa Nui tend to be either overviews of the island's history and culture, or albums of photographs. This, as far as I am aware, is the first which is both at once, and it succeeds admirably in both categories. It is a large format book; its first part comprises a text by Georgia Lee, together with a series of drawings and black-and white photographs, mostly by Lee but with some by Marcia Opal, Bill Hyder and Mark Oliver, plus museums in Chile. Only one or two of the museum photographs are not quite up to scratch. The text, a rapid survey of every aspect of the island's culture, is both readable and accurate, as one would expect from the editor of this august journal. There are notes, a glossary of terms, and a succinct bibliography but not, alas, an index. I spotted only a couple of minor typos, and the French translation seems fine. The book exists in Italian, Spanish and French

editions, but not, as yet, in English. It is to be hoped that this omission will be rectified in the near future. The true glory of this book, however, comes from the second part, the collection of colour plates by Catalan photographer Toni Catany. Many of these are outstanding, and they include several fold-out plates, most notably a spectacular 4-page super-wide-angle shot of the almost-restored Ahu Tongariki. Whatever the merits and demerits of this particular restoration—and one hopes that full details will eventually emerge of this project so we can assess its accuracy and desirability—it makes an undeniably impressive sight, and the book is probably worth buying for this picture alone. □

PUBLICATIONS

➤ Anon. 1995. Polynesian Cloud. *The Nation*, 2 October 1995:336. [A scathing editorial about the resumption of French nuclear testing and the recent protests in Tahiti].

➤ Dalton, Bill. 1995. *Indonesia Handbook*, 6th edition. Moon Publications, Box 3040 Chico, CA 95927. ISBN: 1-56691-062-5. Paper cover, 1330 pages plus index; 250 maps. Black and white photos and drawings, phrase book and glossary included. \$25.00

The island nation of Indonesia has 17,110 islands which may explain why this new edition of the *Indonesia Handbook* has 1330 pages and could serve as ballast. Every imaginable tidbit of information, be it in the form of tree-climbing fish or komodo dragons, mountain trekking or monuments, puppet plays or batik fabrics, can be found in this amazingly informative book. It even tells you how to deal with monkeys, should you be tempted to offer them a snack. The details, descriptions and general knowledge in the book reveal how well the author knows his subject; and the sections on censorship, civil liberties and corruption clearly reveal why the *Indonesia Handbook* has been banned in that country for two decades.

The *Indonesia Handbook* is a good read and detailed enough to be used as a reference to the area. It may, in fact, tell you far more than you ever cared to know. But if you are contemplating a trip to Indonesia, don't leave home without this excellent guide.

➤ Edwards, E. and S. Millerstrom. 1995. Peintures rupestres de la vallée de Eiaone à Hiva Oa. *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Océaniques*, No. 267, Tome XXIII, No. 5: 5-17.

➤ Fischer, Steven Roger. 1995. Preliminary evidence for cosmogonic texts in Rapanui's *rongorongo* inscriptions. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 104(3):303-321. This is an important paper, the closest we have come to a 'breakthrough' in understanding *rongorongo* script. Fischer provides significant evidence that the studied texts contain creation chants and he postulates that *rongorongo* was more than a mere mnemonic device. Although still not 'deciphered', this paper contains exciting new insights into