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Micronesia Handbook (4th edition) -Review

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scriptions are \$20 a year. For further information, contact Le Pasefika, 558 E. Double Street, Carson, CA 90745-2121. Phone: (310) 549-0920.

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The University of the South Pacific Bulletin, Suva, Fiji. USP is the regional University serving Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

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16th Congress of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association (IPPA), Malaysia, tentatively scheduled for 4-10 January 1998. Expressions of interest should be sent to Dr. Peter Bellwood, Dept of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia. Fax: 61 6 249 2711; email: Peter.Bellwood@anu.edu.au

The IX Pacific Science Inter-Congress, "Sustainable Development in the Pacific: Conservation, Population, Resources, and Environment." December 1998, at Taipei, Taiwan. Information can be had by contacting Prof. Chang-Hung Chou, Institute of Botany, Academia Sinica, 128 Sec.2; Yuan-Chiu Road, Taipei, Taiwan, China; email: chou@gate.sinica.edu.tw

XIX Pacific Science Congress, June 1999. University of New

South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Information can be had by contacting Dr William O'Sullivan, Dean, Faculty of Biological and Behavioural Science, The University of New South Wales, Sydney 2052, Australia. Email: W.O.Sullivan@unsw.edu.au

FILM REVIEW

Martians on Rapa Nui

Paul Bahn

THERE ARE NOT MANY POPULAR MOVIES which include a sequence featuring Rapa Nui, so RNJ readers should seize the chance to see Tim Burton's recent sci-fi black comedy "*Mars Attacks*". Once the Martians begin gleefully to destroy the monuments of the Earth--Big Ben, the Taj Mahal, etc--there is a brief sequence which shows the supposed inhabitants of Easter Island (a short clip of the Ariki and his followers from the Kevin Reynolds movie "*Rapa Nui*"!) gazing up in horror; this is then followed by the destruction of a row of *moai* in ingenious fashion by a Martian spaceship. I will not spoil your fun by revealing how they do the deed: go and see for yourselves!

BOOK REVIEWS



Micronesia Handbook (4th edition),
Neil M. Levy, 1996.

ISBN 1-56691-077-3. 315 pages, \$14.95.

Moon Publications, PO Box 3040,

Chico CA 95927-3040; Email: travel@moon.com

Review by Georgia Lee

Micronesia ("little islands") is composed of 1,245 square miles of tropical islands stretching from Hawaii to the Philippines and encompassed by 4,500,000 square miles of ocean. As the author points out, if you don't like water, this not the destination for you. But it is a diver's paradise and an offbeat place to visit.

This comprehensive guide book is divided into sections, beginning with an *Introduction* that includes the land, flora and fauna, history, economy, the people, and arts and crafts. Several pages are devoted to the Pacific war. The next section *On the Road* covers the basics for travel in this part of the world, and notes that you can't always get there from here!

Then the various parts of this enormous area are described: Republic of the Marshall Islands (Ratak Chain and Ralik Chain); Federated States of Micronesia (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap); Republic of Palau (Koror, and other islands); Territory of Guam; Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (Saipan, and other islands), Republic of Nauru; and the Republic of Kiribati (Tarawa, Gilbert, Phoenix, and Line Islands). The American Possessions (Midway, Wake, Johnson, Kingman, Palmyra, Howland, Baker, and Jarvis) are included for their historical and geographical links to the rest of the region despite the fact that they cannot be visited by tourists.

Levy covers all the pertinent facts, hotels, restaurants, etc., that one might expect to find in a exhaustive guide book. In addition, he includes insightful comments about problems on these far flung dots of land in the Pacific: pollution, toxic waste, crime, places where you need to bring your own food, customs to watch out for, poisonous fish, and so on. There is an emphasis on conservation. The staggering amount of material in *Micronesia Handbook* reflects the extensive research done by Levy in this remote island world. There is a glossary,

index, excellent booklist, and bibliography; over 70 two-color maps plus line drawings and black/white photographs.

Levy warns that the modern world is penetrating to even the most remote atolls and now is the time to visit—before change permeates these special isolated corners in the Pacific. Bring your diving gear.

IN MEMORIAM

THOMAS S. BARTHEL

(January 4, 1923 - April 3, 1997)

A sudden illness at his home in Tübingen, Germany, has ended the life of one of the world's leading scholars of Easter Island. Over the past forty-four years Prof. Thomas S. Barthel of the University of Tübingen has published 41 scholarly articles about Rapanui, and his two monographs—*Grundlagen zur Entzifferung der Osterinselschrift* (*Rudiments Toward a Decipherment of the Easter Island Script*) and *Das achte Land* (English edition: *The Eighth Land*) are classics in the field. Born in Berlin and trained in cryptanalysis during World War Two, Thomas Barthel completed a doctorate in ancient American studies (Mexico and pre-Columbian scripts) at the University of Hamburg in 1952. Here, on his thirtieth birthday, he began his Rapanui studies, commencing one of the most intensive investigations of the island's *rongorongo* script ever undertaken. This ultimately culminated in a decipherment attempt that captured the world's headlines in the mid 1950s. There followed a year's study leave at the University of Chile in Santiago, including several months of field research on Rapanui, in 1957-58. Thomas Barthel was appointed Associate Professor of the Department of Ethnology of the University of Tübingen in 1959, and assumed the directorship of the University's Institute for Ethnology in Tübingen's medieval castle. Appointed Full Professor of Ethnology in 1964, Barthel held both posts with distinction until his retirement as Emeritus Professor in 1988. He was married three times and is survived by two sons and two daughters.

A forerunner of modern Rapanui scholarship, Thomas Barthel was one of the most prolific and precise scholars of ancient Easter Island culture in the last half of the twentieth century. His essays, most of them written in the German language, contain a wealth of information that will provide scholars with valuable insights for many years to come. He was always prepared to question and test his own hypotheses, and to effect a revision of these when necessary. Today Thomas Barthel's work stands as exemplary to students in the field: though sometimes reflecting his era's Diffusionist cast that no longer obtains, it serves as a model of scholarly lucidity, breadth, and precision.

I came to know Thomas Barthel well over many years. My wife and I accompanied Thomas and Maria Barthel to Brussels, Belgium, in 1990 for an Easter Island exhibition and to St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1992 to meet with colleagues Fedorova, Knorozov, Butinov, and Pozdnyakov. I shall never forget the countless hours we spent together in summer breezes and winter winds strolling along the heights above medieval Tübingen while discussing ancient Rapanui and the complexities of *rongorongo*. He was a difficult man, a complex weave of cold intellect and fervid imagination. Very much from the "old school" of German professors, he could be terse and authoritative at times, yet generous and sensitive too. "*Altwerden heißt loslassen*" ("Growing old means letting go"), he confessed to me on one of our last walks. He was always willing to let go to others the experience of over forty years of scholarly achievement as one of Germany's foremost ethnologists.

The passing of Thomas S. Barthel marks the end of an era of Easter Island research, one that included his personal friends Sebastian Englert and Alfred Métraux. It was a remarkable era, with ambitious ideas. It taught us to think larger than ourselves. We owe these historic personalities the very discipline we treasure.

Steven Roger Fischer