


1999

Archaeology of Easter Island (Rapa Nui) (Review)

Paul Wallin

Sonia Haoa

Follow this and additional works at: <https://kahualike.manoa.hawaii.edu/rnj>

 Part of the [History of the Pacific Islands Commons](#), and the [Pacific Islands Languages and Societies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wallin, Paul and Haoa, Sonia (1999) "Archaeology of Easter Island (Rapa Nui) (Review)," *Rapa Nui Journal: Journal of the Easter Island Foundation*: Vol. 13 : Iss. 3 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://kahualike.manoa.hawaii.edu/rnj/vol13/iss3/7>

This Book or Media Review is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Hawai'i Press at Kahualike. It has been accepted for inclusion in Rapa Nui Journal: Journal of the Easter Island Foundation by an authorized editor of Kahualike. For more information, please contact sheila.yeh@hawaii.edu.

contact in the Marquesas was structured by a geographical division of the group into north-western and south-eastern sections appears to be something of a myth, despite its demonstration by this reviewer (Green 1966). It is a relief therefore to find these editors now employing this late 18th century contact data to strongly affirm that it leaves no room for doubt "that there were and, in essence, still are (though with massive leveling and shared Tahitian contamination), two distinct Polynesian tongues in the Marquesas Islands: Northwest Marquesan and Southeast Marquesan."

The enhancement of the original essay lies in the 41 pages of the editors' introductory remarks. They make clear the essay's origin, the nature of each of the three authors' contribution to it, and its present-day significance for linguistic studies in the Pacific. Some of their remarks, such as "the Marquesas as a principal dispersal center in Eastern Polynesia", or the dating of the development of Proto Polynesian to the second millennium BC, I would quibble with, but over all it is a valuable commentary when using the second part.

This section is scrupulously edited version of the original essay consisting of: General Remarks, A Marquesan and English Dictionary of 45 pages, a Marquesan and English grammar of 14 pages, and the Lord's Prayer as an example of composition in the Marquesan tongue. Three appendices complete the volume: a finder list to the dictionary spellings, an English-Marquesan finder list, and portions of Peter Heywood's Tahitian vocabulary of 1792 which has correspondences in Marquesan.

REFERENCES

- Green, R. C. 1996. Linguistic Subgrouping Within Polynesia. The Implications for Prehistoric Settlement. *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 75:5-38.
- Thomas, N. 1986. Further Notes on Marquesan Dictionaries. *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 95:127-29.

Archaeology of Easter Island (Rapa Nui)

By Helene Martinsson-Wallin in Collaboration
with Paul Wallin and Sonia Haoa.

Rapanui translation by Nicholas Haoa and Sonia Haoa.

The Kon-Tiki Museum, Institute for Pacific Archaeology and Cultural History, 1999. ISBN 82-995087-0-3; papercover, 27 pages, 31 full-color plus black/white photographs, maps and drawings. A summary in Rapanui is included. Order from the Kon-Tiki Museum; price: 50 NOK (US\$6.50). A version is available in Spanish <Kon-Tiki@online.no>.

Archaeology of Easter Island is an abbreviated version of what the Kon-Tiki Museum has been doing on Easter Island from the 1950s to the present. It is a "popular" version, made with the people of Rapa Nui in mind, particularly in view of the synopsis in the Rapanui language.

The first section describes the Norwegian expedition of 1955-56, and then the work that was accomplished after 1960, including the island-wide survey by the members of the Chilean Instituto de Estudios. Following that is a description of the work sponsored by the Kon-Tiki Museum in 1986-1988, and finally the recent La Pérouse Project of 1996-1997. Many of the photographs show islanders working with the various projects and

clearly is aimed to "give something back" to the people.

This is an excellent small booklet and will surely be treasured by the islanders who often wonder what is happening, on their own island. Few archaeologists have made the effort to include the locals and explain to the Rapanui the importance of archaeological study and research. Martinsson-Wallin, et al., and the Kon-Tiki Museum are to be commended.

Spirit of Place. Petroglyphs of Hawai'i

Georgia Lee and Edward Stasack
Easter Island Foundation, Los Osos.
\$35.00; 211 pp.

Review by Paul G. Bahn

Like most people, I suspect, my limited knowledge of Hawaiian rock art hitherto came entirely from the invaluable little book by Cox and Stasack (*Hawaiian Petroglyphs*, 1970). And I had the distinct impression that Hawai'i's rock art was somewhat dull, and consisted primarily and repetitively of human stick-figures. This new volume, which is dedicated to the late J. Halley Cox, has been produced by his co-author, this time writing with Georgia Lee, and it has revealed to me how wrong I was.

The book itself is a worthy addition to the already distinguished series of monographs from the Easter Island Foundation—I found no typographic errors, the design and layout are excellent, and there is a striking and evocative color photograph on the cover.

This is not an exhaustive account of Hawai'i's rock art, since no book of this size could possibly encompass it all: for example, of 70 sites known on the big island, only 6 are covered here. But nevertheless the authors present a wide variety of sites on a whole range of islands, and they have a computerized database of 31,640 petroglyphs. Moreover, through a pioneering series of studies over the past decade, all the sites have been carefully and thoroughly recorded, not only by camera but also by tracing or drawing to scale, and by measurement—the ideal combination of methods where any rock art study is concerned.

A whole series of direct dates for a wide variety of motifs are presented here for the first time; and although the debacle over direct dating of the petroglyphs of the Cõa in Portugal a few years ago has sent aspiring daters back to their drawing boards, the results obtained so far in Hawai'i appear to fit well with what was expected from local archaeological knowledge, so they may well be valid. Hawai'i's rock art is dominated by cupules and human stick-figures, but the latter are far more varied than I had remembered, and there are some truly remarkable long lines of them (e.g. p. 22, 7.4 m in length). There are also occasional motifs of a different kind, such as what may be sails, turtles or dogs, for example. As in other parts of the world, there are also some ringing rocks (p.147), at least one of which is covered with petroglyphs.

However, the authors are not content with simply presenting the figures at each site. They also set them in their physical and archaeological context, with an emphasis on rock-type and shape, location (including sacred locations, or places with