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Kibo: Le Serment Grave. Essai de Synthèse sur les Petroglyphes Calédoniens. (Review)

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ous and the objects and early prints and etchings that are displayed are breathtaking. A glossary, references, and index are included.

Those who are fortunate enough to visit this exhibit will certainly want a catalog to take home with them, but those who cannot visit the museum and have any interest in Pacific cultures, and particularly in the Marquesas Islands, simply must obtain a copy of this catalog. Highly recommended.

Adorning the World: Art of the Marquesas Islands remains at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue and 82nd Street, New York (212)535-7710, through January 15th, 2006.

Kibo: Le Serment gravé. Essai de synthèse sur les pétroglylyphes calédoniens.

Review by Georgia Lee

ANYONE INTERESTED IN PETROGLYPHS will appreciate this book. It consists of five chapters plus an introduction, conclusion, and seven addenda. The book is extensively illustrated, as books that concern rock art should be. There are black and white photographs, line drawings, and maps.

The “General Introduction” discusses the peopling of the area, the expansion of the Lapita tradition, the Polynesian triangle, and the impact of Europeans into these areas.

Chapter 1 is titled, “La recherche sur les pétrogllyphes: historique d’un sujet controversé” and here we find the history of research on the subject, including early studies by Luquet, Archambault, and others.

Chapter 2, “Les pétrogllyphes calédoniens: données archéologiques,” defines terms, describes the techniques used in creating them, the constraints posed by terrain, and the techniques of carving. This chapter shows the various motifs in conjunction with detailed maps that indicate where the motifs occur in the landscape. For those who are fascinated by petroglyphs, this chapter is amazing.

Chapter 3, “Proposition de typologie des pétrogllyphes de Nouvelle-Calédonie,” places the various design types into categories, all fully illustrated, charted, and tallied.

Chapter 4, “Les données de traditions orales kanakes sur les pétrogllyphes calédoniens” provides information on the oral traditions collected by earlier studies. Chapter 5, “Analyse,” compares the petroglyphs with other art forms from New Caledonia, including the Lapita designs on pottery and motifs carved on bamboo, and the authors discuss oceanic comparisons, including that of Easter Island.

Following the “Conclusion” are seven appendices: “Le corps et le visage humain, base de l’interprétation des pétrogllyphes calédoniens par G. H. Luquet”; “Étude d’un motif de pétroglypse: la spirale (catégorie no 1)”; “Répartition des différentes formes de croix enveloppées (cat.3) en Nouvelle-Calédonie”; “Examples de motifs de pétroglyphes calédoniens identifiés dans d’autres formes d’art de l’archipel”; “Des motifs de pétroglyphes peints: l’exemple de la grotte ornée du Cap Bocage (Houailou); Le traditions de pétroglyphes océaniens”; and, “Corpus supplémentaire de sites de pétroglyphes calédoniens.” There are extensive notes plus a bibliography.

Although the authors cite my volume, The Rock Art of Easter Island, for the Rapa Nui examples in Annexe VI (Oceanic comparisons), they used Lavachery’s sketches, which are invariably in error (Lavachery sketched them freehand from horseback). In the same manner, the authors used the drawings by Cox and Stasack (1970) for their Hawaiian material, instead of from the updated volume on Hawaiian rock art by Lee and Stasack (1999).

This book, however, represents an enormous amount of research and the authors have assembled in one place many diverse studies by those who worked on these sites in earlier years. As a valuable resource for petroglyph studies in Oceania, it is highly recommended. I was personally very interested to note the incidence of the vulva form motif from Grand Terre. This motif, called “komari” on Rapa Nui, is the most common petroglyph design found on Easter Island. However, the authors refer to them as “Ellipses avec segment axial”. Hey fellas, those are vulvas. I should think that Frenchmen might recognize them.

REFERENCES


In Search of Lemuria: The Lost Pacific Continent in Legend, Myth and Imagination
by Mark R. Williams
Golden Era Books, San Mateo, CA

“IN SEARCH OF...” IS THE LATEST EFFORT from the lunatic fringe and, of course, this book takes in Easter Island, along with Mt Shasta and the Hopi Indians. The following blurb touting this book is of interest, as is the person who wrote it: Doreen Virtue, Ph.D., Author of Angel Medicine and Healing with the Angels. Ms Virtue wrote: “In Search of Lemuria is a very interesting and enjoyable investigation into the ancient civilization of Lemuria. Mark Williams beautifully blends science and metaphysics in this clear account of both his worldwide explorations and his personal inward journey.”

The book was also recommended by a publication called Planet Lightworker.

Oh yessss.