Publications
Michael Graves; Ritual and Domestic Architecture, Sacred Places, and Images: Archaeology in the Marquesas Archipelago, French Polynesia, by Sidsel Millerstrom; and The Archaeology of the Conical Clan in Micronesia, by Paul Rainbird.

As can be seen, only three papers deal with Polynesia, and none address our favorite island in the center of the world—despite their use of a birdman figure from Easter Island as the logo for the book. New Zealand gets a short paragraph in the introduction, as does Samoa.

Conte discusses the importance of ethnographic analogy that becomes more and more urgent as elders die and life-ways change. Some technologies have been maintained with enough continuity to allow for this approach, with assistance of the Polynesian societies themselves.

Ladefoged and Graves describe Hawaiian political and community territories that were organized in complex ways, and attempt to explain patterns of spatial variation of complex Hawaiian chiefdoms. Such divisions may have occurred over centuries and may have been in response to productivity within divisions, or due to the rise of complex chiefdoms that altered boundaries for political purposes.

Millerstrom’s paper on Marquesan archaeology concerns ritual architecture and art and how these were associated or how they varied. Her study includes separating ritual architecture from chiefly household units and studying variations and associations. Her survey indicates that, in the valleys of Taipivai, Hakapa’a, Hatheu, and Anaho, ritual architectural complexes often were built on narrow ridges; most were extensive with multiple terraces, and some had petroglyphs in the shrine, as well as one or more statues.

I thought the papers somewhat uneven and the extensive coverage of Australia, while interesting, was overwhelming for a book supposedly about Oceania.

Easter Island and Its Mysteries
by Stéph en-Charles Chauvet


Review by Paul Horley

EVERYONE TRYING TO GATHER a bookshelf devoted to Easter Island is well familiar with the difficulties of this task, as numerous titles dedicated to the turbulent Rapa Nui history and its vast cultural heritage are out-of-print for years. Moreover, many are written in Spanish, French, German, etc., which poses an additional barrier for the Anglophone reader. This situation was significantly improved by the successful project of bringing us a book translated into English from French and compiling several valuable accounts of early Easter Island visitors, published by the Easter Island Foundation. Yet another great advance was made in the past year, resulting in a wonderful web-site dedicated to the classic French book about Rapa Nui written by Dr. Stéph en-Charles Chauvet, translated into English by Ann M. Altman, edited and designed for web presentation by Shawn McLaug hl.

Originally published in the first half of 20th century, the book contained a large amount of data about Easter Islanders, their land, customs, religion and art. In addition, it featured 68 plates with 186 figures—a unique gallery where one could find early maps of the island (made by the expedition of González de Haedo in 1770 and by the officers of the corvette O’Higgins in 1870), old drawings and etchings (from the accounts of Cook, Lapérouse, Duperit-Thouars, Kotzebue, Vinaud, and Pinart), historic photos of the island sites (by Thoms on, Delabaude, Bienvenido de Estella, and Shapiro), as well as an impressive photographic collection of Easter Island artifacts including wooden statuettes and large stone images, spear points, bone and stone fishhooks, skulls with engravings, ceremonial paddles, rongorong o tablets, and adornments.

Now, one can truly enjoy the on-line version of this book, superbly translated into English with correction of numerous Chauvet misspellings. It is even easier to read than the paper version, mainly due to searchable text and a single mouse click access to the figures referenced in the text. All the illustrations are scanned in high-resolution, featuring very good details, at the same time generally of medium file size that ensures a fast download. If necessary, the overall composition of the plates can be seen in low-resolution scans, accommodated with the detailed captions for every figure on the “Figure legends” page.

The site follows the subdivision of the original book into the chapters entitled “Easter Island,” “The Easter Islanders,” “Flora and fauna,” “Monuments and megaliths,” “Carved wooden objects,” and “The talking tablets of Easter Island,” each presented as an individual web-page. Comments appearing in each chapter are added with numerous translator/editor notes (given in italics), clarifying particular statements and supplying the reader with modern information and corresponding literature references regarding the topics discussed. The bibliography from the book is presented “as is” in the verbatim; a separate page entitled “Current sources and further reading” lists more than 170 modern references. In addition, the site also presents biographical information about Stéph en Chauvet himself, which increases the overall presentation integrity of this impressive new translation project.

PUBLICATIONS


Bulletin of the International String Figure Association, vol. 11, 2004. Box 5134, Pasadena CA 91117; This issue features string figures of Japan. webweavers@isfsa.org


John Charlot. Classical Hawaiian Education: Generations of Hawaiian Culture. The Pacific Institute, Brigham Young University, Hawaii. CD-ROM. Available for US$14 plus shipping and handling. This electronic book is formatted for printing or reading on a computer or PDA. Fully indexed with interactive functions including hyperlinks. Charlot provides the most complete description to date of education in an oral culture, showing how education permeated the Hawaiians’ lives and was a central factor in their encounters with foreigners. uhpbooks@hawaii.edu

Cherry, Michael. 2005. Return to Rapa Nui. Surfing Magazine Vol. 41(11): 52-58, for November. This is the typical surfing expedition, loaded with “dude” and other bits of surf lingo. It is hard to tell where on the island’s shores they were actually surfing as the author has messed up the place names. He refers to “Tanga Roa” which probably is Hanga Roa, and “Tanga Reki” seems to be Tongariki. “Mataveri” appears to be the shoreline at Ana Kai Tangata. The author also has problems with the island’s history, as he has the “birdsman…. retrieve a bird from an offshore island and return it...” and the oft-repeated mistake about Akivi being the only ahu facing toward the ocean. But hey, dudes who read Surfing Magazine will not be interested in the finer points.


Pendleton, Stephen with O. W. Newport and Members of the PISG. Philatelic Survey of Chile’s Juan Fernandez Archipelago. Stamp aficionados take note. The first letter with a “cancel” from Juan Fernandez dates from 1899. Available from the author: SPENDL@peoplepc.com

Tahiti Pacifique. The March 2006 issue (No. 179) features “Le naufrage de la Matilda à Moruroa en 1792” by Ghislain Houzel. The February 2006 issue (No.178) has papers concerning development and conservation in Huahine and the Marquesas: “La vallée de Tarar à Tefareri, Huahine, Portection ou développement?” by Mark Eddowes; and Pour une archéologie preventive: Concier respect du passé et développement socio-économique, by Eirc Conte. [It seems that Easter is not the only island in Polynesia where archaeological sites are being trashed by hotel projects.] The January 2006 (No. 177) issue contains “Réflexions sur le drame de Vanikoro et l'expédition de 2005,” regarding the La Pérouse mystery, and “Le tiki Marquisien de Picasso retrouvé.” The December 2005 (No. 176), issue has an article on tattoo. B. P. 368, Moorea, Polynésie française. www.tahiti-pacifique.com


A NEW ISLAND TRAVEL BLOG has been launched to supply visitors with the latest updates. South Pacific Travel carries news and views from 15 Pacific countries and territories, shares information collected by David Stanley, author of Moon Handbooks South Pacific. It covers everything from Easter Island to the Solomons, the same areas included in Stanley’s guides. Moon Handbooks South Pacific was the original travel guide to Oceania, first published in 1979, and now in its 8th edition. It takes years to compile each new edition, and even as one is being printed, the next one is underway. In the interim, a blog http://southpacific.org/blog/ keeps readers up to date. Aside from providing new facts, the South Pacific Travel blog discusses issues of interest to visitors. Subjects often avoided in mainstream guidebooks can be
touched on here. Says Stanley, "I consider this blog an extension of my existing websites, and a means of staying in touch with my diverse readership. Viewers can contact me through the blog, and if I think their questions are of general interest, I'll address them in the next day's posts." Stanley's guidebooks are published by Avalon Travel Publishing of Emeryville, California.

David Stanley has created three travel websites to display his photos, maps, and guides.

http://www.pacific-pictures.com
http://www.mapsouthpacific.com
http://www.southpacific.org

'A Po: The Rapanui Youth Program, Field Report on Lichen Studies

'A Po (THE RAPANUI YOUTH INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM) began in 2003 as an educational outreach program offered by the Padre Sebastián Englert Anthropological Museum on Rapa Nui. For the last three years, the program has involved local Rapa Nui high school students in various scientific research projects.

During 2005, a group of students and instructors mapped, photographed and described the lichens of Vinapu, focusing specifically on Ahu Tahira. The project was funded in part by generous donations from Michael Graves, Jo Lynn Gunness, and the University of Hawai'i Foundation. Revisiting a topic initially investigated by Gerhard Follmann in the 1960's, the 'A Po group conducted a pilot study to assess lichen growth and the potential for lichenometry at Ahu Tahira. Students participating in the 2005 project learned a variety of fieldwork and laboratory skills, including digital photoglogy, archaeological mapping, microscopic analysis, and computer programs for data analysis.

The pilot study, the results of which will soon be presented on the 'A Po website (http://www.terevaka.net/apo.html), will serve as a foundation for future research. A long-term monitoring project may be the best step forward to reestablish lichen studies on the island and to further both archaeological and biological interests. Lichens are renowned for their use in environmental monitoring, and if groups of high school students could regularly collect lichen data from specific sites, the contribution to a database of measurements for future analysis would be invaluable. To support 'A Po or for questions or comments, please contact 'A Po coordinator: bleif@hawaii.edu.

Easter Island: Total Land Area of Te Pito o Te Henua

Claudio Cristino and Roberto Izaurieta

REVIEWING THE COPIOUS LITERATURE dealing with Easter Island, we find conflicting figures for the land area of the island. Many are clearly inaccurate, so we are pleased to now update this information. The surface of Easter Island is calculated based on air-photogrammetric digital mapping developed by IGM (Instituto Geográfico Militar de Chile) in August 2004, based on air photographs, scale 1:25,000, taken by SAF (Servicio Aerofotogramétrico de la Fuerza Aérea de Chile) in 1981. For the vectorial cartography, the Geodetic Reference System SIRGAS (WGS84) in UTM projection zone 12 (central meridian 111°W) were used, designed for graphic plots to scale 1:10,000, with contour lines every 5 meters.

Our new calculations show that the exact value of the area included by the projected coastal polygon of Easter Island is 16,357.4026 hectares and, after applying the reciprocal square of the UTM mean scale factor for the island, a corrected value of 16,359.7354 hectares or 40,425.6209 acres is obtained, as effective for the zero contour at mean sea level. Thus, the land area of Easter Island, rounded to the nearest decimal, is 163.6 square kilometers or 63.2 square miles.

Editor's Note: In 1994, RNJ printed a paper by Lehman Henry, "The Area of Rapa Nui," RNJ 8(3):71-73. Henry suggested 66 square miles (171 sq. km) as the size of the island. Those who used 64 sq. miles include: Cambridge World Gazetteer (1988); Uncommon Guide to Easter Island by Lee (1990); Rapa Nui National Park Map (1992); Easter Island Earth Island by Bahn and Flennley (1993); South Pacific Handbook (1993); and National Geographic Magazine (March 1993). The only one to come up with 63 square miles was The New Encyclopedia Britannica for 1990. The US National Museum Report of 1899 gave the smallest dimension, stating the island's size to be a measly 34 square miles.