

freight. *Kon Tiki Museum, Bygdøynesveien 36, N-0286, Oslo, Norway*

*Reviewed by Frank G. Bock, Ph.D.*

There is little doubt that one of the most dramatic sites on Easter Island is the reconstructed *ahu* at Anakena with its commanding *moai* silently gazing inward. In the 1970s, the local archaeologist and former Governor of Rapa Nui, Sergio Rapu, conducted an extensive excavation and restoration of Ahu Nau Nau, placing rather complete and also fragments of *moai* on the platform. After the work of excavation, the area was returned to its natural state, thus covering up the crucial evidence of earlier culture phases.

In 1986-87, another and even more extensive excavation was conducted at the site, the intent being to reopen certain trenches dug by Rapu, and to ascertain more data concerning the cultural remains buried beneath the sand and soil. Skjølsvold's publication is an excellent account of this investigation.

The introductory material, although somewhat truncated, is well written and needed [especially by the general public] prior to reading the text. The author's descriptive passages are complete and comprehensive, detailed, and well referenced with illustrations. However, here comes a caveat: most of the photographs in the volume are dark and rather hazy, lacking good, sharp definition. This is especially irritating when seeking graphic substantiation of the referenced material. Since the text is so well written, it does seem a shame that the photography does not match it in professional quality.

On the other hand, the numerous sketches and maps are excellent, detailed and accurate. Almost makes up for the poor photos.

The author has turned to excellent sources for references and prior work. One error does stand out: he mentions Lee's watershed publication--*Rock Art of Easter Island*--and even recommends it. Unfortunately the textual reference gives it a date of 1993. It is correct in the References as 1992, so look not for the missing volume! One other publication this reviewer would suggest that might have given an insight into Skjølsvold's work would be *Easter Island Earth Island* by Bahn and Flenley [Thames and Hudson, 1992].

The field work conducted by the crew, and discussed by the author, reads like a text-book example of correct archaeological investigation. Trenching was quite extensive revealing a composite picture of the totality of earlier *ahu* construction and its relationship to the cultures responsible. Stratigraphic profiles are well defined, and the trait list of artifacts provides an extensive, well-documented scrutiny needed for possible future study and interpretation.

The evidence discussed ranges from the most obvious--such as features--to the most mundane, which includes chips and powdered *moai* tuff indicating on-site statue manufacturing or at least alteration and finishing. There were enough osteological deposits to give good insight into food sources, and the hundreds of tools recovered provide a

graphic illustration of cultural activity.

The data point out the various phases of *ahu* construction, each with its own distinct architecture, with strong probabilities concerning which platforms were used for *moai* from Rano Raraku. The controversy surrounding whether or not the Rapa Nui practiced cannibalism is discussed in the light of the amount of burned human bone located among the bones of edible prey. Abundant small statues, heads and fragments, as the author points out, are understandable considering the many phases of *ahu* construction.

Although there is certainly some conclusive evidence to be noted, certain results from the lab work indicate discrepancies. Consequently Skjølsvold points out that because of this ambiguity, some conclusions must remain speculative.

His conclusions are sound, based on the data collected. There is one problem: he makes a case for the Polynesian rat found in the lower levels of the excavation, then turns around and repeats the extremely controversial idea of South American contact and settlement. He bases this on the work of Heyerdahl, and again pushes the connection between the temple wall friezes in Peru with their birdman-like figures and the birdman motif found on Rapa Nui. However, Skjølsvold does not make a strong plea--a mere two pages plus two photos. This half-hearted effort seems more like a conventional bow to Heyerdahl than a personal conviction.

Part II of the book, written by Helene Martinsson-Wallin and Paul Wallin, discusses the Settlement/Activity Area around Nau Nau East at Anakena. Although there is, of necessity, some repetition with Skjølsvold's work, this is a valuable supplement, focusing on cultural and settlement patterns as illustrated by the data collected from trenching east of the *ahu*. The lack of total and absolute data results in some speculation, which is a major point in their favor. Future lab work will no doubt reveal information that presently is not fully understood.


Again the reader will be rewarded with detailed work written in an excellent report. The photographs are a bit better than the earlier ones, and the drawings and maps are superb, adding graphic evidence. It is well cataloged, providing future study a strong base for study. The authors' statistical analyses are exemplary, a well-founded key to 'final' interpretation.

Their conclusions indicate that the entire area was probably a settlement for priests and/or leaders. The burial in trench N quite possibly indicates that the area was a holy ground, partially substantiated by refuse pits used as ceremonial sites. Spatial relationships are discussed, with a view toward artifact distribution and its possible meaning. Another point well taken is a learned discussion of what was **not** found; fish hooks and other material that might well have been taboo.

Some modern intrusions, including the Heyerdahl expedition of 1955-56, have disturbed some of the site, and the recent crews had to ascertain the extent of this activity and separate it from their own investigation. Exercising professional caution they perhaps best sum up their work

with the idea that, since few settlements on Rapa Nui have been excavated, "far reaching conclusions are difficult to make."

All in all, this excellent volume is both Prologue and Future, providing an impetus for extended archaeological research sometime down the road. But any future archaeologists are hereby admonished that the field work done, the data collected, and the initial meaning and interpretation of this investigation; all have set a standard that future investigators would be wise to follow.

 *Easter Island. Archaeology, Ecology and Culture.*

Jo Anne Van Tilburg. 1994. British Museum Press, 191 pp, 126 figs, 30 plates. £20.00; ISBN 0 7141 2504 0

Review by Paul G. Bahn

"No Tern Unstoned"

I read this book on a long train journey that, by chance, took me through the town of Tilburg in Holland. Tilburg looks fairly dull. The same cannot be said of Van Tilburg's book, but not, I'm afraid, for the right reasons, because it is so full of errors of every conceivable kind that spotting them becomes a distraction while reading it. I'll return to them shortly.

The front cover has a pleasant photograph of *moai* on the slopes of Rano Raraku--two appear to have birds on their heads. The back cover features Van Tilburg perched precariously on a step-ladder, involved in what at first sight seems a strange bondage ritual with a *moai*, but is in fact an exercise in photogrammetry. She is wearing the shorts and sunglasses so familiar to viewers of the various TV shows in which she has appeared and which are listed on the dustjacket (as the instigator of the BBC Horizon/Nova documentaries that launched her Rapa Nui televisual career, I must accept some responsibility here). The dustjacket blurb calls her, with as much accuracy as modesty, "the foremost authority on the subject", and also refers to "*moai* hidden deep in seaside caves" (some mistake, surely??) and to her simulated transportation of a "near fourteen-ton statue" (actually 12.5 metric tons). Did nobody check this dustjacket for accuracy?

The book begins with a jolly prologue that waxes lyrical about fieldwork on the island. After that, the chapters seem to have no logical sequence, and resemble a series of separate essays thrown in at random (and with a certain amount of repetition between them). The first gives a brief account of the Routledge expedition, followed by the history and development of her own project (as if the two are somehow equal or linked--apparently Van Tilburg has now even baptized her project "In the Wake of the *Mana*"! [p.18]), and then a general survey of *moai* statistics, her field of expertise, in an updated summary of her 1986 thesis. Chapter 2 starts deceptively with a normal account of the early European visits to the island, but after Cook it veers away into missionaries, traders, informants and oral traditions. Chapter 3 deals with island life, and the three phases of cultural development; No 4 focuses on the Birdman ritual, No 5 on

stone structures, No 6 on society, No 7 on hunger and astronomy, No 8 on aesthetics and *Rongorongo*, No 9 on the *moai* and No 10 on moving them. Why did nobody bother to give this book a coherent structure?

Right at the beginning. (on p.14), Van Tilburg states: "Katherine [Routledge] . . . was born . . . in 1880. She was a student at Somerville College, Oxford, from 1891 to 1895". I expect *RNJ* readers can spot a mistake here. Yet it is not a typographic error; on p.18 she states that Routledge died "in 1935 . . . aged fifty-five" (an error also published in her *H.M.S. Topaze* monograph, p. 5); and she says (p. 14) that Scoresby Routledge was born in 1883. Van Tilburg tells us at length and with evident pride of her in-depth research on Katherine Routledge and her empathy and admiration for her. It is odd, therefore, that she could commit such blunders. She may have read Routledge's notes, correspondence and will--but had she bothered to consult Katherine's death certificate or Scoresby's will or even Scoresby's obituary in the *Times* (all easily accessible in London) she would have discovered that Scoresby was born in Melbourne in 1859, and that Katherine was 69 when she died in 1935. Ironically, this means that when Katherine's book appeared in 1919 she was not 39 but roughly the same age as Van Tilburg is now! This may seem a small point to belabor here, but it has very important implications: for not only does Van Tilburg ignore the fact that, in a joint presentation on Routledge at Wyoming in 1993, Charlie Love and I gave the correct dates, but a number of eminent specialists apparently read this book (p.9) without spotting the ridiculous notion of an 11-year old girl attending an Oxford college in 1891. Worst of all, the dedication page of this volume claims that it is intended to mark the 80th anniversary of the *Mana* expedition, and "to honour the memory of Katherine Scoresby Routledge"! It is a pity that Van Tilburg's in-depth research on her heroine did not extend to the most basic of facts, and this, I'm afraid, is quite typical of the book as a whole.

It is, for example, riddled with typos or spelling errors--e.g. canes (for caves, p. 185), Chippendale (3 times), courtsey (p.88), diety (p. 172), Figueroa (p.166), Haddingham (p.9), Marguesas (p. 87), Moto Iti (p.171), Moto Nui (p.22), Owlsley (p.106), plaform (p.174), preceeded (p.130), Rano Kao (p.60--otherwise Kau throughout), *Scripus* (twice), Sommerville (p.15), trial (for trail, p. 181), etc. One or two typos are inevitable in a book, but this looks like sloppiness. Did nobody proofread this volume?

Then we have a series of words which Van Tilburg seems to think correct, but which I've been unable to find even in American dictionaries, such as arboculture (p.41), conflicted (as an adjective, p. 113), photogrammetrically (p. 148). The bibliography is equally careless, with, for example, errors in titles by Adam, Forment, Heine-Geldern, Peña, Roussel and Terrell, and McCoy 1979 listed twice under different initials. Again, did nobody proofread this book?

Any volume might have one photo slip through that is the wrong way round--here, the Museum of Mankind's wooden left hand (p.120); but it takes real genius for a full-page color plate of the view to the islets from the Orongo petroglyphs--