

Publications

Anderson, Atholl. 2000. Less is Moa, *Science*, Vol. 289, No. 5484, pp. 1472-1474. This is a response to an article in *Science* from March 24 (p.2250) by R.N. Holdaway and C. Jacomb regarding moa extinction in New Zealand.

Le Bulletin du Centre d'Etudes sur l'Île de Pâques et la Polynésie (CEIPP). Number 39, November. 28, boulevard Saint-Germain, 75000 Paris, France.

The Journal of the Polynesian Society, Vol. 109(3), September 2000. This issue includes a paper by Atholl Anderson, Paul Wallin, Helene Martinsson-Wallin, Garry Fankhouser, and Geoffrey Hope: "Towards a First Prehistory of Kiribati (Christmas) Island, Republic of Kiribati," pp. 275-293; and a shorter note by Anderson, Geoffrey Clark and Trevor Worthy: "An Inland Lapita Site in Fiji", pp. 311-316.

Marshall, Yvonne, Andrew Crosby, Sepeti Matararaba and Shannon Wood. 2000. *Sigatoka: The shifting sands of Fijian prehistory*. University of Southampton Department of Archaeology Monograph 1. Oxbow, Oxford.

Rolett, Barry V. 1998. *Hananiai: Prehistoric Colonization and Cultural Change in the Marquesas Islands (East Polynesia)*. Yale University Publications in Anthropology and Peabody Museum.

Tok Blong Pasifik, June 2000. Vol. 54(2). This issue, focusing on ocean development and conservation, has a paper by Dr Kenneth MacKay titled "The Pacific: An Ocean of Opportunity." MacKay describes the problems facing small islands and the rise of sea levels, the effect of tourism on fragile environments, etc. Jennifer Robinson's contribution is titled Sea Turtles—the Campaign to Save the Pacific's 'Sacred Fish.' *Tok Blong Pasifik* can be reached at sppf@sppf.org

Conferences

The 10th Pacific Science Inter-Congress; Integration of Natural and Social Sciences in the New Pacific Millennium, will be held at Tumon, Guam, June 1-6, 2001. For information, contact Joyce Marie Camacho, Coordinator, Graduate School and Research; University of Guam Station, Mangilao, Guam 96923; email : jcamacho@uog9.uog.edu

XIV Congress of the International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences. 2-8th September 2001, Liege, Belgium. The session on Asian and Oceanic Prehistory will have a session on Rapa Nui, chaired by Dr Christopher Stevenson. For details about this conference, contact ABACO-M.A.C.srl; via le A. Gramsci, 47; 47100 Forli, Italy.

email: uispp2001@abaco-mac.it

Notes from Our Readers....

Memories of Samuel H. Elbert

Joseph C. Finney

THIS IS A PERSONAL TRIBUTE to Sam Elbert, who was my chief mentor in the field of diachronic Austronesian linguistics (along with my father, who taught me Indo-European diachronics when I was thirteen). I could never have done it without Sam's inspiration, his brilliant example, and his unflagging encouragement.

Before Sam Elbert was called on to teach them, the courses on the Hawaiian language at the University of Hawaii are said to have been taught at a very undemanding level so that student athletes and others wishing an easy A could get one.

In 1960, while I was serving as Director of Research for the Health Department of the newly-admitted State of Hawaii, and was an Adjunct Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Hawaii, I took Sam's two-semester introductory course in Hawaiian. As a faculty member, I didn't have to sign up for the course, or pay tuition fees. At the time, Sam had been teaching the course for some years: the textbook, *Conversational Hawaiian*, by Elbert and the Rev. Samuel A. Keala, had the first edition in 1951, its second in 1955, and its third in 1961. For the 1960-61 year, we had (like others beginning in 1958) the third edition in temporary, mimeographed form. The vocabulary had been restricted to 700 words, the emphasis was indeed on conversation more than reading or writing, and in lesson six, the table of personal pronouns was presented with the apologetic note, "This is the only table you are asked to memorize."

Sam was, from the beginning, an inspiring teacher, and a helpful one. He believed in what he was doing. He taught lots of popular Hawaiian songs, both words and music. One summer at the two-week annual encampment and training of the Hawaii National Guard (in which I served as a Major), the soldiers spent their evenings strumming guitars and ukuleles and singing songs in the Hawaiian language. At the time I wondered, "How much longer will the young people keep enthusiastically learning and singing songs in a language they don't understand? What will it be like, thirty years from now? The answer is that, after fifty years of watching television passively, people no longer sing songs when they get together for evening parties.

In the first week of class, Sam taught us to say, for "I don't know" "a'ole ike au". It was a useful phrase and Sam wanted to emphasize that the verb comes before the subject: "not know I" in that sentence. A few weeks later he corrected himself, saying "I didn't want to complicate it at the beginning, but the way Hawaiians really say it is: "a'ole au e'ite". (That's a cleft construction: something like "it's not I that knows.") Linguists consider "a'ole" a verb.

Even before taking the course, I had developed a fantasy that some day I would do fieldwork in Polynesian linguistics and anthropology on a remote Polynesian island. And I had read enough to know that the "k" in Hawaiian was earlier. "t", and, indeed, the "t" pronunciation still survived on the island of Ni'ihau, and in most Polynesian islands, including, probably, the

island where (if ever) I'd do the fieldwork. The Proto Polynesian "k" had become a glottal stop in Hawaiian. In the University library I had also read that a committee of seven missionaries had voted 4-3 to use the "k" spelling and not the "t", and by the same vote, the "w" and not "v" and the "l" and not "r". So I decided that in learning Hawaiian I would pronounce every "k" as "t".

Sam took it in stride. He never asked me why I said "k"s as "t". I think that intuitively he knew the answer. But a graduate student assistant, Pua Pung, who taught the class once a week, responded with amazement: "Tell me, what other Polynesian language do you know?" When I encountered Hawaiians and spoke to them with the "t", they gave me one of three responses: "You are speaking Tahitian" or, "You are speaking Ni'ihau", or "you're speaking too high-class for me".

One day, Sam told the class that he had been to the Honolulu airport and there encountered a young Hawaiian man who was greeting the tourists and directing them. Sam asked, "Do you speak Hawaiian?" The man said "yes." Sam began talking to him in Hawaiian. The man said, "Why don't we speak English?" Sam could only speculate that the young man could not speak Hawaiian at all. He was saddened that so few could still speak the language.

Sam was always looking for better ways to teach the language. Once he asked the class, "could you handle the glottal stops better if I were to write them with a q? How about small q subscripted?" Sam rightly insisted that the students pronounce every glottal stop. But he let it pass when they pronounced the long vowels short, provided they got the stress on the right syllable.

Once he had gone to Ni'ihau to hear how the language was spoken there. It had the only public school in the state in which Hawaiian was still the language of instruction. The school-teacher was a young woman, Tini Teale (Jean Kelly). There was no hotel or guest house and the Robinson family, who owned the island and were the only employer, owned the only boat that ferried passengers in from Kaua'i. So Sam had to go there as guests of the Robinson family and stay in their home.

One day, in the University of Hawaii library, which was very small in those days, I was looking for books in the section on the language and history of Hawai'i. I happened to notice a Hawaiian woman there, and spoke to her. A conversation developed, and it turned out that she was Tini Teale, there for a brief visit away from Ni'ihau. So I listened carefully for her phonology. As Sam had said, she used both "t" and "k", for the t/k phoneme, and often used one "r" and one "k" when the phoneme occurred twice in the same word. For the w/v phoneme, she sometimes used true "w"; sometimes true "v" and very often the intermediate bilabial voiced spirant, determined partly by what vowel followed. For the l/r phoneme, she consistently used the same sound, which was basically "l" but said with the tip of the tongue retroflexed, so that its sound had a tinge of "r". The best way an English speaker can approximate it is to say the word "ala" as "alra". I think that this observation of Tini is as close as we'll ever get to knowing the phonology of the Hawaiian language as it was spoken when the foreigners first came.

The Puku'i-Elbert Dictionary of the language had just

come out in its first edition and had only Hawaiian-English. Sam was fortunate in having as a collaborator a highly educated and intelligent speaker from the Big Island of Hawai'i. Sam was generous in having her name listed first. Normally, the professionally-trained linguist is named first. Of course, Mary Kawena Puku'i was far more than a native informant. She was a true collaborator. Once on behalf of the State Mental Health system, I went to the Bishop Museum and interviewed her, asking mainly about what indigenous systems the Hawaiians had for counseling and for reconciliation of quarrels. Bishop Museum at that time was recording and transcribing every word she spoke, taking her every word as a treasure. And it was a good idea. I was happy to get a transcript of my interview of her. She was a true link with the past, and also a scholar.

Sam never talked about his personal life. Others told me that Sam never married. Occasionally he told me a sexy joke, but never told them in class.

During World War II and shortly thereafter, Sam had served in the Navy in the Pacific as a linguist. His specialty was to develop, in a short period of time, brief dictionaries and grammars of the languages in what became the US Trust Territory of Micronesia. Being primarily a Polynesianist, he also visited all the islands of Tuvalu, and indeed, almost every Polynesian Island group in the Pacific. So, being a rapid learner, he made use of his first-hand experience to acquire the ability to speak perhaps every known Polynesian language. He also had expert knowledge about which islands still had bare-breasted women.

For an elder statesman in a field as specialized as Oceanic languages, Sam kept up well with general linguistics. In 1962 he had the University import as Visiting Professor, Charles Hockett, who was a leader in Bloomfieldian languages. It was about that time that Chomsky (who is a year younger than I) began to be noticed. Sam was much older than Chomsky, but was willing to learn from him. Sam acquired some of the terminology of generative grammar, and used some of it in his later works, such as his descriptive grammar of Rennell and Bellona.

Once, at the newly founded University of the South Pacific, in Papua-New Guinea, I encountered a young male student from Takuu, one of the Polynesian Outliers. Knowing that Sam had been there, I asked the man if he knew Sam. He said, "Yes. He amazed us. He had never encountered our language before, and he came there to learn it. But from the very first day, he spoke our language fluently.

A few months later, in Honolulu, I saw Sam and asked him about the matter. He said, "Yes, in fact, I did that." I asked "How?" and he replied, "I knew that language belonged to the Samoic Outlier group. And I could tell from the name of the island that certain sound changes of Samoan had not taken place there. So I just imagined to myself what the Samoan language must have been like a thousand years ago, and that is what I spoke to them." I could only sit in rapt admiration and amazement.

Sam was always interested in diachronic linguistics. In the *Hawaiian Dictionary*, and in the Rennell-Bellona one, he often listed his reconstructions of the Proto Polynesian ancestral words. I wish more people would do that.

In 1963, when I had accepted an offer of a professorship at the University of Kentucky, I decided that, to keep open my dream of returning later to do Polynesian linguistics and anthropology on a remote island, I'd better visit that part of the world first. So, after consulting with Sam, I took a trip of 73 days in which I visited key Polynesian areas (Tahiti, Tuamotu, Samoa, New Zealand), as well as Micronesia (Truk, Ponape, Guam, Yap and others), and Fiji, Australia, Indonesia, and South East Asian countries as far as Burma. I had served in Japan in connection with the Korean War.

It was in 1970-71, ten years after preparing for it by studying Hawaiian with Sam, that I took a year's sabbatical leave and spent it in the South Pacific doing linguistics and anthropology. Again, Sam's advice was helpful. I began by visiting in three months all the Micronesian areas again, and Tonga, Nauru, Saipan, as well as Australian Aboriginal tribal areas, New Guinea, the Solomons, Vanuatu and other places, but Polynesian was still my first love. I settled on Tuvalu for the greater part of the year, after a months work in Samoa and a visit to Margaret Mead's Ta'u (same name as Sam's outlier). Mead's husband, Gregory Bateson, had taught me anthropology. Mead had done her work in Samoa the year before I was born, and her book on it had inspired me to work with Polynesians. Sam's Hawaiian course had given me a 500 word vocabulary that was good in Tuvalu (with certain consonant changes which were partly predictable), but the syntax differed. When I had problems with the syntax, I'd write Sam and he'd give me the answer. Only once was he mistaken. I wrote him that I suspected there was a connection between the use of the preverbal "clitic" pronouns (*kau* series) and the use of the Cia'ina suffix. Sam replied that he didn't believe the two were related. But a Nanumanga man, Puleisili, told me, in English: "Yes, they are related. Neither the pronouns (*kau* series) nor the suffix on the verb can be used with an intransitive verb." Sam can't be faulted as the Nanumanga fact is not true at all in the Samoic-Outlier languages.

The only real error that Sam made was failure to recognize the first person singular "*kau*" pronouns such as in Rennell. That language has no non-singular pronouns in that series, nor second or third person pronouns of that series. Doubtless that's the reason why Sam offered another explanation: that "*kau*" in that language is a contraction of the conjunction "*ka*" ("and") and the disjunctive first person singular pronoun "*au*". Another linguist who worked on that island told me it's from pronoun series in Samoic-outlier languages, nonsingulars disappear first, then third person singulars, then second person singulars, leaving "*kau*" as the last temporary survivor before it disappears (Richard Feinberg lists the survivors for all the outlier languages, in a personal communication.)

At the 6th ICAL in Honolulu, in 1991, I telephoned Sam. He said his health was too poor to allow him to attend the meeting. That was the last time I spoke with him. I heard from him only once more, when he wrote to say that he disagreed with the Langdon-Tryon proposal that Rapanui, Rennell, East Uvea and East Futuna form a linguistic group. The world has lost a worthy man. A true scholar and a brilliant contributor to his field. And a very thoughtful human being who was always ready to

give generously of his time and knowledge to help people who could use it. I am one of those who will miss him.

The Hancock Museum's Moai Maea

Leslie Jessop, Hancock Museum, UK

OVER THE PAST 200 YEARS the Hancock Museum in Newcastle, England, has slowly built up an ethnographic collection that now includes some 4500 items. Although there has never been a curator specializing in ethnography, it is interesting to look back and see how a succession of geologists and biologists (of which I am the latest in the series!) have fallen under the spell of these artworks. My own interest came about when I decided to spend an afternoon determining how much of the founding 18th century collection still survives. Five years later, and an Anthropology Ph.D. almost within sight, I am still burrowing into the material.

One of the Hancock's items, catalogued as NEWHM: C172¹ is a carving in pinkish tufa of a head on a short conical neck. The photograph shows the carving of the face very clearly. The tufa has a slightly blackened surface patina, which is obvious where small chips show the underlying lighter stone. The overall height is 35 cm, and the head is 20 cm high. Maximum circumference is 51 cm. The carving formed part of a collection owned by André Breton and Paul Eluard, sold by auction at the Hotel Drouot in Paris in 1931 (Anon. 1931). It was acquired by the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum in London, and passed by them to the Hancock Museum in 1951 (1).

For a long time I thought little of C172. Not only because it is not part of the 18th century collection but also because I somehow had it mentally marked down as a tourist piece. After all, in my imagination "real" Rapa Nui carvings were either giant heads or carvings in *toromiro*. My suspicions that it might be something more interesting were aroused when I acquired a copy of Métraux's *Ethnology of Easter Island* (Métraux 1940). He figured a *moai maea* from the collection of the Museum für Völkerkunde Vienna that is not dissimilar to C172. My ears metaphorically pricked up when I read of small stone images being scarce and 'probably ancient for they were collected before the curio industry was fully developed on the island'.

Looking further into the situation, I turned to Volume 1 of the *Archaeology of Easter Island* (Heyerdahl and Ferdon,



C 172

The Hancock's *moai maea*, carved in red tufa (*hanihani*).