

However, although the format suits the scope of the subject, it requires some digging on the part of one who wishes to learn about a single population. For example, according to the index, references to Easter Island appear on 46 pages scattered throughout the book.



Splendid Isolation. Art of Easter Island

Eric Kjellgren

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Yale University Press, New Haven & London. 2001. \$19.95.

ISBN 0-300-09078-1

Review by Paul G. Bahn

THE SMALL EXHIBITION at New York's Metropolitan Museum (see review by Norman Hurst, *RNJ* 16:60-62) has given rise to a slim but beautifully produced catalogue, which is certainly worth buying for the photographs of so many fine and rare objects. Its text, on the other hand, leaves much to be desired.

There are three short essays, the first a general introduction by Eric Kjellgren, the second is an account of the *moai* by Jo Anne Van Tilburg, and the third an overview of the island's art by Adrienne Kaeppler. They are followed by the annotated catalogue of the exhibition's fifty objects.

It is particularly shameful and baffling that the catalogue of an exhibition on Easter Island art, published by one of the world's leading art museums, should pointedly ignore the basic texts on its subject – such as Heyerdahl's monumental *The Art of Easter Island* (1976), or the two leading works on the island's wooden carvings: Joan Seaver Kurze's *Ingrained Images* (1997) and Catherine and Michel Orliac's *Bois Sculptés de l'île de Pâques* (1995).

Surely, anyone interested enough in the exhibition to buy this catalogue may well wish to delve more deeply into the subject of the island's art, but the book provides them with little help, by omitting numerous major works from the references. Instead, the bibliography seems to have a different purpose – it comprises 56 entries, no less than 14 of which (25%!) have been written by Van Tilburg and Kaeppler. To be fair, it is titled a "Selected Bibliography", and it is pretty obvious who did the selecting...

Kjellgren has clearly relied on Van Tilburg's 1994 book, and on little else, for his general background information on Easter Island, and this inevitably has some unfortunate consequences. Readers of the *RNJ* may recall (1995, 9:32-34) the wide variety of unreliable facts in that book, and some of its innumerable errors have found their way into this one: for example, the *tatora* reed is called *Scirpus* instead of *Scirpus* (p. 60); and Kjellgren's claim (p. 13) that the island is 1000 miles from eastern Polynesia and 1400 miles from Chile is clearly derived from the figures in Van Tilburg's book (p. 46), where she has the correct numbers (1400 and 2300), but mistakenly says they are kilometres rather than miles. Hence Kjellgren has turned her kilometre figures into miles, and thus compounded the original error!

One is also somewhat startled to find that for "palaeobotanical evidence for the island's forests" (p. 13), the reader is not referred to the seminal work of John Flenley, but instead to a page of Van Tilburg's book. And similarly, for the

rongorongo phenomenon (p. 77), the reader is not referred to Fischer's exhaustive tome on the subject (although, by some miracle, it is listed in the bibliography), but once again to a page in Van Tilburg's book. There is clearly a definite pattern here.

The catalogue has a number of errors and typos – for example, Kjellgren says (p. 13) that the palm forests were made up of *Jubea chilensis*, whereas the island's palm was merely a similar species, *Paschalococos disperta*; he describes the birdman petroglyphs (p. 18) as having tails; Mata Ngarau is misspelled as *ngara* throughout the book; Georgia Lee appears once as Grant Lee in the references; Stéphen-Chauvet's Christian name is mistakenly given as Charles throughout; the long discredited story of islanders being carried off to guano mines appears several times; two pictures of Tepano are incorrectly described here as Juan Tepano (p. 38 – Kaeppler has explained the origin of this error in her apologetic letter to the *RNJ* (2002) 16:62). In addition, a number of Rapa Nui words are misspelled, as is *tatora* (as *totara*) on p. 60.

Doubtless the vast majority of visitors to the exhibition who buy this catalogue will not notice these errors, but it is a pity that so many different problems have crept into what is a very brief volume, and that an event and a book which could have been used to encourage numerous people to become interested in the island and its artistic heritage have been somewhat diverted from this course by other agendas, which have led to a highly partisan and unscholarly presentation that is characteristically ungenerous towards other specialists.



Pacific 2000: Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Easter Island and the Pacific.

Edited by Christopher M. Stevenson, Georgia Lee, and F. J. Morin. 2001, Easter Island Foundation. Los Osos, CA. (\$35) Paper; 8.5x11; 576 pages; photographs, maps, and drawings. ISBN 1-880636-18-2.

Review by Dave Tuggle

THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EASTER ISLAND was held at Kamuela, Hawai'i in August 2000. The *Pacific 2000 Proceedings* volume has appeared less than two years later. This is remarkable in its own right, but doubly so when considering that this duplicates the publication feat of the Fourth Conference (held in 1997, *Proceedings* printed in 1998). The editors and the Easter Island Foundation deserve some sort of reward for this record-breaking effort. As reviewer, I have no hesitation in suggesting that *RNJ* readers who have not already purchased the volume can reward the Foundation and themselves by sending in their order for this wonderful collection that consists of 56 papers by 75 authors (including the Keynote Address by Peter Bellwood), and 29 abstracts of papers that were not submitted for publication. (The Easter Island Foundation should also consider making this, and their other publications, available on CD-ROM.)

It is of some interest to see that Easter Island researchers have been expanding the boundaries of their comparative universe in great leaps. The first three International Conferences focused exclusively on Easter Island. The Fourth was "Easter

Island and East Polynesia.” The Fifth is “Easter Island and the Pacific.” If the Sixth is “Easter Island and the World,” that will be fine with me, because it still identifies Rapa Nui as the center of Everything. (In fact, Peter Bellwood may have presaged this in his Pacific 2000 Conference Keynote Address: “Polynesian Prehistory and the Rest of Mankind.”) This expansion is explained by Christopher Stevenson in his Introduction to the *Proceedings* of the 1997 Fourth Conference in which he notes that there was a concern that “inward focus will in the long run be academically fatal,” and thus there was a call for papers covering all of Polynesia. In the Pacific 2000 Conference, Easter Island and Polynesia remain the core, but the outward view now includes papers where geography or theme refer to the larger Pacific region.

Space constraints prohibit review comments on individual papers (shorthand for saying I do not want to expose my ignorance of some of the topics), and I control my normal tendency to rant about egregiously erroneous statements (shorthand referring to statements that do not reflect my own views). More importantly, there are too many interesting papers and valuable points to fret about selective offenses. By subject matter the 56 papers include: the archaeology of Rapa Nui (5); the cultural anthropology of Rapa Nui (5); the archaeology of Hawai‘i (5), Samoa (4), Palau (3), the Society Islands (2), Kosrae (1), and the Marquesas (1); Polynesian arts (9); Polynesian physical anthropology (5); Polynesian language (4); thematic papers on regional chronology, voyaging, subsistence, agriculture, and ceramics (7); and conservation, from curation problems to petroglyph recording (5).

As he did for the 1997 *Proceedings*, Stevenson provides an Introduction to the 2000 *Proceedings*, and makes the important observation that the “list of participants has a true international flair. Researchers from the Americas, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands and Japan have all made important contributions.” He also defines some of the themes that emerge from the papers, including landscape studies, contemporary social issues, and fresh views on older subjects. For example, Anderson’s study of prehistoric voyaging canoes is a reminder that it is necessary to consider what the modern voyaging experiments are in fact measuring. Let’s pursue the themes of the *Proceedings*.

Several papers treat new or updated models dealing with cultural change and variation, including evolutionary theory (Terry Hunt and Carl Lipo), gender as an analytic category (Cynthia Van Gilder), and complexity theory (Robert Hommon).

Paleoenvironmental work (particularly pollen studies) has become a critical part of archaeological research in the Pacific, represented here in papers by Kevin Butler and John Flenley, Juan Grau, and Steve Athens and Jerome Ward.

Art, oral traditions, historical research, and linguistic analyses maintain places of importance for their cross-disciplinary contributions in Pacific research in an exemplary manner (as found in numerous papers).

A number of papers address the promises and problems of the conduct of archaeology in the modern world, a world in which archaeology is not the isolated academic discipline it was a generation ago. Such papers include Ross Cordy’s High School Hawaiian Studies Program (the paper focuses on the re-

sults of the archaeological research and training of students most of whom are of Hawaiian ancestry; another paper on the training program itself would be welcome), Susan Lebo and James Bayman’s archaeological and historical work involving cooperation with a Hawaiian community organization, Yoshihiko Sinoto’s experiences with government-managed *marae* “restoration” on Ra‘iatea, José Miguel Ramírez’ remarkable review of “utopia and reality” of CRM on Easter Island, and several that concern native values and cultural revivals in relation to archaeology and anthropology (for example, those by Riet Delsing, Lorella Pignet, and Alejandra Grifferos A.)

In the same realm, the expanding numbers of native islanders in Pacific anthropological/archaeological research is well illustrated in the authorship of many papers (including abstracts of papers not submitted for publication); these individuals are not only anthropologists who happen to be from a native group, but indigenous people who are anthropologists/archaeologists, that is, who may bring a non-Western view to the practice of the discipline. (Representatives of local cultural groups, some trained as anthropologists and some not, are increasingly becoming the responsible authorities for cultural resource management in the Pacific. Conflicts are emerging between some of these new managers and older ones, conflicts based not only on variation in training, but also based in differences in world-view. This will certainly appear as a theme in some future conference.)

Finally, there is a theme that should not be overlooked, considering that it is in one way or another the point of it all: the decades of focused substantive and theoretical research in archaeology, physical anthropology, and linguistics are producing a relatively coherent and largely consistent general model of Pacific prehistory, as best illustrated in Bellwood’s keynote paper, but clearly expressed in many other reports. (Bellwood and others suggest that the chronology of Palauan colonization is one note that is off-key. However, the large multi-year archaeological research project conducted for the US Corps of Engineers Compact Road construction is still on going, and the papers in the *Pacific 2000 Proceedings* and the existing CRM reports on Palau should all be considered preliminary. As a project participant, albeit a marginal one, I know that the final report – much of which will be written by field director Jolie Liston – will address this issue in great detail.)

Three closing points:

It is always a pleasure to read an unvetted volume – a collection that has not been subjected to the misnamed and generally pernicious peer review. The editors are to be congratulated for giving full voice to all those who participated in the conference.

Bellwood’s summary of Polynesian prehistory is an intellectual *tour de force* that concisely presents the current state of knowledge, theoretical issues and models, larger comparative issues, and on-going research problems.

And how could one not like a volume that dares to include comparative illustrations of “The Tahitian Chief Tu/Pomare I, and ...Bob Zimmerman/Bob Dylan. Both living in a mythological reality...?” (the Paul Wallin paper).

