

***Volcanoes, El Niños, and the Bellybutton
of the Universe***

D.A. Walker, 2000 Xlibris Corporation, Soft cover, 99 pages,
\$20.00, ISBN 07388-37229

Review by Tom Christopher

This little volume traces the career of D.A. Walker from a graduate student of geophysics at the University of Hawai'i over, under, and around the Pacific for the next thirty-six years on the way to some startling discoveries for Rapanuiphiles.

Having amassed some 20 years of seismographic and hydrophonic data from around the Pacific, Walker, with a cross disciplinary approach, began to see a relationship between the El Niño phenomenon and volcanism on the sea floor near Easter Island. El Niños were preceded by increased sea floor volcanism. These correlations were present in the past two El Niño events.

On page 64, Walker reflects back on his first visit to Easter Island when Antonio Haoa had told him that the island's name was Te Pito te Henua:

Furthermore, if any place on the face of the earth could be called "The Earth's Bellybutton", the plate tectonics revolution had now proven that it was near Easter Island. The ridge system there was found to be the most rapidly spreading on earth. It was so fast that in some places it couldn't keep up with itself, and small mini-plates were forming. In 1992 and 1993, hundreds of volcanoes were found along this ridge system. Also, many hundreds of thousands of years earlier, Easter had been right on the axis of this most rapidly spreading ridge center. Easter itself was formed by the energy (lava) traveling through umbilical columns of conduits from its Mother (the mantle), which gives birth to all of the earth's crust. Easter Island is now merely a remnant of that birthing process (i.e., a bellybutton).

I found this to be a nice little read, written for the layperson who will have particular interest to linking El Niños and the climate changes associated with them to both the discovery of Easter Island and changes to the society due to drought and the subsequent food shortages.

***El mundo submarino de Isla de Pascua/
The Underwater World of Easter Island***

Michel García, 2000 S.E.E.M. Orca Ltda, Chile

Review by Georgia Lee

Full color, 28 pages, text in English and Spanish. This slim book provides a stunning view of the underwater world of Easter Island, a view denied to non-scuba divers. García arrived to Easter Island in 1979 and, together with his brother Henri, now heads the Orca Center for Scuba Diving. Michel is known for his excellent underwater photographs and has worked with scientific expeditions and documentaries. Aside from the underwater "vistas", there are close-ups showing fish and other sea creatures to be found around the island, views of shipwrecks such as the *Apolline Emilie* which went down in 1896, and an evocative shot of an encrusted anchor from some unnamed ves-

sel that met its fate here. The cover illustration is a real "grabber". It shows a *moai* under the sea, covered with coral growths, and a faint figure of a diver swimming past. But all is not as it appears: this "underwater scene" was actually from a Chilean soap opera of 1998, "*Iorana*". Price of book not given; interested parties may contact: seemorca@entelchile.net

Splendid Isolation: Art of Easter Island

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, December 11, 2001 – August 4, 2002, Eric Kjellgren, Evelyn A. J. Hall and John A. Friede Assistant Curator of Oceanic Art. Catalogue published by Yale University Press, New Haven and New London

Exhibition Review by Norman Hurst

Splendid Isolation presents Easter Island objects from North American public and private collections. The installation occupies the Special Exhibition Galleries for the Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas (A.O.A.) from December 11, 2001 to August 4, 2002.

In an exhibition of scant 50 objects, Kjellgren has managed to include at least two examples of every familiar type of wood carving, as well as an interesting variety of stone sculpture, pendants, gorgets and other body ornament. There are five barkcloth objects, three feather headdresses, three dance paddles, a group of weapons (including one *paoa* and two *ua*), and finally three *rongo* boards. Given the paucity of Easter Island material world-wide, the viewer should find this a well-balanced and representative exhibition. It includes important and well known, as well as newly "re-discovered" pieces.

Although the Special Exhibition Galleries for A.O.A. have been the locus of many interesting exhibitions, few have been as ambitious as the present example, and almost no others have been accompanied by a scholarly and serviceable catalogue. The catalogue includes a surprisingly positive letter from director de Montebello, not known for his enthusiasm for "primitive" art, and articles by Adrienne L. Kaeppler, Jo Anne Van Tilburg and associate curator Eric Kjellgren, who also wrote the catalogue entries.

Kjellgren has attempted what every good curator should in trying to locate and exhibit noteworthy objects that have seldom, if ever, been previously published or exhibited. There are a number of these from institutional collections that will be new even to most Easter Island aficionados. Notable among these are two barkcloth figures from the New Brunswick Museum in St. John, Canada, and a birdman figure from the Springfield Museum of Science in Massachusetts.

There are also many privately held objects, some of which will be fresh to viewers. Among the private collections represented, Mark and Carolyn Blackburn have lent nine objects. There are also two objects from the collection of Arman and Corice Arman, two from the Helois Trust collection (courtesy of Francesco Pellizzi), one each from the collection of Faithdorian Wright and the current collection of Raymond and Laura Wielgus, as well as several from anonymous lenders.

Visitors will recognize a reasonable number of objects that have been widely published and exhibited. The Metropolitan Museum itself has Easter Island pieces in its collection. Five