

Featured EIF Publication

Easter Island Settlement Patterns in the Late Prehistoric and Protohistoric Periods

By Patrick Carlton McCoy

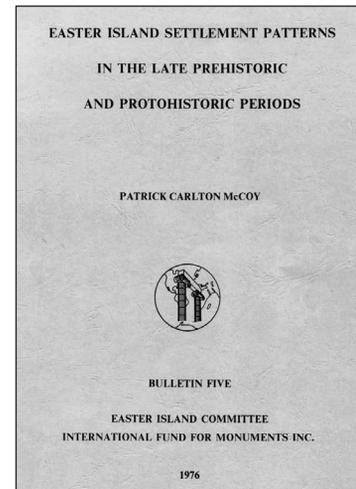
In light of the article in this issue by Pat McCoy, the EIF would like to offer our readers an opportunity to purchase this long out-of-print Bulletin Number Five in a series published by the International Fund for Monuments (now World Monuments Fund). This classic monograph was published in 1976 and is derived from McCoy's 1968-69 fieldwork on Rapa Nui.

The book includes a background chapter on the environment (climate, flora and fauna) and geography of Rapa Nui; there are maps and images, including a great aerial view of the Rano Kau caldera. Previous archaeological research is detailed, along with the genesis of the 1968 site survey, proposed by William Mulloy based on his assessment of the importance of continued research into the island's prehistory, due to increasing land use and the potential for destruction of undocumented archaeological sites. In the subsequent survey that took place, McCoy's responsibilities included surveying the southwestern portion of the island. The main goal of the survey was to systematically compile a site catalog in the area bounded by Rano Kau in the south and Vaihu in the northeast, continuing inland for about 2.5km.

The island was divided into 35 quadrangles and for the 1968 survey; the five quads completed were Rano Kau, Maunga Orito, Vinapu, Hanga Poukura and Vaihu. A total of 1783 sites were recorded during a little over 8 months, which was quite an accomplishment given the terrain, access, and the sheer number of sites encountered. Types of sites documented included houses, rockshelters, earth ovens (*umu*), chicken houses (*hare moa*), water catchment basins, canoe ramps, quarries, roads, boundary markers, historical landmarks, religious monuments, burials, earth mounds, rock art, and other unclassified sites. The survey obtained important information about the spatial distribution and frequency of sites types.

Various household features such as *umu*, *hare moa*, and *manavai* are described, and frequency is noted. Rockshelters and houses (*hare oka*, *hare paenga*, etc.) are divided into types and described. Maps showing locations of the various features and tables with dimensions are provided, along with illustrations.

The complications of developing settlement pattern models are discussed in relation to Rapa Nui. Ethnographic and ethnohistoric evidence is detailed for the protohistoric period using early accounts of La Pérouse, Beechy, Routledge, Lisiansky and



Aguera. Community organization and the economic base, including extraction of marine resources and production of agriculture (food and fowl), are discussed. Quarries, *ahu* and burial types are described, discussed, and mapped. Villages, campsites, and other residences are described and patterns are noted; the impacts of population pressure, warfare, as well as over-exploitation and environmental deterioration on settlement patterns are detailed.

The data collected indicated that on Rapa Nui, single family residential units were uniform in content and layout and that the household was the smallest unit of production and consumption. Individual residential units grew their own food and raised their own fowl, which could be exchanged with others during times of political stress or warfare. Marked social stratification was evident in domestic architecture. Larger, more elaborate houses were occupied by chiefly classes while common people had more simple dwellings. Typically settlements were self-contained permanent villages composed of clustered components that included subsistence living, communal events (dancing, chanting, feasting, or redistribution of food), and religious activities. Anomalies to these patterns are discussed.

The survey, which focused on the interrelationship of cultural systems as embodied in settlement patterns, was the first of its kind to attempt to understand the cultural processes and dynamics of Rapa Nui prehistory and as such, this is a very important study.

Due to the generosity of Dr. McCoy, EIF has a limited number of copies of this monograph, which would be a great addition to the bookshelf of all Rapa Nui researchers, or anyone interested in learning more about the settlement patterns and ways of life of the Rapanui who lived in the southwest sector of the island between the mid-1500s to the mid-1800s. We are offering *Easter Island Settlement Patterns in the Late Prehistoric and Protohistoric Periods* to our readers at a special price of \$30.