

Motu-Iti. Die Insel der Möwen (Island of Seagulls)

by Roberto Piumini

Originally published as *Motu-Iti. L'isola dei ga bbiani*. New
R. Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1997. 140 pages.

Carl Hanser Verlag Munchen
ISBN 3-423-62103-6

Review by Andrea Wagner

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THE MAIN CHARACTER of this children's book is Tou-Ema, who won the birdman competition and is chief of the long ears. Another young man, Kontuac, also wants to win the race and tries to cheat, but Tou-Ema is the winner. Kontuac meets with some friends and they try to kill Tou-Ema by pushing him down the cliff but Tou-Ema lands on Motu-Iti. The seagulls choose him as a leader and follow the movements of his hands so he decides to punish the people on Rapa Nui by sending the seagulls to destroy houses. The attacks get stronger and Kontuac confesses what he has done. Then people notice someone on Motu-Iti and assume that Tou-Ema is still alive. Kontuac is sent to Tou-Ema to apologize and to ask him to come back as their chief. But before Kontuac reaches the island, Tou-Ema sees that the seagulls are very aggressive and he raises his arms to warn Kontuac but the seagulls take this as a signal to attack. Tou-Ema returns to the island to the top of the volcano so he can warn everyone if the seagulls attack. His girlfriend, who always believed that he was still alive and innocent, brings food to the top of the volcano. One day she doesn't notice the warnings and protects herself with a piece of wood that looks like a face and the seagulls do not attack her. So Tou-Ema tells everyone to make a mask because the seagulls fear the features of the face. Then Tou-Ema asks the young men to carve the huge stone figures with eyes looking towards Motu-Iti to keep seagulls from attacking the island.

Moon Handbooks: South Pacific

8th Edition, 2004

By David Stanley

Avalon Publishing Group, Inc.

ISBN 1-56691-411-6

1,093 pages, maps, charts, black/white photographs

Review by Georgia Lee

THIS HEFTY GUIDE TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC has it all. Anyone traveling to the far-flung islands of the South Pacific is well advised to pack this book, even though it may cause your luggage to be overweight! Stanley has done his usual excellent job of including every last scrap of information one might possibly need before traveling across this vast ocean.

The book contains an amazing 120 maps, a time-line chronology, charts and sidebars on every possible subject with detailed information. There are sections on languages and the natural history of the various island groups. His introductory material covers everything from plate tectonics to coral formations, from climate change to flora and fauna. There is con-

siderable information on history, governments, peoples, languages, and the Polynesians themselves. Holidays, arts and festivals, food and drink, email and AIDS, all are covered, as are local customs and conduct, toxic fish and time zones, money and visas, and how to find cheap tickets. He provides tips that won't be found in most guidebooks, such as how to book into a pension in Tahiti, and why to not stay in an over water bungalow in those islands. A separate section is devoted to each island group: French Polynesia, the Pitcairn Islands, Easter Island, the Cooks, Niue, Tonga, American Samoa, Samoa, Tokelau, Wallis and Futuna, Tuvalu, Fiji Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands.

I cannot comment in depth about the entirety of this exhaustive book, only on the island that I know the most about, Easter Island – and that section comprises a mere 1.8% of the total.

The Easter Island chapter is correct up to the time when Stanley submitted his material, but things on Easter Island change with lightning speed – literally “as we speak”. Since Stanley went to press, the fee setup at Orongo has changed and reuse of the entry ticket is no longer allowed; the trail into Rano Raraku has been rerouted through the park ranger station west of the old entry. A new camping facility has opened in the village, as well as several new restaurants. And a new Tourist Office has been built.

I am overawed by the vast amount of knowledge about the islands of the Pacific that is to be found in this one book. While I am unlikely (sob!) to ever travel to all these islands, I do plan to use the book as a reference! Highly recommended for anyone who is headed out into the Pacific.

The Polynesian Connection

by Blake Edgar.

Archaeology Magazine, Vol.; 58(2):42-5. 2005

Review by Georgia Lee

THIS ITEM IN THE RECENT ISSUE OF *ARCHAEOLOGY Magazine* hit a nerve with this reviewer because it touches on two areas of personal interest: Polynesia, and the Chumash Indian culture of coastal California. Edgar's article describes research by archaeologist Terry Jones and linguist Kathryn Klar suggesting that Polynesians, probably Hawaiians, reached the coastal area occupied by the Chumash Indians sometime around AD 700. The connection is suggested by parallel technology – sewn plank canoes – plus linguistic similarities (for the names of the canoes).

As may be expected, this is a controversial concept in most of the archaeological community, but it has the backing of Patrick Kirch, and this connection was also seriously considered by the late anthropologist, Robert Heizer. The sewn plank canoe of the Chumash appeared suddenly, and was the only such craft in all of North America. The trip from Hawai'i to California and return would not have been an unusual one for the Polynesians of that time. It all makes sense to me!