

FROM THE EDITORS

IN THIS ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL...

WE ARE PLEASED TO PROVIDE a variety of important, interesting, informative—and widely divergent papers, all of which deal with various facets of Polynesian studies.

Our 'lead' author, **Roger Green**, needs no introduction to those who deal in things Polynesian. Green provides a commentary on some pertinent issues: sailing rafts, the sweet potato, and connections to South America. **Grant McCall** is back on Easter Island "...still crazy...after all these years", and sent us his observations on changes that have occurred. McCall's book, *Rapanui. Tradition and Survival on Easter Island*, first published in 1981, is now considered a "classic." It is suspected that his sojourn on the island will result in another excellent book. We are delighted to be receiving updates sent to us from his Rapanui sabbatical.

Ferren MacIntyre's study of climatic change and its effect on Easter Island, Part II, will leave half our readers cheering while those who believe climate change caused the downfall of the Rapanui society will be put on the defensive. Those readers who struggled through the technicalities of MacIntyre's Part I will be rewarded by his fascinating conclusions.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE are two papers, one by **J-L Candelot** of Tahiti and the other by **John Raffensperger** of Chicago. While these deal with different subjects, they present widely diverging views of the same petroglyph panel from Tahiti. Candelot discusses the lizard (*moko*) motif in Polynesia and uses, as one example, the Tahitian petroglyph. Raffensperger suggests in his paper that this petroglyph represents conjoined twins. These are unusual and rarely explored subjects.

As for the concept of lizards in Polynesia, Skinner (1964:1) suggests that folk memories of crocodiles from Southeast Asia were the basis of Polynesian legends about man-eating lizards. Many Polynesians (particularly females) still today hold them in terror and consider them evil omens. Williamson (1933, 1:81) cites legends of reptiles that violated women with their tails and, in some cases, the origin of mankind is attributed to this kind of happening.

Aside from one so-called Lizard Man (on the sea wall of Ahu Nau Nau), there are only two known petroglyphs of lizards on Easter Island, and one of them is huge: 330 cm long (Lee 1992:100). To extrapolate from a tiny gecko to a monster lizard carved in the rock is a considerable leap of the imagination. However, the lizard motif also appears in Easter Island's woodcarvings where a lizard head combines with human and avian characteristics.

It takes a disassociated eye or point of view to provide provocative and alternative ideas to a well-known theme. In this case, Raffensperger, a medical doctor, looked at the double-headed figures from Easter Island and Tahiti, and saw something else: conjoined twins. The incidence of "Siamese Twins" is a rarity, and yet it may be that at some time in the

past, it did happen—and thus provided a natural model for the artistic form. While it may be that two-headed figures may express duality in Polynesian societies and belief systems, it is possible that Raffensperger may be on to something. Read these articles and share your ideas with us!

References

- Lee, G. 1992. *Rock Art of Easter Island. Symbols of Power, Prayers to the Gods*. Institute of Archaeology, UCLA.
- Skinner, H. D. 1964. Crocodile and Lizard in New Zealand Myth and Material Culture. *Records of the Otago Museum: Anthropology* (1):1-43. Dunedin.
- Williamson, R.W. 1933. *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs of Central Polynesia*, 2 Vols. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

FOR OUR "LOOK BACK" FEATURE, we present another one of those marvelous true stories by adventurous souls who traveled the Pacific in earlier days. This issue contains a report by a Major Douglas and a Mr. Johnson, who published (in 1926) "*The South Seas of To-day. Being an Account of the Cruise of the Yacht St. George to the South Pacific.*" Douglas and Johnson reached the shores of Easter Island in 1924. They had first visited the Marquesas, Tahiti, and Rapa Iti, and stopped at Rapa Nui on their way home. Their descriptions of the island include that of an ancient Ford automobile, belonging to Mr Edmunds. One can only wonder how it got there, and what happened to it!

A REVIEW OF A BOOK ABOUT A KIDNAPPED MĀORI boy that appeared in the *Guardian Weekly* for August 9-15, 2001 caught our eye, for the story has a parallel on Easter Island. Dating back to the 1760s, there was a mutual history of kidnapping between Māori and the British. Sometimes the children were returned; others might be found years later, speaking another tongue. Sometimes they were enslaved or killed. The book, *The Fox Boy*, by Peter Walker (Bloomsbury), is the story of a five-year old Māori boy who was captured in 1869 after a battle near the Taranaki forest, New Zealand. He was taken to the city to be brought up 'civilized', dressed in clothes, and renamed by the premier of New Zealand, William Fox, as William Fox Omaha. This brought to mind a little known episode in Rapa Nui history. Sometime prior to 1841, a whaler under the command of a Captain Lawrence stopped at Easter Island for wood and water. They didn't find any. However, the crew did bring a boy around age 12 aboard ship and fed him dinner. He fell asleep. In the morning they were under full sail and the distressed boy ran back and forth on the deck, screaming and crying. The captain felt badly, but the wind was such that they didn't want to risk returning. They named him George Lawrence. He learned English and was found useful for helping to spot whales. When the ship returned to port, George went to school for a summer. He sailed the next voyage with a new captain, Thomas Marshall Pease. But after being out two years in the Japanese whaling grounds, George died, apparently of consumption. This story

came from the notes on the life and voyages of Captain Thomas Marshall Pease, as told by his daughter, Charlotte Ann Pease, and is in the Manuscript Collection of the Mystic Seaport Museum, Connecticut. The item was ferreted out by Tom Christopher.

TERENCE BARROW, 1923-2001

As we were going to press, word was received that Dr Terence Barrow died at his home in Honolulu on 31 August 2001. Barrow, well-known for his books and Polynesian studies, was born in Wellington, New Zealand, and grew up in Māori country. He was curator at the New Zealand National Museum for twenty years, then came to Hawai'i in 1964 where he was curator of the Polynesian collection at the Bishop Museum until 1968.

Barrow was the author of twenty books, including *Art and Life in Polynesia* (1972), *Decorative Arts of the New Zealand Maori* (1965), *Women of Polynesia* (1967), and *Maori Wood Sculpture of New Zealand* (1969). Our sincere condolences to his family.



Terence Barrow in 1964.

NEW RAPA NUI RESEARCH RESULTS PRESENTED IN BELGIUM

Seven papers were presented at the *International Union of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences*, Liege, Belgium (6 September 2001) in a symposium, *Environmental, Geomorphological and Social Issues in Easter Island Prehistory*, organized by C. M. Stevenson. A variety of topics was presented:

- G. Louwagie, R. Langohr and J. Mikkelsen: *Soil Characteristics for Crop Growth in Historical Perspective in the La Perouse Area of Easter Island*
L. Vrydaghs, Ch. Cocquyt, T. Van de Vijver and P. Goetghebeur: *New Evidence of the Schoenoplectus californicus Totora Arrival at Easter Island Based on Phytolith Analysis*
M. Orliac and C. Orliac: *Evolution of Vegetation and Architecture on Easter Island*

- C. Stevenson, S. Haoa and T. Ladefoged: *Agriculture in an Uncertain Environment*
H. Martinsson-Wallin: *Sea, Land and Sky as Structuring Principles in Easter Island Prehistory*
C. Love: *The Ara Moai of Rapa Nui (The Easter Island Roads)*
N. Cauwe, D. Huyge, S. Haoa C., and F. Forment: *The Ahu A Rongo Project: Archaeological Research on Easter Island*

All participants recently conducted original fieldwork on Rapa Nui. Some of the information presented was only collected and synthesized a few weeks prior to the meeting and represents the latest findings in the field.

The paper by Louwagie et al. is a first attempt at understanding the chemistry and productive capabilities of the soil with regard to raising traditional Polynesian crops such as taro, yam and sweet potato. This complemented the paper by Stevenson et al., examining how variation in rainfall due to elevation influenced agricultural fields and settlement patterns.

Discussion of the island's vegetation began with the paper by Vrydaghs et al., arguing that the *totora* reed (*Schoenoplectus californicus*) was not a later period (i.e., 14th century) introduction as suggested by others, but was introduced many centuries earlier. M. Orliac and C. Orliac used the study of wood cell structure and C¹⁴ dating to track the disappearance of trees and woody species on the island.

Prehistoric religion and ideology was discussed by Martinsson-Wallin who proposed that early symbols of elite status centered on resources such as larger mammals (e.g., dolphins) and pelagic fish. As agriculture increased in importance from AD 1300 to AD 1600, chiefly power was land-based prior to the collapse of the chiefdom in the 17th century. From that time, ancestor worship was abandoned and a single deity and associated cults became increasingly important.

The influence of chiefly authority in the construction of megalithic architecture was revealed in the paper by Love, who discussed statue transport. Love's excavation of the *moai* roads reveals them to have been built by cut-and-fill techniques. Especially noteworthy is the occurrence of V-shaped road surfaces that are incompatible with current theories about statue transport. The antiquity of *moai* and *ahu* construction was addressed in the excavation of Ahu A Rongo by Cauwe et al. who believe that this *ahu* with its large basalt statue has the potential of being one of the earliest on Rapa Nui.

All of these papers are scheduled to appear in the *Rapa Nui Journal*. So keep your subscription current!

Christopher Stevenson

WE RECEIVED CALLS AND EMAIL from the far corners of the world, including from Rapa Nui, in response to the horror of the recent terrorist attacks. Island Governor Enrique Pakarati, together with many Rapanui islanders, sent a book with signatures to the US Ambassador in Chile, conveying condolences and deep feelings for those who were lost or injured, and their families. The EIF and staff of RNJ join with the nation and the world in mourning.

In such times, it is comforting to travel back in memory Rapa Nui—to Ovahe's pink sand beach, or to memories of sitting alone on Rano Raraku's slopes while a lonely hawk soars overhead. If Rapa Nui didn't exist, we'd have to invent it.