



Easter Island.

Maunga Tari: an Upland Agricultural Complex

by Christopher M. Stevenson

Easter Island Foundation 1997 \$26

Review by Paul G. Bahn

Chris Stevenson is a freak in Easter Island studies. Over the years it seems to have become "de rigueur" that any archaeological investigations on the island should be published only after long delays, or, better still, not published at all. Yet Stevenson persists in publishing regular reports every year on his *Earthwatch* projects on the island. He is also perverse in other ways; for whereas most researchers have tended to focus on the more obvious, spectacular features of Rapa Nui's past, the statues and platforms which are relatively easy to study and attract media coverage, Stevenson chooses to zero in on far more modest traces of human occupation—minor domestic sites, or small upland structures where there is little to be found, but which nevertheless do a great deal to flesh out the somewhat lopsided picture we have of the original islanders' life, based as it is primarily on knowledge of major structures, ritual complexes and cave-sites. And not content with this, he has also pioneered obsidian dating on the island, a major contribution in itself, and in this monograph on some of his excavations he also presents use-wear analysis of some obsidian pieces.

This book is not an easy read—it is an exemplary excavation report, with all the humdrum detail that requires—but it opens with a valuable account of the different phases of the island's settlement system, combining archaeological, environmental and social data into an admirable synthesis. Indeed, Stevenson's perversity knows no bounds, for he then presents a series of hypotheses against which excavation results can be tested in order to evaluate the settlement system model. This man simply has no respect for the traditions of Rapa Nui archaeology—and we should all be deeply grateful to him for that. ■



Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos Handbook

by Michael Buckley

Moon Travel Handbooks, PO Box 2040,

Chico, CA 95927 \$18.95

Review by Kay Kenady Sanger

When I received this book to review, I asked my husband, who spent the better part of 1967 in Vietnam writing about the war for the United States Army, if he would like to read the book and write the piece. "Are you kidding?" he asked incredulously. "I can't imagine going there as a tourist and I have no desire to learn about it either." In his role as an information specialist, he spent some time flying around the country, writing news releases about Army advisors. He saw Vietnam's green beauty, marred by bombings, fires, and huge military complexes. His photos feature men in camouflage uniforms and rows of U.S. aircraft lined up on long asphalt strips.

Later I found him perusing the book with some amazement. The area where he was based in the Central Highlands is now attracting tourists with tours to Montagnard villages

plantations. Clearly, as the book's author, Michael Buckley endeavors to explain in nearly 400 pages about Vietnam, the country has made great strides in its tourism infrastructure since the Americans left nearly 25 years ago.

Battlefields have been turned into tourist attractions (christened "Cong World" by one Western reporter) and it's now possible to cruise down the Mekong Delta on a cargo boat or tour the rain forests by mountain bike with jeep support. Even the "Hanoi Hilton," the infamous prison where American POWs were interned, has been rebuilt as a bonafide 22-story hotel and convention center.

Buckley covers the three major countries of Indochina--Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos--in his 700 page guide. The region has become more easily accessible to American travelers only since the 1994 lifting of the U.S. trade embargo and the recent normalization of relations between Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and China. Tourists may now travel between these countries using roads that follow the old Ho Chi Minh Trail. (Note: the July 1997 coup in Cambodia may upset this picture of diplomatic harmony).

Buckley's candid style is typical of Moon Travel Handbooks. This is not a promotional guide in any respect. He honestly rates some hotels as "fleabags" and offers useful advice on such serious topics as how to avoid land mines and malaria. He serves up detailed route suggestions for bicycle, motorcycle, boat, and walking tours in all three countries and includes more than 100 easy-to-read maps. Charts and special topic sidebars offer short explanations of a wide variety of cultural attractions and history, such as the "The Lost Kingdom of Champa" and the "Betel Nut Chewers." And he tantalizes the reader with suggestions for adventure travel: caving, whitewater rafting, kayaking, and elephant trekking. The bulk of the book covers travel in Vietnam. Chapters on each of the major cities and the surrounding countryside detail the sights, accommodations, food (from *pho* to pizza), nightlife, shopping, and getting around. He readily admits that local authorities tend to overrate some of the country's attractions; many sites that formerly were splendid have since become casualties of the war. For example, the heavily promoted "beautiful Royal Citadel City of Hue" was almost completely destroyed by fighting in 1986.

Buckley's tongue-in-cheek style makes for some amusing reading. One sidebar examines the question of which distinct ethnic tribe, the camera-toting "Homo ektachromo" or the Red Zao women hawking their embroidered wares, is the most astonishing to each other. In another section he admonishes readers to be wary of drug dealers who work with authorities to have drug-buying travelers arrested as a "fundraising venture."

The last third of the book focuses on Cambodia and Laos, which also have been devastated by decades of fighting. Current problems with the Khmer Rouge, corrupt government troops, and an overabundance of land mines advise extreme caution for would-be travelers to Cambodia. In fact, Buckley suggests only a handful of places in Cambodia that are considered reasonably safe for tourists. The author suggests that "remaining a bipod is easy if you are alert to potential dangers . . . and stay on well-trodden trails." A trip to Cambodia is definitely for the adventurous and maybe the foolhardy.

Of course, a major reason to brave a trip to Cambodia is the recently re-opened Archaeological Park at Angkor. Buckley describes the 200 square km complex of temples, tombs, and palaces in a ten-page segment and recommends tourists spend at least a week to explore it all. However, a week of fighting off the vividly-described one-legged beggars and homeless children, no matter how splendid the ruins, doesn't sound like much of a vacation.

Laos is summed up by Buckley in less than 100 pages. He leaves the reader with no illusions about the difficulty of traveling there unless as a member of a high-paying tour group. In a country of scarce cultural sites, Buckley suggest the traveler shift focus to concentrate on meeting the hill tribe people, visiting markets, and shopping in small villages. He candidly rates the fabled Plain of Jars as a "dud," although the flight there in a light Chinese aircraft "does wonders for your heart rate."

Throughout the book, Buckley presents touring Indochina as a grand adventure. The traveler who uses this useful guide and remains flexible may be rewarded with a serendipitous and raw adventure of the kind seldom encountered in the late 20th century. Even my husband admitted, after reading this detailed and witty guide, that there might be some good reasons to revisit Vietnam, but it's still not at the top of his list. ■

Marquesas Islands

by Hideaki Sato and Yoshihiko H. Sinoto

Published by Hiroshi Shimonaka, Heibonsha Limited,
1996. 5-16-19 Himonya, Meguro-ku, Tokyo 152, Japan
Price unknown ISBN 4-582-52942-9.

Text in Japanese and English.

Review by Emily Ross Mulloy

This is primarily a book of exquisite photographs made during a voyage which the author and artist made in 1995 to the Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia, on the cargo-passenger ship, *Aranui*. Dr. Sinoto, Senior Anthropologist of the Bishop Museum, led the tour, which was made up primarily of people from Hawai'i, including a group *Pa Kui a Lua* which has been working to revive ancient Hawaiian martial arts, and which demonstrated these for the Marquesans at many of their stops. Another participant was Sato, a well-known photographer from Japan who specializes in photographing people and nature in their interaction in remote regions of the world.

The six Marquesan islands and the villages on each provided a rich variety of subjects for Sato's camera, ranging from spectacular mountain scenery, seascapes, archaeological sites, villages, birds, animals, flowers, fruits and food, and, above all, people. Sinoto's text provides the historical background from the 'discovery' by Mendaña in 1595 to visits by Cook, Melville, and Gauguin and, finally, to his own experience doing archaeological work since 1963, and pointing out changes in life style of the islanders over the past thirty years. He concludes with a discussion of his theories on East Polynesian settlement which involve dispersal from the Southern Marquesas to Hawai'i, Mangareva, and Rapa Nui; later, from the Northern group to Tahiti, the Australs, the Cooks, and

eventually New Zealand. Unfortunately, no doubt to save as much room as possible for photos, the English text is printed in such small type that one needs a magnifying glass to read it.

This book is highly recommended. If you haven't been to the Marquesas, it will whet your appetite; if you have been there, it will simulate nostalgia. Having made the same trip in April 1997 (luckily with both Sato and Sinoto aboard again) I recognized many familiar faces and places. A few years ago the two visited Rapa Nui. Perhaps they will produce a similar book based on that visit!

Religion and Language of Easter Island.

An Ethnolinguistic Analysis of Religious Key Words of Rapa Nui in Their Austronesian Context

Annette Bierbach and Horst Cain, 1996

Baessler-Archiv, Beiträge zur Völkerkunde, Neue Folge Beiheft 9. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag. xiii + 181 pages. Price unknown. ISBN 3-496-02576-X.

Reviewed by Steven Roger Fischer, Ph.D.

Published on behalf of the Museum of Ethnology, Berlin, and financially assisted by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, this impressive scholarly tome—in large, double-columned, A-4 format—represents the finest monograph on Rapanui ethnolinguistics to grace the scholar's shelf. A cornucopia of ethnolinguistic data from throughout the Austronesian realm, Bierbach and Cain's profound study affords the first truly professional investigation into the historical roots of Easter Island's spiritual beliefs as revealed through the indigenous Polynesian language of Rapanui. Based solidly on the strict canons of modern European positivism, it nonetheless exploits these to also indict the hitherto "Eurocentric bias" of earlier scholars who, according to the authors, have ever failed to recognize the true essence of ancient Pacific religious concepts.

Annette Bierbach and Horst Cain are internationally recognized Polynesian ethnolinguists. They have authored, or collaborated on, several seminal studies that have principally dealt with the historical religious beliefs of various Polynesian communities, in particular those of Samoa (Cain 1979). Their Pacific field work in the 1970s and 1980s—in Western Samoa, the Society Islands, Mangareva, the Marquesas, the Tuamotus, Rarotonga, Aotearoa, Fiji, and Tonga—eventually led the authors to Rapanui, whose unique position among Polynesian communities inspired Bierbach and Cain to elaborate a project at whose heart lay the investigation of "the spiritual background of Easter Island culture in its Polynesian context" (p. vii). In time, the wealth of information they gathered there compelled them to widen their scope to Austronesian dimension.

The monograph is quite breathtaking for the volume of its ethnolinguistic documentation. Essentially, modern Polynesian ethnolinguistics was pioneered only one generation ago: it was the eminent Finnish linguist Aarne Koskinen (1960, 1963, 1967, 1968, 1969, and 1977) who was the first professional scholar to apply the post-war methodology of the new discipline of ethnolinguistics—the science which treats the distinctive characteristics of races and peoples through language—to commonly shared concepts in the approxi-