

# BOOK REVIEWS



*Waihou Journeys. The Archaeology of 400 years of Maori Settlement.* Caroline Phillips. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2000. 194 pp, 96 illustrations, bibliography, index. Softcover. \$39.95 (NZD). ISBN: 1 86940 227 8.

*Reviewed by* CHRISTOPHE SAND, *New Caledonian Museum, Noumea*

*Waihou Journeys* is the edited version of the Ph.D. thesis presented by C. Phillips at the University of Auckland in 1994. Centered on the Hauraki Plains, its goal is to reconstruct, through data from archaeology, geomorphology, Maori oral traditions, and European records, nearly half a millennium of human occupation of this small region southeast of Auckland, in northern New Zealand.

The volume, 170 pages long plus appendices, notes, glossary, references, and index, is divided into seven chapters. The introduction sets the tone, showing that archaeological research around the Waihou Plains started early in the twentieth century and was central to the interpretation of pre-European Maori history. Oruarangi Pa, "an artefact-rich Maori fortification" (p. 3), has been used since the 1930s as the best example of a centralized political Maori site. Following this historical reminder, the author summarizes the four key issues she identifies as "fundamental to New Zealand archaeology" (p. 3): definition and mechanism of culture change, analysis of sites and settlement systems, impact of European culture, and use of Maori oral histories, before presenting in a few sentences the content of the book.

Chapter 2 presents the physical landscape of the Hauraki Plains, describing the geology, the soils, the climate, and the natural

environment of the area, illustrated by numerous maps. The main characteristic of the lower part of the Waihou River is its wetlands, with the lowlands affected by numerous flooding episodes and regular changes in the river's course. The most interesting part of the chapter is surely the reconstruction of the evolution of the lower plain over the last 2000 years, and the identification of the major impact of the Kaharoa eruption some 600 years ago, leading to the "deposition of large amounts of volcanic ash" (p. 32). A long part is also devoted to the consequences of European settlement in the area.

Chapter 3 summarizes the surveys conducted over the last 50 years in an area about 25 km long and 5 km wide, with the addition of the numerous sites located as part of the present work, mostly through aerial photography. This chapter is unexpectedly short, with the absence of any detailed description of individual sites: only three maps of sites are published, and there are no photographs of the studied area. This leads to difficulty for the reader in really visualizing the archaeological landscape. The different graphs of size of sites, etc., give just general information. At least one aerial photograph used for the study would have been helpful, especially for people not working in the New Zealand context.

Chapter 4 is a lengthy presentation of the research on the Maori Land Court Records by the author. These traditional claims on the land, mostly recorded for the Hauraki region in the 1880s, identify 135 blocks, covering a total area of about 14,400 ha. Phillips raises different methodological problems with these records, pointing for example to the meaning of fixed boundaries in traditional Maori society. Instead of presenting the raw data, the chapter is divided into different sections incorporating part of the information present in the Maori Land Court Records, developing, after the history of occupation, themes like changes in the physical landscape and economic practices. These themes are developed in the discussion, showing that more sites are listed in the oral traditions than found today on the ground, and pointing to the "unexpected finding (of) the fluid nature of the land use practices" (p. 75). Some of the information gathered through the Maori Land Court Records can be traced back as far as the middle of the eighteenth century (1760), but "reference to kainga mainly after 1830, means that most of the sites are post-contact in date" (p. 75). The late recording of the oral traditions, mainly in the 1880s, places some doubt on the reliability of part of the data, especially regarding the pre-contact Maori occupation of the landscape.

Complementary data on the post-contact period are given in Chapter 5, focusing on European records. The first part of the chapter summarizes the accounts of European visitors, starting with Captain James Cook in 1769, followed by timber ships, missionaries, and traders in the first part of the nineteenth century. Once again, the presentation is restricted to the data related to the studied topics, illustrated by some reproductions of maps, without the more detailed accounts that could have been published in appendixes. The second part of the chapter proposes the division of the historical period into three phases up to the 1850s. A single period, between 1821 and 1830, characterizes the total abandonment of the region by the Maori, seeking refuge further south in Waikato, before coming back with European guns to defend their

lands against other Maori tribes. The progressive introduction of foreign goods and then new settlers was paralleled in changes in settlement density, political centralization, and warfare, partly related to population decline. Phillips estimates that "there was a marked decrease in the Maori population resident along the lower Waihou, from approximately 2000 to 250 people" (pp. 103–104). This is a dynamic period, with evolutions in the political functioning of the society and the traditional use of the landscape.

Chapter 6 presents the archaeological data and seeks to find confirmation on the ground of the different dynamics observed through the precedent studies. The content of ten sites, excavated over a period of over 70 years, is presented. In each case, data on construction and layout, chronology, stratigraphy and features, and finally artifacts, are presented, before a short interpretation. Location maps, site maps, and some stratigraphies are published for nearly all sites, once again without any photographs of the landscape, individual sites, or features. The discussion summarizes the data, describing the different types of features discovered (defenses, storage pits, etc.), the diversity of the artifacts, and a few sentences on economic data before turning to concerns related to the history of the sites. One of the significant characteristics identified is the use of large amounts of shell fillers to elevate the ground of dwelling sites before constructing habitations, after parts of the Hauraki Plains subsided following an earthquake between 1600 and 1650. Soon after appeared the first fortified Pa settlements. This chapter could certainly have been more detailed, with, for example, more lengthy developments in shellfish studies. Not a single artifact illustration is presented, although the study shows major differences in content between the undefended settlements, most of the Pa, and the large Oruarangi Pa. In the general summary, the author proposes first a synopsis of the history of Hauraki Plains, showing how much "adaptation" was characteristic of the whole human chronology in the area. For example, the Maori settlers developed a tradition of storage pits, like in other places

on the North Island, before turning to raised storage houses, due to high moisture in the soils. Relying on radiocarbon dates, it appears that the local Pa were occupied longer in the Waihou Plain than in other places of New Zealand, although regular shifts in site occupation were still common. Major changes occurred with the advent of the Europeans, like the change in house form by the 1830s.

The last chapter, entitled "Historical Narratives and Critical Issues," presents a synthesis of the collected data. Waihou was the "well-worn inland route to the Bay of Plenty and the Waikato" (p. 161) and was thought to be a strategic point. Although the first settlements dating around 1500 must have been restricted to the high elevations in a very wet natural environment, the presence of vast fields of flax, used in various ways (weaving, plaiting, rope making, etc.), possibly served as a major appeal. Natural disasters, such as the eruption of Mt. Tarawa and the earthquake around 1600–1650, partly changed the landscape, necessitating adjustments in the use of the low plains. During the last two centuries before first European contact, oral traditions point to the regular intrusion and settlement of new groups along the Waihou River. The excavations indicate that the occupations of each fortified Pa during this period were short: "although 49 fortifications have been located along the river, no more than five may have been inhabited at any one time" (p. 163). The regular shift of groups from one site to the other and the later resettlement of abandoned old dwellings explain for the author the different reconstruction phases identified through excavations, showing a mobile use of the landscape and a dynamic society. This was also the case for gardens, which had long fallow periods, "possibly 10–40 years or so" (p. 163). Erosional processes indicate the growth of population, leading by the end of the pre-European period to the rise of more centralized power around the Ariki, the construction of bigger Pa, and the production of numerous prestige goods in some of the sites. The first arrivals of Europeans had a progressive effect on the region, with the new development of local

wars due to the introduction of guns. The abandonment of Waihou during nine years in the 1820s was motivated by the need to plant cash-crops in Waikato to buy guns. Rapid changes are identified by that time, especially with diverging claims of the returning Maori groups to the land. New erosional processes led to more moisture and a subsequent shift of settlements, some Pa being used by that time as graveyards. Population numbers dropped significantly, which "by 1850 ... may have been only a quarter of the previous number living along the Waihou" (p. 165). The disappearance of the traditional centralized power also favored group movement outside the area, searching for better planting fields.

Coming back to the key issues of New Zealand archaeology identified at the beginning of the book, Phillips discusses in turn in the last part of the synthesis the significance of the results obtained through this work. Discussing the mechanism of cultural change, she asserts that "this study demonstrated that the definition of any particular phase of culture along the Waihou River during this period of 400 years could best be described in relation to people's use of the environment and their accommodation of any environmental changes" (p. 167). By multiplying the cultural phases as proposed in the book, instead of a simple Archaic, Classic, and post-contact division, the author seeks to "describe a dynamic culture that was continuously changing, developing and re-forming, according to various environmental, demographic, economic, social and political agendas" (p. 167). The variety of data used in the work is justified by the fact that a "landscape approach enables one to look at the area in which people lived as something that shapes their existence yet is also shaped by them" (p. 167). The difficulty of the study was the diversity of the data, strengthened by the irregularity of the occupations in each site and the apparent mobility of the groups between the settlements. In this situation, a classic approach using only archaeological methods is not relevant and other data must be used in parallel. A good example lies in Phillips' use of Maori genealogies to date the late pre-European sites.

For the post-contact period, the image is complex. What appears to the author to be the major characteristic of that time is that the dynamics *remain* Maori: the inhabitants of the Hauraki Plains, for example, left between 1821 and 1830 because they wanted guns for local wars. Phillips asserts that “the rise and fall of community numbers was a common event prior to (the European introduced) diseases” (p. 168), and that it’s “the loss of the ariki (that) was probably the single most important development” in the early nineteenth century. As the author notices, “clearly Groube overstepped the mark in his ideas of immediate, universal post-contact change” (p. 168), as seen in the Bay of Islands (see also Bedford 1996).

The last, but probably in some fields the most controversial part of the work, is the use of oral traditions—as collected in the Maori Land Court Records—to reconstruct the chronological history of the area. Phillips outlines the unexpected diversity of information present in these documents, relating not only to landholding and genealogies, but to the cultural landscape as a whole. She makes a strong case for the use of genealogy-dated ancestors when data are cross-referenced with other information, and, quoting A. Ballara (p. 169) who says that “Land court evidence is best used in the aggregate” (1998:49), points to the central significance of these documents for any work on Maori history.

The final conclusion seeks to show the necessity of criticizing “certain issues, fundamental to the founding of New Zealand archaeology, which have been accepted and hardly considered again since the 1960s” (p. 169). The book ends by a very direct call: “I now challenge others in New Zealand and the Pacific to look for small-scale cultural developments which may lead to identification of the mechanisms of change, to employ settlement models appropriate to the people that they are studying, to recognise that post-contact change is not merely counting rusty nails, and finally that traditional accounts have a wealth of information if used with care” (p. 170).

The volume as a whole reads nicely and

is informative. The different data are discussed in logical order, although the absence of photographs of sites and illustrations of artifacts has already been noted. At the end, the reader still feels some kind of frustration, having the impression that the author’s choice to summarize her data as much as possible for the book deprives us from the more detailed and in-depth studies that have certainly been completed to achieve her goals. The absence of any discussion on the results of the carbon-14 dates is problematic, as this point is one of the key issues of the volume and has profound implications for all Pacific archaeologists working on late prehistoric human settlements in the region. All the samples dated, as published, fall perfectly into the brackets of the period, without any outliers that to my knowledge appear regularly for late sites. A more lengthy discussion on the archaeological data demonstrating short-term occupations of the different settlement sites would also have been useful, as other conclusions—stressing longer term occupation—appear to be possible to propose with the dates published. Finally, in the long-standing debate concerning the introduction of diseases in the Pacific by Europeans, the possibility of the impact of an early virus on the Waihou population after first contact with Cook in 1769 is not discussed. If this had been the case, then most of the information on “traditional” land-use, as recorded in the 1880s in the Maori Land Court Records, could correspond to a “post-contact” type of settlement. In a situation of regular epidemics, mobility of the different groups would have increased on a scale not witnessed before contact.

Notwithstanding these comments, the work published by Phillips takes into account scientific data and oral traditions, and is precisely the type of synthesis awaited by the indigenous inhabitants of the Pacific. Furthermore, by achieving the synthesis of over 70 years of often-unpublished excavations, the author also concludes a long-awaited work in the archaeological history New Zealand. These two points make the book a cornerstone not only for New Zea-

land, but, as the author correctly states in her conclusion, for the whole Pacific. Interestingly enough, long after the early attempts on settlement pattern archaeology (Green 1970), programs focusing on the same general issues as the ones developed in *Waihou Journeys* have developed in the last decade in Melanesia (Sheppard et al. 2000) as well as in Polynesia (Kirch 1997), pointing to the increasing interest of archaeologists to use different types of scientific data and incorporate oral traditions for a better understanding of the recent past of local communities in the Oceanic region.

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*Gardens of Lono: Archaeological Investigation at the Amy B. H. Greenwell Ethnobotanic Gardens, Kealahkekua, Hawai'i*. Melinda A. Allen, ed. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 2001. 167 pp, illustrations, maps, bibliography. Paperback. ISBN: 1-58178-008-7.

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*Gardens of Lono* is the story of the founding of the Amy Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden, and the story of how the Kona Coast of Hawai'i gained importance in both Native Hawaiian and Euroamerican Hawaiian history. The Amy B. H. Greenwell Garden is significant because it was a part of an *ahupua'a* (Native Hawaiian agroeconomic land unit) known as Kealahkekua—"pathway of the god"—referring to the Hawaiian fertility god, Lono, and the *ahupua'a* was at the center of the expansive prehistoric Kona field system (Major, p. 23).

Although Kona became famous for its

coffee during the historic period, it was also an important center of dryland agriculture prior to Euroamerican contact. Kona was the power base and central arena for political and religious ritual, and Kealahkekua, being in the center of this Kona field complex, was crucial in the political and economic development of chiefs, beginning in the fifteenth century and extending into the late eighteenth century, when Kamehameha I united the Hawaiian Islands under his leadership.

The story begins with Amy Greenwell, the granddaughter of a nineteenth-century Kona Coast settler. Because of her keen

interest in traditional plant use, she willed her home and surrounding gardens to the Bishop Museum in the 1970s with the intent that it be preserved specifically as an example of "pre-Cookian" gardens of Kona (Van Dyke, p. ix). Given that the integrity of at least half of the Native Hawaiian gardens was intact, archaeologist Kirch and ethnobotanist Yen initiated an archaeological study of the Greenwell land in the late 1970s. Archaeological research carried out over the next 25 years by numerous experts (including at least 12 years by Allen herself) is presented in *Gardens of Lono*. The research results include detailed site maps, descriptions of excavation work, artifact analysis, and associated botanical studies, as well as an ethnohistorical review of the agronomic use of the Kona Coast.

*Gardens of Lono* is a very readable account and provides a set of archaeological reports put together to produce a more comprehensible and holistic understanding of the history of the Greenwell property. In *Gardens of Lono*, Allen discusses the topographic, environmental, and climatic zones of Kona. M. Major presents the oral history and ethnohistoric accounts of the political and economic operations of the Kona Coast and its agricultural practices and organization. P. Kirch, M. Allen, and M. Major supply extensive reports that describe the mapping of architectural features, surface collections, and excavations within the prehistoric gardens on Greenwell land. D. I. Olszewski and S. A. Lebo describe the lithic (volcanic glass and basalt) assemblages and "nontraditional" (historic) artifacts collected from the surface and subsurface sediments, and H. A. Lennstrom and J. V. Ward supply the macrobotanical and pollen analyses. In the final chapter, Allen assesses the presented data and provides spatial and temporal perspectives of the Kona field system.

This history of the gardens of Lono documents the economic roles of Kona in general and Kealahou in particular. Even before Kona's historical entrance into the global market, a prehistoric field system had been in place. A series of agricultural practices, which began in the twelfth century, were recognized during the archaeo-

logical work. The sequence includes shifting cultivation practices (pp. 137–139), cross-slope terraces (pp. 139–140), parallel walls called *kuaiwi*, which were perpendicular to the cross-slope terraces (pp. 140–141), and lastly variously sized stone mounds placed between the *kuaiwi* (pp. 141–142).

The most impressive features of the Greenwell Gardens and the Kona field system are the *kuaiwi*, which are long mounds, wider than tall, in a series of closely spaced parallel structures. *Kuaiwi* extend hundreds of meters so they were probably not the work of individual gardeners, but the result of managerial input. The *kuaiwi* system is extensive, but is found only in association with fertile soils (p. 141). The ages of *kuaiwi* at Amy Greenwell Gardens are extrapolated from radiocarbon dates of charcoal retrieved from under the structures, which indicate fifteenth- to sixteenth-century construction. Substantiated dates from similar wall features in other locations, such as the cross-slope walls at Kohala in northwest Hawai'i (Ladefoged et al. 1996) are few, but indicate that they were contemporaneous or later than those on the Kona Coast.

Allen does an excellent job synthesizing the results of various reports presented in this book and assessing the interpretations offered. The various archaeological results lead her to argue for the inclusion of the Kona field system as part of a larger centralized agricultural complex that provided the economic support for chiefly political agendas during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The mapping and excavation projects illustrate in detail the development of the permanent gardens in the prehistoric Kona *ahupua'a* system, which represents a massive capital investment constructed not only to intensify production, but, Allen argues, for risk management. Allen seeks to address the questions put forth by other researchers (for example, Leach 1999 and Morrison 1994) who suggest that capital investment does not necessarily signify intensification, but rather may represent maintenance of the garden system. Allen suggests that, as in the case of



Amy Greenwell Garden, extensive architectural projects may be built for purposes of risk management. She goes on to reason that risk management projects may become part of the intensification strategy (pp. 148–150).

Allen assesses the results of the archaeological research at the Amy Greenwell Garden, and uses empirical data to examine the process of intensification and its archaeological identification. She argues that risk management strategies, usually eclipsed by a focus on the short-term benefits of intensification, are strategies providing long-term benefits. Allen bases her argument on the archaeological evidence of *kuaiwi* construction, and on the timing of their construction.

*Kuaiwi* dominate Kona's landscape, but are associated with prime soils in all Kona *ahupua'a*. It was only during the seventeenth century that people cultivating the Kona Coast moved into more marginal lands; here they failed to construct soil and moisture-preserving features like the *kuaiwi*, and this failure resulted in soil erosion. The lack of long-term risk management appears to be an attempt to acquire short-term benefits. Apparent shortsightedness left Kona's populations "increasingly vulnerable to both agronomic and demographic loss," as the same political forces that produced a cohesive agricultural system pushed it too far (p. 152).

Allen provides a convincing argument that variance-minimizing strategies (such as *kuaiwi* and stone mulching) enhanced long-

term production in a variable environment (as a bet-hedging strategy). Allen concludes that strategies with stabilizing effects buffered the Kona system against perturbations, and that risk management became a successful means of intensification. It was only when the area became more populous, or chiefly competition demanded increased production, that intensification without risk management developed (p. 152).

Allen advances a reasonable model to explain the agronomic strategies behind the system uncovered through her and others' archaeological efforts, and she has anticipated, and countered, criticism of her model by presenting a chronological sequence that shows a transition from risk management as a variance-reduction strategy, to risk management as a means to intensify for long-term gains, to short-term intensification at Kealakekua.

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*Sigatoka: The Shifting Sands of Fijian Prehistory*. Yvonne Marshall, Andrew Crosby, Sepeti Matararaba, and Shannon Wood. Oxford, UK: Southampton University, Department of Archaeology Monographs: Oxbow Books, 2000. 124 pp, color plates; appendixes, tables, figures, maps, photographs. Softcover. ISBN 1842170112.

*Reviewed by* JEFFREY T. CLARK, North Dakota State University, Fargo

Marshall, Crosby, Matararaba, and Wood present a summary of the various archaeo-

logical investigations that have been carried out at the Sigatoka Dune site over the last

40 years. The real meat of the volume, though, is their lengthy reanalysis and reinterpretation of the site complex. As the authors note repeatedly in the text, Sigatoka is a site of paramount importance for understanding the prehistory of the central Pacific, so any clarification of the site data is welcome. The authors are certainly qualified to write this treatise on Sigatoka, with many years of experience in Fijian and Oceanic archaeology behind them, and the volume is well done.

In the first chapter, the authors lay out in some detail the essential problem that they examine in the book. As they see it, Sigatoka has become an icon in Pacific prehistory. In the conventional view, Sigatoka is characterized by shifting phases of occupation and abandonment, with three cultural layers visible in the dune face, separated by thick layers of sterile sand. They argue, however, that this layer-cake imagery is, in fact, inaccurate and the significance of the site has therefore been misinterpreted. While the claim of iconographic status is overdrawn, the significance of the site for central Pacific prehistory is unquestionable.

The authors characterize the conventional view of Sigatoka stratigraphy as a reflection of "cultural stability or stasis punctuated by events of rapid change" (p. 3). They seek to reanalyze Sigatoka "within the context of a surface map rather than just a stratigraphic sequence," which reveals Sigatoka as a "lived-upon surface" on which "human occupation took place in a nearly continuous mosaic of shifting settlement" (p. 3). They go on to identify three purposes for the book (p. 9): (1) to present new information derived from their work at the site over the last several years, particularly a topographic mapping of the site; (2) to provide a summary of past research and interpretations of Sigatoka; and (3) to present their new interpretations of the site and the implications of that reinterpretation for Pacific prehistory.

The next five chapters provide context and data summaries for the Sigatoka site complex. Chapter 2 gives background to the dunes, summarizing their significance

and the environmental variables affecting them. Chapters 3 and 4 review the methods and results of the 1992 mapping project that the authors carried out on the dunes. This was a complex project and the topographic map that they produced lies at the heart of the reinterpretation of the site. The creation and significance of the map are discussed in detail, and the volume is aided considerably by the many derived maps that provide the visual context for site strata, features, excavations, and artifact distributions. Indeed, these maps represent a major contribution of the volume. Chapters 5 and 6 provide informative reviews of previous work at Sigatoka.

The next set of chapters, 7 through 10, deal with the reinterpretation of the history of the dunes and their occupation. Chapter 7 covers the reconstructions of the dune surfaces over time. Wind and sea erosion, on the one hand, and redeposition of sediments on the other, have been cyclical, although the net effect has been significant inland migration of the dunes, "at the rate of approximately 20 metres per decade over the last 30 years" (p. 67). Chapter 8 places the human occupation at Sigatoka in the context of the changing dunes. In the last two chapters, 9 and 10, the authors explore the occupation at Sigatoka in the context of the larger picture of Fijian prehistory and ethnography. These chapters also explore the implications of the Sigatoka site, as reinterpreted, for Fijian and Polynesian prehistory.

The authors argue that the conventional model of the Fijian ceramic sequence, with four diagnostic phases, is as simplistic as the conventional stratigraphic sequence of Sigatoka. And, the two sequences have been mutually reinforcing. For many of us, however, especially those of us who have worked with Fijian ceramic collections, this point does not require much convincing. Back in 1984, Simon Best laid out the severe limitations and unrealistic character of the simplistic four-phase sequence for the far-flung islands of Fiji. But archaeologists tend to like chronologies, typologies, and simple stories, even though we know they are unrealistic. They are tools that help us



think about and talk about the past. So, unless and until the simple sequences are demolished by new evidence and better interpretations, the conventional views are often used, especially when communicating to a wider audience that includes non-specialists.

It is in this regard that the Sigatoka volume is significant. Marshall and colleagues claim that the site is far more complex, and engaging, than previously surmised. Moreover, this complexity has enormously significant implications for our interpretations of the prehistory of the entire Fijian group, and beyond. If one accepts the arguments of Marshall et al., then one must conclude that the simplistic models are simply no longer tenable. The reality of the site must be taken into consideration and dealt with, however difficult that may be. But we can be sure that not everyone will agree with the authors' interpretation of the site (e.g., Dickinson et al. 1998).

The technical flaws of this book are relatively minor. Because ceramics are so critical to the site and its interpretation, it would have been valuable to the reader to see more illustrations of the vessels and sherds from the site; only one line drawing and one small photograph are presented. Tables on burials, which are discussed in Chapter 6 and Appendix C, giving information on age, sex, grave goods, trauma, etc., would have been useful. It also would have been helpful to have a contents list of the many figures, tables, and plates. The caption of Figure 5.2 is not correct, and

many of the maps do not display a north arrow or scale.

This is an interesting and informative book. I am reluctant to use the trite expression that this book is a "must have for all Pacific archaeologists," but in this case, it does seem to apply. I say that because of both the reference value of the volume in terms of what has been done at Sigatoka, and because of the intellectual exercise that the authors lead us through in rethinking and evaluating what we know—or think we know—about Sigatoka, and the implications of that knowledge for understanding the human experience in Oceania. At the same time, we still need to remain open to counter-claims and interpretations; the final word on Sigatoka has not yet been written. As the title of this book alludes, when trying to interpret the sherds and patches of archaeological traces, we are indeed often treading on shifting sands.

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*Splendid Isolation: Art of Easter Island*. Eric Kjellgren, ed. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2001. 8 × 11, 80 pages, 16 color photographs, 58 black-and-white photographs, line drawings. Softcover. ISBN: 0-300-09078-1.

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*Splendid Isolation* is a high quality illustrated catalog produced to accompany an exhibit of Easter Island artifacts that were on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

from December 11, 2001, to August 4, 2002.

The publication is divided into four sections: "Introduction: Remote Possibilities" by Eric Kjellgren; "Changing Faces: Rapa Nui Statues in the Social Landscape" by Jo Anne Van Tilburg; "Rapa Nui Art and Aesthetics" by Adrienne L. Kaeppler; the catalog of objects in the exhibition (36 pages); and a selected bibliography.

The catalog section beautifully illustrates the objects in the exhibit, which is the first American showing of art objects from Easter Island collected in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The illustrations comprise a diverse group of wood carvings, barkcloth figures, carved stone boulders, a *moai* head, very rare feathered headdresses, and a few of the famous *rongorongo* boards. It is a small collection, but Rapanui artifacts are rare, "old" pieces are scattered in museums around the world, and never before have these artifacts from both museums and private collections been brought together for such an exhibit.

Kjellgren's Introduction provides background information about the island and its history, including the influence that Easter Island imagery had on the Surrealists. Kjellgren based his essay upon secondary sources, and a few errors have crept into his text (i.e., Easter Island is 2300 miles west of South America, not 1400 miles, as Kjellgren states on p. 13). Two other problems are mentioned at the end of this review. However, the general reader who knows little about the island would find the essay to be an ample introduction to the island and the culture.

Van Tilburg's essay describes the archaeology of the island, focusing much attention on the famous statues and their use and re-use, how they may have been moved, and what happened on the island that caused the society to crash.

Kaeppler's essay on Rapa Nui Art and Aesthetics concentrates on Easter Island art in the context of the rest of Polynesia, and how these objects might have been used in ceremonies and rituals. Her chapter illustrates pieces of Easter Island art in other collections in Europe, allowing the reader

to make comparisons to those in the Metropolitan exhibit. She describes the artistic conventions that distinguish Rapanui art and suggests that the future creative arts of the Rapanui will be poetry, music, and dance.

The catalog is the heart of the publication and will be treasured by those who know and appreciate the art of Easter Island. The color plate of the "Naturalistic Male Figure" (Pl. 13, p. 52) is a knockout; a close-up of this figure is also used for the cover illustration. The wooden male figures have carved designs on their heads. While these designs are mentioned in the captions, they are not illustrated. As the figures are so rare, detailed illustrations might have been indicated. The text calls the additional head designs "fish-men": "... human heads and long flowing beards." This may be a misreading of the designs, but without seeing them, it is hard to judge. It is possible that they are octopus forms with human faces (Lee 1992: 164).

Five "Lizardman" (*moko*) are illustrated (Pls. 16–20, pp. 55–56), three from private collections. These wonderfully combined creatures with human, bird, and lizard attributes are fine examples of the Rapanui penchant for visual punning, where one form flows into another. I also found the photographs of the 'Orongo boulders (Pls. 2–3, pp. 44–45) to be of considerable interest. They were collected by the Agassiz expedition in 1904–1905 and are now in the Peabody Museum. Having been preserved in the museum all these years, the carving is sharp and clear. Similar boulders, still in situ at 'Orongo, are now faint and 'soft' due to weathering and erosion.

Some of the figure captions might have been more carefully vetted. For example, Plate 1 (p. 42) illustrates the head of a *moai* removed from the island in 1886 and now in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution. The caption describes the features of this head, "... with its robust brow, aquiline nose ..." Aquiline nose? Aquiline means curved and hooked like an eagle's beak. This could not be further from the actual features of the famous Easter Island

*moai* with their "Richard Nixon-like" ski-jump noses.

While some Polynesian words are misspelled, the average reader likely will not notice them. One such error, however, changes the interpretation of the forms. The flat female figures (Pls. 11–12) are mistakenly labeled as *moai papa* (pp. 50, 51). The word *papa* means flat volcanic rock. The correct name for these figures is *moai pa'apa'a*. The term relates to "sterility images" in Old Rapanui (and still in Modern); *pa'a* means sterile or childless. Métraux (1971:254) named these correctly as *moai paapaa* (but omitted the glottals); Kurze (1997) also correctly identified the name. The duplication *pa'apa'a* appears to be a plural marker, used generically as "images of childless women" (Steven R. Fischer, pers. comm. 2002).

Three barkcloth figures, out of only five remaining in the world, are well described and illustrated, along with a barkcloth headdress and a hat (Pls. 24–27, 38; pp. 58–61, 69). As may be imagined, these are extremely fragile and that they have survived is amazing. Created from reeds, wood, plant material, and barkcloth, they were painted with tattoo designs. Their true function in society is still unknown. To have all these barkcloth objects in one book is a rare treat indeed.

There are two inaccuracies that apparently resulted from the use of a limited number of sources, and these are important to note. Twice in the catalog the text states that Rapanui islanders were sent to the Guano Islands (pp. 20, 78) where they "probably died ..." However, not one Rapanui ever got to the "guano islands." The Rapanui who were captured from the island were sold to haciendas and as household servants around Lima. At that time in history, 1861–1863, the Chincha Islands were closed to everyone and were not functioning due to the danger of attacks from the Spanish. When the Chinchas opened for business around 1864, there were no surviving Polynesians in Peru. This subject has been exhaustively researched by Grant McCall (1976), whose dissertation is cited in the catalog references

but seemingly not read with care. As part of his doctoral work on the Rapanui, McCall studied the parish archives of the Chincha Islands (in Matarani, Peru), in the archives of the Peruvian government, and in the press of the day (both in Lima). As horrific as the kidnapping events were, it is time to eliminate the Chincha Islands as the destination for the captured Rapanui islanders.

A second item that needs clarifying is that of the name of Dr. Stephen Chauvet. In the catalog, he is referred to as Charles Stéphen-Chauvet (pp. 22, 78, 80). However, his obituary clearly shows that his correct name was Stephen Chauvet: no hyphen, no "Charles" (Hurst 2002:4).

The Selected Bibliography is very "selected;" many major books on the subject of Easter Island are simply not listed. This reviewer was somewhat taken aback by being cited as "Grant Lee."

Despite these blips, *Splendid Isolation* will likely whet the appetite for things Rapanui, and possibly open up a new audience to the culture and art of the island. The catalog brings together small but important works of art from widely separated collections and illustrates rare and exotic pieces. This is important for comparative purposes and for illustrating the larger corpus of the art of Rapanui.

The Rapanui artisans working today on the island will find the book to be of great value. Rapanui's woodcarvers treasure illustrated books that show their ancient artifacts that are now located in various museums around the world, and they strive to copy them faithfully from dog-eared photographs in well-thumbed books. It is a sad commentary that this is the only way they will ever see these fine woodcarvings, wonderful feathered hats, and eerie barkcloth figures made by their own ancestors.

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