its components. Only someone with a deep familiarity with both the available source materials and the island itself could have accomplished this, and Fischer has risen to the challenge beautifully. In Island at the End of the World, the reader will learn new details about even familiar characters, such as Padre Sebastián Englert.

Fischer divides Island at the End of the World into five chapters: “The Polynesian Frontier,” “White Men and Bird Men,” “Pirates and Priests,” “Rancho Isla de Pascua,” and “Museum Island,” along with a brief introduction covering the island’s natural history prior to colonization. The chapters are thematic, each covering a major period in the island’s history. The divisions reflect the shifts in political control of the island, and for this Fischer uses the metaphor of the birdman’s egg, and the ‘ao, which was the symbol of the power bestowed by the egg. He describes how that power shifted from the native Rapanui, to the megalomaniac Dutrou-Bornier and the missionaries, and then to Chile. The complex and competing machinations of the missionaries and the early agricultural landowners are particularly well fleshed out, providing the reader with the first really clear understanding of the period that nearly led to the final depopulation of the island.

Fischer chooses to tell most of the story in his own words, which helps to make this volume more readable and consistent, given the hundreds of sources he draws on. Here and there, however, he intersperses passages from various first-hand observers. Among these are some real gems, previously unpublished, such as the passage from a crew member aboard Captain Raine’s Surry, which visited the island in 1821, and excerpts from the personal letters of William Mulloy. Overall, Fischer’s voice makes for a clear and engaging read.

In the final chapter of the volume, Fischer outlines the major issues facing the island and its people today, such as increasing Chilean migration, regarding which he writes:

“Of course, this raises the issue of ‘identity’. For that is what the egg – the ‘ao, that temporal power that drives and defines the island – is all about. On present-day Easter Island there are four relevant identities that make up what it means to be an ‘Easter Islander’: cultural identity, economic identity, proprietary identity and political identity.” Fischer defines the present conditions on the island through the struggle to establish these identities and their meaning. His analysis is insightful and intriguing.

Fischer’s earlier work on the Easter Island script known as Rongorongo generated some controversy. It would be unfortunate for any readers of the RNJ to hesitate to read Island at the End of the World for this reason. Without going into detail regarding that controversy – as to do so would merely distract from the quality of the volume at hand – it is enough to say that none of the criticisms regarding Fischer’s earlier publications are applicable in this case. Even the most careful reader will find little to criticize here, and much to praise.

If Island at the End of the World has any weakness, it is that it has only a few photos, and those it contains are rather small. To Fischer’s credit, most of these photos have rarely, if ever, been published before. Although some readers may consider the small size and paucity of the photos a flaw, a wealth of Easter Island photos are already available in a number of volumes, some of which lack sufficient text to place them in context. Fischer has provided that context.

In addition to his 1997 monograph on Rongorongo and Glyphbreaker, his popular account of his work on the decipherment of ancient scripts, Fischer has also written a trilogy of thematically structured histories, one each on the history of reading, writing and language. I myself have not read these, but the genuine quality of the current volume makes me anxious to remedy that situation.

This is a volume that should be a backbone of any Rapa Nui library, at least for the Anglophone reader. There was a real need for a comprehensive history of Rapa Nui. Quite happily, the right author undertook the task, and for now, it is hard to imagine anyone else improving on it anytime soon. Someday, we will see a history of the island written by a native historian. That, however, will probably come with the next phase of Rapa Nui history, which as Fischer suggests in his final pages, is likely to be one of increasing autonomy for the Rapanui people.

Adorning the World. Art of the Marquesas Islands

By Eric Kjellgren and Carol S. Ivory, 2005


ISBN 0-300-10712-9

Museum Catalogue, paper cover; 128 pages, lavishly illustrated (83 color plates; 29 sepia and black/white illustrations).

Review by Georgia Lee

The opening essay of this excellent museum catalog is “Adorning the World,” by Eric Kjellgren who introduces the island world of the Marquesas and includes some great early photographs ranging from Louis Le Breton’s sketch made in 1838 to one taken by Pablo Picasso in his studio in 1910.

The second essay, by Carol S. Ivory, is titled “Art and Aesthetics in the Marquesas Islands.” Ivory, the acknowledged expert on the arts of the Marquesas, brings the ancient together with the modern arts of today and discusses the artistic traditions and their likely sources. Ivory discusses the pan-Polynesian lack of a word for “art” in the Western sense, the importance of tattoo, and then the Marquesan design system, which is so distinctive. The next section deals with Tiki and the way the human body was/is used in Marquesan art, and this takes the discussion all the way back to Lapita, the roots of the Polynesians. Finally Ivory discusses changes in the arts of the Marquesas that have occurred due to changing economics and new influences. In an upbeat ending, Ivory notes the profound effects that have occurred as a result of arts festivals, sparking a cultural revival, and the creation of cooperative associations to market local Marquesan products.

The remainder of this upscale book is the catalog of the exhibit. Pieces exhibited have been brought in from private collections, most notably that of Mark and Carolyn Blackburn of Hawaii‘i; the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; Bishop Museum, Hawaii‘i; American Museum of Natural History, New York; Peabody Essex Museum, Salem; the Field Museum, Chicago; Peabody Museum, Cambridge; the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; and of course, the Met’s own collections. The color plates are glori-

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ous and the objects and early prints and etchings that are displayed are breathtaking. A glossary, references, and index are included.

Those who are fortunate enough to visit this exhibit will certainly want a catalog to take home with them, but those who cannot visit the museum and have any interest in Pacific cultures, and particularly in the Marquesas Islands, simply must obtain a copy of this catalog. Highly recommended. 

Adorning the World: Art of the Marquesas Islands remains at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue and 82nd Street, New York (212)535-7710, through January 15th, 2006.

Kibo: Le Serment gravé. Essai de synthèse sur les pétrogllyphes calédoniens.

ANYONE INTERESTED IN PETROGLYPHS will appreciate this book. It consists of five chapters plus an introduction, conclusion, and seven addenda. The book is extensively illustrated, as books that concern rock art should be. There are black and white photographs, line drawings, and maps.

The "General Introduction" discusses the peopling of the area, the expansion of the Lapita tradition, the Polynesian triangle, and the impact of Europeans into these areas.

Chapter 1 is titled, "La recherché sur les pétrogllyphes: historique d’un sujet controversé" and here we find the history of research on the subject, including early studies by Luquet, Archambaut, and others.

Chapter 2, "Les pétrogllyphes calédoniens: données archéologiques," defines terms, describes the techniques used in creating them, the constraints posed by terrain, and the techniques of carving. This chapter shows the various motifs in conjunction with detailed maps that indicate where the motifs occur in the landscape. For those who are fascinated by petroglyphs, this chapter is amazing.

Chapter 3, "Proposition de typologie des pétrogllyphes de Nouvelle-Calédonie," places the various design types into categories, all fully illustrated, charted, and tallied.

Chapter 4, "Les données de traditions orales kanakes sur les pétrogllyphes calédoniens" provides information on the oral traditions collected by earlier studies. Chapter 5, "Analyse", compares the petroglyphs with other art forms from New Caledonia, including the Lapita designs on pottery and motifs carved on bamboo, and the authors discuss oceanic comparisons, including that of Easter Island.

Following the "Conclusion" are seven appendices: "Le corps et le visage humain, base de l’interprétation des pétrogllyphes calédoniens par G. H. Luquet"; "Etude d’un motif de pétroglypse: la spirale (catégorie no 1)"; "Répartition des différentes formes de croix enveloppées (cat.3) en Nouvelle-Calédonie"; "Examples de motifs de pétrogllyphes calédoniens identifiés dans d’autres formes d’art de l’archipel"; "Des motifs de pétrogllyphes peints: l’exemple de la grotte ornée du Cap Bocage (Houailou); Le traditions de pétrogllyphes océanien"; and, "Corpus supplémentaire de sites de pétrogllyphes calédoniens." There are extensive notes plus a bibliography.

Although the authors cite my volume, The Rock Art of Easter Island, for the Rapa Nui examples in Annexe VI (Oceanic comparisons), they used Lavachery’s sketches, which are invariably in error (Lavachery sketched them freehand from horseback). In the same manner, the authors used the drawings by Cox and Stasack (1970) for their Hawaiian material, instead of from the updated volume on Hawaiian rock art by Lee and Stasack (1999).

This book, however, represents an enormous amount of research and the authors have assembled in one place many diverse studies by those who worked on these sites in earlier years. As a valuable resource for petroglyph studies in Oceania, it is highly recommended. I was personally very interested to note the incidence of the vulva form motif from Grand Terre. This motif, called "komari" on Rapa Nui, is the most common petroglyph design found on Easter Island. However, the authors refer to them as "Ellipses avec segment axial". Hey fellas, those are vulvas. I should think that Frenchmen might recognize them.

REFERENCES

In Search of Lemuria: The Lost Pacific Continent in Legend, Myth and Imagination
by Mark R. Williams
Golden Era Books, San Mateo, CA

"IN SEARCH OF..." IS THE LATEST EFFORT from the lunatic fringe and, of course, this book takes in Easter Island, along with Mt Shasta and the Hopi Indians. The following blurb touting this book is of interest, as is the person who wrote it: Doreen Virtue, Ph.D., Author of Angel Medicine and Healing with the Angels. Ms Virtue wrote: "In Search of Lemuria is a very interesting and enjoyable investigation into the ancient civilization of Lemuria. Mark Williams beautifully blends science and metaphysics in this clear account of both his worldwide explorations and his personal inward journey."

The book was also recommended by a publication called Planet Lightworker.

Oh yessss.