

Illustrative of this, my wife and I have been living in our current house in Phoenix since December of 2005 but looking at adjacent properties via Google Earth shows in one case a dirt lot where a grocery store complex is already in operation when we moved in and, in another spot, Google Earth shows only construction of another shopping center that is now in full operation also. While I might not necessarily expect Google to update Easter Island imagery that often given its remoteness, I am surprised to find that parts of the 5th largest city in the United States (Phoenix) haven't been incorporated into Google Earth yet. Again, I don't know how relevant this is — except to point out that the utility of Google Earth is less a function of its current nature or accuracy and more a function of the ability to view areas heretofore invisible for scholastic or other purposes. This is not a reflection on the merits or conclusions of the Hunt & Lipo article, merely pointing out an aspect of Google Earth that might not be common knowledge.

One final note that others may find useful: The satellite image of the island (Fig. 2, p. 7) is listed as “copyright 2007” by NASA when in fact it's not only the same picture used in Georgia Lee's *Uncommon Guide* and therefore dated to the late 1980s (as her book was published in 1990) but also, in so far as NASA is a United States government agency, all of the aforementioned images attributed to NASA instead in the public domain.

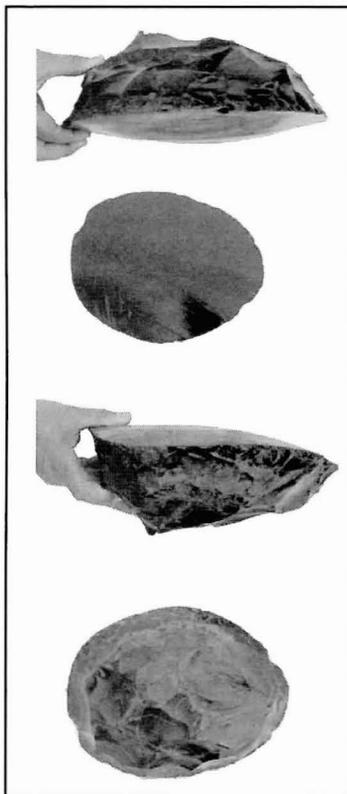
— Shawn McLaughlin

* <<http://local.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=22040&topic=10778>> accessed June 28, 2008

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MOAI SIGHTINGS

A *MOAI* EYE SIGHTING: The EIF has become privy to some interesting news about the apparent discovery of a large obsidian *moai* eye* that has many of us excited. On July 29th we were told the eye had been found at Tongariki “in the last week or so” and that Sonia Haoa was in possession of the artefact originally described as a semi-spherical chunk of obsidian 6 to 8 inches in diameter. Sonia was subsequently in touch with Chris “Obsidian Hydration Man” Stevenson who acknowledged that the only way to analyze it would be to remove a piece. Stevenson reiterated that the eye was “found near Tongariki” by a local islander, “in the water or near it”, so the report goes. Charlie Love, who was on the island at the time, reported that there may be some question about the age of discovery of the item, where it was found, and by whom. He described the eye as having “dirt on the lower two-thirds of it” and went on to say that it may have been found *last December*. Or, based on what some folks on the island have told him, he said it may have been found as many as *five or six years ago* and was possibly taken out of



someone's truck! Given the diameter of the eye, he estimated that, if it accompanied a coral sclera, then the face of the *moai* would have “had to be at least 2.5 meters across since the dang thing is a foot long & weighs 15 pounds. If instead, you want it to fit into an “older” *moai* head without the big sockets, then the head would be about a meter across”. He wondered if it was found during the excavation of Ahu Tongariki, and was then spirited away to sell later. Charlie provided the accompanying composite photograph (on the left).

A few weeks later Sonia provided exact measurements for the artefact: 26.6 cm (10.5") × 20 cm (7.9") in diameter × 18 cm (7.1") deep and we have learned that Chris will attempt to date the artefact starting in September, 2008. So far Chris reports that it looks genuine and has a hydration layer on it.

* In fact, it is not so much the “eye” as the pupil. The *moai* eyes, as we know, are made of coral for the *sclera* (the white part) and either obsidian or red scoria for the pupil.

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A CARVED WOOD *MOAI* adjacent to the door of the Museum of Samoa in Apia.



Thanks to Mimi Forsyth for bringing this to our attention and for sending the photo!

(More on the Festival of Pacific Arts in American Samoa on page 158.)

