

from the past, while the following Chapter discusses various models and views on human settlement including linguistics, racial typologies, and DNA studies. Chapter 6 examines past health and disease in the Pacific and closes with Chapter 7 which considers possible relationships of some health problem in contemporary Pacific peoples in relation to the evolutionary influences of the past.

The computer model developed to study the problem of survival in the face of wet-cold conditions encountered at sea by the Polynesians reveals that survival ratios are associated with latitude and are affected by wind-chill factors. As the author points out, the literature is awash with anecdotal evidence of chilling as the result of recurring wetness and wind conditions, even in the tropics. "For any group there is an approximately 5% decline in survival for each degree movement away from 10° of latitude; and there is an approximately 5% difference in survival between male and female in any group, the male being advantaged" (pg.85). The simulations suggest that some southern settlements (i.e., Easter Island and Rapa Iti) could only have occurred during unusually favorable weather and most probably during the summer months.

This book is surely not for the general reader with a vague interest in Oceanic studies. And its hefty price may put it out of reach for many students. The book jacket states that "This book will be of interest to physical anthropologists, human biologists and scholars of Pacific palaeohistory." Although I am none of the above, I found it absolutely fascinating.



The Riddle of the Pacific. John Macmillan Brown.

1996 (reprint). Softcover, 312 pages, 128 illustrations. Originally published in 1924. ISBN 0-932813-29-1. Adventures Unlimited Press. 303 Main St., Kempton, IL 60619 \$16.95.

Review by William Liller

In the summer of 1922, a distinguished Oxford-educated New Zealander, John Macmillan Brown (1846 - 1935) sailed non-stop from his home to Easter Island where he remained for five (or seven) months. Professor of Classics and English at Canterbury College, Christchurch, Brown had visited and written about many other islands in the Pacific. He knew well the language of the Maoris and had also studied other Polynesian languages.

The Preface to this book explains that the author has not made any attempt to give a full description of the monuments of the island, as he considered that Routledge's recently published (1919) book and Paymaster Thomson's Smithsonian article "have rendered that superfluous." Instead, he concentrates on the legends and the information given to him by his informant, Juan Tepano.

Brown begins with the supposition that there once was a large island to the east of Easter Island which he called Motu Matiro Hiva, the name used by the Rapanui for the basalt reef the Chileans call Sálas-y-Gómez. He suggests that it was this island, now submerged, that the buccaneer John Davis had seen, and he argues that the architects and builders of the *ahu*, and the carvers of the *moai* came from this island. His

grounds are that there never would have been enough food available on Easter Island to feed "the great armies of workmen" that he claims were needed build these great monuments "in a moderately brief period".

Today we know that the *ahu* and *moai* were not made during "a few generations", and we now know that the Nasca plate, on which Easter Island sits, is deep, inactive and sprinkled with a few dozen sea mounts scattered along a line stretching eastward from the Island to northern Chile. (See the several maps in the article by Edwards et al. in the March 1996 RNJ.) Most of the tectonic activity in the area occurs around 300 km to the west of Easter Island.

But if we discount the now-outdated theories that Brown relies on, there is much valuable information and some surprisingly modern conclusions in this generously illustrated book. Brown points out that "the only Polynesian island that ever developed the conception of a medium of trade was Easter Island; and its currency was rats." And in the chapter "The American Coast" he states that "We can dismiss at once the idea that the American Coast peopled or even influenced Polynesia." His claim is that Polynesians brought to Chile and Peru the sweet potato (*kumara*), the banana, the coconut, the knotted string language (*quipu*), the *umu*, the *toki*, the intoxicating drink *chicha* (*kava*) and the poncho (*tiputa*). As for the fitted blocks and stone statues of Cuzco and Tiahuanco, Brown suggests that the idea came from the Marquesas and Pitcairn via Ra'ivavae and the Australs—and reached Easter Island as well. Brown, Routledge, Métraux and others all relied heavily on the same informant, Juan Tepano: he was intelligent, and he spoke fluent Spanish and a bit of pidgin English. It is interesting to speculate on how our current knowledge of Rapa Nui might have differed had it not been for him.

Finally, I feel it is my duty as reviewer to note that the press responsible for reprinting this book specializes in books featuring lost cities and vanished islands and continents. You'll be glad to know that one of their publications explains "how the statues were levitated around Easter Island in a clock-wise vortex movement."



Where in the World is Tonga? Samantha J. Fisk, Kin Publications, 558 E. Double Street, Carson, California, 1996. Soft cover, map, 4 pages color photographs; 19 pages black and white pictures plus spot photos; 50 pages; \$14.95. ISBN 0-9644426-3-9.

Where in the World is Tonga? is for a young audience, written by a 16 year old author. It was begun at age 9 as a school report on how she spent her summer. Samantha creates a feel for living in Tonga, being among the people and the culture. She describes how she went from being a *palangi* (white person) to an accepted member of an extended family. A good choice for something different in the way of books for kids. They may even learn something. All proceeds will be used by KIN Publications to promote a greater understanding of Pacific cultures.