

## REVIEWS

Thomas S. Barthel. *The Eighth Land. The Polynesian Discovery and Settlement of Easter Island*. Trans. Anneliese Martin. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978. Pp. xi, 372, illustration, bibliography, index. \$17.50.

Barthel's *The Eighth Land*, the English translation of the 1974 German original, *Das Achte Land*, represents a major contribution to Easter Island ethnology. The work is based on an early twentieth century document, Manuscript E, which was discovered on the island in 1955. This manuscript is the most complete of several known versions (Mss. A-F) of oral migration traditions which were written down in the Polynesian language, Rapanui, as they were remembered by several old Easter Islanders (*korohua*); the likely source for these traditions is Pua Ara Hoa A Rapu who was born around 1840. The translation from the Polynesian and the structural analysis of this manuscript complement and correct various other partial or garbled versions of the migration myth. Barthel had promised earlier a complete analysis of Ms. E which now forms the basis of this book, augmented and tested through his work with informants on the island in 1957-58.

Barthel follows the manuscript organization in dealing with major topics: the island's first inhabitants; the earlier history in the migrants' homeland; the new land described in Hau Maka's dream; dispatching scouts to search for this land; the voyage of Hotu Matua, the first *ariki* or chief; Hotu Matua's arrival; his conflicts with his wife, Vakai, and arch-enemy, Oroï; and Hotu Matua's death. A final chapter is added to discuss the stone statues. One of the two appendices describes steps taken to authenticate the manuscript; the other appendix provides the complete Rapanui text.

The place name for Easter Island, *Te Pito O te Henua A Hau Maka O Hiva* (fragment of the earth of Hau Maka from Hiva), and the directions for finding it originated in a dream by a person called Hau Maka. Hau Maka's dream soul passes by seven islands shrouded in mist before discovering the last, the eighth (*he varu kainga*) which, as a number, refers to the most sought after, well-balanced perfection.

The traditions indicate that there were people on Te Pito O te Henua prior to the arrival of Hotu Matua's scouts, but, unfortunately, this earlier population, which is thought by Barthel not to be the common, legendary "original inhabitants" found in Polynesia, remains unidentified in the manuscript. However, to substantiate a pre-Hotu Matua population on the island, Barthel is forced to refer to evidence other than that of the

early place names and the myth of the giant Uvoke; he uses archaeological and linguistic assessments for the initial settlement derived from the Marquesas or Mangareva at A.D. 400-500. He convincingly argues against suggestions that this earlier population consisted of the Hanau Eepe ("Long Ears" or "Stocky People") or American Indians.

Barthel analyzes chants, place names, and the extensive lists of items taken on board the voyaging canoe and then delineates the classification systems and illustrates the use of numbers and names as mnemo-technic devices. Chants are analyzed as poetry on four different levels. Place names transferred to the island show a parallel arrangement to the names of months when paired and contrasted. Local names served as month indicators by giving information about the stars and seasonal activities. The long list of plants and animals gathered for the trip and stowed on board the canoe reveal contrastive pairs or groups based on systems of numerical, sexual, or other attributes. Plant name systems seem to correlate with lunar cycle phases.

A new distinction is specified between two kinds of *ariki* in the homeland which were contrasted by social rank and functional roles: *ariki motongi* are thought by Barthel to be political leaders while *ariki maahu* are designated as spiritual leaders. The *motongi* title applied to Hotu Matua and his mythical ancestors who were kings in the homeland; included among these are pantheon gods familiar from elsewhere in Polynesia, for example, Tangaroa and Tiki Hati.

The manuscript and Barthel's interpretations offer insights into the relationship between the two feuding factions on the island, the Hanau Eepe and the Hanau Momoko. Both groups are shown to be part of the same Polynesian population. Hostilities between the two groups began in the homeland, Hiva, during the reign of Hotu Matua and were caused by land disputes. The conflict was settled by force and, in the end, 500 [sic] Hanau Eepe prisoners were taken on the voyaging canoe as slaves to Easter Island.

Manuscript E clearly relates the importance of stone statuary (*moai maea*) in the earlier Polynesian society. Two small stone images served as star-voyaging guides for the scouts and the use of stone as a medium for ancestor-related magical power is illustrated in two stone images which Hotu Matua planned to take with him to Easter Island. Barthel suggests that in Hiva the statues served as boundary markers between the land and the sea, in this way they were supposed to prevent floods; apparently they did this unsuccessfully because flooding was the reason Hotu Matua was forced to leave his homeland.

Stone statues are said to have represented ancestors rather than more remote deities, meaning that genealogically close ancestors rather than

very remote mythical ones were depicted in stone. Translating the term “*moai*, image, statue,” as “*mo ai*, for the progeny or descendants,” supports the ancestor image association.

Both living *ariki* and ancestor statues were closely related to fishing and, no doubt, to other foods, as already documented. The ability of some stone statues to cast spells over fish is illustrative.

A general relationship between the statues and burials in the stone *ahu* platforms is indicated in Ms. E., but its exact nature is problematic. Barthel's informants believed the statues served as memorials on the first *ahu*, literally, “living face” (*mo aringa ora*) for the dead father and were to guard the burial chambers (*mo tiaki o te avanga*). However, this relationship is not at all clear from the archaeological record; numerous burials have been found in *ahu* platforms but, I believe, none can be unequivocally associated with the erection of the statue and, in fact, most burials in *ahu* date to the late prehistoric or historic periods. This association remains a problem that must be resolved with archaeological data.

Uncarved eyes are thought by Barthel to indicate that the person represented was still alive and the eye sockets were hollowed out upon the person's death when the statue was moved to an *ahu*. A comparison he fails to make—one that supports his argument—is that the small carved wood *moai kavakava* figurines which represent decaying bodies of ancestors also have carved out eye sockets with obsidian and bone inlays. Obsidian eye inlays are known to be contemporaneous with the stone statues. The recent discovery of coral and scoria eyepieces, reportedly fitting the large stone images, makes the parallel even more striking.

Barthel errs in assigning a too-recent date for the standardization of *moai* and the major period of quarrying activity. He bases his argument largely on Skjolsvold's date of A.D. 1470 ± 100 from Rano Raraku and concludes that the “remarkable *moai* belong to the beginning of the modern era. . . .” The radiocarbon sample cited was only 35 to 50 cm beneath the surface of a mound of quarry rubble. It now seems that a previously questioned reading of A.D. 1250 ± 250 located nearly three meters beneath the above sample is reasonable because dates compiled from the Tahai complex show *ahu* and associated stylized statues at A.D. 1100 to 1200 [W. S. Ayres, “Radiocarbon dates from Easter Island,” *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 80, 4 (1971); 497-504]. Because the quarrying of stylized *moai* was well underway by this time and, as Barthel states (p. 269), the stylized forms were developed locally, it must be concluded that their originators arrived before the thirteenth century. Barthel says that the Hotu Matua migration can be dated by genealogies and by the introduction of the Rongorongo script, but he gives no specific dates. I take his statement (p. 273) that the locus of statue quarrying shifted from the

west coast to Rano Raraku “shortly after the arrival of the settlers from Hiva” to mean that the proposed Hotu Matua settlement date would be around the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, too late for these migrants to have developed the standardized *moai*. Alternatively, Hotu Matua may have arrived much earlier. Available archaeological evidence about the earliest occupants shows strong continuities with the later, better known and clearly Polynesian materials, thus *if* two populations were involved, then they were both Polynesian and so shared a long-standing carving and statuary tradition.

Given the strong historic Tahiti-Easter-Island contacts, particularly from the 1860s to the 1880s, one wonders if other Polynesian migration myths might have influenced those written down by Easter Islanders; however, Ms. E shows its strongest linguistic links to the Marquesas, New Zealand, and Mangareva rather than to Tahiti. Scholars may question some conclusions in the book because ethnographic and linguistic data from different periods are sometimes collapsed into one temporal frame and because difficulties arise in translating words with multiple meanings; nevertheless, Barthel derives an impressive array of supportive and corroborative evidence for the document’s authenticity and reliability.

In sum, the discovery of Manuscript E marks a major addition to the ethnographic data on Easter Island; Barthel’s analysis of it provides an important perspective on the development of this complex Polynesian society. The work innovatively employs linguistic and structural methods for solving ethnohistoric problems and is perhaps the most complete multi-level structural analysis of a Polynesian migration cycle yet published. Insights gained here should be used in re-examining other extant Polynesian migration cycles.

William S. Ayres  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Oregon