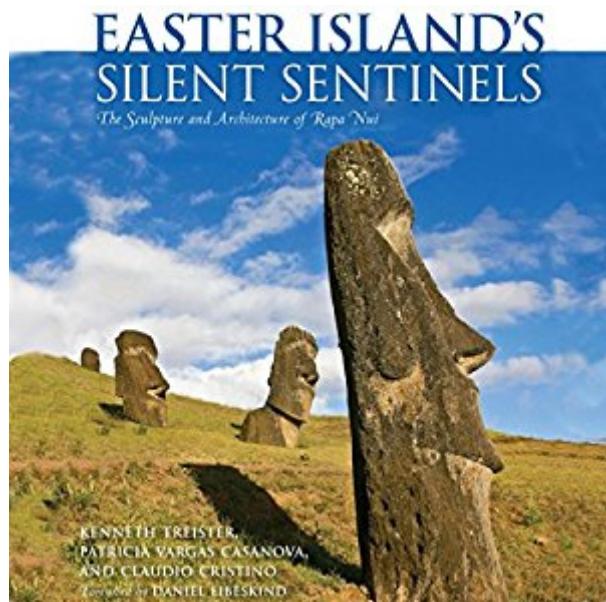


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Easter Island's Silent Sentinels: The Sculpture And Architecture Of Rapa Nui



Synopsis

It may be the most interesting and yet loneliest spot on Earth: a volcanic rock surrounded by a million square miles of ocean, named for the day Dutch explorers discovered it, Easter Sunday, April 5, 1722. Here, people created a complex society, sophisticated astronomy, exquisite wood sculpture, monumental stone architecture, roads, and a puzzling ideographic script. And then they went about sculpting amazing, giant human figures in stone. This audiobook of the history, culture, and art of Easter Island is the first to examine in detail the island's vernacular architecture, often overshadowed by its giant stone statues. It shows the conjecturally reconstructed prehistoric pole houses; the ahu, the sculptures' platform, as a spectacular expression of prehistoric megalithic architecture; and the Easter Island Statue Project's inventory of the colossal moai sculptures.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

We recently visited Rapa Nui and were lucky enough to be guided by Claudio Cristino one of the authors. The book is an up to date review of research on the mysteries of the island's architecture and sculptures. It seems to be even handed, including the work of other academic experts. It is readable and has many large and very good photographs and charts of important sites and findings.

Although I haven't read this book yet; we had the pleasure of having Claudio Cristino as a tour guide yesterday on Easter Island. His lectures were backed up by 39 years of education and knowledge. I ordered three books for all of us to enjoy after we return home. What a treat awaits us! It was an amazing day.

The title of this interesting book of photographs is somewhat misleading because, though the colossal moai that dot the landscape of Rapa Nui do appear to be standing guard over the island, the focus here is more on the stone dwellings of the early inhabitants. The photographs of the latter are artistically arranged and attractive to the eye. The text is less satisfactory, not because it isn't informative, but because it appears to unnecessarily avoid controversy. The few notes that are offered are of the "for more information, see. . . " variety but we are rarely told how problematic certain issues are. Easter Island archaeology is replete with unanswered questions, in fact, but the authors offer us little sense of that in this book. The short section on the Rongorongo tablets, for instance, implies that they represent an ancient system of writing essentially co-equal in value to that of other written languages of the past like ancient Hebrew and Linear A. But Thomas Barthel and others evidently think that the tablets are of much more recent origin and are largely mnemonic in character. Why not just admit to the uncertainty and offer suggestions for further reading that highlight the various debates? Everything here seems to point to a text that might have been more subtle and comprehensive, but which was forced by shortsighted editorial policy to take the form of summary description. Too bad. At least the photographs are good.

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