

Island. Skeletal evidence gathered from the island in the past by scientists do not have the Polynesian rocker jaw, but distinctive Caucasoid craniofacial features. The images of the ancients are preserved to this day in the Easter Island Moai statues as narrow featured, long-eared people with red top knots. One of the statues, much older than the others, is of a kneeling man, similar to the kneeling statues of Tiahuanaco, on the shores of Lake Titicaca.

Redheads are easily traced

Redheads were common in New Zealand when Captain Cook visited our shores, as were people with blue-green eyes. Red hair was also common in Peru, where tens of thousands of trussed mummies with very fine, auburn-red hair were found in beautifully woven mummy bags around the Nazca Lines in Peru. This reddish hair colour is found on only a very small percentage of the world's population (about 1-2%). The largest, present-day concentration of redheads in the world is in the United Kingdom, where 13-percent of the population has red hair and 40-percent carry the recessive red gene. The gene is strongly represented in England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland and amongst the Germanic and Scandinavian tribes, Finns, Russians, Basques - extending to the most ancient occupants of Egypt in the Eastern Mediterranean (where the early mummies have red, blond, or other European hues of hair colour) to the former population of the Canary Islands in the Atlantic, the Gaunche, where the early mummified people found were ethnic Europeans. Testing of samples of hair from the mummies in Peru has found that it is much finer than samples taken from present day Indians and often wavy, providing a further definitive racial difference.

Another large group of ancient pre-Incan mummies was found in 1925 at Paracas, on the Pacific coast - bodies considerably taller than formerly known Indians in Peru and with narrow facial features and rusty-brown coloured hair.

The earliest cave burials of New Zealand were observed to be Caucasoid people with red hair. These most ancient New Zealanders also buried their dead in a trussed, sitting position, alongside personal possessions, in much the same manner as is found with the Nazca mummies. The mummies of the Nazca region are of tall stature, Caucasoid, dolichocephalic-cranium, long thin faced people with typical European hues of multi-coloured hair. Could the tall people whose bones lie hidden in burial caves across our land be descendants of those who sailed west across the Pacific from the coast of Peru? The daring voyage of the Kon-Tiki proved that this was entirely possible.

It is common practice to classify all people who were in New Zealand when Captain Cook visited as "Maori" and to assume that all were of Polynesian ancestry. Yet, there is ample evidence that far from being branches of one people, there were many varied lines of peoples who sailed to and from these shores in antiquity. Perhaps the last word on the historic mobility of peoples across the South Pacific should go to an ancient chicken. In June 2007, a group of Chilean and New Zealand archaeologists analysed a single chicken bone recovered from the archaeological site of El Arenal-1, on the Arauco Peninsula, Chile. Radiocarbon dating and DNA analysis provided firm evidence for the pre-Columbian introduction of chickens to the Americas and strongly suggested the birds were of Polynesian origin. A searching question from people on the coast of South America provides another fresh perspective. When shown photos of Maori digging implements and exploring similarities between the two peoples, they were amazed and asked: "Were these people OUR ancestors?"



Mural paintings from Temple of the Warriors, Chichen Itza, Yucatan. The light-colored men in the bay are apparently packing up to retreat by sea, while others on the right defend a village, or are taken away as prisoners in the procession of victors and captives on the road below. (From Morris, Charles, © Morris 1911, through courtesy of Carnegie Institution of Washington.)



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