

Pakomio Maori: red-haired, blue-eyed key to Easter Island's prehistoric past

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Anyone who spends more than a few days on Easter Island and can converse in Spanish with the islanders soon becomes aware that they are endlessly fascinated by the variations in each others' skin colors. Katherine Scoresby Routledge, the English archaeologist, who spent almost 17 months on the island in 1914-15, was the first to note this peculiarity in print. In her book *The Mystery of Easter Island*, she said that Roggeveen's description of the islanders as being 'of all shades of colour' was 'still accurate' and that they themselves were 'very conscious of the variations'. She went on:

...when we were collecting genealogies, they were quite ready to give the colour of even remote relations: 'Great-aunt Susan', it would be unhesitatingly stated, was 'white', and 'Great-aunt Jemima black'. The last real ariki, or chief, was said to be quite white...It is obvious that we are dealing with a mixed race, but this only takes us part of the way, as the mixture may have taken place either before or after they reached the island (Routledge 1919:221).

In my book *The Lost Caravel* (Langdon 1975) and its revised and expanded successor *The Lost Caravel Re-explored* (Langdon 1988a), I put forward an explanation for what the Easter Islanders find so fascinating. I argued that they are descended from two distinct stocks, Polynesian and European: that their European ancestors were members of the crew of the Spanish caravel *San Lesmes* that disappeared on a voyage from the Strait of Magellan to the East Indies in 1526.

I summarised my Hispano-Polynesian theory and put forward my interpretation of Easter Island's prehistory as a whole in an article in *RNJ* 9(1) (Langdon 1995a). Three writers - Erika Hagelberg (1995) and Paul Bahn and John Flenley (1995) - disputed aspects of my case in the same issue. They also expressed the view that the recent discovery of bones of the Polynesian rat, *Rattus concolor*, throughout a 1,000-year-old habitation site at Anakena indicated that Polynesians were the island's first settlers and challenged me to explain how that discovery could be accommodated under my scenario. I am pleased to respond. But first things first. The problems of the distant prehistoric past cannot be solved without first solving those of more recent times. So my first task must be to answer Hagelberg's criticisms of my case for settlement by Hispano-Polynesians. To do that intelligibly, I must first summarise the debate so far.

My case is that the *San Lesmes*, with a crew of about 53 men, including Basques, ran aground at Amanu, 800 km east of Tahiti. The crew refloated the ship by pushing their four heavy iron cannon overboard and then proceeded westward to Ra'iatea, 200 km NW of Tahiti. There some of the men

settled and took Polynesian wives. Later, some of their Hispano-Polynesian descendants were drifted to Ra'ivavae in the Austral Group whence some of their descendants reached Easter Island, about 2,000 miles eastward. This was in about 1680. Long-resident American Indians were then the island's only inhabitants. They had no resistance to the infectious diseases that the Hispano-Polynesians and early European explorers brought with them and had largely been wiped out as an ethnic entity by the time of Cook's visit in 1774.

The principal - but not the only - evidence for my Easter Island hypothesis comprises numerous descriptions of European-looking Easter Islanders from Roggeveen's time onwards and the discovery, in 1971, that 18 Easter Islanders with no known non-Easter Island ancestors were/are carriers of the HLA genes A29, B12 that are especially common among Basques. All 18 islanders with these 'Basque' genes descend from a single man, Pakomio Maori, through his two wives, Terive Meitota and Angata. In 1886, Pakomio was estimated to be about 70 years old, or, 'at least the Biblical three score and ten', as the surgeon of the USS *Mohican*, George H. Cooke (1899:713,719), put it. Pakomio had blue eyes, red hair, a light skin and was remarkably European-looking.

My view that Easter Island had an American Indian population before Hispano-Polynesians arrived there has been reached as a result of my own investigations - not because I am 'a bullish supporter of Thor Heyerdahl's views', as Hagelberg (1995:17) wrongly asserted. However, I am in accord with Heyerdahl that there were two prehistoric migrations from South America. The first, in the first millenium of the Christian era, could only have been from Ecuador or northern Peru. It is needed to account for the island's distinctive domestic fowls of contact times and almost a dozen cultivated plants of American origin or provenance (Langdon 1982, 1988b, 1989a, 1989b, 1992, 1993, 1995b; Langdon and Tryon 1983). The second migration was evidently by people of the Tiahuanaco culture and must have occurred in about 1100 AD. It is needed to account for the island's megalithic architecture and statuary, including the structures called *tupa* that closely resemble the Andean *chullpa* that I described and pictured in *RNJ* last year (Langdon 1994).

I claimed in Langdon (1995a) that the recent findings of a study by Hagelberg *et al* (1994) in which mitochondrial DNA was extracted from 12 prehistoric Easter Island skeletons did 'not put the slightest dint' in my own case. This was because (1) radiocarbon specialists now consider the date for one skeleton used in the study to be invalid; (2) although the remaining 11 skeletons have been radiocarbon-dated to the 1680-1868 period, they are likely to be nearer in age to 1868 than 1680 because of Easter Island's damp climate; (3)

mtDNA evidence cannot 'confirm' the Polynesian affinities of the island's original settlers, as Hagelberg *et al* claimed, because no one has established that those people were Polynesians; (4) if all 11 skeletons are those of post-1680 Hispano-Polynesians, then they cannot tell us anything about any pre-1680 American Indians; and (5) as mtDNA is passed down only in the female line, it cannot yield information about Easter Islanders of *San Lesmes* descent on their male side.

In replying to these claims, Hagelberg said my Hispano-Polynesian theory was interesting and merited consideration, but was 'irrelevant to the fundamental question of Easter Island origins'. In fact, I did not say that it was relevant to that question. I said (p.9) that if my explanation for the island's 'Basque' genes was correct, then 'Polynesians of the early centuries of the Christian era could not have been the island's only prehistoric settlers, as one camp of Rapanui specialists claims'. Nevertheless, if my explanation *is* correct and the 11 undisputedly post-1680 skeletons of the Hagelberg study are those of Hispano-Polynesians, then mtDNA extracted from them certainly cannot tell us anything about the island's original inhabitants. Hence, the Basque genes *are* relevant, indirectly, to the fundamental question of who the original settlers were.

Not surprisingly, Hagelberg could not explain how the mtDNA she analysed does point to a lack of significant prehistoric contact between Polynesia and the Americas. The best she could do was to say (p.17) that if - as others have assumed - Easter Island did have only one set of prehistoric settlers, then the presence of 'Polynesian-specific genetic markers' in Easter Islanders would point to settlement only from the west. In other words, the only thing that Hagelberg's evidence does tell us is that people with Polynesian affinities were living on Easter Island in 1680-1868. This is not in dispute. What is in dispute is whether those people were Polynesians of unmixed ancestry or of part-European descent from the *San Lesmes*.

Having gone out on a limb without having consulted my two books, Hagelberg would now like to believe (pp.17-18) that Pakomio Maori's 'Basque' genes were 'introduced by a Basque or Spanish sailor in the nineteenth century' and that the evidence for his red hair and blue eyes is unreliable. But she presents no evidence to support these ideas. By contrast, I have published a bookful of evidence to support my case and there is yet more that I can bring forward here.

In the first place, I have pointed out that about 19.5 per cent of Basques in the Spanish province of Guipuzcoa have blue, grey or green eyes and that the same percentage obtains in the (Celtic) provinces of Galicia. From 10.4 to 15.5 per cent of the people of those provinces have red or fair hair. I have also published the names and places of domicile of three Basques, all single men, who were in the *San Lesmes*' crew of 31 men when it left Spain in 1525. They were Ortuño de Alango, pilot, of Portugalete, near Bilbao; Juan de Arratan, able seaman, of Bilbao; and Juan de Bolívar, chaplain, of Valle de Salcedo. At least three of several other Basques, whose names I have also published, are likely to have joined

the *San Lesmes* at the Strait of Magellan after a large companion vessel was wrecked there and the survivors had to be accommodated in the caravel and two other ships. On a *pro rata* basis, the caravel's crew on leaving the strait would have been 53, comprising 20 Galicians, six Basques, 14 other Spaniards, four Flemings or Germans, six Italians and three others (Langdon 1988a:41-2,279,281-4).¹

The earliest vital records for individual Easter Islanders are the baptismal, marriage and death records of the early Catholic missionaries. They are preserved in the Archbishop's office in Tahiti. However, although mission work began on Easter Island in 1864, no such records have survived for the period down to early 1871 when a Frenchman, J. B. O. Dutrou-Bornier, who ran a sheep ranch on the island from 1868, forced the missionaries to flee to Mangareva with more than 150 of their followers. The records have also been lost for the seven years and more that the Easter Islanders spent on Mangareva. This was until Dutrou-Bornier's assassination in 1876 made it safe for the survivors to return home. As Pakomio Maori's first marriage took place before 1862-63 when labor recruiters took him and about 1400 other islanders to Peru, there is naturally no record of that event. Nor is there a record of his first wife's death, his baptism on Easter Island, or his marriage on Mangareva to his second wife, Angata. The first time Pakomio does figure in the mission records is in November 1879 when Father Hippolyte Roussel, who had just visited Easter Island from Mangareva, gave an account of his visit to Bishop Jaussen in Tahiti. 'Pakomio, the Easter Islander who has come from Mangareva', he said, had been busy rounding up stock belonging to the mission. Two years earlier, death and deportation had reduced the island's population to only 110 souls (Langdon 1988a:215).

On another visit to Easter Island in January 1883, Roussel conducted nine weddings and baptised 22 children. One of the brides was Pakomio's daughter Rita (short for Eritapeta or Elizabeth, otherwise Isabel or Isavera) by his first wife. The groom was Anatareme Ko Ahoa, later known as Andrés Haoa.² Two of the newly-baptised children were offspring of Pakomio and Angata. One did not survive infancy. The other, Maria Matarena (Magdalena), lived until 1950. By working backwards, it can be shown that both she and Rita inherited their father's 'Basque' genes.

A complete census of the Easter Island population was taken on 8 February 1886, the day that Father Albert Montiton arrived on a 10-day visit (McCall 1976:310-18). The census lists 65 men, 41 women, and 52 children under 15 years - 23 boys and 29 girls. It gives their 'heathen' and baptismal names, and fathers' names in the case of the children. Pakomio and Angata had had another daughter by then, Maria Renga, known later as Hilaria. Three other daughters and a son, Nicolas, were born to them between about 1887 and 1898. However, because the island had no resident missionary then and visiting missionaries were rare, no baptismal records appear to exist for them. Nor is there any documentary record of Pakomio's death which occurred some years before Mrs Routledge's arrival in March 1914. Angata,

then a 'frail old woman with grey hair and expressive eyes' and a 'magnetic personality', died about a year later (Routledge 1919:145,149).

In collecting genealogies, Mrs Routledge (p.223-7) found that knowledge of family connections was 'often greater than would be found among Europeans'. In her view, obtaining genealogical knowledge was important, for if there had been 'two peoples on Easter Island', then the division of the islanders into clans was one place 'where we must at least look for it'. However, only in one instance could she get beyond the great-grandfather of her informant, and for many of her informants helping her to compile family trees was 'not a very popular line of research'. Those that she did compile are now preserved in the library of the Royal Geographical Society, London (Routledge 1911-23). They do not include a tree for the Pakomio family, but they often state that the persons recorded had red, fair or black hair and white skin.

Six of Pakomio Maori's seven children by his two wives who survived to adulthood figure in a census taken by a Spanish priest, Father Bienvenido de Estella (1921:60-74), during a visit to Easter Island in 1918. All were married by then and most had children of their own.

On 31 December 1934, another census was taken by Israel Drapkin (1935), a Chilean scientist with the Franco-Belgian expedition of Alfred Métraux and Henri Lavachery. This census, in the Chilean fashion, lists all the islanders by their dual surnames (father's and mother's), together with their baptismal names, sex, age, civil status, number of children in the case of women, and *grado de mestizaje* (percentage of mixed blood). By that time, Pakomio's daughter Rita was dead. But three of her six children by Andrés Haoa (surnamed Haoa Pakomio) were still living, as were five children by one of them, plus Pakomio's six children by Angata (surnamed Pakomio Angata), their spouses, and a total of 31 children by them. All were listed as being of pure Easter Island descent. The total islander population then stood at 456. Of these, Drapkin listed 159 as 'pure-bloods'. However, the number was actually higher, as several islanders who had been born in Tahiti of Easter Island parents were listed as Tahitians - an error that affected the status of their children.

Between Drapkin's time and the early 1970s, several biological investigators carried out tests among the reputedly pure-blooded islanders (e.g. Sandoval and Wilhelm 1945). As they usually published the names and ages of their subjects and as such people are frequently mentioned in books, anyone interested can acquire a good knowledge of the family histories of the pure-bloods from published information. Thus, when I went to Easter Island in October 1977 under a fellowship from the Australian National University with the express purpose of learning everything I could about Pakomio Maori, his descendants and others, I went armed with genealogies that I had compiled in Australia. I left photocopies of them at home so that afterwards I could readily identify anything I altered or added on Easter Island. My experience as a genealogist was the same as Mrs Routledge's. Almost as a matter of course, my informants told

me the skin color, hair color and eye color of people under discussion.

Hagelberg has opined that my claim that Pakomio Maori had red hair, blue eyes, etc. must be based on anecdotal evidence. This is not so. I first heard of Pakomio's light features from a noted Easter Island woman, Victoria Rapahango, who remembered him from her girlhood. I later found ways to verify her information.

I gave an account of what Mrs Rapahango told me in a letter to my wife of October 13, 1977, three days after I arrived on Easter Island. I said I had sat next to a Chilean woman on my flight from Tahiti and had spoken Spanish throughout the night as if I had never stopped speaking it' 24 years earlier after returning to Australia from four years in South America and Spain. I went on:

Within a few hours of my arrival, Rosa Cardinali [in whose pensión I am staying] or her 27-year-old daughter had put me in touch with two of the oldest local residents - José Fati and Victoria Rapahango - and during the past three days I have spent many hours talking to them, and to several other people. After treading a little gingerly at first, I found that no islander was at all averse to having a 16th century Spaniard for an ancestor - in fact, that they readily accepted my theory as the explanation for the frequent occurrence of light skins, hair and eyes, and European features among their compatriots of pure descent. Victoria Rapahango, who will be 80 next year, and who has a fantastic knowledge of island genealogies and history, told me long before I had said anything about lost Spaniards that Pakomio Maori (the ancestor of all the people with 'Basque genes') had red hair, blue eyes, etc.; that she well remembered him; that he had died when she was 10 or 11 years old from a hand wound caused by the fin of fish that became infected. Victoria estimates that he must have been about 84 when he died, which takes his birth date back to 1826 or thereabouts. This, and the fact that blue eyes are recessive and can only be passed on if you have two parents with blue-eye genes, virtually eliminates (or does eliminate) all possibility of modern sailors being responsible for the light features of E.I.; but needless to say I am collecting every other scrap of evidence to hammer the point home.

My statement that Victoria would be 80 next year, i.e. 1978, was based on a genealogy I had compiled in Australia. In fact, she celebrated her 80th birthday during my stay on the island. This makes Pakomio's date of birth 1823 or 1824, according to her reckoning. However, Victoria also told me that Pakomio could have died as late as 1909 or 1910, with 1909 the 'more probable' date, which would bring his birth date forward to 1825 or even 1826.

The discrepancy between Cooke's estimate of Pakomio's age in 1886 and Victoria's estimate of his age at death will be taken up later on. For the moment, I will deal only with evidence for Pakomio's light features as Hagelberg claimed

that this kind of evidence is unreliable and subject to exaggeration.

Victoria Rapahango's actual words in relation to Pakomio's features were that he had *ojos azules* (blue eyes), *cabello rubio/rojo*³ (red hair) and skin that was *blanquito*, which I took to mean 'very white'. He was very strong and had neither a beard nor hair on his chest. 'I used to see him a lot', Victoria said.

Pakomio's daughter Rita by his first wife was known to Victoria as Isavera (Isabel). She was 'very like her father', but did not have his light skin. On the other hand, she had freckles, as did most members of her family.

Victoria described Pakomio's second wife Angata as *morena*, which my dictionary defines as brown, dark-brown, dark, tawny, swarthy. She had big brown eyes and black hair. Maria Magdalena, her first daughter by Pakomio, was *morena pálida*, and her husband, Timoteo Pate Vakatukuonge, was of the same complexion.

Hilaria, the second daughter, had bluish eyes (*ojos un poco azul*), reddish hair and a white skin. Her husband, José, Atan Aharekaihiva, a son of the island's second last king who died in 1892, was *moreno pálido* with black hair.

As Nicolas Pakomio, the only surviving sibling of Maria Magdalena and Hilaria lived next door to Rosa Cardinali's pensión at the time of my visit, I took the opportunity to ask him about the coloration of his sisters and he confirmed what Victoria said. Nicolas, then about 79, was partially blind. I described him in my notebook as 'quite European-looking' with brown eyes.

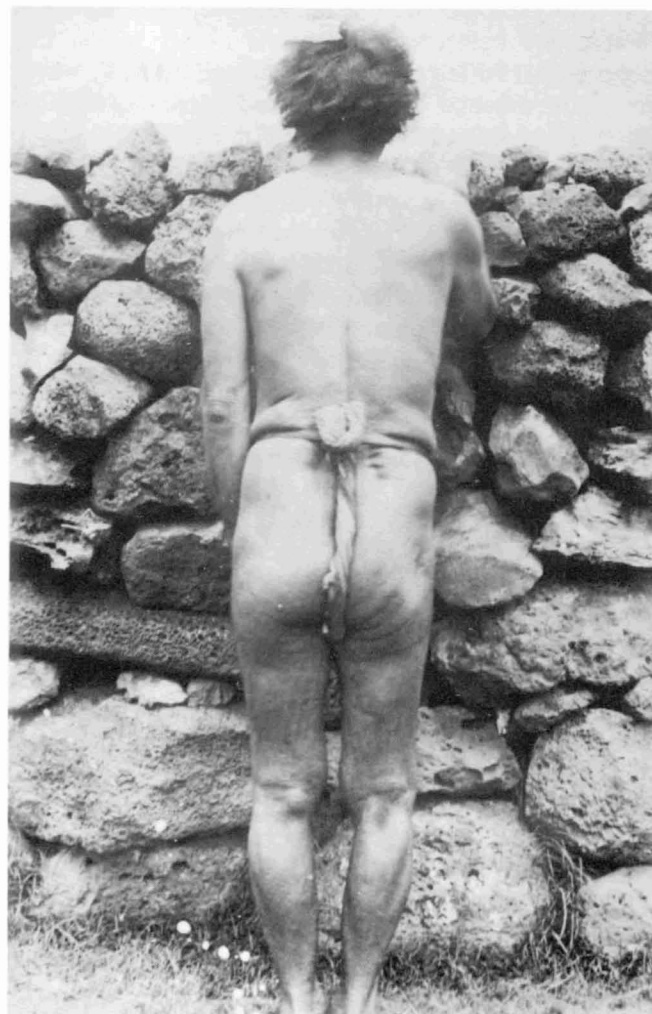
In the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, a week or two later, I found two photographs of Pakomio taken during the USS *Mohican's* visit of 1886. One, in which he posed with only a *hami* or loin-cloth on, undoubtedly proved that his skin was white; both proved that his hair was certainly light in color; and both suggested that his age, then, was round about 70.

The only other writer who has mentioned Pakomio's light features in print is the anthropologist Grant McCall (1980:139). He says that when Pakomio returned to his homeland after being kidnaped by the Peruvians, he was landed at Hanga o Ho'onu. As the skiff taking him ashore bobbed towards the beach, Pakomio pulled a borrowed woman's shawl over his head and shoulders so that his enemies in that landing place 'could not recognise him by his extraordinary red hair'.

Hilaria's light features are mentioned in Heyerdahl's book *Aku-Aku*, a popular account of the Norwegian Archaeological Expedition to Easter Island of 1956. The mayor of that time was Pedro Atan Pakomio, the eldest son of Hilaria and José Atan. Heyerdahl (1958: 141,231) described him as having thin lips, a sharp, narrow nose, and light skin, adding that he did 'not look like a native at all'. Pedro told Heyerdahl that there had been two kinds of people on the island in former times. Some were dark and some 'quite fair-skinned like you from the mainland, with light hair'. Although they were white people, they were genuine Easter Islanders. His own family had included many of the fair type. These included his own

mother and one of his aunts whose hair had been 'much redder' than that of Heyerdahl's Nordic wife. Heyerdahl added that the mayor's brothers, Esteban, Juan and Atan, also had 'nothing of the native in their appearance'. All would have 'passed unnoticed in any street in Northern Europe'.

In 1950, an Argentine scientist, Marcelo Bórmida (1951), used scientifically-devised color scales in a study of the hair and eye color of 35 reputedly pure-blooded Easter Islanders - 17 men and 18 women. Of these, 22 were descendants of Pakomio. In a sea of black hair and brown eyes, Bórmida found three cases of reddish hair, two cases of grey-green eyes (*ojos pardo-verdosos*) and one pair of eyes lighter than brown



Pakomio Maori, in an ancient hami or loin-cloth, poses for a photograph during the USS Mohican's visit to Easter Island in 1886. Incidentally, he also revealed the whiteness of his skin and the lightness of his hair, despite a flaw in the photograph.

(No. 4 on his scale). One of the people with reddish hair, a man, was described as having *cabellos castaños* (chestnut-colored hair); the other two cases were of women whose hair was said to have *tintes castaño y amarillento* (chestnut and yellowish tints). The light-eyed people were a man and a

woman. Bórmida was clearly surprised by them for he wrote (pp.190-1): 'The racial purity of the individuals with greyish-green eyes was assured to us by our sources of information'. Bórmida gave the names, ages and other details of his 35 subjects (p.184), but, unfortunately, did not state who the light-featured people were.

A decade and a half later, when the Canadian Medical Expedition to Easter Island (METEI 1964-65) recorded the eye color, hair color, skin color, etc. of the entire indigenous population, 15 of Bórmida's subjects, including 10 of Pakomio's descendants, were either dead or absent from the island. Three cases of dark brown hair and one case of dark hazel eyes were noted on that occasion among pure-blooded descendants of Pakomio; but no cases of grey-green eyes. The dark hazel eyes belonged to Angelina Atan Pakomio, a sister of Heyerdahl's mayor. They were almost certainly those classified as No. 4 on Bórmida's scale in 1950. So Bórmida's two people with grey-green eyes must have been among his 15 subjects who did not figure in the METEI tests.

In December 1984, when Sergio Rapu, then Governor of Easter Island, visited Canberra, I asked him if he could identify the two light-eyed people from Bórmida's lists. He thought the woman was Maria Gracia Pate Pakomio, but he could not identify the man. As 34 years had then passed since Bórmida's tests and as Sergio could scarcely have been born at that time, I was not surprised that he came up with only one name, and that, according to METEI, Maria Gracia actually had brown eyes! But, to judge from a photograph of her on p.58 of the second edition of Father Sebastian Englert's book *La Tierra de Hotu Matu'a*, one could well be excused for thinking that she might have had grey-green eyes. Englert, who lived on Easter Island for 35 years, described Maria Gracia as being 'of pure Rapanui descent', but, like many other writers, he was mystified by the European appearance of such people. In discussing this matter, he wrote:

The person better placed than anyone to observe the physical characteristics of the islanders of former times was Brother Eugene [Eyraud] who, in 1864, lived among them for nine months. As this kind of observation does not require scientific training, the following statement of his merits our confidence: 'Their complexion, although somewhat coppery, differs very little from that of Europeans, many of them being completely white. Their faces come nearer to the European type than do those of other islanders in Oceania.'

Englert (1974:163-4) added that if one studied the photographs of islanders of pure race on p.212 of Routledge's book as well as in his own, and if one also looked at the complexion and features of such people who were still living on the island, one could not but make Eyraud's observation one's own and 'recognise a surprising likeness to the peoples of Europe'.

Two of the islanders pictured on p.212 of Routledge's book are Juan Tepano and his mother Viriamo who appear to have been unrelated to the Pakomio family - at least in historical times. Tepano, who was born in about 1872, served

in the Chilean Army. In 1914-15, he was the headman of Hangaroa and Routledge's principal informant. His mother, Viriamo, born about 1839, was then the island's oldest woman. Routledge (1919:227-8) gives a detailed account of



Maria Garcia Pate Pakomio, born 1911, a grand-daughter of Pakomio of pure Easter Island descent.

Viriamo's ancestry and history, saying that some of her ancestors were white and some dark, that Viriamo herself was dark, and that Tepano, in his own words, had taken after his mother. In the light of this, a description of Tepano by the Belgian scientist Lavachery (1935:44) about two decades after Routledge's time is especially interesting:

Juan Tepano! After so many months passed side by side [with him] it is difficult for me to describe the impression he first made on me. He is rather small, with wavy, grey hair. His skin is brown. He shaves his scanty beard. Even though he is an Easter Islander of unmixed descent, Tepano could be Spanish or Italian. His racial characteristics [as a Polynesian?] are not apparent at first sight.

The foregoing evidence should suffice to show that Easter Islanders of the past did not have to have red hair and blue eyes to strike outsiders as European-looking. On the other hand, the evidence provides no good reason to suppose that Pakomio Maori did not have the features that Victoria Rapahango attributed to him. So what of Hagelberg's claim that the islanders' European features could be the result of 'encounters with sailors of visiting ships in post-Roggeveen

times'? What of her claim that Pakomio's 'Basque' genes 'may well have been introduced by a Basque or Spanish sailor in the nineteenth century'?

The first point to be made is that no Rapanui pregnancies are likely to have resulted from Roggeveen's own visit. Only one landing was made on that occasion - on 10 April 1722 - when 134 Dutchmen went ashore 'armed with musket, cartridge pouch and sword'. The islanders pressed round them in great numbers and although the Dutchmen 'made signs with the hand' that they should 'stand out of the way', 10 or 12 were shot dead after one tried to seize a musket. The rest fled. Some trading - strictly of a commercial kind - later took place, for no more than two or three old women were seen. 'The young women and daughters', Roggeveen recorded, 'did not show themselves' (Sharp 1970:91-100).

Roggeveen's companion Carl Friedrich Behrens said much the same thing: the 'young women and lasses did not come forward amongst the crowd'. On the other hand, Behrens noted that the islanders in general were 'brown like the Spaniards', but some were 'pretty black', others 'quite white' and yet others were of a reddish complexion, as if burnt by the sun (Dalrymple 1771:93).

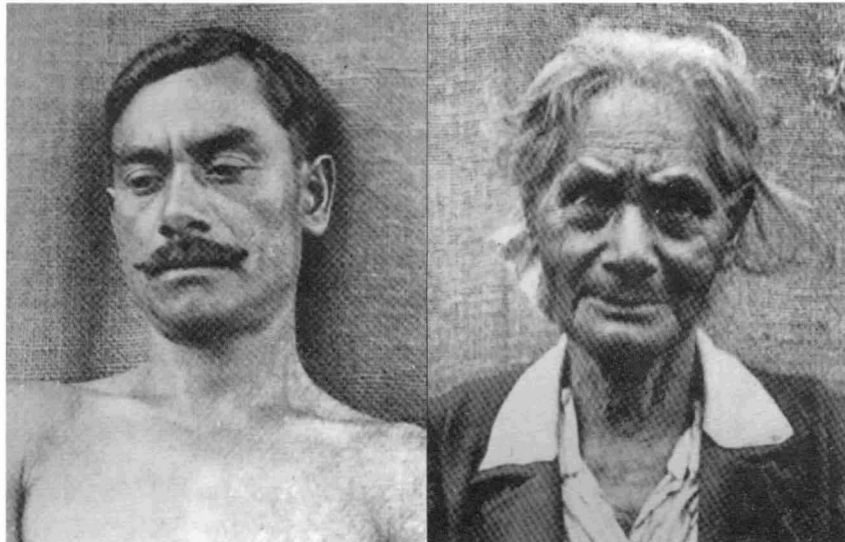
When the Gonzalez expedition, the next European visitors, arrived in two ships in November 1770, their crews, in the main, spent most of the time on board. When they did go ashore, they were under strict orders not to interfere with the islanders. By then, however, the island already had a seemingly sizeable part-European population. The pilot Juan de Hervé, who made a circuit of the island in a boat, wrote:

They [the islanders] are in hue like a quadron with smooth hair and short beards, and they in no way resemble the Indians of the South American continent; and if they wore clothing like ourselves, they might very well pass for Europeans (Corney 1908:127).

Another pilot, Francisco Antonio de Aguera, noted that the islanders' appearance was 'thoroughly pleasing' and 'tallying with Europeans more than with Indians'. Their hair was generally chestnut-colored, but in some it was black and in others it tended to be red or a cinnamon tint (*el pelo [es] castaño... algunos lo tienen negro, y otros tiran a rubio, ó acanelado*) (Corney 1908:127; Mellen 1986:284).

A pregnancy or two could conceivably have resulted from Captain Cook's two-day visit in 1774 because the scientist J. R. Forster noted that several of the crew 'had some favours of the Girls & found them by no means very shy, if they only came up to their price' (Hoare 1982:476). But these brief encounters could hardly account for the findings of M. Rollin, a medical officer with the expedition of the French explorer La Pérouse, who became Easter Island's fourth European visitor in 1786. Except in color, Rollin wrote, the features of the islanders hardly differed from those of Europeans. The hair was generally black, but in a 'a few instances' it was fair (Milet-Mureau 1807:3:161).

La Pérouse's crews spent only eight or nine hours ashore. He himself and 70 of his men landed at Hangaroa soon after dawn when from 400 to 500 islanders crowded around them. They included at least 150 women who 'offered their favours to anyone willing to give them a present'. But all this was merely a means to a covetous end. 'While these women were teasing us', La Pérouse wrote, 'our hats were being snatched from our heads and our handkerchiefs from our pockets'. These tricks went on 'throughout the morning' while La Pérouse examined archaeological sites in the vicinity of Hangaroa. When he returned, 'almost everyone was hatless and with no handkerchiefs', including himself. As no cases of lost trousers were reported and as La Pérouse stated specifically that no



Juan Tepano (1872-1947) and his mother Viriamo, two pure-blooded Easter Islanders photographed by Mrs Routledge in 1914. In 1935, the Belgian scientist Henri Lavachery thought Tepano could be taken for a Spaniard or Italian.

Frenchman 'took advantage of' some girls of 13 or 14 who were offered to them, it seems safe to say that no European genes were contributed to the Easter Island gene pool on this occasion (Dunmore 1994:57-69).

The thieving propensities of the Easter Islanders and the few provisions that their island had to offer were a great disappointment to La Pérouse. The upshot was that he gave the island a decidedly poor reputation as a place to visit in the published account of his voyage. Cook did much the same for he, too, got little in the way of food and water. Not surprisingly, few ships visited the island during the next half century for the accounts of Cook and La Pérouse were the only ones then available that gave its position accurately.

Only seven visitors are known from first-hand evidence for the period from 1816 to 1826 when Pakomio Maori was born - if the maximum latitude for error is allowed in the estimates of his age cited above. Those visitors were:

1. The Russian exploring ship *Rurick* (Captain Otto von Kotzebue) which arrived at Hangaroa on 16 March 1816. Numerous islanders swam out to the ship with bananas, yams and sugarcane which they traded for pieces of iron. But when two boats with 22 well-armed men tried to land, about 600 islanders opposed them and had to be frightened away with shots of powder. A later attempt to land was no more successful. So the Russians continued on their way, having seen only two women (Choris 1822:10). To Kotzebue (1821:18), most of the islanders were copper-colored, but a few were 'rather white'.

2. An unidentified ship, for which a log is held in the Whaling Museum, Nantucket, stood off the island on 17 March 1821. As the log begins on 8 August 1820, the ship is likely to have been either the whaler *Factor* (Captain John Maxcey) or the *President* (Captain Shubael Cottle), both of which left Nantucket on the following day. No contact with the islanders is mentioned (Unidentified 1820-21; Starbuck 1964:232-3).

3. The Sydney trading vessel *Surry* (Captain Thomas Raine) which hove to off the island on 24 March 1821 in

but here I saw the features of Englishmen and heard them speak in my native tongue' (De Salis 1969:36-38).

4. The British whaler *Coquette*, which stood off the island on 23 September 1821 on its way home to England. The only entry in a journal kept by one William Cash (1820-23) is: 'This island is inhabited by savages'.

5. The Nantucket whaler *Foster* (Captain Shubael Chase) which called on 10 January 1822 and was treated with 'great civility by the 5 or 6,000 natives'. The ship was on its way home from a voyage that began on 22 July 1819. It obtained 'some potatoes, fruit, etc.'. (Stackpole 1953:282; Starbuck 1964:228-9).

6. The Nantucket whaler *Paragon* (Captain Henry Bunker) which called some time in 1822. A boat party traded with islanders of both sexes who swam out to the boat which was 'lying at the back of the surf' (Stackpole 1953:282-3).

7. The British exploring vessel HMS *Blossom* (Captain F. W. Beechey) that called on 16 November 1825. Some Englishmen went ashore in boats. Seemingly friendly islanders swam out to them, sometimes throwing them bananas, roots and other products. But when the visitors landed, the islanders plundered them and pelted them with stones. Several were wounded. No European cloth was seen among the islanders. This made Beechey (1831:1:51) think that they had had 'little communication with Europeans' or had benefited little from it. He noted also that the islanders had 'aquiline and well-proportioned' noses and jet black hair, but that one man's hair was 'a reddish-ash gray'.

The ethnographic evidence for the entire period from 1722 to 1826 must surely leave no doubt that opportunities for sexual contact between visiting European sailors and Easter Islanders were usually non-existent and, at best, minimal. Yet variegated complexions, European features, red and fair hair were remarked on from the beginning. As blue eyes frequently go together with red and fair hair, there is every reason

to believe that the island had its blue-eyed people, too. So it is fruitless to seek to attribute Pakomio Maori's light features and 'Basque' genes to some visiting sailor of the post-Roggeveen period. Easter Island already had a part-European population long before he was born.

Bahn and Flenley (1995:20) scoffed at my theory that Easter Island's original inhabitants were American Indians who died out as an ethnic entity because they had no



Alien European genes had little chance of being introduced to Easter Island in the early 19th century when visiting sailors could get no nearer to shore than this. The drawing depicts the Russian ship Rurick at the island in 1816.

returning to Sydney from Valparaiso with a cargo of wheat. The *Surry* later called at Pitcairn. Back home, Raine told the *Sydney Gazette* that excited Easter Islanders had swam off to his ship. Six had been briefly taken on board as 'a sufficient specimen of the inhabitants of the island'. The *Australian Magazine* later published an extract from Raine's journal on his visit to Pitcairn in which he said: 'I remarked at Easter Island that I thought the natives there resembled Europeans;

resistance to the alien diseases that Pakomio's part-European, part-Polynesian ancestors and the Roggeveen and Gonzalez expeditions brought to the island. They ridiculed the idea that Alberto de Olaondo, a senior officer of the Peru-based Gonzalez expedition, could have correctly identified maize, the white potato and manioc - three plants of American origin that he reported under cultivation. If those plants had really been present in 1770, they said, then Cook's scientist J. R. Forster would surely have seen them in 1774. However, Cook himself would not have endorsed this view. On leaving Easter Island after only two days, he wrote in his journal:

...the Spaniards,...I have been told, visited [these islanders] in 1769 (sic)...Its probable they made a longer stay at this isle than we did and may favour the world with a better account of it than I can, [as] a stay of two days was by no means sufficient for this task (Beaglehole 1961:359).

In retrospect, Cook's statement is ironic in the extreme. The Spaniards did stay at the island longer than he did and they saw more of it. But 138 years passed before the world was favored with an account of their visit: an English translation of their records by Bolton Glanvill Corney (1908). Unfortunately, Corney blindly accepted the view - first propounded by J. R. Forster (1778:277-84) - that there had been no prehistoric contact between America and Polynesia.⁴ Accordingly, whenever he encountered evidence in the Gonzalez records that contradicted this view, he either left it out or 'corrected' it without giving his readers any indication that he had done this.

Thus, the passage in which Olaondo reported seeing maize, white potatoes and manioc under cultivation was entirely omitted, as were references to manioc in other documents. Another such reference was mistranslated as taro, and yet others were left untranslated or were otherwise obfuscated (Langdon 1989, 1995b). The overall result was that Corney's work entrenched the belief that American Indians had played no part in Easter Island prehistory and it perverted the course of Rapanui studies for the next eight decades.

Not until Mellén (1986) published the original texts of the Spanish records 216 years after their authors wrote them could anyone begin to realise the extent of Corney's baleful influence. He had not simply suppressed or altered a few small but crucial items of ethnobotanical information, his censorship had inhibited the realistic evaluation of much other such evidence. This included, for example, the discovery on Easter Island in 1913 of two more plants of American origin - the pineapple and 26-chromosome cotton - that were growing wild in isolated places. It included the sweet potato, whose American origin remained uncertain until the 1920s. And so on. This, in turn, inhibited scholarly attitudes towards the Kon-Tiki expedition, to Heyerdahl's *American Indians in the Pacific*, to the work of the Norwegian Archaeological Expedition of 1955-56, and to my own theories.

Not surprisingly, present-day scholars who have espoused the Forsterian view of Polynesian prehistory refuse to accept the Gonzalez expedition's newly-revealed ethnobotanical evidence. Nor do they want to think seriously about Pakomio

Maori's red hair, blue eyes and 'Basque' genes. 'We prefer to apply Occam's razor and adopt the least complex solution', Bahn and Flenley have said. Alas, history is not about personal preferences and least complex solutions. It is about what actually happened in the past. Which brings me to the question of the Polynesian rat, *Rattus concolor*.

The Norwegian archaeologist Arne Skjølsvold (1994:114-15) has reported the discovery of bones of *R. concolor* throughout a habitation site at Anakena that possibly date back to about A.D. 1000. In his view, the bones indicates a Polynesian presence on Easter Island from the 'very first settlement at Anakena'. This is because the rat, which he says was obviously used for food, 'must have been brought from somewhere in Polynesia' either purposely or as an accidental stowaway in Polynesian canoes.

Bahn and Flenley (1995) have opined that Skjølsvold's discovery 'clearly affects' my Easter Island scenario - that I must now 'presumably envisage' three sets of colonists: first Polynesians, then Amerindians and finally Hispano-Polynesians. I doubt, however, that any change is called for to my scenario. This is because over hundreds of thousands - possibly millions - of years, the Polynesian rat probably got about the Pacific in its own particular way and succeeded in colonizing Easter Island without any human aid, as I have already described (Langdon 1995c).

Notes

1. The men were categorized according to their names and places of domicile.
2. Nicolas Haoa and his daughter Sonia, two of the Easter Islanders who attended the Rapa Nui Rendezvous at Laramie in 1993, are descendants of this marriage and therefore of Pakomio.
3. The Spanish term *rubio* in relation to a person's hair is ambiguous. The dictionary definition is: red, reddish, ruddy; blond, fair, golden. By saying *rubio/rojo*, Victoria Rapahango left no doubt that Pakomio's hair was red.
4. The four premises on which Forster's theory was based were: (1) no distant or accidental similarity existed between the American and Pacific languages; (2) the color, form, habit of body and customs of the Americans and Pacific Islanders were 'totally different'; (3) the wretchedness and small size of American sailing craft proved 'incontestably' that the Pacific Islanders had not come from America; (4) America, itself, had not been peopled until a few centuries before the Spaniards discovered it. The discovery in 1847 that the Quechua term *kumar* 'sweet potato' was virtually identical to the common Polynesian term *kumara* 'sweet potato' undermined Forster's first premise. The second was too sweeping to be valid. The third was wrong: Forster evidently had never heard of the huge balsa rafts that carried cargo and passengers up and down the coasts of Ecuador and Peru. And the fourth is now known to be wildly astray: at least one reputable scholar believes that man has probably been in the New World for up to 100,000 years.

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