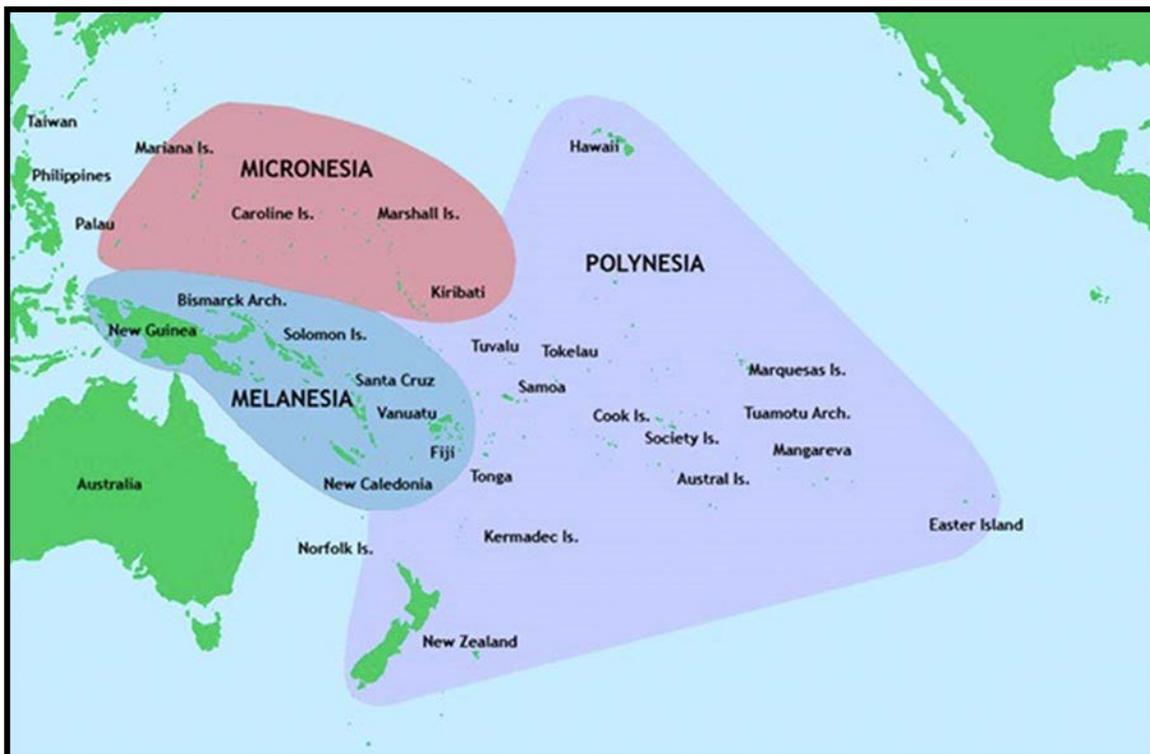


Pre-Historic Island Hopping ‘Hobbits’ in the South Pacific

Jim Willis

Although New Zealand and the Philippines are separated by more than 5,000 miles (8,000 km), the stories of how people first migrated to them, and how those stories were treated by scholars, show clearly that, in the words of the poet Bob Dylan, "the times, they are a changin'." A new day has dawned in the field of human origins.

When Peter Jackson set up shop in New Zealand to spend 10 years filming his double trilogy-set of *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, he created a new tourism industry and reminded people all over the world of the beauty New Zealanders see every day. The first trilogy, released to the public in 2001, took the film industry by storm. But by 2012, when the second set began to fill theaters all over again, historians were prepared with a new set of books that explored New Zealand's mysterious background as well as its impressive beauty.



Three of the major groups of islands in the Pacific Ocean (Public Domain)

Discovering New Zealand

Traditional historians tell that New Zealand was the world's last large island to be discovered and populated. The ancestors of the Māori were the first to arrive, making the discovery when they explored the Pacific from their home base in Polynesia. They even remember the name of the navigator who made the discovery — a man by the name of Kupe. That being said, there are alternative possibilities that have a long and illustrious history. Some versions say the original pioneers were Celts, Greeks, Egyptians, or even Chinese. One of the first alternative studies is found in a booklet called *Lords of the Soil*, written by Kerry Bolton in 1987. He put forth the theory that Europeans, or, in his words, 'a Europoid race', populated the country ever since ancient times.



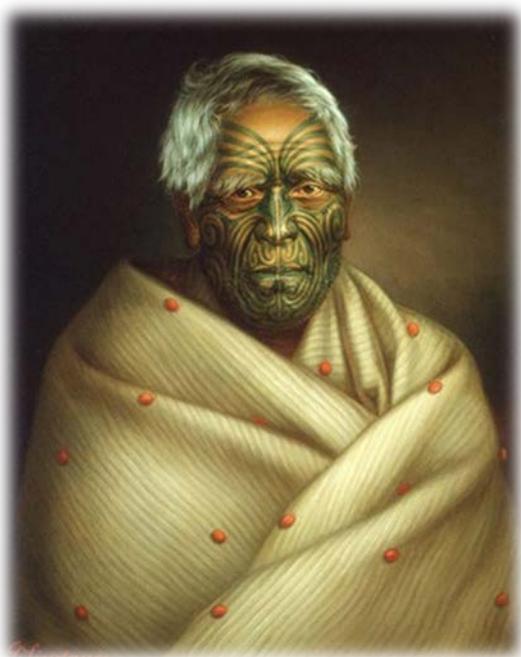
BARNE MEETING OF SETTLERS AND MAORI AT A NATIVE VILLAGE NEAR NAPIER, HAWKE'S BAY, NEW ZEALAND.—SEE PAGE 66.

Meeting of Settlers and Maoris at Hawke's Bay, New Zealand (Adam Cuerden/ CC BY-SA 3.0)

In 1999, Martin Doutré published a book, now out of print, that revived the idea that the first people to populate New Zealand were Celts. The petroglyphs found to this day in Silverdale, on the north island of Auckland, he says, are proof of ancient Celtic artists. The year 2012 saw the release of the first *Hobbit* movie, as well as two books that presented further alternative origin views. *The Great Divide: The Story of New Zealand & Its Treaty*, was written by Ian Wishart. To the *Ends of the Earth*, by Maxwell C. Hill, put forth the idea that the first New Zealanders were from Egypt and Greece.

The Maori Elders: Light Skinned Inhabitants

The Ngāpuhi are the largest Māori tribe existing today. One of their elders, David Rankin, recalls stories long told by his ancestors that a mysterious people with light-colored skin lived on the islands when the first Māori arrived. Mixed with these legends were tales of red-haired giants. Rankin goes so far as to suggest that academics have joined in a conspiracy to suppress this information and that many modern scholars refuse to honor the traditions and mythology of an indigenous people. Perhaps he has a point. The words of Michael King, who wrote what is considered by some to be a definitive history of New Zealand, do have a ring of arrogance: "*Despite a plethora of amateur theories about Melanesian, South American, Egyptian, Phoenician, and Celtic colonization of New Zealand, there is not a shred of evidence that the first human settlers were anything other than Polynesian.*" Hugh Laracy, of the University of Auckland, goes so far as to say alternative theories are: "*wild speculation [that has been] thoroughly disposed of by academic specialists.*"



A portrait of Māori man, by Gottfried Lindauer
(Public Domain)

When ideologies collide, there exists the tendency to attack character rather than ideas. Vincent O'Malley, of the New Zealand Archaeological Association, even employs the dreaded "R" word (Racist) when describing anyone who mentions Celts or Greeks or Egyptians. Such claims, he feels, are derogatory to indigenous New Zealanders. Scott Hamilton echoes his views. In his treatise, *No to Nazi Pseudo-history: An Open Letter*, he even implies that these alternative views can only be held by those who invoke the prejudices of Hitler's Third Reich.

Still, those who hold alternative views of ancient New Zealand labor on. They refuse to push evidence that challenges accepted wisdom, under the rug. Māori legends say there were people on the islands when they first arrived. Why is it racist, they ask, to believe the ancestors of the Māori themselves? Typical, or rather, representative, of the kind of evidence they cite is a tree stump, along with the stone artifact used to cut it, found in Auckland in 1874. Crews were excavating 25 feet down (eight meters) for the foundation of a university library. Scholarly and popular journals of the time recorded the discovery because it is unusual to find such things that deep. What soon raised a lot of eyebrows was that the stump was estimated to be some 150,000 years old. How could a tree stump that old show display markings indicative of human work? Specialists were mystified. If the stories are true about this piece of evidence, it would, of course, throw modern ideas about late migration theory out the window.

Pare Watene by Gottfried Lindauer (1878) Auckland Art Gallery
(Public Domain)



But, as is so often the case, the story took a dark turn. Because the find did not fit the prevailing theory of when humans first set foot in New Zealand, it was brushed aside and forgotten. It soon disappeared not only from the literature of the day, but physically as well. No one knows what happened to it. All that is left, is the written word of some bona fide experts, among them a scholarly treatise with a title that almost ensured very few people would read it. It is called *Notes upon the probable Changes that have taken place in the Physical Geography of New Zealand since the arrival of the Maori*, by T.H. Cockburn-Hood, F.G.S.

As one might expect from the title, it is not exactly a page-turner. But the author makes some interesting observations. At one point he draws attention to: "*some scientific evidence in the form of an ancient stump that proves ancient inhabitants existed in New Zealand [during] a period prior to volcanic land formation. It is evidence of human activity in New Zealand prior to the laying down of ancient volcanic debris.*"



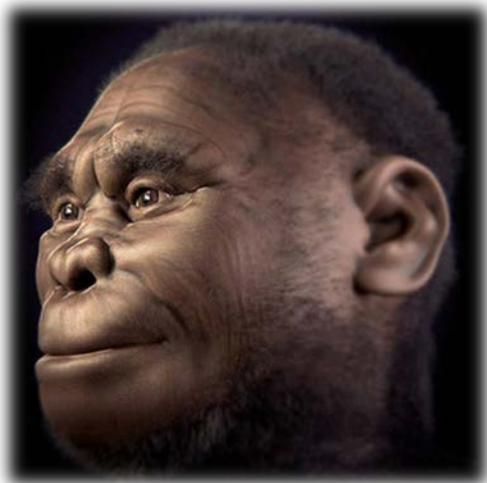
Aquatint depicting men discovering the Easter Island Statues engraved by Carlo Bottigella (1827)
(Public Domain)

The discovery was quoted in the *Auckland Southern Cross* newspaper of 1874. But that is not the only evidence. On virtually every important, habitable island in the South Pacific it is common to find ancient megalithic construction. The

standing stone heads on Easter Island are the most famous, but there is also the Ring Road of Rarotonga and megalithic construction on Tonga as well. People obviously built these monuments. But most historians are very vocal in their opinion that somehow New Zealand remained undiscovered while all this was going on, despite the oral history of the indigenous people.

This attitude of entrenchment may be changing. Daring archaeologists these days are making some audacious finds and then risking their reputations by sticking to the facts and following

them wherever they might lead. Whereas it used to be almost impossible to break through the crust of the academic world and declare something new that will re-write the history books, it is happening more and more. Chalk it up to better ways to reach the public through media outlets, or a younger, faster, stronger, hungrier generation of archaeologists who want to make a name for themselves, or better tools and equipment, or just an idea whose time has come, but these are exciting days when it comes to uncovering the history of human beings on earth.



Reconstruction of *Homo floresiensis* based on LB-1 (Cicero Moraes et alii/ CC BY-SA 4.0)

The Hobbits of Flores, Indonesia

Much of the excitement comes from the Philippines. A whole series of finds is revealing new branches of mankind's family tree, and it appears the hunt is just beginning. In Indonesia, in 2003 on the island of Flores, a strange human specimen now called *Homo floresiensis*, after the island of Flores, was discovered. The first skeleton, almost complete, was that of a three-and-a-half foot (1.06 meters) 30-year old, adult female, who was immediately named LB1. A name like that could not last however, except in a *Star Wars* movie, so, because of her small stature, the popular press dubbed her the 'Hobbit', after the characters in the books by J.R.R. Tolkien. The find was reported in the prestigious journal *Nature*.

Mark Collard, a



Cave where the remains of *Homo floresiensis* were discovered in 2003, Lian Bua, Flores, Indonesia (CC BY-SA 2.0)

biological anthropologist at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia, told *Live Science*: "We don't have very many associated skeletons of hominins outside of Neanderthals." Later discoveries uncovered jaw and skeletal remains of more than eight similar individuals, proving that the first find was not an anomaly. This was a distinct species, never before recognized.

This species had gone extinct by at least 17,000 years ago, but it might have had a run that began as early as 95,000 years ago. How did they ever get to the islands of Indonesia? They appear to have evolved from *Homo erectus*, a 1.8 million-year old species that first showed up in Africa. In looking for possible migration routes, a team of researchers, reporting in the journal *Nature*, discovered stone tools on the island of Sulawesi, which lies between Flores and continental Asia, that dated back at least 118,000 years. Modern humans only showed up there some 50,000 years ago.

No one knows who made the tools, of course. They might have been made by ancestors of *Homo floresiensis*, or other species such as Denisovans or Neanderthal. But whatever species was island hopping a long time ago, it shows that man's ancestors really got around. These were relatively sophisticated people. When they finally were superseded by modern *Homo sapiens*, they had experienced quite a track record. Along with the remains, archaeologists found evidence of butchering and roasting. It appears as though 'Hobbits' knew how to use fire.

More research followed and the very latest information indicates that 'Hobbits' lived in the caves of Indonesia between 190,000 and 50,000 years ago, and because modern human artifacts were also found in those caves, the two species could have conceivably lived for at least a short while alongside one another, similar to the relationship modern humans shared with both Neanderthals and Denisovans in Europe and Asia.



Callao Cave on Luzon Island, Philippines (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Ancient Island Hopping

In 2019, beneath the rocky floor of Callao Cave, on Luzon Island, (Philippines) archaeologists found yet another human species. This species was dubbed *Homo luzonensis*. Like the ‘Hobbits’, they were small in stature, standing only about four feet (1.2 meters) tall. They have some modern anatomical characteristics, but also display features found only in much earlier hominins such as those found in Lucy, the *Australopithecus*. They were estimated to be about 50,000 years old. But a year later, scientists digging in a different cave found tools that dated back 700,000 years. The questions rose immediately. Given the short stature of the two species, one on Indonesia and one in the Philippines, could they have been somehow related? If so, how did the early hominins island hop across the vast oceans?

Improbable theories immediately came to mind and were presented very seriously. One of them was that perhaps a few survivors were blown out to sea while clinging to fallen trees and drifted across the great distances. But who can really take such an idea seriously? If they reached their various locations, they must have meant to get there. Only prejudice makes someone grasp at proverbial straws. The simplest answer to the dilemma is that preconceived ideas about these ancient people are way off base. Human intelligence goes back a lot further than modern man has, for a long time, dared to think. The first wave of *Homo erectus* out of Africa, if it ever took place in the way one could imagine, was made up of intelligent people who had an agenda. The second wave, *Homo sapiens*, was the same. The true telling of the story of mankind’s species is far from over.

The modern world is a lonely place compared to what it once was. Matthew Tocheri, a paleoanthropologist from Lakehead University in Canada, summarizes the situation well: *“The more fossils that people pull out of the ground, the more we realize that the variation that was present in the past far exceeds what we see in us today.”*

There seems to be no question that the staid doors of academia are going to have to re-write their textbooks after all. The lineage of mankind’s species is proving to be a lot more complex, and a lot more ancient, than ever believed. It is a whole new world out there.



Butchered remains of a *Rhinoceros philippinensis* found in Rizal, Kalinga. An evidence of early hominins in the Philippines about 709,000 years ago. (Darwgon0801/ CC BY-SA 4.0)

This excerpt is adapted from Hidden History: Ancient Aliens and the Suppressed Origins of Civilization, by Jim Willis. Available May 2020. Visible Ink Press.

Top Image: Tahitian warrior dugouts, by Giulio Ferrario. (1827) (Public Domain)

References

Joseph, F. 2013. *Before Atlantis: 20 Million Years of Human and Pre-Human Cultures*. Bear & Company.

Kenyon, J. D. Ed. 2005. *Forbidden History: Prehistoric Technologies, Extraterrestrial Intervention, and the Suppressed Origins of Civilization*. Bear and Company.

Willis, J. 2016. *Ancient Gods: Lost Histories, Hidden Truths and the Conspiracy of Silence*. Visible Ink Press.

Willis, J. *Lost Civilizations: The Secret Histories and Suppressed Technologies of the Ancient*. Visible Ink Press.