

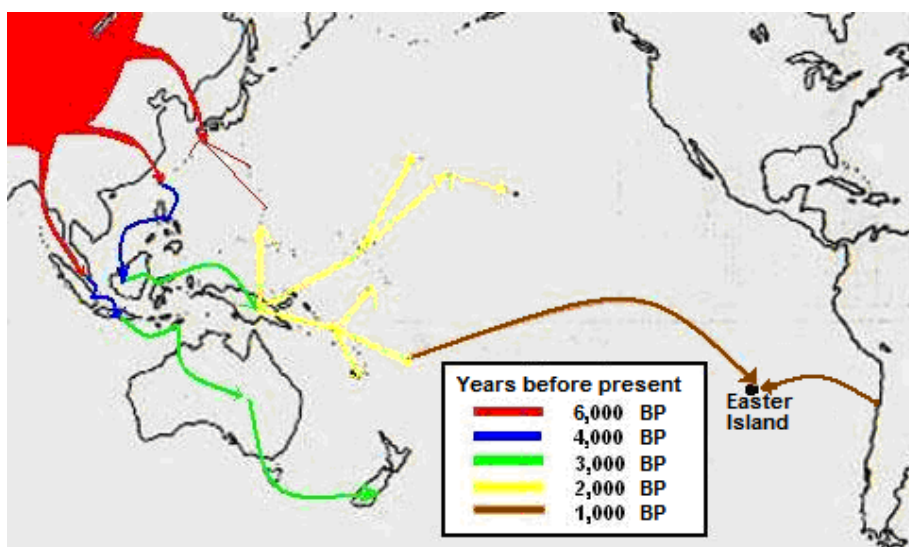
The Pacific Expansion

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Investigations of the linguistic patterns and the language groups all over the world indicate that prehistoric distributions resulted from a natural human urge to explore, forage and spread as much as possible. Scientifically speaking this urge for expansion can be linked to the **Second Law of Thermodynamics**, which states: "Particles occupying a closed system will spread into the whole volume homogeneously until a state of equilibrium is reached". In the case of human populations, groups of people will tend to spread on the surface of the earth until a natural obstacle, preventing further expansion is attained.

In an article published in **Scientific American**, Peter Bellwood says (1):

The Austronesian language family has more than 200 million native speakers in Taiwan, inland southern Vietnam, Madagascar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and right through the Pacific Islands to Hawaii and Easter Island.



Most linguists of our day favor a geographic expansion that started from south eastern Asia and spread eastward. The map on the left shows the expansion starting some 6000 years before present and reaching the Easter Island about 1000 years BP (2).

Easter Island occupies a special-place in this picture. This is because it contains two distinct populations, originating from two opposite regions, **the Pacific Islands and Peru**.

Thor Heyerdahl (1914 - 2002) sailed 8,000 km across the Pacific Ocean in a self-built raft called Kon-Tiki, from South America to the Tuamotu Islands in 1947. He argued that in addition to having been settled by Polynesians, Easter Island was settled by people from Peru in South America. Regarding the Easter Island population he claims that (3):

Amongst the chiefly families of New Zealand, Easter Island and the Chatham islands there is a genetically different group who are : tall, pale skinned, bearded, long headed, with narrow lips and occasionally reddish brown hair with a wavy texture. The Polynesian name for families carrying this racial type are called 'Urukehu' and they are said to be descended from an earlier population.

The root phoneme 'ur' is an ancient proto-Turkish word related to "settle, settlement, habitation, or location". The form 'ur' still exists in modern Turkish in the words: "vur" (hit, place), "kur" (construct, wind), "yurt" (central Asiatic tent, country) and "dur" (stand). There are several cities all over the world containing this root word. In ancient Mesopotamia the two cities **Ur** and **Uruk** were part of the Sumer Empire (see article **26-The South-West Expansion**).

The **Ural** Mountains in Western Asia and the ancient burial mound, the **Kurgan** (Ok-Urgan) are two typical words pointing to the ancient Asiatic language (see article **4-The Asiatic Scythians**). In South America there is the country Uruguay and the city Urubamba in the sacred valley of the Incas, in Peru. In the local Inca language **Uru** means 'flatland', which is in agreement with the original meaning of 'ur' being "settlement" and "country".

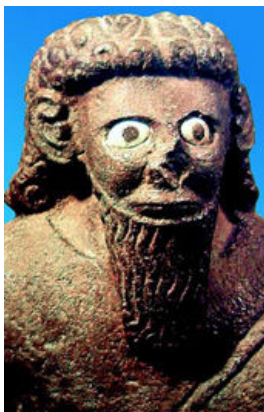
In the mythology of the Māori people of New Zealand as well as in most Pacific cultures, **Tangaroa** is the name of the great god, the god of the sea. He is a son of Ranginui and Papatuanuku, Sky and Earth. His brothers are Rongo, Tūmatauenga, Haumia, and Tane. Tangaroa is the father of many sea creatures. The composite word Tangaroa can be split as Tanga and Roa. **Tanga** has its origin in the Asiatic word **Tengri**, meaning God. The same meaning is found in the word **Tagaloa** in the Samoa language and as **Tanka** in most northern American so called "Indian" languages. The same word meaning God is found as **Tengeri** in the Asiatic Buriat language, and as **Tingir** in the Tatar Turkish of Crimea. The Anatolian Turkish word for God is **Tanry**. Could all these similarities be pure coincidence?

The local name of the Easter Island is Rapa Nui and the local script is called **Rongo-Rongo**. On the next page we see these glyphs organized in 4 columns. It is most probable that the script is syllabic and similar glyphs represent the same sound pronounced somewhat differently in each column. Thus the basic number of syllables in that language is 48. Here is another similarity with the central Asiatic **Orhun** script, which contains 38 syllables (see article **33-The Orhun Valley Script**).

As long as the language and the script of the **Easter Island** is not deciphered, it won't be possible to give solid proof, for or against, the above similarities and relationships. Below are the Rongo-Rongo glyphs and a megalithic statue whose height can be guessed when compared with two humans standing next to it.



There are 887 huge statues of head spread all around the Easter Island. They all face the ocean as if waiting for **Tangaroa**, the sea God, to appear. But Easter Island is not unique in possessing huge monoliths and megalithic stone statues. Central Eastern **Polynesia** also has a well-documented megalithic tradition. What is most interesting is that head statues of Easter Island possess eyes of shell inlay similar to the ones of **Hittite** statues from central Anatolia, modern **Turkey** (4). While it is impossible for the Hittites to have influenced Easter Island directly, it is quite possible that some traits of a common culture managed to survive between middle-eastern people and the Polynesians. A possible explanation is that a common root culture located in central Asia has been the originator of both (see article **12-The Anatolian Expansion**). On the left below we see a Hittite statue and on the right an Easter Island head with inlaid eyes.



- (1) **The Austronesian Dispersal and the Origin of Languages**, Peter Bellwood, Scientific American, July 1991, page 70.
- (2) **The Origin Of Language**, Merritt Ruhlen, John Wiley & Sons, 1994, page 178.
- (3) **Aku-Aku and Early man and the ocean: A search for the beginnings of navigation and seaborne civilizations**, Thor Heyerdhal, 1980.
- (4) **A speck in an ocean of speculation**, Nick Saunders, New Scientist, 20 January 1990, page 60.