

The Polynesian expansion across the Pacific

Between c. 700 and 1756, Polynesian peoples settled thousands of islands across a wide area of the Pacific Ocean. This region is now known as the Polynesian Triangle. As they spread throughout the region, Polynesians formed unique societies on each of the islands they settled. Each Polynesian society had its own traditions, spiritual beliefs and ways of life, but they also shared some common features. All Polynesian societies depended on the sea for their food and for trade with other societies. Because of this, Polynesian peoples became expert sailors and navigators who used



their ocean-going canoes to travel great distances across the Pacific, discovering new uninhabited islands as they went.

chapter 16

16A

How did Polynesian settlers spread across the Pacific and where did they settle?

- 1 The Polynesian peoples travelled great distances across the Pacific Ocean in search of new homelands. What skills and techniques do you think they would have needed to arrive safely at their destinations?

16B

How was Māori society organised and what was daily life like?

- 1 Traditional Māori villages were ringed with strong wooden walls and further protected with ditches, moats or towers. Why do you think Māori people fortified their villages? How does this aspect of Māori culture compare with other civilisations?

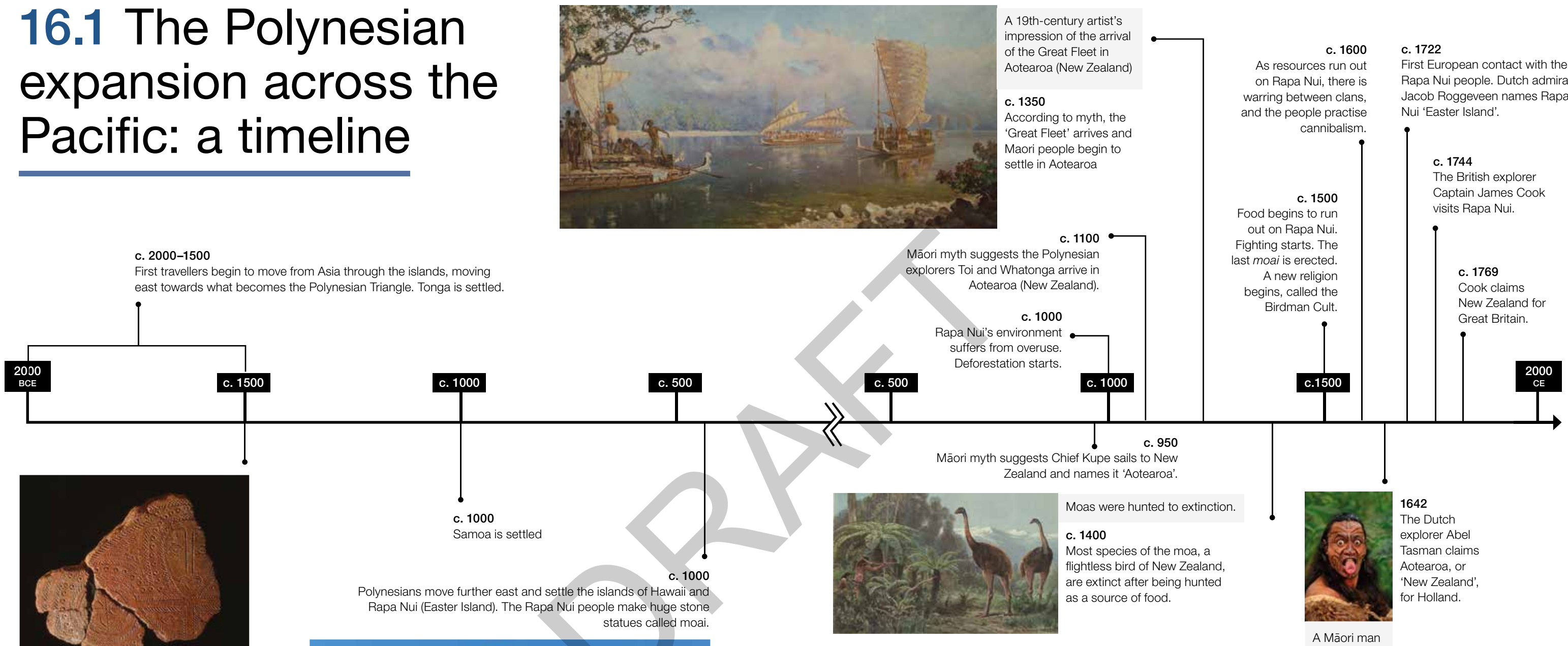
16C

What were the most significant Māori cultural achievements?

- 1 Important achievements of the Māori included sustainable management of natural resources and a rich arts tradition. How do you think these achievements contributed to the survival of Māori people and their culture?

Source 1 An artist's impression of Polynesian voyagers sailing to New Zealand

16.1 The Polynesian expansion across the Pacific: a timeline



Lapita pottery

c. 1500
Evidence from discoveries of Lapita pottery suggest the ancestors of Polynesian peoples reach the Bismarck Archipelago, north of New Guinea.



Moai on Rapa Nui (Easter Island)



A 19th-century artist's impression of the arrival of the Great Fleet in Aotearoa (New Zealand)



Moas were hunted to extinction.



A Māori man

Check your learning 16.1

- Remember and understand

 - 1 Give the English names for the islands of Rapa Nui and Aotearoa.
 - 2 What were moa and what happened to them?
- Apply and analyse

 - 3 Use the timeline to work out the year in which each of the following islands was discovered by Polynesians. Place them in chronological order, from earliest to most recent.
Rapa Nui Hawaii Aotearoa Tonga Samoa
- 4 Why do you think the Rapa Nui people practised cannibalism?
- Evaluate and create

 - 5 Conduct some internet research to find out more about Lapita pottery. Present your findings in a paragraph, describing how it was made and its links to the Polynesian expansion across the Pacific.

Source 1 A timeline of key events in Polynesian expansion across the Pacific

16.2 Geography and natural features of Polynesia

Polynesia is part of what is more broadly classified as Oceania. Oceania includes all the islands in the central and south Pacific Ocean. Polynesia includes all the islands within what is generally called the Polynesian Triangle. The three corners of the triangle are Hawaii in the north, Easter Island (also called Rapa Nui) in the east and New Zealand in the south. Samoa, Tuvalu and Tonga mark the triangle's western edge.

There are many different natural environments in Polynesia – from tiny islands with tropical climates, to the heavily forested South Island of New Zealand with its snow-capped peaks. There is not much vegetation on the hundreds of coral reefs that have formed islands (which are called 'atolls'). In the past, Polynesians on these coral islands mainly lived by

fishing, growing crops such as yams and taro, and raising animals such as pigs, dogs and chickens. Hawaii, New Zealand and remote Easter Island are volcanic islands, not coral islands. Societies here developed agriculture on a much larger scale because of the rich volcanic soil. They also lived by hunting, fishing and gathering edible plants.



Source 2 An atoll in the Tahiti islands



Source 1 The Polynesian Triangle

Source: Oxford University Press



Source 3 South Bay and the Seaward Kaikouru Range, South Island, New Zealand



Source 4 Crater of the volcano Rano Raraku on Rapa Nui (Easter Island)

Check your learning 16.2

Remember and understand

- 1 What are the boundaries of the Polynesian Triangle?
- 2 What are the different climates on the islands of Polynesia?

Apply and analyse

- 3 Use Source 1 to write a statement about the geographical location of the Polynesian islands, and the size of New Zealand and its location compared with that of other islands.
- 4 Sources 2, 3 and 4 show the natural environments of different parts of Polynesia. Suggest how the different environments would have affected people's ways of life.

Evaluate and create

- 5 In a group, find out about the climates of Samoa, Hawaii, New Zealand and Rapa Nui. Summarise your findings in a table. Individually, write a paragraph comparing the climates of these places.

16.3 Theories about Polynesian expansion

The Polynesian expansion across the Pacific took place over a long period of time. Historians do not always agree on exactly how or when the Polynesians spread throughout the area. Most historians do believe that the Polynesian expansion happened over a period of more than 2000 years and covered a large part of the Pacific region. Many disagree on where the Polynesian peoples came from – some historians have even tried to copy the sea voyages they think the Polynesians undertook in order to prove their theories.

East or west?

One of the biggest disagreements is which direction the Polynesians came from – east or west. Most historians agree that the Polynesians originated from

South-East Asia. But other theories suggest origins in the opposite direction, from South America.

Who is correct? According to one argument, the travellers came from an area such as modern-day Peru, floating across the ocean on rafts created from balsawood common to that area. The people who support this idea argue that the regular wind patterns and ocean currents would enable this type of travel, while making travel in the opposite direction a great deal more difficult. They also sometimes suggest that there are similarities between Aztec, Inca and Mayan stone sculptures and the stone statues of Polynesia such as the *moai* on Rapa Nui.



Source 2 Moai on Rapa Nui



Source 3 A Mayan statue in Central America. The Mayans were a powerful Central American civilisation in ancient times.

Settlers from the west

Despite Heyerdahl's voyage, more recent archaeological evidence strongly supports the view that the Polynesians came from the west. Most people now believe that the early ancestors of Polynesian people travelled from the Malay Islands and along the coast of New Guinea. From New Guinea, they would have moved east along the Solomon Island chain, into Vanuatu. It is thought that these initial trips were made from 1500 BCE onwards, with the travellers

using double-hulled canoes to cross the vast distances between land masses.

The early settlers then moved on into modern-day Polynesia, taking with them domestic animals and plants. From Vanuatu they travelled east to the Cook Islands, then on to the Society Islands, the Marquesas and across the huge sea gap to Hawaii, Easter Island and down to New Zealand. These voyages possibly took place until at least 1000 CE.

keyconcept: Contestability

Thor Heyerdahl

In 1947, a Norwegian adventurer named Thor Heyerdahl carried out a daring voyage in an attempt to prove that the Polynesians had travelled west, from South America, across the Pacific. Heyerdahl felt that the theory of movement from the west to east was wrong. He argued that the strong currents and strong winds that blow from east to west in the Pacific would have made such travel in canoes almost impossible. Heyerdahl created a balsawood raft, called the *Kon-Tiki*, that he used to drift from Peru to the Tuamotu Islands – a voyage of nearly 7000 kilometres. As the Tuamotu Islands are on the eastern fringe of Polynesia, he argued that it was highly likely that this is the way that the early Polynesians had travelled.

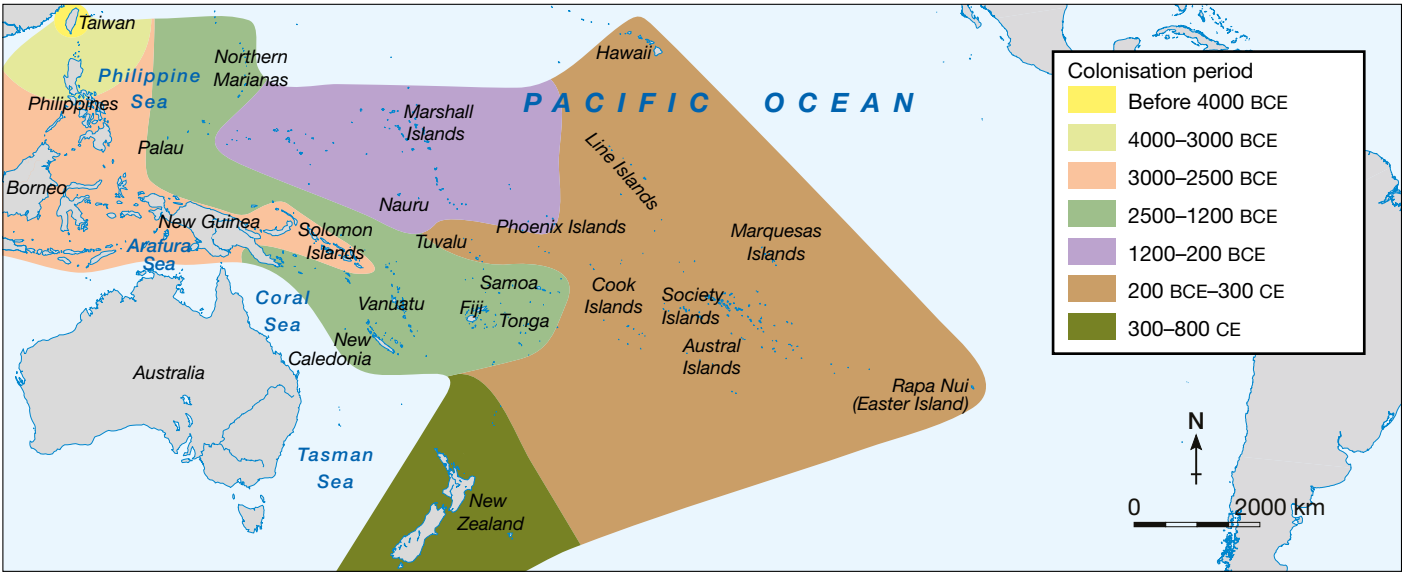
There is no solid evidence that would support this theory, although many people feel that it is a logical explanation. Heyerdahl's proposal was valuable because it questioned established ideas. His voyage also helped to show that there was a lack of solid



Source 1 A poster for the documentary film *Kon-Tiki*, about Thor Heyerdahl's voyage across Polynesia

archaeological evidence for the west-to-east movement theory, and encouraged historians to begin gathering evidence to support their different theories.

EXPANSION FROM THE WEST



Source 4 Most historians now believe this is the order in which islands across the Pacific were colonised by Polynesians. Source: Oxford University Press

Evidence of Polynesian expansion

Historians and other experts have used a variety of sources as evidence to investigate Polynesian expansion.

Polynesian languages

One way of working out how different Polynesian peoples are historically related is to study their different languages and look for similarities. Among the earliest recorders of these similarities were the British explorers Joseph Banks and Captain James Cook. During their travels through Polynesia in the 18th century, Banks and Cook listed and compared languages from Tahiti and New Zealand. They also looked at the languages used by people in Indonesia and Melanesia. They found that all of these languages were connected, meaning that there was a link from Polynesia back to South-East Asia. In other words, the Polynesians had travelled eastwards.

Polynesian languages are closely related and contain many similar words.

English word	Tahitian word	Hawaiian word	Māori word
person	ta'ata	kanaka	tāngata
eye	mata	maka	mata
wind	mata'i	makani	matangi

Oral histories

Anthropologists – people who study human societies, customs and beliefs – have studied the strong oral traditions of Polynesian societies to help determine the origins of Polynesian peoples. Ancient Polynesian societies did not leave behind written records. However, stories that have passed down through many generations offer valuable clues about how Polynesia was settled. For example, traditional Māori stories connect the canoes that settled New Zealand to a legendary place called Hawaiki, which may be a real island or a mythical place. Hawaii has legends and stories that link it to Kahiki, which many believe to be the islands of Tahiti.



Source 6 An example of Lapita pottery. This style of pottery, with its distinctive designs, has been found at sites that range from the Bismarck Archipelago to the islands of Samoa and Tonga in the east of Polynesia.

DNA research

Most of what we know about Polynesian expansion is based on the work of archaeologists. These specialists study the artefacts of the past as evidence of people's daily lives. They look at objects that people used every day, such as weapons, cooking pots and tools. Archaeologists increasingly rely on scientific techniques – such as radiocarbon dating and DNA testing.

DNA is a genetic code inside the nucleus of every cell in the human body. Each person's DNA is slightly different. We inherit our DNA from our parents: half each from our biological mother and father. By comparing the DNA of different people across the world, scientists can tell how closely or how distantly they are related.

As a result of DNA testing of Polynesian peoples, most historians now accept that the ancestors of the Polynesians came from South-East Asia and from China more than 6000 years ago. They made their way south, settling first in what is now Indonesia. They then settled in the Bismarck Archipelago, a group of islands north of New Guinea. This is where the Lapita culture first appeared. The Lapita people are believed to be the ancestors of both the Melanesian and Polynesian peoples.

key concept: evidence

Sweet potato

One of the greatest puzzles in the debate about Polynesian origins has come from one of their foods, the sweet potato. Most Polynesian foods are of South-East Asian origin, supporting the idea that the Polynesians came from the west. But sweet potatoes come from Peru.

So how did the sweet potato arrive in Polynesia? The ocean distance between South America and eastern Polynesia is vast, so it seems highly unlikely that the sweet potato arrived because of accidental drifting of plants or seeds.

Even more surprisingly, research has shown that the first islands to have sweet potato were not the ones closest to Peru, such as Rapa Nui (Easter

Island). Instead, sweet potato probably arrived first in the Marquesas Islands. Several theories exist. Some scholars suggest that the sweet potato arrived in Polynesia because of trade, either with Peruvians or with Chinese explorers. Both of these ideas have little evidence to support them. More commonly accepted is the idea that the Polynesians sailed east to Peru and returned with the sweet potato around 1000 years ago.



Source 8 Kumara is the Māori name for this variety of sweet potato



Source 7 Replicas of Polynesian double-hulled ocean-going canoes. Similar boats would have been used by the early voyagers to cross the Pacific Ocean.

Just an accident?

Several historians have suggested that Polynesian expansion throughout the Polynesian Triangle may have been accidental. New Zealand historian Andrew Sharp believed that the early Polynesians did not plan their longer voyages. Instead, he proposed, they found new islands when they were blown off course by storms or because of poor navigation. He called this kind of expansion 'drift voyaging'.

Recent research into Polynesian seafaring methods has shown that they were actually incredibly skilled navigators, so Sharp's 'drift theory' is unlikely.

Check your learning 16.3

Remember and understand

- 1 List three reasons historians think the Polynesians spread into Polynesia from the west.
- 2 Explain 'drift voyaging'.
- 3 What did Thor Heyerdahl do to try to prove his theory that the Polynesians originally come from South America in the east?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Explain why the comparison of languages was useful for historians trying to work out where the Polynesians came from.

- 5 Find a traditional Māori story, or story from another Polynesian culture, about their ancestors first arriving at the island they made home. What evidence does the story provide for historians? Does it tell us anything about the beliefs of the people, the voyages their ancestors made, or contacts with other people?

Evaluate and create

- 6 On a blank map of the Pacific region, mark the islands that were settled by Polynesians. Then show the direction of travel of the people who first settled Polynesia. Do the same for the opposing theory about the origin and spread of the Polynesians.

16.4 How the Polynesians made their journeys across the Pacific

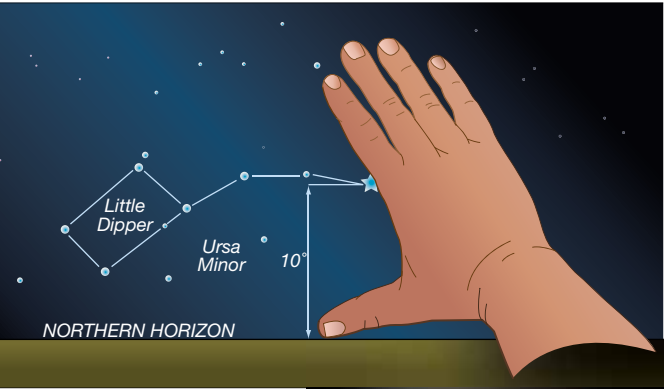
The story of how Polynesian people settled the Pacific region is one of history’s epic tales of exploration and adventure. The Polynesians were skilled boatbuilders, navigators and sailors who saw the ocean as an important part of their world. They had many techniques for making their astonishing sea voyages. They closely observed the positions of the stars, the presence of birds, the directions of the winds and the shapes of the waves.

Navigation

Without modern compasses or satellite technology, the Polynesians found their way across the Pacific. What we know about traditional navigation comes in part from early European observations of Polynesian sailors. We also rely on Polynesian oral traditions for information about how they achieved their journeys.

Using the stars

The Polynesians used the stars to tell them where they were and which direction they should go in. Navigators knew by heart the positions of important stars in relation to their homelands. They also knew how the patterns of the stars would change with the



Source 1 Estimating latitude by placing a hand against the horizon to the angular height of the star Polaris



Source 2 An example of a simple outrigger canoe time of year, or as they travelled to new places. Stars were also useful for finding latitude (the north-south position of a point on the Earth’s surface). Measuring the height of the star Polaris or the Southern Cross above the horizon using their hands, Polynesian navigators could tell roughly how far north or south of the Equator they were (see Source 1).

Birds, wind and waves

Sighting a bird would tell Polynesian navigators that they were near land. If it was a sea bird the distance could be as much as 100 kilometres, but other birds were only seen closer to home. Polynesian navigators could also tell which direction land lay, because at sunrise birds generally fly away from land to hunt out at sea. At sunset they generally fly home towards land.

Wind and waves also gave them clues about nearby land. The 19th-century English missionary William Wyatt Gill recorded that the Cook Islanders recognised 32 different winds that regularly appeared from particular directions. Laid out on a wind compass, the winds could help navigators find their way, though this method was not as reliable as navigating by the stars.

Wave patterns change near islands, also helping with navigation. A long ocean wave will bend around an island and some of the wave will bounce back off the shore. This disturbs the regular wave pattern of the ocean. The larger the island is, the greater the disturbance of the wave pattern. By closely observing the shape of the waters, experienced Polynesian navigators could detect land tens or even hundreds of kilometres away.

Boats

The Polynesians used many types of vessels to cross the waters of the Pacific Ocean. Rafts were widely used to transport goods near coastal areas. The most important type of craft for sea voyaging was the canoe. The simplest canoes were dugouts, made by hollowing out a log. Other canoes could be made by joining planks together with plaited grass or fibre and waterproofing them with sap or coconut fibre. Sails could be made by weaving together palm leaves. Paddles were used both to propel the canoe and for stability and steering.

An outrigger, or float, could be added to a canoe to improve stability. Likewise, joining two dugouts together made them less likely to capsize. Outriggers were usually connected to the main hull using crossbeams, and platforms could be built across the width of the boat to provide extra space for people and goods.

For longer voyages, or when larger numbers of people needed to be carried, the Polynesians used large double-hulled canoes. The largest of these were



Source 3 A Māori double-hulled canoe



Source 4 A 19th-century painting of a Māori war canoe

more than 30 metres long and could carry up to 300 people. This was useful for military purposes, such as attacking nearby islands. When Captain Cook visited Tahiti in 1774, he saw an enormous fleet of these canoes getting ready to raid their neighbours in Mo’orea. He estimated that there were about 160 double war canoes plus many smaller craft, carrying almost 8000 people.

To travel further, large canoes would carry fewer people and more supplies. An ocean-going double canoe with a small crew could travel hundreds of kilometres at sea.

Check your learning 16.4

Remember and understand

- 1 List four techniques that Polynesian navigators used to help them find land.
- 2 What is the function of an outrigger?
- 3 Name three different types of Polynesian sea vessels.

Apply and analyse

- 4 Look at the image of a Māori war canoe in Source 4. What does this image tell us about the technical skills of the Māori? What other information can we get from this image?

Evaluate and create

- 5 Choose one of the Polynesian navigational methods. Create a presentation, using diagrams and other images, explaining how the method would have been used on Polynesian voyages.

16.5 Polynesian societies

There were many Polynesian societies, including those in Hawaii, Samoa, the Marquesas, Tahiti, the Cook Islands, Tonga, Rapa Nui (Easter Island) and New Zealand. Many of these societies continue today, with traditional ways of life adapting in response to the modern world. In this section we will look at one of these societies – Rapa Nui – in greater detail.

Common features of Polynesian societies

Polynesian societies developed in many similar ways. Earlier in the chapter we saw how Polynesian languages are closely related and contain many comparable words (see section 16.3).

Early Polynesian societies depended heavily on fishing and seafaring, and on growing crops such as the sweet potato, banana and coconut.



Source 1 A sketch made by French explorer Dumont D'Urville in the 1800s, showing a traditional Tongan tattoo



Source 2 Wooden tikis representing the gods Ku Kaili and Ku Ki'i Akua in Hawaii

Tattooing – using needles, chisels or a comb dipped in dye – was practised nearly everywhere throughout the Polynesian Triangle. Tattoos often displayed a person's rank, family history or achievements. Different areas of the body were tattooed depending on whether a person was male or female.

Polynesians also shared many beliefs about gods and the creation of the world. Most Polynesian societies believed there were many gods. One of the most commonly known gods in Polynesia was Tangaloa (known as Kanaloa in Hawaii and as Ta'aroa in Tahiti). According to some myths, Tangaloa created the universe out of darkness.

The society and culture of Rapa Nui

Rapa Nui was one of the most isolated settlements on Earth, located more than 2000 kilometres from the nearest inhabited Polynesian island and over 3000 kilometres from the coast of South America. The island is only about 25 kilometres long and 12 kilometres wide. The Rapa Nui people first settled there around 300 CE. When Dutch admiral Jacob Roggeveen arrived at Rapa Nui on Easter Sunday in 1722, he renamed it 'Easter Island'.

The challenge for any historian studying Rapa Nui society is a lack of information. When

Europeans first saw Easter Island it was already in dramatic decline. The population had become very small, apparently after a period of civil war and **cannibalism**. However, by studying the oral traditions and artefacts of the islanders it is possible to piece together an understanding of the Rapa Nui way of life. The focus of a great deal of the study of Easter Island has been on the giant stone statues, called *moai*, the Rapa Nui constructed.

The *moai* of Rapa Nui

More than 800 *moai* have been found on Rapa Nui. It is believed that carving, moving and erecting these huge statues was a feature of islander life for about 300 years, from 1200 CE. The Rapa Nui obtained the stone to make most of the statues at Rano Raraku, a volcanic crater. They carved the *moai* at Rano Raraku, and then transported them to the coast, where they set them on stone platforms facing inland. Archaeologists suggest that the Rapa Nui used a combination of rollers, sleds and ropes to move these huge statues. The largest is almost 10 metres high and weighs 75 tonnes. Most of the statues found on Easter Island are still in the quarry at Rano Raraku, where they were waiting to be moved. Some were simply left unfinished (see Source 4).

Source 3 Some of the *moai* on Rapa Nui



Source 4 Unfinished *moai* at the Rano Raraku quarry on Rapa Nui

It is thought the *moai* represented the ancestors of the different clans on Rapa Nui, and that they were placed to watch over the clans and their lands. But our understanding of the role of these statues is incomplete because there are no written records of the time before Europeans arrived. Also, later generations of islanders appear to have deliberately ruined the statues, perhaps as a rejection of their own past culture.

Social organisation and grouping

The island population was divided into social classes: the chiefs, priests and warriors were the leaders, and the common people provided the labour force.

In many Polynesian societies, including among the Māori of New Zealand and the Rapa Nui of Easter Island, the leaders of the society are the ariki (which means ‘chiefs’), who belong to a **hereditary** ruling class. In Rapa Nui society, the ariki claim to be direct descendants of Hotu Matu’a. According to legend, the god-like figure of Hotu Matu’a was the first to settle the island, arriving with his extended family in two great canoes.

Each family or household (paenga) was linked to an extended clan (mata) through a complex system of social obligations, which involved the exchange of goods, labour and wives. The Rapa Nui did not use money. The ariki organised the labour force and collected taxes in the form of produce and goods. They also supervised trade between the various clans or tribes, and were responsible for keeping the peace and ensuring the food supply. In some cases this involved controlling a central store of food to be used when food supplies were low.

The labour force was made up of farmers, fishermen, craftspeople and warriors. The common

people lived in small, round-walled houses, built on stone foundations. Sweet potato was the main crop on the island. It was a vital food source because it provided high yields, even in poor soil.

The Rapa Nui had no metal tools. They used stone axes (toki), stone fishhooks, tools made from obsidian (volcanic glass) such as spear points, scrapers and knives, and bone needles.

The carving, moving and placement of the moai required a well-organised social structure. Some sections of the community would have had to ensure a surplus of food to feed the important stone masons, tool makers and engineers who were responsible for making and putting up the moai.

Traditionally, marriages were arranged by the fathers of the bride and groom. Many marriages ended in divorce, and both men and women could break their marriage ties for almost any reason, and then remarry. The roles for men and women were strictly defined: men were responsible for planting the garden, fishing and building; women harvested crops and handled domestic chores.

The use of Rapa Nui’s natural resources

Rapa Nui once had over a million giant palm trees and other types of trees and vegetation. But by the

Source 5 A modern reconstruction of a ‘boat house’. Similar elliptically shaped stone foundations for traditional houses have been found on Rapa Nui.



Source 6 A 19th-century illustration of Rapa Nui people

time the first Europeans saw the island in 1722, most of the trees were gone. Some historians think that the history of Rapa Nui can be seen as a warning about ruining the environment through deforestation.

Timber was used by the Rapa Nui people as fuel for fires, to build canoes and houses, and possibly to make rollers and sleds for moving the moai. As the Rapa Nui cut down the trees to obtain timber, they gradually destroyed the ancient forests. Deforestation also caused soil to blow or wash away. Then streams began to disappear. There is evidence that the Polynesian rat, which was brought to the island with the first settlers, also contributed to the destruction of the forest. Rats ate the seeds of palm trees before they could grow.

Deforestation did not automatically mean the end of Rapa Nui society. The islanders, like other Polynesians, were not totally dependent on wildlife or palm trees for food. They also cultivated sweet potato, raised and ate chickens, and caught seafood. The disappearance of the forests over a period of 400 to 500 years would have allowed people to gradually adapt.

Rapa Nui society was also devastated by clan warfare around 1680. This led to the final breakdown of its traditional structure. The population may once have been as high as 15 000 but by the time Europeans arrived, there were only 2000 to 3000 people living on the island. Contact with Europeans then devastated the remaining population. Europeans not only brought deadly diseases such as smallpox (which the Rapa Nui people had no immunity to), they also introduced the slave trade.

Check your learning 16.5

Remember and understand

- 1 List the features that most Polynesian societies had in common.
- 2 What is the English name for Rapa Nui and why was it called this?
- 3 Describe the role of the chief (ariki) in Rapa Nui society.

Apply and analyse

- 4 Find out more about the environmental degradation on Rapa Nui. Prepare a presentation comparing the environmental collapse on Rapa Nui to modern environmental problems such as climate change. Say whether there are any lessons we can learn from the experience of the Rapa Nui people.



Source 7 A Polynesian rat

Evaluate and create

- 5 According to Rapa Nui legend, the moai were once alive and walked to their current locations. Conduct research to find out what theories archaeologists have to explain how the moai were transported, and discuss the methods used to test these theories. Create a presentation to show which theory you think is most likely to be correct. Include sources and diagrams.

Canoe building: a sacred skill

Canoe building was an important and sacred skill for Polynesian peoples. Expert carpenters were highly regarded, and in many Polynesian societies the title of boatbuilder was passed down from father to son. Having a large canoe built was expensive and often boatbuilders were part of a chief or king's staff. There were also complex rituals involved in building canoes.

Source 2

Four hundred men were employed in the building of a certain canoe at Pua Ma'u, working under the direction of four tuhuna (experts). The work was done where the tree was felled and where a decorated house was erected for the workmen. Workmen and tuhuna were fed by the chief, twenty men being employed in this work. The place was tapu (forbidden) to women and to strangers. Any intruder from another valley would be killed and eaten. When the canoe was finished a great feast was held at the place of manufacture, the workmen's house being decorated with ferns and wildvines.

A description of canoe building in the Marquesas, from E.S.C. Handy, *The Native Culture in the Marquesas*, Volume 9 of Bayard Dominick Expedition 1920–21, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1923, p. 155

Source 1 A canoe being built using traditional methods

Source 3

Canoe building was one of the industries of ancient Hawaiians, and it is still carried on to this day. This is how it is done: when a man desires to go up to the mountain forests to get a tree to build a canoe, he must first prepare a pig, red fish, black fish and various other things as offerings to propitiate [pacify] the forest deities. When these things are ready he comes home and invites dreams in his sleep. If they are good dreams, he will go up to the forests; but if they are unfavourable, he won't go.

A woman should not go along with him to the mountains; that is wrong. Should a woman go along, the canoe would crack.

When he arrives at the place where the koa tree selected for his canoe stands, he kindles a fire ... to cook the offerings. After the fire is kindled, he gets a chip of the koa tree and burns it ...; when all the offerings are cooked, prayers are offered to the canoe-building gods ... then he eats some of the food and throws some to the gods. When all these things have been attended to, the tree is ready to be cut.

A description of canoe building in Hawaii, from A. Fornander, *Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folklore*, Vol. 5, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1916, pp. 610–14



Source 4 A Maori war canoe or waka taua. Traditionally, war canoes were often painted black and red – black represents death and red means tapu, or sacred. The bow (front) and stern (back) were decorated with powerful symbols.

Source 5

The war canoes were very tapu; every step in their construction was accompanied by incantations said by the priests, part of whose special functions it was to act as naval architects ... In former times, in the first launching of a canoe, the skids were the living bodies of slaves.

Elsdon Best, *The Maori Canoe*, A. R Shearer, Wellington, 1925, pp. 62–3

Skilldrill

Locate, compare, select and use information from a range of sources as evidence

When conducting a historical inquiry, it is important to locate, compare, select and use information from a range of sources in order to answer your key inquiry question. By doing this, you can be sure that the evidence you gather from these sources is fair, balanced and accurate, rather than based on the point of view of only one person.

There are a number of different methods you can use to compare and select information for your sources. The simplest and most effective is to use an organisation chart. Organisation charts can help you quickly decide which sources provide the most useful, relevant and reliable evidence. To create an organisation chart, follow these steps:

- Step 1** Create a table that is four columns wide and has as many rows as required – this will vary depending on how many sources you are comparing.
- Step 2** List your inquiry question at the top of the table, as well as any possible hypotheses you may have developed during your research.
- Step 3** In column 1, list the name of the source and where you found it. In column 2, list all of the positive things (pros) and negative things (cons) about the source. For example, the source may have been written by a very reputable historian (pro); but it may only be very short and not include all the details you need (con). In column 3, list the type of source it is – primary or secondary. In column 4, list the details of where you found it, such as internet address or book title and author details.

Step 4 Once you have completed your organisation chart, you will be in a good position to make some decisions about which sources provide reliable evidence and which do not. This will then help you answer your inquiry question.

Apply the skill

- 1 Compare, select and use information provided in Sources 1 to 5 by creating an organisation chart as described. For an example of this type of organisation chart, refer to section HT.2 of 'The historian's toolkit'.
- 2 Based on your analysis of the available information, answer the following inquiry question: 'How sacred was the skill of canoe building to the Polynesian peoples?'

Extend your understanding

- 1 What does the description in Source 2 tell you about the amount of work required to build a new canoe?
- 2 With reference to Sources 2 and 3, why do you think women and strangers were banned from witnessing canoe building in some Polynesian societies?
- 3 Canoes such as the one shown in Source 5 are still used today in ceremonial events. Conduct some research to find out more about one such event and write a paragraph describing the presence and significance of the canoes.
- 4 Make your own model of a Polynesian ocean canoe. You will need to do some research to make sure your model is accurate.

16.6 Māori settlement and society

Māori society developed on the islands of Aotearoa (New Zealand) around 1000 years ago and has its own distinctive culture.

The Māori settlement of New Zealand

The Māori call New Zealand ‘Aotearoa’, the ‘land of the long white cloud’. Aotearoa is surrounded by dangerous seas and was probably one of the last areas to be settled by the Polynesians. Historians believe that the Māori probably arrived in Aotearoa between 950 and 1130. The Māori have strong oral traditions about this discovery and settlement.

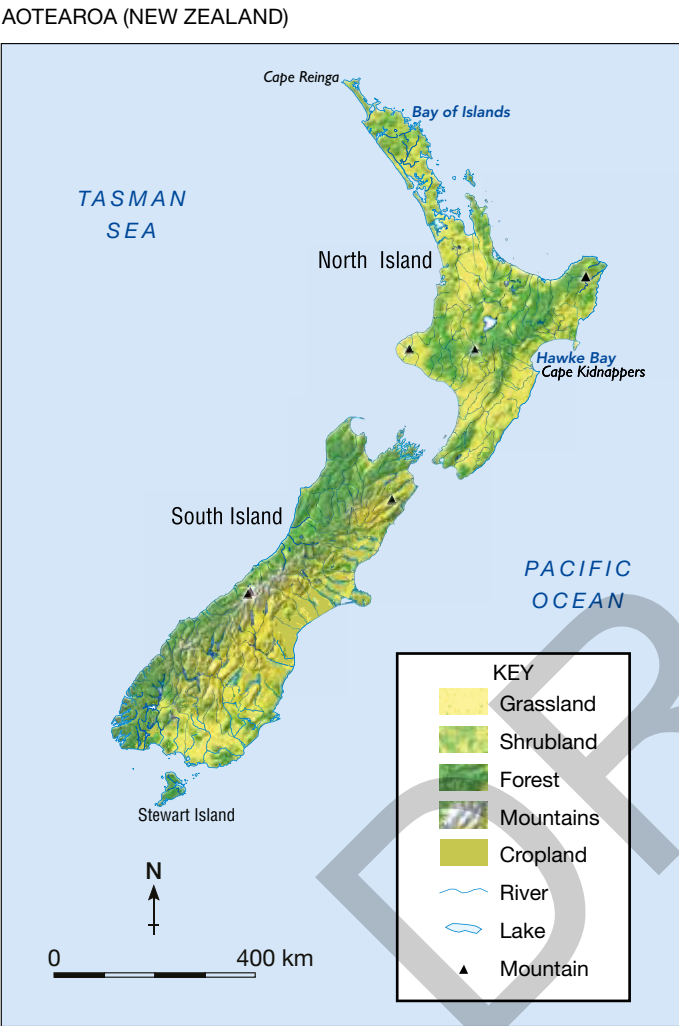
Māori account

Māori tradition tells of Chief Kupe travelling to Aotearoa in about 950. According to the tradition, Kupe travelled in a canoe called Maataa-hourua from a land called Hawaiki. He landed near modern-day Wellington at a place he called Whanganui-a-tara. When he landed on the islands or first saw them it is believed that he said: ‘He ao, he aotea he Aotearoa’ (‘It is a cloud, a white cloud, a long white cloud’).

Legend says that after the discovery two more Polynesian explorers, Toi and Whatonga, followed in 1150. Then there was a voyage of settlers in 1350 known as the Great Fleet. The Great Fleet was made up of eight canoes. Modern Māori trace their ancestry to these settlers in song and oral traditions. Many modern historians question the Great Fleet story but archaeological evidence does point to the arrival of the Polynesians around 1280.

A distinct society

Māori society was organised around the *iwi* (tribe), which traced its descent to one of the original canoes of the Great Fleet. The main group within the *iwi* was the *hapu* (sub-tribe). The *hapu* was usually made



Source 1

up of approximately 500 people organised in several related family groups. Each *hapu* was independent and had established land boundaries.

In charge of the *hapu* was the *rangatira*, an elder who held authority on behalf of the sub-tribe. His role was to ensure that the *hapu* survived, and that its land and resources were protected and defended. Important decisions were reached at a *marae* (a public meeting) held in or near the *whare runanga* (meeting house). While all would be listened to, the *rangatira* made the final decision.

The importance of ancestry

Genealogy (the study of family history) is important to the Māori because each *iwi* (tribe) traces its ancestry back to a canoe of origin. Māori genealogy is known as *whakapapa*, which means ‘placing the people in their layers’. A special carved genealogy staff called a *rākau whakapapa* is used to recite the history of the people. The *rākau whakapapa* is about a metre in length and covered in knobs. Each knob on the staff represents a different generation and serves as a reminder to the person reciting the genealogy.

Social organisation and grouping

Rank and leadership within traditional Māori culture was based on a person’s relationship to the ancestors. Māori society consisted of three classes: *rangatira*, *tutua* and *taurekareka*.

The ruling class, or *rangatira*, was made up of the most important families. The *ariki* (chief) was the leader of the *rangatira*. He was the first-born son of the most senior family that could trace its ancestry back to the founding canoes. While the *ariki* were the clear leaders, their authority came from their family. The *ariki* were expected to listen to the opinions of all members of the tribe and to prove their leadership in war, diplomacy and the wise treatment of the people.

The *tutua* were the largest group in Māori society. They were not as senior in rank as the *rangatira*, but they were the most productive group in the community. Many people in this group had specialised skills, and economic wealth depended on them.

The *taurekareka* were slaves who had been captured in war. They carried out all the menial tasks for the tribe, but were not prisoners. Tribal beliefs stated that once they were captured, slaves were considered dead, so it made little sense to escape. These slaves could often marry into the tribe and their children would be free.

Within this social structure and at differing levels there was a fourth class called *tohunga*. This group consisted of people who had shown talent or skill as a child. They became the priests or the specialists who built houses or canoes or who carried out tasks such as fishing or carving. The *tohunga* were also the educators, telling and passing on the tribal history.



Source 2 Wi Huata tells the history of his family going back 50 generations using a *rakau whakapapa* (genealogy staff).



Source 3 A painting of Māori chief Tamati Waka Nene in chiefly clothing. Painting by Lindauer Gottfried, 1890

Check your learning 16.6

Remember and understand

- 1 What is Chief Kupe known for in Māori oral tradition?
- 2 Explain the significance of the Great Fleet in Māori tradition.
- 3 What is the function of a *rākau whakapapa*?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Describe how Māori communities were organised.
- 5 Identify the groups in Māori society and describe their roles.

Evaluate and create

- 6 Were family relationships in Māori society more or less important than they are for you in your life? In what ways?

16.7 Daily life in a Māori village

The focus of daily life in traditional Māori communities was on getting food, which included growing crops, fishing and hunting. Everyone in the village, including children, worked together. Food was prepared and eaten together in the village or *pā*.

Layout of the *pā* (village)

The *whare runanga* (meeting house) was the central building of every *pā*. It faced the *marae* or village square. This was the physical and spiritual centre of the tribe. A carved mask of the tribe's founding ancestor decorated the outside of the *whare runanga*. The interior of the *whare runanga* represented his belly – the ridge-pole was his spine and the rafters his ribs. Other carvings inside depicted the captains of the ancestral canoes and welcomed those who were entering.

Ceremonies were performed in the open *marae* (the meeting house and open area in front of it). Meetings and formal welcomes both happened here. In a welcoming ceremony, the visitor might begin by remembering the dead. Their host might then welcome them using the *hongi*, a traditional Māori greeting in which two people press their nose and forehead together.

The border of the *pā* was ringed with strong wooden walls for protection against attacking warriors. Some *pā* were further strengthened with protective ditches, moats or towers. Often *pā* were built in places that were easy to defend, such as on ridges or islands.

Whare wananga (learning house)

Tribal history and culture were preserved by skilled men who acted as teachers to the younger people. Law, tribal history, and in some cases magic, were all passed on. The *whare wananga* (learning house) could be a physical building or just a selected space in the village. The *whare* was then described as being present, with the skills, history and *tapu* (sacred rules or restrictions) being taught in the open.



Source 1 The interior of a *whare runanga*, or meeting house



Source 2 Māori elder Ben Hutana greets Britain's Prince William with the *hongi* in New Zealand in 2011.

Other buildings within the *pā*

Apart from the central meeting and learning houses, there was also the *whare whakairo* (family dwelling). This was the sleeping place for the chief and his family. The *whare puni* were smaller family houses for the rest of the village population. The Māori also built small, raised huts called *pataka* to store dried and preserved food. *Pataka* were placed on high stilts to prevent animals from reaching the food.

Diet

The Māori word for food is *kai*. The Māori farmed much of their food but also hunted and gathered



Source 3 *The Interior of a Māori Pā in the Olden Time* by Sam Stuart, 1885 (Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki; gift of Mrs Sam Stuart, 1923)

food from the land and sea. Birds, fish and native vegetables were added to their staple *kumara* (sweet potato).

Diets also varied between regions. On Stewart Island, for example, the mutton bird was plentiful, whereas people in other areas caught eels or collected shellfish.

Hāngi

The *hāngi* was a method of cooking. To make a *hāngi*, the cooks would first dig a large pit. They would light a fire and heat stones until they were hot, then arrange them in the bottom of the *hāngi* pit. Men and women would work together to prepare food, which nearly always included *kumara*, as well as other vegetables, meat or fish. Puddings were also made. The food was wrapped in leaves or placed in baskets to protect it from burning. The baskets were placed on the hot stones and covered over with earth. The *hāngi* was left buried for around three hours. When the *hāngi* was 'raised' the food was ready to share.

Check your learning 16.7

Remember and understand

- 1 Describe the typical features of a Māori village.
- 2 Explain the function of the *marae*.
- 3 What is a *hāngi*?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Using the information in the text, write a paragraph to describe the village scene in the painting in Source 3.

Evaluate and create

- 5 In a small group, create a newspaper called the *Pā Times*. Such newspapers didn't exist but that shouldn't stop you! Your newspaper might include articles about life in the *pā*, upcoming events and gossip about members of the village. Some suggestions for articles might be:
 - a notice of an upcoming *hāngi* feast
 - a story about a social scandal among the *rangatira* or the *taurekareka* (or both)
 - advertisements for services by *tohunga* canoe builders or carpenters.



Source 4 Food being prepared for cooking in a *hāngi* pit

16B rich task

Māori warrior culture

Traditional Māori society became very warlike. A growing population led to competition for resources which, in turn, led to an increase in warring between tribes. Conflicts could break out over land or if one tribe insulted another. After an insult or a defeat, the injured party was obliged to seek revenge and restore their mana (status). War parties prepared themselves for battle using special rituals and a dance, called the haka.

Source 1 A Māori stabbing club



Source 2 Paddlers from different waka (canoes) perform a series of haka on Waitangi Day, New Zealand's national day

To scare the enemy, Māori warriors would perform a haka that called on Tumatauenga (the god of war). This haka used loud cries, the waving of weapons and fierce facial expressions such as grimaces, tongue-poking and bulging eyes. Throat-cutting gestures and other movements would be used to show the enemy what was going to happen to them. A different haka could also be performed in the pā to retell the stories of past victories.

Once ready for war, the chief would lead groups of 70 or 140 warriors (the number that could travel in a war canoe) out to fight. They would often attack at dawn using the natural bush as cover to carry out surprise raids. The raiders would try to kill all the enemy to prevent any revenge attacks. Fighting was hand-to-hand and fierce, using clubs made from wood, bone or greenstone.

After battle, cleansing rites would be performed. Tribes could make peace with one another by arranging marriages between people of chiefly rank.



Source 3 An illustration of a fortified Māori village on Rotorua Lake, drawn by George French Angas in 1847

Source 4

9 October 1769, Poverty Bay, New Zealand
I went ashore ... manned and armed and went to the side of the river, the natives being got together on the opposite side. We called to them in the Georges Island language, but they answered us by flourishing their weapons over their heads and dancing, as we supposed the war dance ...

31 October 1769, Cape Runaway, New Zealand
... five canoes came off to us, in one of which were upwards of 40 men, all armed with pikes and so on. From this and other circumstances it fully appeared that they came with no friendly intention ... I ordered a grapeshot to be fired a little wide of them. This made them pull off a little ...

Entries from Captain James Cook's Endeavour journal written during his first voyage of 1768–71, relating a couple of first encounters with Māori people

Skilldrill:

Analysing primary resources

The primary sources that historians use to understand the traditional Māori way of life tell different stories. It is the job of historians to examine these sources and come to a conclusion about their usefulness and reliability. It is important to identify who created each source and the reason why it was created. That way you can identify any potential bias. What did the person creating the source want his or her audience to think?

Step 1 Evaluating reliability

To determine the reliability of a source, you need to identify whether it is biased. Being biased means having an unbalanced or one-sided opinion. To recognise bias in a source, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who created the source?
- Why was the source created?
- Is there a possibility of bias?
- What message does the source convey?
- What is included and what if excluded?
- What can the source tell you about life at the time that it was created?

Step 2 Evaluating usefulness

To evaluate the usefulness of a source you should ask the following questions:

- What question am I investigating?
- Is the source reliable?
- What messages is the source conveying – both explicit and implicit?
- What is the source saying or showing that will assist me to answer my historical question?
- What additional information would I like that would help me to answer my question?

Apply the skill

- 1 Examine Sources 1 to 4 carefully and complete a copy of the table below in your notebook.

	Source 1	Source 2	Source 3	Source 4
Who wrote or created the source?				
When was the source created?				
Why was the source created?				
What does the source suggest about the Māori?				
What evidence does the source provide that the Māori were a warlike people?				
Do you think the source is reliable? Why or why not?				

- 2 Once you have completed the table, use the information you have gathered to write a short paragraph under the heading 'The Māori: a warlike people'.

Extend your understanding

- 1 Study the illustration of the pā in Source 3. Imagine you are a chief planning to raid this village. Describe how you would organise your attack. Make sure you include information about:
 - which direction you would come from
 - what you would do to overcome the pā's defences.

16.8 Sustainability: managing the environment

Māori believed that all living things were descended from gods. These gods were part of the environment and were found in the rivers, mountains and lakes. Geographical features were thought to contain mana (spiritual essence or power). The tribe was responsible for maintaining the *mana* of their environment. These beliefs affected the way the Māori managed their environment, one of their most significant achievements.

Early environmental damage

In many ways, the Māori were more closely linked to their environment than the later European arrivals. Nevertheless, as the extinction of the moa illustrates, they did have a huge impact early in their settlement of New Zealand.

The use of *tapu*

The word *tapu* has many meanings in Māori. Sometimes *tapu* can mean 'sacred'. But it can also mean that something is forbidden. If an item is *tapu* it cannot come into contact with a person, or the gods might become angry. People could also be *tapu*, though generally only men. The only exception might be a woman of the highest rank.

The chief and his food were *tapu*. A lesser person in the tribe could not touch him and would be punished by death if they did. His house was also *tapu* and could only be entered, particularly by a woman, after a special ritual was carried out. Other people who were *tapu* included the healer or priest, along with their homes and possessions. Areas such as burial grounds were also *tapu*.

key **concept:** cause and effect

Extinction of the moa

One early source of food for the Māori was the moa, a large flightless bird. There were originally 24 species of moa ranging in size from that of a turkey to one that was 3.7 metres high. All moa were herbivores and lived on twigs, shrubs, leaves and tree fruits.

Unfortunately for the moa, they were just too useful. They were easy to hunt and therefore became easy prey for the early Māori settlers. Their bones also made good tools and implements. The moa were hunted into extinction soon after the arrival of the Māori.

The moa were not the only ones to be hunted to extinction. Other victims were the flightless goose, the adzebill (another large flightless bird), swans and pelicans. Sea lions and elephant seals were also decimated in numbers. But as time went on and these ready food sources started to disappear, the Māori had to move from hunting to farming and storing food, as well as conservation of other wild food resources.

Rules called *tapu* were developed to protect sacred places, people and objects. Like other societies, the Māori had to balance their needs with those of the environment. When resources came under pressure, the Māori learnt from their experiences with the moa and used special *tapu*, called *rāhui*, for the protection of the environment.



Source 1 A skeleton of the moa, estimated to be 5000 years old



Source 2 This painting shows a *tohunga* being fed by a child. Some *tohunga* were so *tapu* that they needed others to feed them, as food was believed to pollute their *tapu*.

The role of *tohunga* (priests)

The priests' most important role was to see that *tikanga* (customs or rituals) were correctly observed. They were healers of both physical and spiritual ills, and they performed the appropriate rituals when the tribe was farming, fishing, hunting and going to war. Importantly, this included the placing and lifting of *tapu*.

Rāhui and sustainability

As Māori populations grew and resources declined, the Māori developed ways to more actively manage their environment. One way the Māori managed resources sustainably was through a particular type of *tapu* known as *rāhui*. *Rāhui* involved banning the use of particular environmental resources for a specified time. For example, fishing might be forbidden in a particular lake in order to give the fish

a chance to breed, or an area of land was set aside so that plants could recover.

After declaring a *rāhui*, the chief would set its limits. He would mark it with a post or describe the features of the landscape that served as its borders. Other *rāhui* were based on time rather than space, with hunting of particular animals or birds forbidden during some times of the year.

Source 3

The conservation *rāhui* was used to protect the products of the land and water ... [the] chief Tukuha ... set up a *rāhui* post at Te Rautāwhiri. The post remained in the same position, but whenever the chief wanted to *rāhui* the eels of his part of the Rangitaiki River, he would 'hang one of his old garments' on it. That would signal a complete ban on that one resource, eels. In this instance, the name of the place, Te Rautāwhiri (the leaves twisted on), indicates that it was used by custom as a place to signal a *rāhui*.

Description of *rāhui* by Hirini Moko Mead, 2003

The system of *rāhui* meant that the Māori could use the natural resources available to them without depleting them, meaning they would still be available for future generations. This was a great achievement in early conservation and is something that Western societies are now looking at. In fact, *rāhui* is still used in New Zealand today to protect numbers of native fish, shellfish and birds.

Check your learning 16.8

Remember and understand

- 1 What were the main causes leading to the extinction of the moa?
- 2 Define the terms *mana*, *tapu* and *rāhui*.

Apply and analyse

- 3 Read Source 3 and answer the following questions.
 - a What resource does the *rāhui* aim to protect?
 - b How does the chief signal that the *rāhui* is in place?
 - c What does the signal mean to people in that community?

- 4 If you could declare a *rāhui* on any environmental resource today, what would it be? Give reasons for your answer.

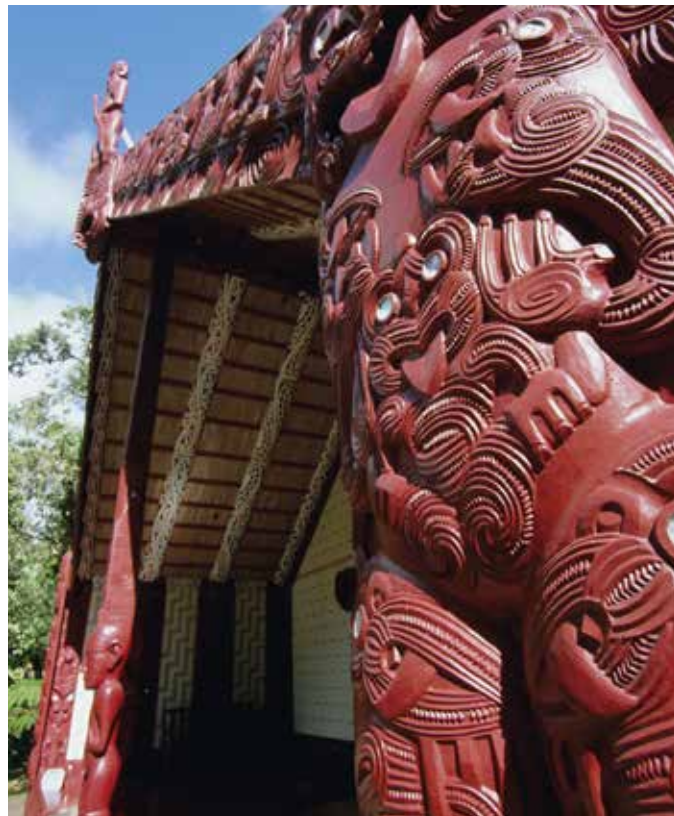
Evaluate and create

- 5 Create a graphic organiser to outline the consequences of native species extinction or decline through excessive hunting, fishing and harvesting by the Māori. Add details about how these consequences would have affected their society and daily life.

16.9 Māori arts

The beauty and importance of Māori art can most clearly be seen in their carving, weaving and tattooing (ta moko). These arts use intricate, detailed patterns and motifs requiring high levels of skill to reproduce, and making them a significant achievement. These arts were common across all levels of Māori society and across all tribes, providing an important source of tribal identity. Art was used to communicate information about spiritual matters, ancestry and other important topics to the tribe.

Māori culture was an oral culture, but stories were not just passed on by storytellers – tribes lived surrounded by their histories, both in their carvings and in their tattoos. For these reasons, the creation of art was also governed by the rules of *tapu*, and skilled artists were well respected and held high positions within the tribe. Most traditional Māori art was highly stylised and featured recurring motifs with the colours black, white and red dominating.



Source 1 A detail of the carving on the *whare runanga*, Waitangi

Source 2 A Māori greenstone *tiki*, traditionally worn around the neck



Carving

Carving was probably the most significant art form. The carvings in wood were the most important to the tribe. Carvings on canoes and within the meeting house held the stories of the tribe's history told with familiar motifs and symbols. But carvings in bone and jade were also common, particularly as jewellery. Again, the shapes used held meaning and provided a link to ancestors or spirits.

The most common carvings were of people. Generally, people were presented face-on with a large head and a squat body. The head was carved in detail and often heavily tattooed. The carver often used paua shell to highlight the eyes. The human figure was also commonly shown in the position of the *haka* with eyes bulging, tongue poking out and a club in their hands. Near the human figures there was often a birdlike beaked figure called the *manaia*. There is some disagreement as to whether this figure is really a bird, or rather a representation of a human figure in profile.

Whales, lizards and even mermaid-like figures were also widespread. Lizard patterns, symbols and motifs were present as guardians and helped protect against evil, which came from the god Whiro, god of the underworld. Spirals also decorated the surfaces of many objects. Spirals are thought to have represented the cycle of life.

The carved human figure commonly used in jewellery is known as a *tiki*. It is thought to represent the first human created by the god Tane. It is thought to bring good luck to its wearer.

Importantly, carving was linked to *tapu*. Wood shavings from carvings could not be used for fires or thrown away. Before cutting down a tree for carving the master carver would sing to Tane, the god of forests. In this way he hoped to ensure that what he was doing was acceptable.

Weaving

Weaving was done by the women of the tribe with flax. Items such as cloaks, skirts, floor mats and baskets were created. Weavers would use different types of flax, depending on the desired colour or use of the item.

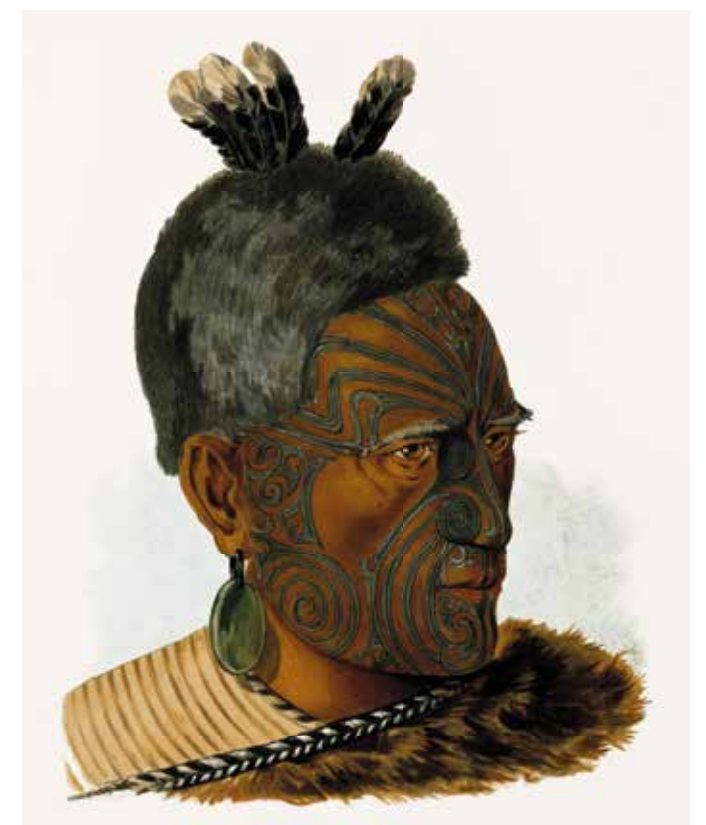
Tāniko refers to any ornamental border typically found on mats and clothes. *Tāniko* patterns are very geometric in form and were most commonly produced with recurring symbols in the traditional colours of red, white and black. A pattern of stars, for example, was associated with the survival of a tribe, the idea being that it is vital to have a large family, just as there are many stars in the sky.

Ta moko

In traditional Māori society, *ta moko* is the permanent marking of body and face. It is different from tattooing in that the skin is carved rather than punctured. *Tohunga-ta-moko*, or *moko* specialists, were highly respected. The patterns or *moko* illustrated a person's rank or status, and a person without *moko* had a very low position in the tribe.

A person's head was the most important area for *moko* because it communicated specific things, such as social standing. Initially, the *moko* specialist would cut into the facial skin using a bone chisel. Then he would dip the chisel into a pigment made from burnt Kauri gum or vegetable caterpillars, and tap it into the wounds. This process could be very painful. Swelling and even temporary loss of sight was common. Afterwards, the wearer was left with long, coloured grooves on their skin.

Both women and men wore *moko*, though women not usually so much. Men generally received *moko* on their faces, buttocks and thighs; women would only have them on their lips, chins and nostrils. Undergoing *ta moko* was an important step in leaving childhood behind and entering the adult world.



Source 3 A Māori chief with facial *moko*

Check your learning 16.9

Remember and understand

- 1 What were some of the motifs commonly used in Māori carving?
- 2 Men and women were involved in different arts. Which of the arts was the domain of the women?
- 3 Why was it important for a carver to sing to Tane, the god of forests, before using a tree for wood?

Apply and analyse

- 4 What do the Māori arts tell you about the importance of the ancestors in Māori society? Give reasons for your answer.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Think about how the Māori used design in carving to show their relationships with their ancestors. Create a graphic design on an A4 piece of paper that represents who you are and where you have come from. The design does not need to be for a carving: it could be a pattern to go on a T-shirt or flag or to be used for street art.

Origin myths of the Māori

Myths and legends were passed down through the generations. These myths were a way for Māori to share their origins, their religious beliefs and their way of understanding the environment.



Source 1 A representation of Rangī and Papatūānuku, the Sky Father and Earth Mother in Māori mythology

Many Māori myths feature gods performing incredible feats. But the myths were also about the creatures around them and their importance to their lives. Many myths featured whales and sharks. Whales and sharks were portrayed as guardians and often saved those in the sea from drowning. Sharks were an important part of the Māori diet and shark bone was used for carving.

These myths in turn came to influence the arts and provide the motifs that were used and easily understood by everyone in the tribe. Two of the most important myths for the Māori were their creation myths – the legend of Rangī and Papa, and the legend of Māui.

The legend of Rangī and Papa

This legend tells the story of how day and night were formed. The Māori believed that the original creators were Rangī, the Sky Father, and Papa, the Earth Mother. In the beginning, Rangī and Papa clung together and their children lived in darkness. The children decided that Rangī and Papa needed to be parted. After great struggle, the children separated their parents and day was separated from night. Rangī cried at the parting, creating the oceans. The children of Rangī and Papa continued to argue. Their fighting caused the storms and the disruptions of the earth, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

The legend of Māui

Another traditional Māori legend, this tells the story of the formation of the islands of Aotearoa. Māui was one of the grandchildren of Rangī and Papa. Māui decided to go fishing and promised to bring back a huge catch of fish. He prepared a special hook made from a magic jawbone. Smearing the hook with his blood, he threw it into the sea. Something immensely strong took the hook and nearly dragged the canoe over. Māui pulled up the line, drawing up a great fish. The fish became the North Island. The South Island was Māui's canoe and Stewart Island was his anchor stone.

A stone formation known as Māui's fishhook can still be found in the North Island today. The Māori believe that Cape Kidnappers in Hawke's Bay is his fishhook.

Skilldrill

Identifying and locating relevant sources using ICT

Being able to locate relevant primary and secondary sources using the internet is an important historical skill. However, you need to keep in mind that not all information you find on the internet is necessarily true, accurate, reliable or useful. So, in addition to being able to find source material online, you need to be able to evaluate the reliability, credibility and usefulness of the information you find.

Use the following steps to apply this skill:

Step 1 Identify key words related to your topic and type these into a search engine such as Google. (Use only these key words; do not type in whole sentences or questions.)

Step 2 Add further relevant key words to refine your search if you cannot find what you want on your first attempts.



Source 2 An illustration of Māui fishing up the North Island of Aotearoa using a magic jawbone

Step 3 Look beyond the first page of results. The best results do not always appear first.

Step 4 Assess the reliability of each site by asking yourself:

- Who is the author or creator? If it is an individual, do they have their credentials listed (e.g. a degree or a title)? If it is an organisation, is it a reputable organisation such as a government or university department?
- What is the purpose of the website? Is it trying to inform, persuade or sell?
- Is the site objective? Is the author's point of view biased?
- Is the information accurate? Can the information be verified if you cross-check it with other sources of information?
- Does the site contain spelling mistakes or grammatical errors? (If so, this is usually an indication that the site is not particularly reliable.)

Apply the skill

- 1 Conduct an internet search to locate and identify relevant sources related to Māori origin myths.
- 2 Make a list of all the websites you visited and the sources you gathered.
 - a Which of these sources do you think are the most reliable and relevant? How can you tell?
 - b Which of these sources do you think are not reliable or relevant? How can you tell?

Extend your understanding

- 1 Do some more research on Māori mythology. Then find out about some of the myths or legends of another Polynesian society.
 - a On a scale of 1 (not very) to 5 (very) say how much you think the stories of these societies were similar.
 - b Make a poster showing the similarities and differences you have found.