

“Things We Missed Part 3 – The Pacific”



Things We Missed Part

The Pacific

60 Minutes Report on
Easter Island's Moai
(13:40)



Moai on platform (*ahu*). Rapa Nui (Easter Island). c. 1100–1600 C.E. Volcanic tuff figures on basalt base



- Sacred statues, likely represent ancestors
- 887 Moai – size and complexity increase over time
- 14 made with basalt, the others made with volcanic tuff
- Head = Generally $\frac{1}{3}$ of body height 6'-60' tall – most are 36' tall
- Placed on platform with backs to the sea = keeping watch over island



- Deep set eyes originally inset with white coral and stone
- Heavy eyebrow ridge
- Pointed noses
- Thin, protruding lips with downward curve



- Sculptures likely commissioned by high-ranking individuals
- Some moved 11 miles from quarry
- Easter Islanders free from outside influence for over 1000 years



- Ecological collapse led to loss of confidence in ancestor spirits
- Overpopulation, deforestation
- Ancestor worship replaced by cult of the man-bird
- Many Moai toppled
- About 40 remained unfinished

Moai. Rapa Nui
(Easter Island).

c. 1100–1600

C.E. Volcanic
tuff figures on
basalt base



Much of Rapa Nui culture and civilization destroyed with the
introduction of European diseases and the slave trade



Nan Madol:
Ancient Island
City of Mystery 3:27

Nan Madol. Pohnpei, Micronesia. Saudeleur Dynasty. c. 700–1600 C.E. Basalt boulders and prismatic columns.

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Megalithic complex divided into 2 parts by a central canal

1st part is administrative (Rulers' residence, public spaces)

2nd part is ritual with priests' residences and mortuary centers





Power and Authority: Separated from main part of the island, structures made of permanent material, larger and much more labor intensive than other regional structures





Saudeleur Dynasty -- 500 year rule

Founded as a religious community focused on worship of the sea

Nan Madol is a political and religious center

Huge amount of labor suggest a controlled population with a great deal of organization



200 and 92 man-made islands on top of a coral reef

Created by moving and stacking basalt columns

‘Ahu ‘ula (feather cape). Hawaiian. Late 18th century C.E. Feathers and fiber.

‘Ahu ‘ula: Power and Protection
Invincibility Cloak

Mana = Inner force or power comes from the gods – the closer our ancestors is to the gods, the more mana we are born with.

In Hawaii, chiefs were descendants from the gods. Power is protected through wrapping and through rules/prohibitions



Cloaks made to preserve and protect mana of the wearer

‘Ahu ‘ula (feather cape). Hawaiian. Late 18th century C.E. Feathers and fiber.

‘Ahu ‘ula: Power and Protection
Invincibility Cloak

Design is specific to the wearer
and each cape is made for a
specific individual

Worn around shoulders on
ceremonial occasions and in
battle

Visible sign of power and
authority



Cloaks made to preserve and protect mana of the wearer



Spiritual Armor – Like tattoos in some cultures

Yellow, Red, Black – Prized, politically/spiritually significant colors across Polynesia

Cloaks passed down through families, given as political gifts, or captured in battle

Dangerous to wear and enemy's cloak



Never intended as trade goods

'i'iwi bird



Still around...but
threatened

Recording of the
'o 'o

Recording of the
'o 'o



'o'o bird



Birds were not intended to be harmed in the process

- ◆ Birds seen as intimately connected to the gods
- ◆ Feathers tied in bundles of 6-10 then bound to webbing – tens of thousands of feathers per cape
 - ◆ Larger ones had up to 800,000 feathers
- ◆ Feathers gathered/sorted by women – feathers served as an annual tribute to a king

These are reproductions but you can get the idea of differing sizes and how they were worn



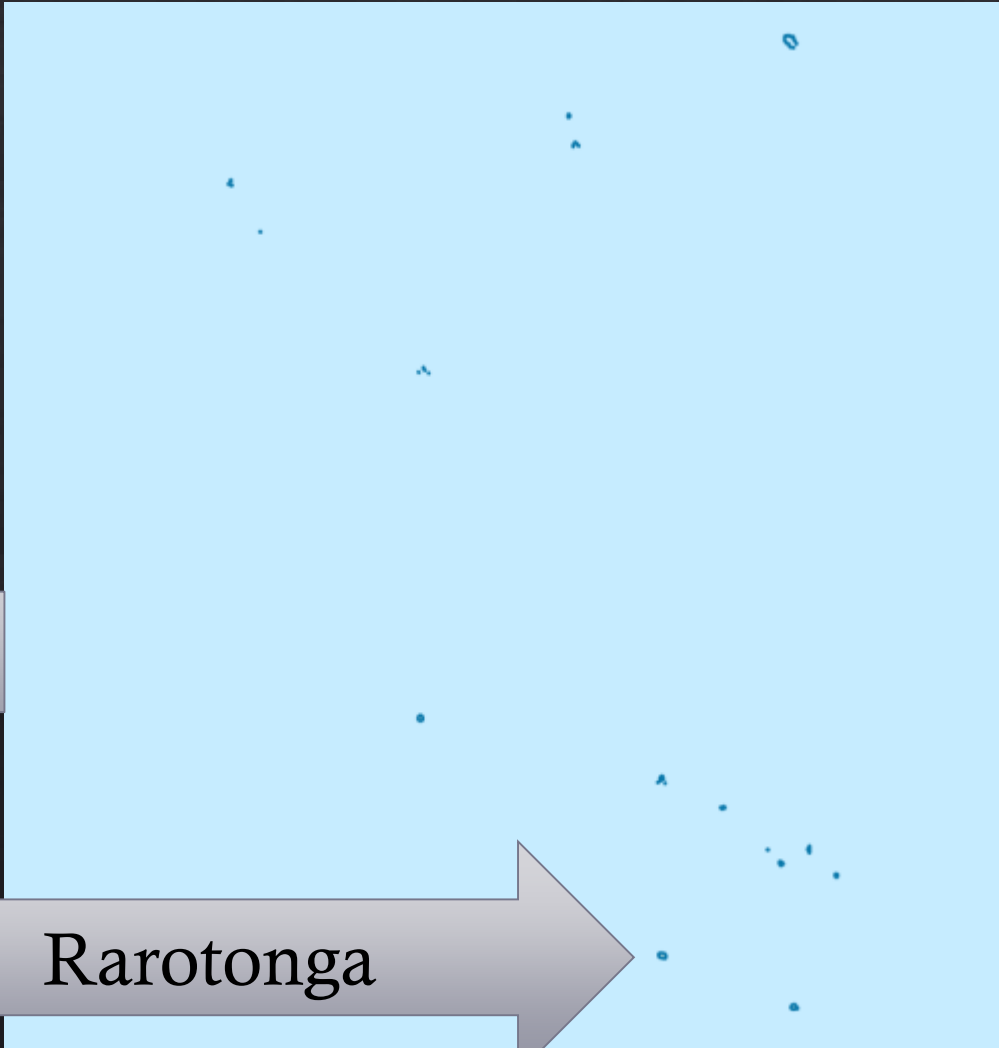


Fiber netting made by men – chanted prayers as they made the net – increases power of the cloak

Reciting genealogy of the wearer causes stories of ancestors to be woven into capes, making them stronger



Staff god. Rarotonga, Cook Islands, central Polynesia. Late 18th to early 19th century C.E. Wood, tapa, fiber, and feathers.



Staff god. Rarotonga, Cook Islands, central Polynesia. Late 18th to early 19th century C.E. Wood, tapa, fiber, and feathers.

No agreement on what deity this is – fertility? Maybe a creator god?

Sacred
object in
Rarotonga
culture



Large, smooth head,
stylized mouth and eyes

Head and arm on one end –
naturalistic phallus on
opposite end (removed by
Europeans)

Small male and female
figures in between



Staff god. Rarotonga, Cook Islands, central Polynesia. Late 18th to early 19th century C.E. Wood, tapa, fiber, and feathers.

Images of gods were made from wood. When wrapped, the god would inhabit the object. When removed, they would leave it.

Wrapping also contained dangerous/powerful mana – protected those around the object



Feathers = connection to the gods

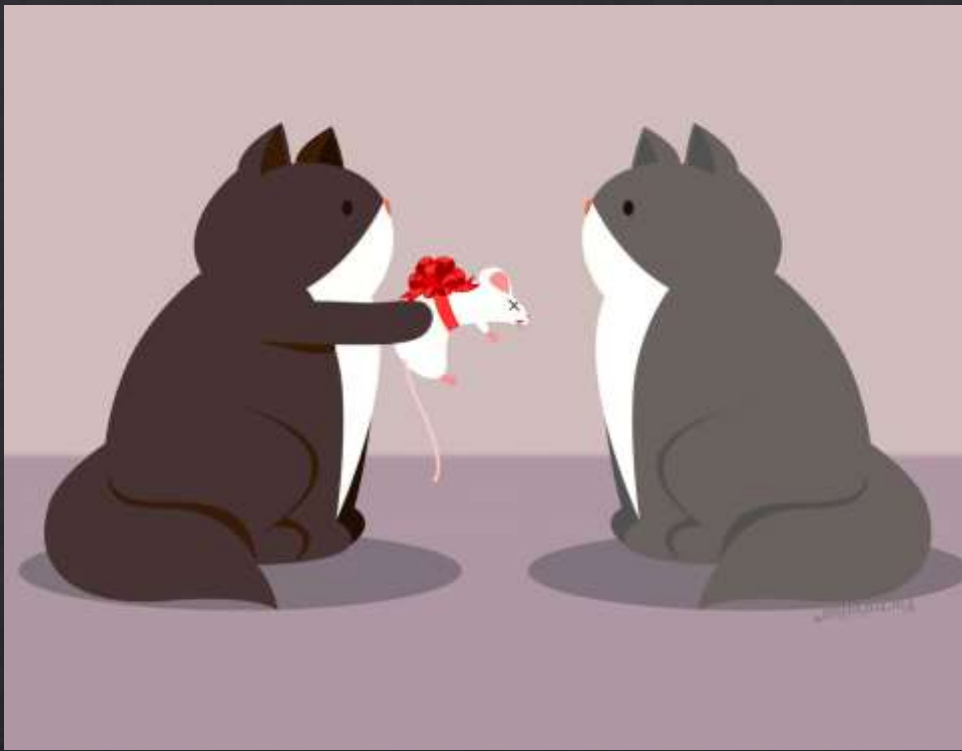
13'



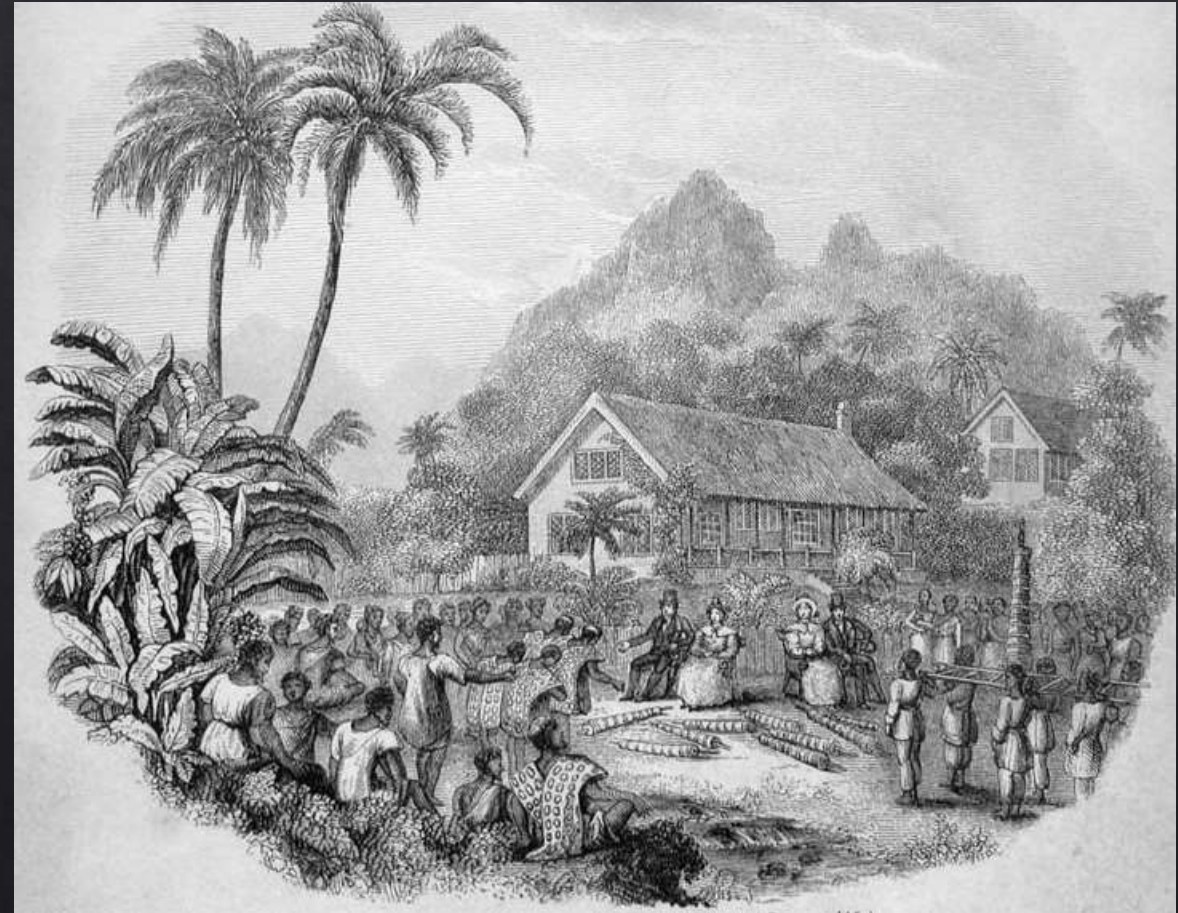
Rarotonga

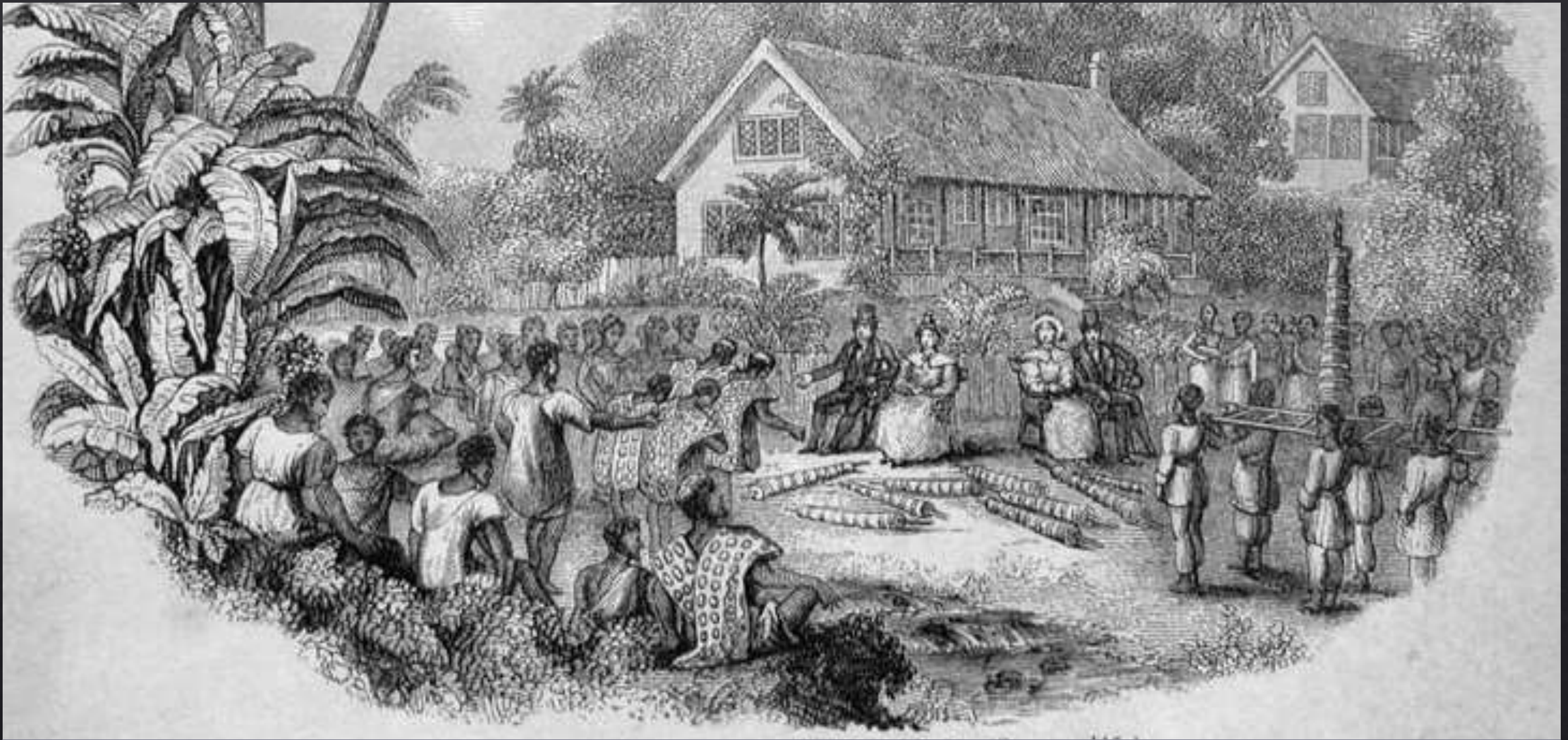
- Massive social change in 1820s
- Conversions to Christianity
- Ceremonial presentation of staff gods to missionaries





Staff god gift-giving ceremony





Staff god gift-giving ceremony

Most were burned by
Christian Missionaries





Female deity. Nukuoro, Micronesia.
c. 18th to 19th century C.E. Wood.
(Goddess Kawe)



Spinal column and posterior



Limited facial features

Suggestion of breasts

Naval

Pubic triangle, also a tattoo required for some elite women

Female deity. Nukuoro, Micronesia. c. 18th to 19th century C.E. Wood. (Goddess Kawe)



Clean lines = absolute balance, spiritual tranquility

Few large trees on a coral atoll – meaning?

Kept in amalau – community temple.
Offerings given during ceremonial occasions

Breadfruit harvest = people ritually renewed
god images and tattooed young women

Female deity. Nukuoro, Micronesia.
c. 18th to 19th century C.E. Wood.
(Goddess Kawe)

Female deity. Nukuoro, Micronesia. c. 18th to 19th century C.E. Wood.
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7'1"

