

# Investigating historical migration routes between Polynesia and South America

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20 décembre 2013

## **Abstract**

The mode and tempo of pre-European colonization in the Americas remains contentious. The migration route most widely acknowledged has its starting point in Siberia and involves a colonization event through the Bering Strait. Another less accepted route suggests contact between Oceania and South America. We present here morphological, isotopic,  $^{14}\text{C}$ , and genetic data from two skulls identified as Botocudo Native Americans from the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Comparing their whole genomes to a worldwide reference dataset, we find that the ancestry of these individuals is Polynesian, with no detectable Native American component. Moreover, the  $^{14}\text{C}$  dates suggest that they could have been present in Brazil prior to European contact with Polynesia. We discuss potential scenarios and argue that a contact between Polynesian seafarers and South America cannot be excluded.