

8. The Channel of the Many Ghosts (Tupapaurau), Moorea Island, French Polynesia (Feb - April 2003).

Max Guérout (GRAN, Paris) and Robert Veccella (GRAN, Papeete)

Abstract

Following the discovery by divers of a site containing many objects in worked volcanic stones, a campaign of excavations has been started in emergency by the Authorities French Polynesia. In the face of risk of looting, the Ministry of Culture has asked GRAN to study the site, and to recover objects to avoid to be taken by indelicate divers and to leave the territory.

The importance of this site holds both to its dimensions and to the number of objects. Objects were, in very great majority, constituted of various type of anchors, fishing weight destined for ballast lines or fillets, basalt and stone prisms coming from constructions on dry land. The distribution of these later objects on a coral plateau alongside the pass of Tupapaurau (the pass of the numerous ghosts) is, partly, due to movements of the swell that have gathered them in breaks or sheltered zones. It is therefore essential to try to understand the reason of this accumulation; several hypothesis are indeed possible. It has been made call both for biologists specialized in coral reefs and for geologists in order that they bring their contribution to the study of causes of this accumulation. The yard has been marked by the particular interest carried by the population to archaeological operations and the numerous contacts to which it has given place.

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Resumen

Después de que los buzos descubrieron un sitio lleno de artefactos de piedra, las autoridades de la Polinesia Francesa comenzaron un programa de rescate. Para evitar el saqueo, el Ministerio de Cultura pidió al GRAN (Grupe de Recherche en Archéologie Navale) estudiar el sitio y recuperar los materiales.

La importancia del sitio deriva de su tamaño y el número de objetos. La mayoría eran ditintos tipos de anclas, pesos de redes de pescar, prismas de piedra de construcciones en tierra firme. La distribución de estos últimos sobre una plataforma de coral a lo largo del paso de Tupapaurau (el canal de los numerosos fantasmas) se debe en parte a las corrientes que los juntaron en zanjas o zonas protegidas. Es importante conocer la razón de esta acumulación, con distintas hipótesis posibles. Se invitó a biólogos especialistas en barreras de coral y a geólogos para ayudar en esta tarea.