
Pofatu: An open-access database for provenance analysis of stone tools in the Pacific

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Résumé

Inter-community and inter-island mobility was an important aspect in the settlement process of Pacific islands, as well as a decisive feature in the evolution of Pacific island societies through time. Following the first attempts to infer historical interactions based on stylistic and typological similarities in material culture, scholars have started applying petrographic and geochemical techniques to investigate the composition of artefacts in order to identify the natural origin of raw materials and trace patterns of exchange among intra- or inter-island interaction networks. While these analyses are increasingly used to document elemental and isotopic compositions of geological sources and artefacts, a growing body of data must be used by researchers to better constrain the origin of new assemblages.

In this paper we introduce *Pofatu*, the first online and open-access database of published geochemical data on stone artefacts and quarries in the Pacific. The data repository includes metadata about archaeological and chronological contexts as well as geographical locations, which will be used to document and quantify patterns of change in stone material distribution among Pacific societies through time.

While most prehistoric quarries and surface procurement sources have yet to be identified, provenance studies must also rely on the acquisition of wide and reliable geological data related to the geological setting of each archipelago. For this reason, *Pofatu* additionally provides a direct access to the comprehensive collection of geological data available from the GEOROC database (<http://georoc.mpch-mainz.gwdg.de/>).

We show how this integrated and exhaustive presentation of published archaeological and geological data will help assigning reliable and unambiguous provenance to specific artefacts using a common reference dataset.

Mots-Clés: Pacific islands, Provenance studies, Geochemistry, Stone tools, Artefact distribution, Interisland voyaging, Interaction

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