
Rano Raraku. The archaeological story of a twin monument

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Résumé

From the study of Thomson (1892), majority of scholars esteem that the isolated images scattered along the ancient paths, but also complete or unfinished statues staying at the Rano Raraku were abandoned during or before their transportation. Concerning the isolated *moai*, recent studies given some arguments to prove that they were erected before the 17th century along the processional roads that not leave the Rano Raraku but lead to the famous volcano. On this sense, Rano Raraku was as a monument (for a "sacred" raw material?) during its exploitation as a quarry. But today we know also that the complete or unfinished statues yet preserved at the Rano Raraku were carved in the course of the 18th century and maybe during the first half of the next one. Definitively, the big *moai* of the Rano Raraku were made to remain on the slopes of the Rano Raraku, and they have nothing to do with a latent transport. Concerning the hundreds of 'sketches', they are in fact "unfinishable". It seems that the aim of the last sculptors was to populate the volcano with human figures, and to transform the volcano as a full cult site, second stage of the "monumentality" of the Rano Raraku.

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