
Taputapuātea (France) No 1529

Official name as proposed by the State Party

Taputapuātea

Location

Island of Ra'iatea
Leeward Islands
French Polynesia

Brief description

Taputapuātea on Ra'iatea Island is at the centre of the "Polynesian Triangle," the last part of the globe to be settled by humans. On a point projecting into the lagoon that surrounds the island is Taputapuātea, a political, ceremonial, funerary and religious centre, part of a complex of sacred spaces called *marae*. Two forested valleys that contain traces of ancient settlements are included in the property, as well as a portion of lagoon and coral reef and a strip of open ocean beyond. A break in the coral reef faces the Taputapuātea *marae* complex. Named Te Ava Mo'a, this sacred pass allows access from Taputapuātea to the ocean, and so to the other islands of Polynesia.

Category of property

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*.

In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (8 July 2015) paragraph 47, it is also a *cultural landscape*.

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List

31 May 2010

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination

None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre

22 January 2016

Background

This is a new nomination.

Consultations

ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committees on Cultural Landscapes and on Archeological Heritage Management and several independent experts.

Comments about the evaluation of this property were received from IUCN in November 2016. ICOMOS carefully examined this information to arrive at its final decision and its March 2017 recommendation; IUCN also reviewed the presentation of its comments included in this ICOMOS report. IUCN's will include the full comments as provided to ICOMOS in its evaluation book 41COM.INF.8B2.

Technical Evaluation Mission

An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 12 to 21 September 2016.

Additional information received by ICOMOS

On 3 October 2016, ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party, requesting additional information on restoration works. The State Party answered on 7 November 2016 and communicated to ICOMOS the details of the investigations and restoration activities carried on the *marae* during the 20th century and a discussion of the integrity and authenticity of the *marae* in light of these studies and works. This additional information has been incorporated into the relevant sections below.

On 19 December 2016, ICOMOS sent to the State Party an interim report requesting additional information on the justification for inscription and on the protection of the property.

A response by the State Party was sent on 21 February 2017. This additional information has been incorporated into the relevant sections below.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report

10 March 2017

2 The property

Description

Ra'iatea Island is at the centre of the "Polynesian Triangle," a vast section of the Pacific Ocean dotted with islands, the last part of the globe to be settled by humans. The nominated property Taputapuātea is a cultural landscape and seascape on Ra'iatea. At the heart of the property is the Taputapuātea *marae* complex, a political, ceremonial, funerary and religious centre. The complex is positioned between the land and sea on the end of a peninsula that juts into the lagoon surrounding the island. *Marae* are sacred ceremonial and social spaces that are found throughout Polynesia. In the Society Islands, *marae* have developed into quadrilateral paved courtyards with a rectangular platform at one end, called an *ahu*. They have many simultaneous functions.

At the centre of the Taputapuātea *marae* complex is *marae* Taputapuātea itself, 44 m wide by 60 m long and paved with slabs of basalt. On the east side, its *ahu* is a long low narrow platform composed of basalt rock and coral slabs set on end and filled with blocks of coral and basalt. Inside the *ahu* are two smaller earlier versions, one built around the other. A banyan tree grows from the

south end of the *ahu* platform. *Marae* Taputapuātea is dedicated to the god 'Oro and it is the place where the world of the living (Te Ao) intersects the world of the ancestors and gods (Te Pō). It also expresses political power and relationships. The *marae* complex was at the centre of a network among the line of Tamatoa chiefs that connected Taputapuātea to other islands in eastern Polynesia. The building of outrigger canoes and ocean navigation were key skills in maintaining this network.

Other *marae* are also part of the complex. The courtyard of *marae* Hauviri, located on the edge of the lagoon, is surrounded by a low wall constructed during a 1995 restoration. Its *ahu* faces the lagoon directly. A large standing stone in the middle of this *marae* is Te Papa Tea o Ruea, the setting for ceremonies that mark the investiture of chiefs. Three other named *marae*, ō-Hiro, 'Ōputeina and Tau'aitū, are linked to lesser ranked families. Natural features include the former location of a spring named Ro'itōmōana; a hill, Matarepetā, that overlooks the complex; and a small beach, Taura'a-tapu, where arriving outrigger canoes made landfall. Recent constructions are also present: Papa Te Fa'atau Arōfa, a rock platform built in 1995 to display offerings, and a commemorative rock placed in 2007. Non-ceremonial recent constructions at the edge of the complex include a recreational beach, parking lot, toilets, and a caretaker's house.

A traditional landscape surrounds both sides of the Taputapuātea *marae* complex. The *marae* complex looks out to Te Ava Mo'a, a sacred pass in the reef that bounds the lagoon. Atāra *motu* is an islet in the reef and a habitat for seabirds. Ocean-going arrivals waited here before being led through the sacred pass and then formally welcomed at Taputapuātea. On the landward side, 'Ōpo'a and Hotopu'u are forested valleys ringed by ridges and the sacred mountain of Tea'etapu. The upland portions of the valleys feature older *marae*, such as *marae* Vaeāra'i and *marae* Taumariari, agricultural terraces, archaeological traces of habitations and named features related to traditions of gods and ancestors. Vegetation in the valleys is a mix of species, some endemic to Ra'iatea, some common to other Polynesian islands and some imported food species brought by ancient Polynesians for cultivation.

History and development

Human expansion into eastern Polynesia began in the 9th or 10th century AD, with populations spreading out from established settlements on Tonga and Samoa to the Cook Islands, the Society Islands (including Ra'iatea), the Southern Islands, the Marquesas, Hawaii, Rapa Nui (Easter Island) and finally 300 years later, the islands of Te Aotearoa (New Zealand). The adoption of the double hulled outrigger canoe allowed these ocean-going voyages; each canoe able to carry 40 to 60 people plus livestock (pigs, dogs, chickens and rats) and plants that could be transplanted on the new islands to grow food.

The most important social spaces in Polynesia are called *marae*, sacred places that have political, ceremonial,

funerary and religious functions. *Marae* themselves were dynamic constructions, restored or changed in response to changes in status of the clan attached to them. The *marae* Taputapuātea has seen at least two stages of construction from the 14th to the 18th centuries, with the *ahu* being expanded greatly. This *marae* is dedicated to the god 'Oro and it is also the place of interface and communication between the human world (Te Ao) and the world of gods and ancestors (Te Pō).

The rise in the importance of Taputapuātea among the *marae* on Ra'iatea and in the wider region is linked to the line of Tamatoa *ari'i* (chiefs) and the expansion of their power. Taputapuātea was the centre of a political alliance that brought together two widespread regions encompassing most of Polynesia. The alliance was maintained by regular gatherings of chiefs, warriors and priests who came to meet at Taputapuātea. This alliance arose in the 17th to 18th centuries and broke apart some years before James Cook arrived in 1769.

Late in 18th century, Europeans made contact with the Polynesians. Captain James Cook was brought to Taputapuātea by the navigator-priest Tupaia. Members of Cook's crew have left descriptions of the *marae* complex. Missionaries arrived in the early 19th century, rupturing the ancient patterns. Chiefs and their families moved away from 'Ōpo'a to the north part of the island. With the *marae* complex effectively abandoned, vegetation grew up and covered the point where the complex sits. A coconut plantation was put in place in the 1920's along the shoreline, including some trees in the parts of the *marae* complex.

The following paragraphs are based on additional information supplied by the State Party in February 2017. The first signs of a renaissance of Polynesian culture appeared in the 1960s with a revival of folk dance and music. The expansion of international tourism provided an opportunity to present these traditions on a regular basis. A number of cultural organizations were founded in the 1970s throughout French Polynesia to promote language, oral traditions, music, dance and the arts. The Tahitian language was taught more widely and a pan-Pacific arts festival in 1972 began to renew ties among people from different parts of Polynesia who were experiencing similar revivals. Around this time, the first pilgrimages began with people from other parts of Polynesia coming to Taputapuātea. In 1976, the first modern long distance canoe voyage took place, the double hulled canoe Hōkūle'a was navigated without instruments from Hawai'i to Tahiti to Taputapuātea. More voyages from other islands were made in the 1980s, and in 1995 a grand gathering of ocean canoes converged on Ra'iatea, with people from Hawai'i, New Zealand, the Cook Islands and Tahiti being greeted with formal ceremonies at Taputapuātea. Festivals and gatherings at Taputapuātea have continued at intervals during recent years, recovering past practices and transmitting knowledge to new generations.

The first restorations at *marae* Taputapuātea were in 1968; at this time several large trees were removed, with effort concentrated around the *ahu* to prevent tree roots from breaking up the structure. More coconut trees were cleared in the wider complex in the mid 1990s and other *marae* were restored in preparation for the great reunion.

3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

The State Party has grounded the comparative analysis on the following categories: *marae* on other islands in French Polynesia; cultural landscapes in the Pacific; cultural sites of Oceania; sacred and agricultural landscapes in the world; sites that represent systems of power; agricultural landscapes; and monumental sites in the Pacific and worldwide.

The State Party compares the cultural landscape at Taputapuātea with other landscapes that feature *marae* in French Polynesia: the Papeno'o Valley of Tahiti (Windward Islands), *marae* Maha'iatea à Papara (Tahiti, Windward Islands), the valley of 'Opunohu on Mo'orea Island (Windward Islands), Mavea and Mata'ire'a on Huahine Island (Leeward Islands), Anaa Island in the archipelago of Tuamotu and the Vitaria ceremonial site on Rurutu Island in the Austral archipelago. The State Party concludes that Taputapuātea is the only "international" *marae* complex as it alone was at the centre of an alliance that brought together a wide swath of French Polynesia, Rarotonga and Te Aotearoa (New Zealand).

ICOMOS considers that none of the comparatives illustrate the same degree of religious, social and political functions as do the *marae* at Taputapuātea, nor do they have the same depth of oral tradition attached to them. Moreover, Taputapuātea is the seat of the oldest chieftdom on the Society Islands. Several *marae* on other islands are also named Taputapuātea; these were founded by local chieftains as expressions of their descent from and linkage to the original Taputapuātea on Ra'iatea.

The State Party also compares Taputapuātea to World Heritage properties in the Pacific region. Two other sites where the original occupants of the place maintain a spiritual connection to the landscape are Tongariro National Park in New Zealand (1990, extended in 1993, criteria (vi), (vii) and (viii)) and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia (1987, extended in 1994, criteria (v), (vi), (vii) and (viii)). Chief Roi Mata's Domain, Vanuatu (2008, criteria (iii), (v) and (vi)), is an inscribed Melanesian cultural landscape. The State Party also compares the property to Nan Madol: Ceremonial Centre of Eastern Micronesia, inscribed on the World Heritage List and on the World Heritage List in Danger (2016, criteria (i), (iii), (iv) and (vi) for the Federated States of Micronesia. Monumental properties compared include Rapa Nui National Park, Chile (1995, criteria (i), (iii) and (v)), and

the mixed property Papahānaumokuākea, United States of America (2010, criteria (iii), (vi), (viii), (ix) and (x)).

Sacred landscapes worldwide that are considered for comparison include Mount Wutai, China (2009, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)), and Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range, Japan (2004, criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi)).

ICOMOS notes that some comparisons are not a good fit, such as monumental archaeological sites like Stonehenge, a site for which there is no surviving record of the rituals that occurred there. Taputapuātea is a location of continuing importance to a living culture, rather than a place with only archaeological vestiges. ICOMOS notes that comparisons could also have been made with sites that are places of pilgrimage today or that were places of pilgrimage during antiquity.

ICOMOS notes that the Pacific region is under-represented in the system of World Heritage properties. Inscription of Taputapuātea would help to fill a thematic and regional gap.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, despite some limitations, justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- Taputapuātea carries an exceptional testimony of 1000 years of the *mā'ohi* civilization;
- The archaeological vestiges of Taputapuātea offer an eminent example of the *marae*, a sacred and ceremonial space constructed by the *mā'ohi* people from the 14th to the 18th century;
- Taputapuātea is a landscape connected to Polynesian myths of the founding of the world, it is the common root of their lineage.

ICOMOS considers that this justification is largely appropriate. In the view of ICOMOS, the significance of the last point is seen in how Polynesians from outside Ra'iatea hold Taputapuātea as the centre of their world.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity

The property contains all the elements necessary to express Outstanding Universal Value. The buffer zone is adequate and does not contain any elements that should be in the nominated property. The property does not suffer from the adverse effects of development or neglect.

The State Party explained that this cultural landscape is an exceptional example of the juxtaposition and continuity of the ancient (traditional) and modern (contemporary) values of the *mā'ohi* people and their relationship with the

natural landscape. The spatial distribution of different types of archaeological remains reflects social stratification and functional divisions of landscape, demonstrating longstanding and sophisticated organisation of the land.

The State Party argues that the forests of the upper valleys are anthropogenic, containing numerous species brought by ancient Polynesian settlers, and that these have changed little since they were abandoned in the early 19th century.

ICOMOS notes that the natural forces of disturbance and change that affect the composition of species in the upland forests are more aggressive than the State Party claims, meaning that few parts of the forests exist in the state that they did two centuries ago when under active cultivation. In this sense, the forests cannot truly be considered to be anthropogenic. The mix of species present in the forests is common on many Polynesian islands. IUCN notes that the vegetation formations of the property and the historical introduction of plants are key to the cultural landscape.

The nomination dossier states that no archaeological excavations have been conducted on any archaeological sites other than the *marae*, which have seen some small excavations and restoration. The integrity of the property is complete in this respect.

Authenticity

The descriptions and arguments presented in the nomination dossier are based on credible and objective information that confirms authenticity of the major physical attributes of the property. Intangible sources and oral traditions of the *mā'ohi* people are both diverse and mutually supportive. There is a convergence between the oral knowledge and documentary sources based on testimonies left by early explorers and missionaries. In sum, these factors provide evidence that the information is genuine. Efforts by the community to gather knowledge related to the property and to transmit traditional knowledge in recent years have strengthened the authenticity of the cultural landscape. Some *marae* at the *marae* complex of Taputapuātea have been restored, but the layout of the complex and most of the materials themselves are original.

ICOMOS notes that the restoration of *marae* Hauviri that occurred in 1995 rebuilt a low exterior wall, joining it to the *ahu*. The State Party in the additional information letter admits that it is not known if this is a form that had existed in the past. The exterior wall may have been removed by the time that the *ahu* had been built in its current state. Furthermore, recent research in the typology of *marae* suggests that the restored form at Hauviri could have antecedents among the *marae* of the Leeward Islands. The State Party is aware of the debate over this restoration and has conducted workshops with residents of the local community to gauge their opinion, which at present is divided about the appropriateness of the restoration.

ICOMOS considers that the restoration of *marae* Hauviri seems to have been rushed and did not stop to consider alternatives to the form that was chosen. Nevertheless, it does not affect the authenticity of the *marae* or of the overall property.

ICOMOS notes that past use of cement mortar to repair cracks in some stones at *marae* Taputapuātea is not authentic. Nor is the use of coral lime mortar at Hauviri.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi).

Criterion (iii): *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Taputapuātea carries an exceptional testimony of 1000 years of the *mā'ohi* civilisation. This history is represented by the *marae* complex of Taputapuātea at the seashore, anthropogenic forests and the variety of archaeological sites in the upland valleys. It reflects social organization with farmers who lived in the uplands and warriors, priests and kings settled near the sea. It also testifies to their skill in sailing outrigger canoes across long stretches of ocean, navigation by observation of natural phenomena, and transformation of newly settled islands into places that provided for the needs of their people.

ICOMOS considers that the attributes of the cultural landscape illustrate in an exceptional way the history of settlement in the Eastern Pacific by Polynesians and the territorial, social and religious organisation of these people. However, the characterization of the forests as anthropogenic is too strong, the forest present today is not the same forest that was under cultivation in the past. Nevertheless, species of anthropic origin are present in the forests and these species support this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iv): *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Taputapuātea provides eminent examples of *marae*: temples with cult and social functions built by the *mā'ohi* people from the 14th to the 18th century. *Marae* were the points of intersection between the world of the living and that of the ancestors. Their monumental form reflects competition for prestige and power among the *ari'i* chiefs. *Marae* Taputapuātea itself is a concrete expression of the paramount alliance formed by its line of chiefs and the cult of worship associated with it, as stones were transported to other islands to found other *marae* with the same name.

ICOMOS considers that the *marae* form an outstanding architectural ensemble illustrating the structure of *mā'ohi* society and the core teachings of *mā'ohi* culture. In particular, the *marae* complex of Taputapuātea expresses the power and prestige of the *mā'ohi* people and the network of alliances in the 17th and 18th centuries that connected this place with other Polynesian islands.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (vi): *be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;*

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Taputapuātea is a remarkable Polynesian associative cultural landscape. The natural attributes of the property are elements of this landscape, along with the *marae*. The place-names, cosmology, mythology and history of these places are key expressions of the values of this cultural landscape. This knowledge is held by the local community and shared with Polynesians who come in pilgrimage to the ancestral home of *mā'ohi* civilization.

ICOMOS considers that as the ancestral homeland of Polynesian culture, Taputapuātea is of outstanding significance for people throughout the whole of Polynesia, for the way it symbolises their origins, connects them with ancestors and as an expression of their spirituality. These living ideas and knowledge are embedded in the landscapes and seascapes of Raiatea and particularly in the *marae* for the central roles that they once performed.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

While not proposed by the State Party, ICOMOS considers that the property could also have justified criterion (v): *be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*

In its interim report dated 19 December 2016, ICOMOS invited the State Party to propose arguments for criterion (v). In additional information received on 21 February 2017, the State Party declined the invitation noting that an argument for criterion (v) had been considered during the drafting of the nomination dossier. The idea was abandoned for three reasons, 1) it was considered to be a poor fit to the attributes of Ra'iātea; 2) long distance navigation does not strictly constitute a "use" of the sea according to the criterion and 3) because an argument for criterion (v) would repeat many of the points made to support criterion (vi).

Therefore, ICOMOS does not suggest this criterion.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi) and the conditions of authenticity and integrity.

Description of the attributes

Marae Taputapuātea is at the centre of the property with its paved court, *ahu* and banyan tree, surrounded by the other attributes of the *marae* complex. *Marae* Hauviri stands at the edge of the lagoon. It is surrounded by a low wall constructed during the 1995 restoration. A large standing stone, Te Papa Tea o Ruea, is in the middle of this *marae*. Other *marae* that are part of this complex are ō-Hiro, 'Ōputeina, Tau'aitū and two other unnamed *marae*. Standing stones and other platforms made of basalt rock are present as well. Two recent constructions are a rock platform built in 1995 called Papa Te Fa'atau Arōfa and a commemorative rock placed in 2007. Natural features include the location of a spring named Ro'itōmōana, now covered by sediment; a hill, Matarepētā, that overlooks the complex, and a small beach, Taura'a-tapu, where arriving outrigger canoes made landfall. Natural landscape attributes of the property include the sacred mountains Tea'etapu and 'Ōrofātiu, the valleys 'Ōpo'a and Hotopu'u, the forests, the peninsula where the Taputapuātea *marae* complex is located, portions of the lagoon, reef and open ocean, the islet Atāra *motu* and the pass Te Ava Mō'a through the reef. The other attributes of the property are the upland *marae*, horticultural terraces, archaeological sites and named features.

4 Factors affecting the property

Much of the Taputapuātea *marae* complex is affected by wave action, particularly during storms. Cyclones create large waves in the lagoon both from the north and from the north-east (from open ocean through the pass Ava Mo'a). Evidence of storm surges and resulting saline (hydromorphic) soils extend as far as 100 m inland. These hydromorphic soils are loose and do not offer adequate support to *ahu* slabs or other constructions built upon them.

Currently, there is a relative rise of sea level of the order of 20 cm per 100 years. However, the nomination dossier does not fully acknowledge the effects of this on the Taputapuātea *marae* complex.

IUCN notes that the impact of invasive alien species, both plants and animals, is a threat to the biodiversity, the landscape and the seascape of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are storm surges and waves, sea level rise and invasive alien plants and animals.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The nominated property covers 2,124 hectares, of which 1223.14 ha are on land and 901.19 ha are on water. The

buffer zone covers 3363 ha, with 1,448.23 ha on land and 1,914.59 ha on water.

The land portion of the property is bounded by the ridgetops of the two valleys 'Ōpo'a and Hotopu'u and includes their entire watersheds. Where the ridges descend to the waterline, the boundary extends out to include the coral reef that surrounds the island and a further 300 metres beyond into the open ocean. The small islet, Atāra *motu* is included within the lagoon portion of the property.

The nominated property is 'buffered' by the following areas: the upper outer slopes of the mountains and ridges that form the land boundary of the property, and the lagoon, reefs and open ocean on either side of the sea portion of the property. One other small island at north end of the reef, Motu Iriru, is in the buffer zone. The boundary of the buffer zone follows a contour line well below the ridges that define the land boundary of the proposed property extending to the outer sea coast and reef near the peninsulas which define the nominated property. Nothing falls into the buffer zone which should be in the nominated property. Because of the distinctive pattern of ridges, peninsulas and bays, the buffer zone protects against visual intrusions into the nominated property. The only exception is the view from the reef and Ava Mo'a toward the buffer zone on either side of the property, but these are distant views and any building in the buffer zone or outside it is unlikely to have a marked visual impact.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate.

Ownership

French Polynesia owns the *marae* complex of Taputapuātea, which is under the control of Service de la Culture et du Patrimoine, and the Domaine d'Aratā'o, which is under the control of the Service de Développement rural. The Domaine is an agricultural estate in the upper half of the 'Ōpo'a valley whose lands are leased to farmers.

Within the nominated property, 52.5% of the terrestrial area is privately owned, and 47.5% is public land. In the buffer zone, 90% of the terrestrial area is private, and 10% is public land. There is no mention in the nomination dossier of who owns the sea portion of the property.

Protection

Only the Taputapuātea *marae* complex is classified as heritage, protected in 1952 under the *Arrêté* n°865 a.p.a. Additional information received indicates that a decree signed by the president of French Polynesia dated 16 February 2017 classified the *marae* complex of Taputapuātea as an historical monument. The law n°2015-10 voted in November 2015 in French Polynesia instituted the Code du Patrimoine de la Polynésie Française, will be mobilized in 2016 and 2017 to improve the protection of all the sites of the nominated property. This law gives also protection to sites on private land.

The area which is now the nominated cultural landscape was first identified in 1994 as a landscape for natural protection under the Code de l'aménagement (the town and country planning law) as a provisional Zone de Site Protégé (ZSP), a basic legislative measure for protecting wide areas of land and sea. This appears to have been the result of a series of severe rainstorms which had led to many landslides and loss of life. The ZSP contained measures which allowed for restrictions on building on steep private land. This first ZSP proposal seems never to have come into force.

A new ZSP was proposed in 2015 to cover the nominated property and buffer zone of the Taputapuātea cultural landscape and would provide protection for the cultural resources and planning guidance for future development. The process to create the ZSP has begun and it includes an extensive consultative study. Additional information received in February 2017 indicates that it is predicted to come to a conclusion between July 2018 and July 2019. The State Party also notes that while the final zoning and rules for each zone may differ from what has been proposed, it is unlikely that the boundaries of the ZSP will change as they are based on the attributes of the cultural landscape.

Following a question from ICOMOS in the interim report, additional information from the State Party states that the existing small scale industries in the property already have operating permits and would have zoning approval under the proposed ZSP. The State Party noted that the quarry is a small operation that produces on average one truck load of stone each day. The nearby asphalt plant is regularly monitored. These small industries in the Hotopu'u valley are not visible from the shore road or the lagoon. Trees and vegetation are proposed to be planted to hide the vanilla greenhouse in the 'Ōpoa valley from the coast. Further industrial developments will not be allowed.

ICOMOS notes that the proposed ZSP is contested by some landowners and officials of the local community who wish to see the World Heritage property restricted in area to include only the Taputapuātea *marae* complex and possibly the Te Ava Mo'a pass through the reef.

ICOMOS recommends that the procedure to establish the Zone de Site Protégé should be monitored and reported on.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and protective measures for the property are adequate. ICOMOS recommends that the establishment of the Zone de Site Protégé be completed as scheduled.

Conservation

The first research study on the *marae* and archaeology of Ra'iatea was done in the 1920s and 30s by K.P. Emory of the Bishop Museum in Hawaii. More excavations were carried out at the Taputapuātea *marae* complex in the 1960s, along with the first conservation interventions.

The following interventions have taken place at the Taputapuātea *marae* complex. *Marae* Taputapuātea had the facades of its *ahu* recorded in 1968. In 1994-95, trees were removed from the courtyard area and the paving stones were reset. *Marae* Hauviri had its *ahu* restored in 1968, and 1994-95 saw the removal of trees, removal of sand from the courtyard, repair work on the sea facing side of the platform and the building of the low side walls. *Marae* Tau'aitū had repair to the seaward side of the platform and its paving was levelled. Rock slabs of its *ahu* were replaced on the seaward side. *Marae* 'Ōputeina had its *ahu* restored in 1968 and its platform on the sea facing side repaired in 1994-95. As a result of this work, all of these *marae* are now in a good state of conservation.

Inventories of archaeological sites in the upland portions of the property have also been undertaken since the 1990s. These have recorded terraces for horticulture, habitations and upland *marae* and associated structures. It should be noted that some private landowners have not allowed access for survey. Oral traditions and cultural knowledge concerning the property were inventoried during the preparation of this nomination.

The present state of conservation is generally good, although there are some issues. Relevant conservation issues include long-term sea-level rise and its effects on the *marae* complex, archaeological site management in the Domaine d'Aratā'o and upper valley, the landscape plan for the Taputapuātea *marae* complex (a draft of this plan was shared with ICOMOS during the mission visit; it has not been adopted yet), and site conservation policy as an element of the overall management of the property.

At the Taputapuātea *marae* complex, the seaward-facing *marae* have external ledges in the tidal zone that have been extended and reconstructed in the early 1990s and provide some protection for their *ahu*. However, the sediments on either side of the projecting ledges may be eroding and exposing more of the *ahu* and *marae* to erosion. This should be monitored.

A large proportion of the Taputapuātea *marae* complex is prone to wave action, particularly in storms. ICOMOS notes that cyclones have a circulating wind pattern and as they pass the winds will veer between all points of the compass. Cyclones do and will create large waves in the lagoon both from the north (a wave fetch of 20 km or more) and from the north-east (sea swells and tidal waves from Te Ava Mo'a). The seaward end of *marae* Hauviri has evidence of sediment being driven up to 1 m high over the surrounding wall of the *marae*. A low sand ridge has been constructed inland and parallel to the shore running from the high ground beside *marae* Hititai to the inland end of *marae* Hauviri. The crest of this ridge is 1 m above the high water mark. Although this work is undocumented, its purpose is to prevent waves from the north advancing across the site area. It has been a successful intervention in this respect and serves as a route for visitors across the site. However, it only protects against waves and surges from the north. At present, there is no equivalent protection for waves from other directions. ICOMOS notes

that other raised sand ridges are proposed in the new draft landscape management plan for the *marae* complex.

As a result of past storm surges, saline (hydromorphic) soils have formed in areas that were inundated with seawater. They are found across portions of the site and extend right up to the seaward face of the *ahu* of *marae* Taputapuātea itself. The main problem identified is the soft texture of the hydromorphic soils into which the *ahu* slabs are inserted. These soils are being continually re-worked by coconut crabs. To date, it does not appear that wave action has damaged or caused the collapse of the slabs. However, it is acknowledged that the soft soils will not support them and that the slabs need monitoring of their degree of tilt.

ICOMOS recommends that research on the coastal geomorphology and sediment transport by wave action be undertaken. Threats to the coastline and measures to protect the Taputapuātea *marae* complex should be identified. Interventions could include the construction of protective offshore sediment bars or 'rakes' of coral fragments, planning for restoration of seaward faces when they are damaged, including wave protection in the landscape planning and building protection for the seaward face of Taputapuātea *marae* complex. Sea level rise should be included as a factor in this research.

ICOMOS observes that conservation of the upland archaeological sites takes a conservative approach with an emphasis on retaining stable vegetation in the vicinity of sites.

ICOMOS notes that the creation of teams to undertake regular monitoring and maintenance of the property is a point in the current Action Plan to improve the management of the site (see the Management section below).

ICOMOS recommends that training in the policies and practice of conservation and restoration of archaeological sites and the *marae* are needed. The adoption of a policy and/or manual for restoration is desirable.

ICOMOS recommends that the draft landscape management plan for the Taputapuātea *marae* complex be approved.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is generally good. Issues include landscape protection of the *marae* complex against the effects of waves and storm surges.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

A management committee for the property has been in place since 2012 and it meets at least 4 times a year. A three person secretariat is proposed to manage the property in concert with a staffed bureau and the steering committee. Expert staff of the Service de la Culture et du Patrimoine would provide advice and support. Current

plans allow for funding for two full time ranger staff on site who are based at the SCP building, there will also be local cultural staff and some specialist staff for specific purposes such as monitoring and survey.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

Since its creation, the management committee has worked towards creating and implementing a management plan for the property and a formal plan was adopted on 14 December 2015. The plan aims to preserve the sites of memory that testify to the ancient *māo'hi* civilization, protect the *marae*, preserve the terrestrial and marine environments of the cultural landscape and seascape and preserve and transmit traditional knowledge and skills. It identifies the boundaries of the property and the buffer zone, the issues at play in the property and the pressures they exert upon the values of the property, issues related to governance, zoning and prescriptions to preserve the cultural landscape. It also includes a three-year Action Plan which began in 2016 with four goals: 1) to improve governance, 2) to strengthen management of the property, 3) to promote and enhance the cultural landscape and 4) to consolidate and share knowledge about the property including oral history. The Action Plan considers matters such as sources of funding, effects of climate change on the property, the available expertise of both professionals and the local community and key indicators for measuring the ongoing conservation.

ICOMOS notes that the following components of the Action Plan remain to be completed including:

- Visitor surveys (underway)
- Coral reef health and ecology (underway)
- Landscape management plan for *marae* complex (draft now completed)
- Coastal geomorphology of the *marae* complex, measures to mitigate sea level rise
- Ecological management of the Domaine and upper valley, monitoring of long-term ecological change.

To date, there are no interpretation or wayfinding signs for the Taputapuātea cultural landscape. About 20,000 visitors come to Ra'iatea each year, which is unlikely to increase in the short term. An increase in school groups from French Polynesia to visit the valley and the Taputapuātea *marae* complex is anticipated. The draft landscape management plan for the Taputapuātea *marae* complex includes the construction of new paths to guide visitors and provision for visitors to view the *marae* without trespassing onto their sacred spaces.

Additional information received from the State Party in February 2017 describes the current state of tourist facilities on Ra'iatea and nearby Taha'a island. There are two hotels on Ra'iatea and 18 family run pensions or hostels with a total of 123 rooms to rent. A similar number are on Taha'a a short boat ride away. In 2016,

27,000 tourists came to the island, resulting in a 48% occupancy rate for the hotels and 37% for the pensions. The State Party estimates that numbers will increase by 30% by 2022 and that this can be accommodated by the current infrastructure. Plans are in place to train islanders in guiding, catering, accommodation and artisan crafts. The State Party desires to create a sustainable tourism that creates jobs and benefits the community as a whole.

There is currently no set plan to control the ecological processes and invasive plants of the valleys, although various measures are being considered for the Domaine d'Aratā'o and the terrestrial natural zone (the upper parts of Hotopu'u valley and the buffer zone). Specific invasive species are noted in the management plan that can be targeted such as the Moluccan albizia (*Falcata*), the Strawberry Guava (*Goyavier de Chine*), Java Plum (*Pissetache*) and wild pigs, but no specific actions to control them are presented. The use of parts of the Domaine d'Aratā'o for low-intensive agriculture and subsistence is a management measure that will provide some control of invasive species (including pigs) and could also provide a model to demonstrate the ancient agriculture of the valley.

ICOMOS and IUCN recommend the creation of a plan for the ecological management of the property with special attention paid to the Domaine d'Aratā'o, the reef and lagoon, the effects of invasive alien species and the monitoring of long-term ecological change.

Involvement of the local communities

A community association, Na Papa e Va'u, exists to support the nomination of the property. The elders who hold the traditional knowledge about the property are honorary members. Knowledge about the property is taught in the primary schools and a Polynesian heritage section is taught at the local college. An aspect of the Action Plan is the training of local residents in management procedures, the maintenance and conservation of archaeological sites and skills for visitor guides.

There is broad support for the World Heritage nomination within the local community, although as noted above, some landowners and officials oppose the creation of the Zone de Site Protégé. They wish to see a smaller World Heritage site that does not encompass the whole cultural landscape but rather just the Taputapuātea *marae* complex and possibly the Te Ava Mo'a pass through the reef. Additional information received in February 2017 indicates that the State Party has increased its efforts to communicate with all of the residents of the property and the nearby region.

ICOMOS notes that the final parts of the management system are being put into place such as hiring the secretariat and enshrining their authority in law. ICOMOS considers that the main risks and pressures that face the property are being properly addressed and that adequate

processes and procedures to respond to them should be a result of the management planning.

ICOMOS considers that the final pieces of the management system are being put into place for a complete system of management for the property. ICOMOS encourages the State Party to complete the Action Plan, continue to strengthen the governance and management of the property and undertake a plan for the ecological management of the property.

6 Monitoring

The nomination dossier describes the monitoring regime for the attributes of the cultural landscape. Specific indicators are given for each of the structures at the Taputapuātea *marae* complex. On the landscape level, indicators are given for views of the landscape, for plants and animals and for archaeological sites. These will be observed on a biannual, annual or semi-annual basis. This monitoring scheme is new so that a full reporting cycle has not yet been completed.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system for the property is adequate.

7 Conclusions

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List; that the nominated property meets criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi) and conditions of integrity and authenticity. The main threats to the property are effects from storm surges and waves, compounded by sea level rise and the risks of inadequate protection. The boundaries of the nominated property and of the buffer zone are adequate.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and protective measures for the property are adequate. ICOMOS recommends that the establishment of the Zone de Site Protégé be completed as scheduled. ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation and the monitoring system are adequate. The management system for the property is not yet fully developed, but the pieces are being put into place for a complete system of management for the property.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that Taputapuātea, France, be inscribed on the World Heritage List as a cultural landscape on the basis of **criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi)**.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Taputapuātea is a cultural landscape and seascape on Ra'iatea Island. Ra'iatea is at the centre of the "Polynesian Triangle," a vast section of the Pacific Ocean dotted with islands, the last part of the globe to be settled by humans. At the heart of the property is the Taputapuātea *marae* complex, a political, ceremonial, funerary and religious centre. The complex is positioned between the land and sea on the end of a peninsula that juts into the lagoon surrounding the island. *Marae* are sacred ceremonial and social spaces that are found throughout Polynesia. In the Society Islands, *marae* have developed into quadrilateral paved courtyards with a rectangular platform at one end, called an *ahu*. They have many simultaneous functions.

At the centre of the Taputapuātea *marae* complex is *marae* Taputapuātea itself, dedicated to the god 'Oro and the place where the world of the living (Te Ao) intersects the world of the ancestors and gods (Te Po). It also expresses political power and relationships. The rise in the importance of Taputapuātea among the *marae* on Rai'atea and in the wider region is linked to the line of Tamatoa *ari'i* (chiefs) and the expansion of their power. Taputapuātea was the centre of a political alliance that brought together two widespread regions encompassing most of Polynesia. The alliance was maintained by regular gatherings of chiefs, warriors and priests who came from the other islands to meet at Taputapuātea. The building of outrigger canoes and ocean navigation were key skills in maintaining this network.

A traditional landscape surrounds both sides of the Taputapuātea *marae* complex. The *marae* complex looks out to Te Ava Mo'a, a sacred pass in the reef that bounds the lagoon. Atāra *motu* is an islet in the reef and a habitat for seabirds. Ocean-going arrivals waited here before being led through the sacred pass and formally welcomed at Taputapuātea. On the landward side, 'Ōpo'a and Hotopu'u are forested valleys ringed by ridges and the sacred mountain of Tea'etapu. The upland portions of the valleys feature older *marae*, such as *marae* Vaeāra'i and *marae* Taumariari, agricultural terraces, archaeological traces of habitations and named features related to traditions of gods and ancestors. Vegetation in the valleys is a mix of species, some endemic to Ra'iatea, some common to other Polynesian islands and some imported food species brought by ancient Polynesians for cultivation. Together, the attributes of the property form an outstanding relict and associative cultural landscape and seascape.

Criterion (iii): Taputapuātea illustrates in an exceptional way 1000 years of *mā'ohi* civilisation. This history is represented by the *marae* complex of Taputapuātea at the seashore and the variety of archaeological sites in the upland valleys. It reflects social organization with farmers who lived in the uplands and warriors, priests and kings settled near the sea. It also testifies to their skill in sailing

outrigger canoes across long stretches of ocean, navigation by observation of natural phenomena, and transformation of newly settled islands into places that provided for the needs of their people

Criterion (iv): Taputapuātea provides eminent examples of *marae*: temples with cult and social functions built by the *mā'ohi* people from the 14th to the 18th century. *Marae* were the points of intersection between the world of the living and that of the ancestors. Their monumental form reflects competition for prestige and power among the *ari'i* chiefs. *Marae* Taputapuātea itself is a concrete expression of the paramount alliance formed by its line of chiefs and the cult of worship associated with it, as stones were transported to other islands to found other *marae* with the same name.

Criterion (vi): As the ancestral homeland of Polynesian culture, Taputapuātea is of outstanding significance for people throughout the whole of Polynesia, for the way it symbolises their origins, connects them with ancestors and as an expression of their spirituality. These living ideas and knowledge are embedded in the landscapes and seascapes of Raiatea and particularly in the *marae* for the central roles that they once performed.

Integrity

The property is a relict and associative cultural landscape with attributes that are tangible (archaeological sites, places associated with oral tradition, *marae*) and intangible (origin stories, ceremonies and traditional knowledge). It is an exceptional example of the juxtaposition and continuity of the ancient (traditional) and modern (contemporary) values of the *mā'ohi* people and their relationship with the natural landscape. It contains all the elements necessary to express outstanding universal value. The buffer zone is adequate and does not contain any elements that should be in the nominated property.

Authenticity

Credible and objective information confirms authenticity of the major physical attributes of the property. Intangible sources and oral traditions of the *mā'ohi* people are both diverse and mutually supportive. There is a convergence between the oral knowledge and documentary sources based on testimonies left by early explorers and missionaries. In sum, these factors provide evidence that the information is genuine. Efforts by the community to gather knowledge related to the property and to transmit traditional knowledge in recent years have strengthened the authenticity of the cultural landscape. Some *marae* at the *marae* complex of Taputapuātea have been restored, but the layout of the complex and most of the materials themselves are original.

Management and protection requirements

The Taputapuātea *marae* complex has been protected since 1952 under French Polynesian law and it has recently been classified as a historical monument. A protective and planning system, called a Zone de Site Protégé, is being put into place that would cover the whole

of the property and the buffer zone. A steering committee has guided management of the property since 2012. This committee is creating the permanent management structure for the property and a management plan was adopted in 2015. The plan will preserve the sites of memory that testify to the ancient *mā'ohi* civilization, protect the *marae*, preserve the terrestrial and marine environments of the cultural landscape and seascape and preserve and transmit traditional knowledge and skills. A three person secretariat will manage the property in concert with a staffed bureau and the steering committee.

Additional recommendations

ICOMOS further recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Approving the draft landscape management plan for the Taputapuātea *marae* complex,
- b) Completing the remaining points specified in the Action Plan including the visitor survey, a study of the health of the coral reef and ecology, a study of coastal geomorphology of the *marae* complex, measures to mitigate sea level rise, ecological management of the Domaine and upper valley, and monitoring of long-term ecological change,
- c) Training in the policies and practice of conservation and restoration of archaeological sites and the *marae* and adopting a policy and/or manual for restoration,
- d) Completing the establishment of the Zone de Site Protégé to cover the buffer zone of the property as scheduled,
- e) Undertaking research on the coastal geomorphology and sediment transport by wave action. Threats to the coastline and measures to protect the Taputapuātea *marae* complex should be identified and interventions proposed. Sea level rise should be included as a factor in this research;

ICOMOS and IUCN recommend the creation of a plan for the ecological management of the property with special attention paid to the Domaine d'Aratā'o, the reef and lagoon, the effects of invasive alien species and the monitoring of long-term ecological change.



Aerial view of the Te Ava Mo'a pass, motu Atāra and Taura'a-tapu landing beach



View of the marae Taputapuātea complex



Terrace of dwelling (site 36)



Te Papa Tea o Ruea, stone of inauguration of Hui Ari'i Tamatoa