

READING PASSAGE 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 27–40**, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.

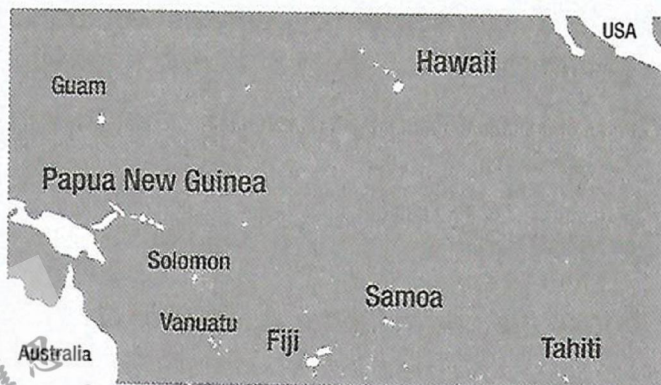
Beyond the blue horizon

Ancient voyagers who settled the far-flung islands of the Pacific Ocean

An important archaeological discovery on the island of Éfaté in the Pacific archipelago of Vanuatu has revealed traces of an ancient seafaring people, the distant ancestors of today's Polynesians. The site came to light only by chance. An agricultural worker, digging in the grounds of a derelict plantation, scraped open a grave – the first of dozens in a burial ground some 3,000 years old. It is the oldest cemetery ever found in the Pacific islands, and it harbors the remains of an ancient people archaeologists call the Lapita.

They were daring blue-water adventurers who used basic canoes to rove across the ocean. But they were not just explorers. They were also pioneers who carried with them everything they would need to build new lives – their livestock, taro seedlings and stone tools. Within the span of several centuries, the Lapita stretched the boundaries of their world from the jungle-clad volcanoes of Papua New Guinea to the loneliest coral outliers of Tonga.

The Lapita left precious few clues about themselves, but Éfaté expands the volume of data available to researchers dramatically. The remains of 62 individuals have been uncovered so far, and archaeologists were also thrilled to find six complete Lapita pots. Other items included a Lapita burial urn with modeled birds arranged on the rim as though peering down at the human remains sealed inside. 'It's an important discovery,' says Matthew Spriggs, professor of archaeology at the Australian National University and head of



the international team digging up the site, 'for it conclusively identifies the remains as Lapita.'

DNA teased from these human remains may help answer one of the most puzzling questions in Pacific anthropology: did all Pacific islanders spring from one source or many? Was there only one outward migration from a single point in Asia, or several from different points? 'This represents the best opportunity we've had yet,' says Spriggs, 'to find out who the Lapita actually were, where they came from, and who their closest descendants are today.'

There is one stubborn question for which archaeology has yet to provide any answers: how did the Lapita accomplish the ancient equivalent of a moon landing, many times over? No-one has found one of their canoes or any rigging, which could reveal how the canoes were sailed. Nor do the oral histories and traditions of later Polynesians offer any insights, for they turn into myths long before they reach as far back in time as the Lapita.