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2 **The chronology of occupation at Teouma, Vanuatu: Use of a modified chronometric hygiene protocol**
3 **and Bayesian modeling to evaluate midden remains.**

4
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14 **ABSTRACT**

15 A number of radiocarbon dates, both published and unpublished have been obtained from archaeological
16 deposits across the Teouma site on the island of Efate in Vanuatu. These are on a range of materials from
17 the midden and associated cemetery including charcoal (13) and shell (7) as well as a number of less
18 commonly dated ¹⁴C sample types including bone from 2 terrestrial giant tortoises (?*Meiolania damelipi*), 8
19 pigs (*Sus scrofa*) and 2 chickens (*Gallus gallus*). Thirty-six human bone collagen dates and 5 *Conus* sp.
20 shell ring artifacts from the cemetery context have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Petchey et al. 2014).
21 In this paper, we evaluate the radiocarbon data according to observed contextual associations and
22 established understandings of ¹⁴C offsets, and collate all available information in a Bayesian framework to
23 establish the age and duration of the settlement at Teouma. This analysis provides a maximum age range
24 for the Lapita deposits of between 3000 and 2560 cal BP and a most likely start date of 2920-2870 cal BP
25 and end date of 2870-2750 cal BP (68.2% prob.). This is slightly younger age for the deposits than
26 previously reported, but is in keeping with evaluation of the burials themselves, the majority of which are
27 dated to between 2940 and 2720 cal BP. This age range indicates that the site was in use at the same time as
28 colonization events in Tonga (2850-2830 cal BP) and Fiji (3020-2860 cal BP), and supports the hypothesis
29 that Vanuatu was at the center of a region-wide interaction sphere for several generations after initial
30 settlement.

31
32 **KEYWORDS:** Teouma, Lapita, calibration, reservoir offsets, Bayesian analysis.

33
34 **INTRODUCTION**

35 The Teouma site is located on the south coast of Efate Island, Vanuatu, 800m from Teouma Bay (Figure 1).
36 Excavations took place between 2004 and 2010 (Bedford 2006; Bedford et al. 2009, 2010) during which 68
37 burial features, concentrated in a band running northeast to southwest, parallel to the former beach, were
38 uncovered. There are two key zones of the site that have been extensively dated; the Cemetery Zone and the
39 Midden Zone located to the east of the Lapita cemetery (Figure 2). The Lapita midden contained a number
40 of domesticated species (i.e., *Sus Scrofa*, *Gallus gallus* and the commensal *Rattus exulans*), as well as a
41 large number of bones from indigenous birds and animals, many now extinct, including fruit bats
42 (Pteropodidae), flying fox (*Pteropus* sp.), land tortoise (?*Meiolania damelipi*), and crocodile (*Mekosuchus*
43 *kalpokasi*) (Bedford et al., 2009; Valentin et al. 2010:1826). Layer 3 of the Midden Zone (MZ3) deposit
44 was considered to be contemporary with Layer 3 of the cemetery (CZ3) because it largely respected the
45 cemetery boundary and contained substantial amounts of extinct fauna as well as obsidian from New
46 Britain deposited on top of an orange/yellow tephra (Spriggs and Bedford 2013). Layer 2 of the Midden
47 Zone (MZ2) seems to have been contemporary with the cemetery but also likely associated with terminal
48 Lapita midden dumping that extended on top of the cemetery (i.e., Cemetery Zone Layer 2/3 transition
49 [CZ2/3]). These thin deposits are considered to immediately post-date the cemetery because the midden
50 caps the burials but still contains ceramics of Lapita affiliation and substantial quantities of extinct fauna. A
51 later midden deposit (Layer 2 Cemetery Zone [CZ2]), up to 50 cm thick, covered the cemetery and
52 extended downslope over the former beach. This is associated with Arapus and Early Erueti
53 ceramics currently dated to c. 2800-2500 BP¹ (Bedford et al. 2009:219-221). Layer 1 from both zones has

¹ Arapus ceramics are characterized as plain globular cooking pots with out-curving rims and notching on the lip, and are associated with immediately Post-Lapita settlements on Efate. Over time Arapus rims and associated lip form changed into very distinctive wide

1 not been dated. It represents natural post-occupation accumulation, rich in tephra, but also some earlier
2 material brought up from lower levels of the site

3 Preliminary dating of the site using charcoal suggested it was first used c. 3200-3000 cal BP
4 (Bedford et al. 2006:818). Analysis of the Lapita ceramics indicated they were of Western or Middle Lapita
5 style transitioning from Early or Far Western, while in CZ2/3 there were some sherds with Late or Eastern
6 style Lapita that had general similarities to ceramics from the Reefs/Santa Cruz Group and New Caledonia.
7 The mix of older styles, exotic ceramics, simplified dentate-stamped designs and incised and shell
8 impression wares all support the hypothesis that Teouma represents an early phase of expansion into
9 Remote Oceania with some continued interaction with the wider region that was ongoing for a few hundred
10 years (Bedford et al. 2009:225-6). An extensive dating program has since been undertaken at the site on a
11 range of materials including charcoal and marine shell, as well as human, terrestrial native fauna and
12 domesticated bones. This program includes samples from the Lapita cemetery (CZ3), the contemporary
13 midden that abuts up against the cemetery boundary (MZ3 and MZ2), the immediately post-cemetery
14 midden (CZ2/3 and CZ2), and burials found in shallow deposits 70m to the south and southeast of the
15 Lapita cemetery that are believed to be of Early Erueti age. Chronological evaluation of this information
16 poses a number of challenges, including: the calibration of remains that have a mixed dietary ¹⁴C input
17 (domesticated and human bones); the establishment of suitable local marine reservoir offsets (commonly
18 referred to as ΔR) for different shell species; the likelihood of inbuilt age² in wood charcoal that has not
19 been identified as short-lived species, nuts or twigs; and heirloom effects for shell adornments associated
20 with the burials.

21 This paper is a collation of both published and unpublished dates from various deposits across the
22 site, both Lapita and immediately post-Lapita. All results are evaluated according to current understanding
23 of natural ¹⁴C parameters and observed contextual associations and evaluated in a Bayesian framework to
24 establish the age and duration of site use.

25 26 **Sample selection**

27 A total of 47 radiocarbon dates have been obtained for the Lapita cemetery, including 37 human bone - one
28 of which was a cremation burial; 5 *Conus* spp. arm band ornaments in direct association with burials 4, 11,
29 17, 58 and 59; a chicken associated with the fill of burial 50; 2 pig bones; a *Turbo argyrostomus* shell date
30 and one charred nutshell date from the fill of burial 67. A further 10 dates have been obtained from the
31 contemporary adjacent (Layer 3) midden deposits (MZ3). These include 6 nut charcoals, 2 unidentified
32 wood charcoal, and 2 pig bone dates. From the Layer 2 midden (MZ2) there are 2 charred nut and one pig
33 date. A further 11 dates are from the Layer 2/3 transition Cemetery Zone midden (CZ2/3). The samples
34 include 2 unidentified wood charcoals, one chicken bone, 3 pig bones, 4 marine shell samples (3 *Turbo*
35 *argyrostomus* and 1 *Trochus niloticus*) and 2 tortoise bones. A single *Turbo argyrostomus* shell date comes
36 from the CZ2 deposits considered to belong to the Arapus phase. Seven burials from later deposits to the
37 south and southeast were dated for comparison with the Lapita remains.

38 This wide range of material includes what are commonly termed “novel” ¹⁴C sample types – that is
39 samples that have not been thoroughly tested by the comparison with reliable short-lived materials from
40 secure stratigraphic contexts in order to assess likely issues and offsets that may affect the calibrated
41 radiocarbon ages. The evaluation of samples at the Teouma cemetery presented here does not constitute
42 such a robust test. Instead, our evaluation implements various assumptions and results of current theories
43 regarding different ¹⁴C sample types within a real archaeological situation to demonstrate the potential
44 shortcomings of our current knowledge, but at the same time show the value of different sample types to
45 the evaluation of Pacific chronologies.

46 47 **Radiocarbon Preparation**

48 Radiocarbon dates were prepared and analyzed at the University of Waikato Radiocarbon facility

and flat forms that have been termed Early Erueti ceramics, a phase succeeded by Late Erueti ceramics at about 2500 BP (Bedford 2006:161).

² Radiocarbon results of wood charcoal samples may be influenced by inbuilt age if they originate from long-lived species (Allen and Wallace, 2007), or by “storage age” if the species selected is resistant to weathering and decay, or if stored wood is burned (Schiffer, 1987).

1 in New Zealand (Wk-)³, the Australian National University Radiocarbon facility (SANU-) and the Rafter
2 Radiocarbon laboratory (Geological and Nuclear Sciences, New Zealand; NZA-) following standard
3 accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) protocols, whereby the shells were washed in dilute HCl to remove
4 surface contamination, and charcoal samples were treated with a series of dilute HCl, multiple NaOH and
5 HCl washes prior to CO₂ collection (UCI 2006). All Waikato shells were tested for recrystallization prior to
6 dating using the Feigl staining technique (Friedman 1959). Bone dates were prepared at Waikato following
7 bone ultrafiltration methodologies outlined in Bronk-Ramsey et al. (2004) and Petchey et al. (2011).
8 Chicken bone (NZA-29450) was prepared as per Beavan-Athfield and Sparks (2001) and Beavan-Athfield
9 et al. (2008). Unmodeled (dietary and/or reservoir corrected, as per discussions below) calibrated
10 radiocarbon dates are given in Table 2. Radiocarbon information is given in Table 1.

11 All ultrafiltered gelatin was assessed for purity prior to analysis using standard % gelatin yield,
12 %N, %C and C:N quality assurance parameters (see Petchey et al. 2014). Waikato gelatin stable isotope
13 measurements used for dietary reconstruction and quality assurance (QA) were measured at Iso-trace
14 Research Department of Chemistry, University of Otago, on a Carlo Erba NA 1500 elemental analyser
15 (EA), coupled with either a Europa Scientific '20/20 Hydra' or a Thermo Finnigan Delta Plus
16 Advantage. Bone isotope QA parameters (% gelatin yield, %N, %C and C:N) and stable isotope values
17 ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$, $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ and $\delta^{34}\text{S}$) are given in Tables 2 and 3.

18 **Chronological model building.**

19 A number of issues need to be considered when evaluating ¹⁴C results on the range of materials sampled at
20 Teouma; post-depositional disturbance, heirloom effects, inbuilt age, local marine reservoir offsets, and
21 diet. Some of these are well-recognized archaeological interpretive issues; others are natural ¹⁴C variation
22 issues that are rarely taken into consideration by researchers because these offsets are often not statistically
23 significant except in the highest precision chronologies (i.e., high precision [better than ± 25 year] dates
24 with well-constrained, multi-date sequences). Despite these apparent interpretive issues, dates on these
25 novel ¹⁴C sample types often have greater potential to refine and focus ¹⁴C chronologies that deal with
26 specific research questions, such as faunal extinction and cemetery use. The range of material dated from
27 Teouma has potential to address these questions, but the analysis requires a holistic evaluation of the dates
28 based on established understanding of radiocarbon variation in nature. For this paper we have used an
29 approach that identifies and eliminates all known unreliable results from further analysis (cf. modified
30 chronometric hygiene or manual rejection) based on a set of previously established parameters for charcoal,
31 shell, and bone, combined with a Bayesian approach that weights samples according to how likely they are
32 to be correct based on assumptions that compose the model. It relies on a model-averaging approach to
33 arrive at an acceptable hypothesis (cf. Bronk-Ramsey 2009).
34
35

36 **A. Charcoal**

37 The dataset of Teouma charcoal dates includes one nut charcoal sample from CZ3 and 2 unidentified wood
38 charcoals from CZ2/3. From the Midden Zone deposits there are 2 unidentified wood charcoal and 6 nut
39 charcoal samples from Layer 3 and a further 2 nut charcoal results from Layer 2.

40 Short-lived nut charcoal samples with only 1 year of growth are considered to be one of the most
41 reliable dating materials assuming minimum stratigraphic displacement. It is also well established that most
42 wood charcoal determinations will date earlier than the event by an unknown amount. This could be by a
43 few years, or several hundred years (Spriggs and Anderson 1993; Allen and Wallace 2007). It is possible to
44 build a sliding outlier correction for charcoal into any Bayesian model to correct for this variable inbuilt-
45 age (see for example Bronk-Ramsey 2009 and Nunn and Petchey 2013), but in this instance we have opted
46 to remove the 4 unidentified charcoals from further analysis because of the large number of short-lived nut
47 charcoal results (n= 9), the possible displacement of small charcoal samples through a porous midden
48 matrix, and because it will avoid unnecessary complications to our Bayesian model.
49

50 **C. Bone Protein**

51 Pig, chicken (both omnivorous animals) and fully terrestrial giant tortoise (herbivorous) have been
52 dated from the Teouma midden. These provide a unique comparison to dates on human remains from both
53 the Lapita and post-Lapita deposits, and by dating human and faunal remains the chronological relationship

³ Waikato AMS graphite targets were measured at the Keck Radiocarbon Laboratory, University of California, Irvine, and GNS Science, Wellington.

1 between sample and target event is brought into congruence. Moreover, inbuilt age is minimal because of
 2 the fairly rapid rate of collagen turnover and the short-lived nature of most animals. The interpretation of
 3 these ^{14}C results is, however, linked to diet. Generally it is assumed that natural variations in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values
 4 among plants and animals are maintained within the consumer bone collagen and that offsets between diet
 5 and consumer isotopic ratios, caused by metabolic fractionation, are relatively predictable. Ultimately, this
 6 is an area of research that is complicated by numerous assumptions that make it difficult to assign actual
 7 proportions to different foods (see Hedges and Reynard [2007] and Schulting and Richards [2002]). Despite
 8 these problems, it is essential prior to age calibration that the marine ^{14}C contribution to bone protein is
 9 evaluated because of the c. 400 ^{14}C year offset of the marine reservoir compared to the terrestrial reservoir
 10 (Stuiver et al. 1986). One methodology to counteract the effect of ^{14}C coming from the marine environment
 11 is the use of linear extrapolation between terrestrial and marine $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ endpoints. This overly simplifies the
 12 evaluation of diet, but has demonstrably been successful for the evaluation of radiocarbon results on human
 13 bone from the Teouma Lapita cemetery (Petchey et al. 2014) and elsewhere (Petchey et al. 2011). Possible
 14 errors were only noted in instances where C_4 plants may have been eaten, but a larger scale isotopic
 15 evaluation of diet undertaken by Kinaston et al. (2014:14) suggests this is limited at Teouma. Petchey et al.
 16 (2014) concluded that collagen $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values for Pacific humans that consumed terrestrial C_3 pathway plants,
 17 or the flesh of animals that fed on those plants, fell around -21‰, while a $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ value of c. -12‰ indicated a
 18 diet that is high in marine protein. Moreover, humans from temperate regions who get most of their protein
 19 from marine food typically have $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values above +12‰, while those that consume predominantly
 20 terrestrial protein have $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values below this. Typically, the introduction of domesticates and dietary
 21 diversification increases the interpretive difficulties (e.g., Field et al. 2009; Jones and Quinn 2009; Petchey
 22 et al. 2011:37).

23 The isotope values for post-Lapita individuals are given in Table 2. $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values of between -
 24 20.7‰ and -19.2‰ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values between 7.2 and 9.8 are depleted and more homogeneous than the
 25 Lapita individuals ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$ = -18.2‰ to -13.0‰; $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ 10.6‰ to 15.2‰ [Petchey et al. 2014]). Valentin et al.
 26 (2014:391) attributed this isotopic shift to a diet consisting of greater quantities of herbivore and C_3 derived
 27 foods. This predominantly homogenous and terrestrial diet provides us with greater confidence in the
 28 calibration of these remains because the percent marine carbon correction (%MC) and associated errors are
 29 small.

| Sample ID | Burial No. | %N | %C | C:N | $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ (‰) | $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ (‰) | $\delta^{34}\text{S}$ (‰) | Gelatin Yield (%) | % Marine Carbon (-21/-12) |
|-----------|--------------|-------|-------|------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Wk-24480 | 1 | 15.2 | 43.4 | 3.33 | 9.61 | -19.82 | 13.60 | 1.4 | 13 |
| Wk-24481 | 2A | 15.1 | 43.4 | 3.35 | 9.62 | -20.25 | 13.23 | 1.2 | 8 |
| Wk-24482 | 2B | 15.0 | 42.7 | 3.32 | 8.57 | -20.38 | 12.90 | 1.3 | 7 |
| Wk-24483 | 3 | 14.2 | 41.5 | 3.41 | 8.67 | -20.74 | Na | 0.2 | 3 |
| Wk-24484 | 4 | 14.9 | 42.2 | 3.30 | 9.78 | -19.59 | 13.88 | 1.6 | 16 |
| Wk-30871 | Trench 3, B1 | 15.39 | 43.06 | 3.3 | 7.2 | -20.1 | 13.17 | 1.0 | 10 |
| Wk-30872 | Trench 3, B2 | 15.11 | 43.89 | 3.39 | 8.67 | -19.16 | 14.15 | 0.6 | 20 |

33 Table 2: Quality assurance and stable isotope data for Post-Lapita burials from Teouma.

34
 35 Less is known about the isotopic offsets for other omnivorous animals, or where dietary extremes
 36 occur (Ambrose and Norr 1993; Tiezen and Fagre 1993). Variations in diet-tissue enrichment may be
 37 responsible for the calculated -20/-10 $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ endpoints reported by Clark et al. (2013) for pigs from Hanamiai
 38 (French Polynesia), where the marine endpoint (-10‰) may reflect an artificially high marine diet through
 39 controlled feeding practices (Richards et al. 2009:36). Clark et al. (2013) reported $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values for pigs
 40 eating only terrestrial protein as measuring between +7.0 and +10.3‰, while those assumed to have a
 41 predominantly marine diet return values that fell between +14.4 and +18.3‰.

42 Ultimately, the effect of using $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ endpoints of -20‰ and -10‰ instead of -21‰/-12‰ results in
 43 relatively little change to the dietary %MC for the Teouma animals (Table 2), except in those cases where
 44 the %MC input is already high (i.e., chicken Wk-25198, and pigs Wk-28392, Wk-28386 and Wk-28387),

1 therefore resulting in a smaller marine correction. This is most extreme for Wk-28387 (pig from CZ2/3)
 2 whereby -20/-10 $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ endpoints results in a shift from 66%MC to 49%MC (Table 2). Comparison with the
 3 short-lived nut charcoal results from CZ2/3 (combined in a single phase model in OxCal – see model
 4 building discussion below) reveals that both endpoint models give results at an acceptable level of
 5 agreement (-21/-12: $A_{\text{model}} = 142$; -20/-10: $A_{\text{model}} = 104.8$), but the individual agreement index for Wk-
 6 28387 in the -20/-10 model is poor ($A=51.8\%$). Although data are limited we have opted to use the -21/-12
 7 correction model for the subsequent Bayesian analysis in keeping with Petchey et al. (2014).
 8
 9

10 Table 3: Quality assurance[#] and stable isotope data for animal bones from Teouma.

| Lab no. (Sample no.) | %N | %C | C:N | $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ [^] (‰) | $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ [^] (‰) | $\delta^{34}\text{S}$ [^] (‰) | Gelatin Yield | Percent Marine Carbon (-21/-12) | Percent Marine Carbon (-20/-10) |
|---|------|------|-----|---|---|---|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chicken (<i>Gallus gallus</i>) | | | | | | | | | |
| NZA-29450 (VUTTEO003) | 13.5 | 39.7 | 3.4 | 12.4 | -20.5 | na | na | 1 | 0 |
| Wk-25198 (VUTTEO006)** | 11.4 | 33 | 3.4 | 9.9 | -18.2 | na | 0.6 | 31 | 18 |
| Giant tortoise (? <i>Meiolania damelipi</i>) | | | | | | | | | |
| Wk-25601 (8.631 3A4.9) | 15.0 | 43.4 | 3.4 | 3.0 | -23.2 | 11.8 | 0.4 | 0 | 0 |
| Wk-25602 (8.1215 3A5.7) | 15.0 | 42.2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | -22.8 | 12.6 | 0.4 | 0 | 0 |
| Pig (<i>Sus scrofa</i>), | | | | | | | | | |
| Wk-28391 (6.886) | 15.2 | 43.6 | 3.3 | 11.1 | -20.2 | 13.8 | 0.6 | 9 | 0 |
| Wk-28392 (6.891) | 15.9 | 44.6 | 3.3 | 8.2 | -18.9 | 12.9 | 1.7 | 23 | 11 |
| Wk-28393 (6.914) | 15.7 | 45.3 | 3.4 | 9.8 | -20.2 | 13.0 | 1.2 | 9 | 0 |
| Wk-28386 (6.124) | 15.3 | 44.4 | 3.4 | 8.9 | -18.0 | 13.5 | 1.4 | 33 | 20 |
| Wk-28389 (6.1042) | na | na | na | na | -19.9 ⁺⁺ | na | 0.4 | 2 | 1 |
| Wk-28390 (6.6) | 15.5 | 44.4 | 3.3 | 9.4 | -20.4 | 14.7 | 0.8 | 7 | 0 |
| Wk-28387 (6.1354) | 15.7 | 45.4 | 3.4 | 14.4 | -15.1 | 14.0 | 1.0 | 66 | 49 |
| Wk-28388 (6.1093) | 15.3 | 44.0 | 3.4 | 6.8 | -20.4 | 12.9 | 0.6 | 7 | 0 |

11 Footnote to Table 3:

12 #Most well-preserved archaeological bone protein has a %N value that ranges between 11 and 16, a %C value between 30 and 45, and
 13 a C:N ratio range of 3.1-3.5, while the % gelatin yield should be $\geq 0.5\%$ (van Klinken 1999; Brock et al. 2007; Petchey et al. 2014).
 14 Three samples had low yields (highlighted in grey) but acceptable isotopic values. These should be treated with caution.

15 ⁺⁺ $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ value measured using a Europa Scientific Penta 20-20 isotope ratio mass spectrometer on gas split taken during preparation of
 16 ¹⁴C samples at the University of Waikato. Measured relative to VPDB with precision of $\pm 0.2\%$.

17 [^] $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ measured relative to VPDB with precision of $\pm 0.1\%$. $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ measured relative to AIR and with precision of $\pm 0.2\%$. $\delta^{34}\text{S}$
 18 measured relative to IA-R061, IA-R042 and IA-R027 (Iso-Analytical) or IAEA-S-1, IAEA-S-2 and NBS123 (Isoprime) with precision
 19 of $\pm 0.3\%$.

20 ^{**} Gelatin isotopes values not measured by Waikato. Values as reported by Storey et al. (2010: Table 4).
 21

22 *Tortoise:*

23 Stable $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ isotope values for the two giant tortoise bones from CZ2/3 are given in Table
 24 3. The $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values (-22.8‰ and -23.2‰) reflect the terrestrial environment, and are comparable to average
 25 values recorded by Kinaston et al. (2014: Table 2; $-23.4 \pm 0.5\%$) for tortoise at the site. They interpreted
 26 these as reflecting either a canopy (i.e., recycling of ¹³C-depleted CO₂ from decomposing forest floor litter
 27 resulting in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values that were lower than other terrestrial mammals such as fruit bats), or a
 28 physiological effect. Our $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values (3.0‰ and 3.3‰) fall at the lower end of the Kinaston et al.
 29 (2014: 12-13) range ($\delta^{15}\text{N} = 4.9 \pm 2.8\%$, n=17), which they suggest may be the result of foraging in the
 30 mangrove environment because of a similarity to mangrove shellfish and crabs ($-\delta^{13}\text{C} = 26.1\%$; $\delta^{15}\text{N} = -$
 31 2.0% and $\delta^{13}\text{C} = -24.1\%$; $\delta^{15}\text{N} = 2.5\%$ respectively). If tortoise are feeding on shellfish from the mangrove
 32 environment it could have an effect on the ¹⁴C content, but this does not appear to be significant since the

1 results are comparable to a chicken bone; NZA-29450 from the same deposit considered to be fully
2 terrestrial in origin (see below). We have, therefore, assumed a terrestrial calibration for both terrestrial
3 giant tortoise results.

4 5 *Pig:*

6 Pacific pigs are generally considered to have an opportunistic and omnivorous diet. The $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and
7 $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values of the Teouma pigs (Table 3) suggest that most (Wk-28388, Wk-28390, Wk-28391, Wk-28392,
8 and Wk-28393) have eaten predominantly terrestrial foods, but three consumed various mixes of both
9 marine and terrestrial foods (Wk-28386, Wk-28387 and Wk-28392). The more depleted (terrestrial) values
10 are comparable to those reported by Kinaston et al. (2014:table 2; $\delta^{13}\text{C} = -19.6 \pm 0.7\text{‰}$; $\delta^{15}\text{N} = 9.6 \pm 1.1\text{‰}$;
11 $n=20$) who interpreted the results as representing a diet largely composed of C_3 plant and animal foods. The
12 enriched $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ value of -15.1‰ for Wk-28387 may be indicative of a controlled feeding environment where
13 higher proportions of marine foods were fed to this animal (cf., Richards et al. 2009). It is unlikely that this
14 value reflects feeding on C_4 foods (e.g., grasses, sea-grass and seaweeds), which could also result in an
15 enriched $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ value, because the $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ value (14.4‰) reflects a diet dominated by higher trophic level
16 foods. A mixed terrestrial/marine calibration (Table 3) has been applied to the pig bones based on the
17 dietary correction between $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ endpoints of -21‰ and -12‰ .

18 19 *Chicken:*

20 The two chicken results give very different results; the isotopes for NZA-29450 ($\delta^{13}\text{C} = -20.5\text{‰}$
21 and $\delta^{15}\text{N} = 12.4\text{‰}$) suggest that this particular chicken may have acquired a protein rich terrestrial diet,
22 though the high $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ value could be indicative of hot/dry conditions (cf., Valentin et al. 2014). Kinaston et
23 al. (2014:table 2) report values of $\delta^{13}\text{C} -19.7 \pm 1.1\text{‰}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N} = 11.1 \pm 1.2\text{‰}$ for chickens ($n=7$). The chicken
24 bone associated with Burial 50 fill (Wk-25198) on the other hand had a slightly more enriched carbon
25 signature ($\delta^{13}\text{C} = -18.2\text{‰}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N} = 9.9\text{‰}$) suggesting that this chicken may have derived some of its diet
26 from C_4 plants and/or marine foods.

27 28 **B. Shell**

29 Theoretically, marine shells that are gathered for food should provide very robust age estimates for human
30 activity because they will give radiocarbon dates close to the timing of the gathering event. Various issues
31 need, however, to be considered before dating any shell. In particular, shells may give apparently erroneous
32 ^{14}C results depending on genera and even species selected, as well as local ocean conditions unless
33 appropriate corrections are applied. Research in the Pacific (Petchey et al. 2008) has demonstrated that the
34 marine reservoir in the southern gyre region is fairly uniform and that the Vanuatu specific reservoir
35 correction (ΔR) of 40 ± 44 ^{14}C years is suitable for most open ocean suspension feeding shellfish and coral
36 species. Location-specific issues such as hardwaters⁴ and/or the potential ingestion of carbonate from the
37 uplifted limestone cliffs that border Teouma on the east and southeast (Dickinson et al. 2013) make it likely
38 that ancient ^{14}C from this limestone will have influenced most dates of deposit feeding, herbivorous and
39 suspension feeding shellfish that occupy the local estuarine environment (Petchey and Clark 2011; Petchey
40 et al. 2013). Even in such problematic locations informed corrections can be made based on observed
41 oceanographic conditions, local geology and understanding of shellfish habitat and dietary preferences.

42 There is a single *Turbo argyrostomus* result from the CZ3 (SANU-12025); three from CZ2/3
43 (SANU-12024, SANU-12029, SANU-12027) and one from CZ2 (SANU-12023). One *Trochus niloticus*
44 (SANU-12026) shell comes from CZ2/3. Both these genera are potentially problematic for dating; *Turbo*
45 spp. are herbivorous gastropods with a preference for calcium carbonate strata (Beesley et al. 1998:675,
46 768), while *Trochus niloticus* is an algal grazing gastropod that prefers rock and reef environments
47 (Beesley et al. 1998:683). Consequently, both can ingest terrestrial sediment while feeding. Studies into
48 herbivorous shellfish have clearly demonstrated large ^{14}C offsets for herbivores collected from along
49 limestone coastlines (Dye 1994; Anderson et al. 2001:37-9; Petchey et al. 2012). To estimate the possible
50 offset for these two species it is necessary to calculate a reservoir correction (ΔR). This can be done using
51 contemporaneous terrestrial material (i.e., a terrestrial/marine pair), but there are no ideal sample pairs from
52 Teouma since both the Cemetery Zone and Midden Zones could have been deposited over some time span
53 (see below and Petchey et al. 2014) and the majority of terrestrial samples from CZ2/3 are novel materials

⁴ Hardwaters contain large amounts of bicarbonate ions, which are generated by seepage through calcareous strata and can make radiocarbon ages anomalously old.

1 (i.e. previously untested ^{14}C sample types) or materials with a mixed marine/terrestrial diet (i.e., chicken
2 and pig bone) which add uncertainty to the evaluation. One short-lived nut charcoal sample (SANU-22513)
3 was found in the midden deposits in the Cemetery Zone and when compared to SANU-12025 we get a ΔR
4 of 105 ± 39 ^{14}C years (see Petchey et al. [2013] for methodology). Similar ΔR results are obtained by using a
5 systematic offset methodology in OxCal (Bronk-Ramsey 2009) whereby we used the following command
6 Delta_R(“local”,U(-200,200)) for *Trochus* and *Turbo* shells grouped into CZ3 and CZ2/3 phases within the
7 OxCal sequence model b as outlined below. This methodology gave us a ΔR of 118 ± 40 ^{14}C years for Layer
8 3 *Turbo argyrostomus* and 121 ± 27 ^{14}C years for the Layer 2/3 *Turbo* and *Trochus* shells.

9 There are also five *Conus* sp. rings associated with the burials (Wk-15729 [Burial 11]; Wk-16830
10 [Burial 4]; Wk-37680 [Burial 17]; Wk-37682 [Burial 58] and Wk-37681 [Burial 59]). *Conus* are
11 carnivorous reef dwelling animals (Beesley et al. 1998:852-3) and therefore should more closely reflect
12 ocean reservoir offsets. However, shells associated with burials may also have heirloom offsets while larger
13 animals may have some inbuilt age⁵, though this is mitigated somewhat by sampling procedures that select
14 material from as near to the growth edge of the shell as possible. Moreover it is possible to assess the level
15 of offset by comparison with paired radiocarbon data, such as the associated burial dates. This is discussed
16 in some depth in Petchey et al. (2014) where it was demonstrated that the regional reservoir value (40 ± 44
17 ^{14}C years) produces *Conus* sp. ring ^{14}C results that are in keeping with the associated calibrated burial
18 results.

20 C. Cremated bone

21 Burial 26 is a collection of cremated bones⁶ (see Scott et al. 2010:901-2). This gives an uncalibrated result
22 (Wk-21030) of 2850 ± 24 ^{14}C years and has a $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ of -25.3‰ , which suggests alteration to the carbonate
23 fraction has occurred; bone carbonate $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ value is a function of the bulk diet and is offset by around
24 $+12\text{‰}$ to $+14\text{‰}$ (Ambrose and Norr 1993; Tieszen and Fagre 1993), consequently any human bone
25 carbonate $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values should be significantly more enriched than this (Teouma human tooth carbonate
26 values range between c. -10‰ and -14‰ [see Petchey et al. 2014:237]). The absolute dating of calcined
27 bone fragments is a recent development in radiocarbon dating (Lanting et al. 2001; Naysmith et al. 2007).
28 The technique, although successful in many inter-comparison studies, remains largely experimental, and
29 recent tests (Van Strydonck et al. 2010; Hüls et al 2010) have demonstrated that during the burning process,
30 exchange of carbon from firewood and other organic remains can occur, resulting in a possible transmission
31 of the ‘old wood’ effect (i.e., inbuilt age). Therefore, the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ value does not represent a dietary signal and
32 there is no indication of dietary difference between this individual and other individuals from Teouma
33 (contra to Scott et al. 2010:907). When calibrated with the terrestrial calibration curve (IntCal13) this
34 sample gives an age of 3010-2880 cal BP. Even though this overlaps with the human bone dates from the
35 cemetery (2940-2880 cal BP) reported in Petchey et al. (2014), we have not included this result in our
36 analysis because the unusual nature of the burial and the absence of any other associated dating evidence.
37

38 RADIOCARBON CALIBRATION AND MODEL BUILDING

39 All radiocarbon dates were calibrated in OxCal v4.2 (Bronk Ramsey 2013) using the Marine13 and
40 Intcal13⁷ curves (Reimer et al. 2013). Mixtures between these curves were determined from dietary
41 terrestrial/marine $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ endpoints ($-21\text{‰}/-12\text{‰}$) given in Tables 2 and 3. Given the limitations of the dietary
42 evaluation we have used an uncertainty of ± 10 following the recommendations of Ambrose (1993:112). A
43 location-specific reservoir correction value (ΔR) of 40 ± 44 ^{14}C years has been applied to calibrations of the
44 *Conus* sp. shells and 105 ± 39 ^{14}C years to the *Trochus* and *Turbo* shell calibrations to adjust for regional
45 oceanic variation in ^{14}C . All dates discussed in the text are reported at 68.2% probability unless otherwise
46 noted.

47 To refine the chronological interpretation of Teouma we have utilized Bayesian statistical methods

⁵ The limited data available for reef gastropods suggests that most live >5 years and some may reach 20 years of age (Frank 1969:247). This is unlikely to be truly reflective of animals collected from locations previously uninhabited by humans.

⁶ Cremated or calcined bones (those with a white coloration rather than those that are charred) have been exposed to temperatures greater than 600°C (van Strydonck et al. 2009).

⁷ The ^{14}C division between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres is considered to lie along the Inter-tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ). This creates additional uncertainty when calibrating terrestrial samples from Pacific locales because many island groups, including Vanuatu, straddle the South Pacific Convergence Zone, which merges with the ITCZ to the west. Because the Southern Hemisphere calibration curve (Hogg et al. 2013; McCormac et al. 2004) was developed from trees younger than 1000 cal BP collected above 25°S (South Africa [25°S], New Zealand [40°S] and Southern Chile [55°S]) we have opted to use the Northern Hemisphere calibration curve (IntCal13; Reimer et al., 2013) for terrestrial calibrations from central Vanuatu [$\sim 16^\circ\text{S}$].

whereby ^{14}C ages are constrained by prior information such as stratigraphic sequence and archaeological provenance. The overall model is assessed by the calculation of an agreement index (A_{model}) that tells us how well the model agrees with the observations. If “A” falls below 60% (equivalent to the 5% level of a χ^2 test), the model should be re-evaluated (Bronk-Ramsey 1995). The radiocarbon dates from the midden and cemetery zones are modeled as separate overlapping sequences. Within each of these sequences the various layer designations are grouped in phases that are arranged in a contiguous sequence. Between each phase is a boundary that provides an estimate for the date of transition between each phase. The boundaries between the different CZ and MZ phases are also cross-linked in accordance with archaeological interpretation of the relationship between the two areas. After running the model an agreement index is calculated for individual dates, and any with an individual agreement index <60% were assigned a prior outlier probability of 5% within the General t-Type outlier model – which allows outliers to be either too young or too old (Bronk Ramsey 2009b); therefore accounting for both potential inbuilt age and context displacement. The following dates are excluded from the model: Wk-21030 (cremation burial) and SANU-22516 (modern wood charcoal). Following initial modeling runs the prior outlier probability is revised and a date’s influence on the model is readdressed and reweighted according to the posterior probability.

RESULTS

The initial run of this model (a) produced an acceptable agreement index (A_{model}) of 70.8 (Table 4). Although several samples had individual agreement indexes less than 60 (Wk-37681 [$A=6.3$], Wk-28391 [$A=47.2$], SANU-22507 [$A=44.5$], S ANU-22506/22525 pair [$A=54.8$]), only one sample was found to have a much greater posterior probability of being an outlier than expected (i.e. had a posterior value of >10): Wk-37681/Burial 59 *Conus* shell armband (O:73/5). Model (a) gives a start date for the Cemetery Zone of 2930-2870 cal BP and an end date of 2830-2700 cal BP, with transitions between Layer 3 and Layer 2/3 at c. 2870-2820 cal BP and a transition between Layer 2/3 and Layer 2 at 2840-2770 cal BP. The start of the Midden Zone activity has been cross-linked to the beginning of activity in the CZ and has an end date of 2870-2750 cal BP.

Table 4: OxCal modeled calibrated ages for the Teouma Cemetery and Midden Zone radiocarbon samples.

| | Model a (with B59/ Wk-37681) | Model b (with B59/ Wk-37681 removed) |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A_{model} (agreement index) | 70.8 | 105.9 |
| Start Teouma | 3000-2870 cal BP | 3000-2870 cal BP |
| Start CZ3 (Lapita) | 2930-2870 cal BP | 2920-2870 cal BP |
| Start CZ2/3 (Lapita) | 2870-2820 cal BP | 2870-2820 cal BP |
| Start CZ2 (Arapus) | 2840-2770 cal BP | 2840-2780 cal BP |
| End CZ2 | 2830-2700 cal BP | 2830-2710 cal BP |
| Span CZ | 60-210 yrs | 60-200 yrs |
| Start MZ3 = Start CZ3 | 2930-2870 cal BP | 2920-2870 cal BP |
| Start MZ2 | 2900-2850 cal BP | 2890-2850 cal BP |
| End MZ2 | 2870-2750 cal BP | 2870-2750 cal BP |
| Span MZ | 0-10, 20-150 yrs | 0-10, 20-150 yrs |
| End Teouma | 2880-2580 cal BP | 2880-2560 cal BP |

The young age (unmodeled = 2760-2650 cal BP) for the *Conus* sp. arm band associated with burial 59 (Wk-37681) relative to the rest of the CZ3 dates may indicate a problem with the reservoir (ΔR) offset, or it may come from a slightly later phase of cemetery activity, possibly a later Arapus/ Early Erueti phase. This sample was taken from the burial goods associated with Burial 59 – comparison of Wk-37681 with the ultrafiltered bone gelatin burial result (Wk-26342: 2790-2680 cal BP, reported in full in Petchey et al. 2014), suggests the shell result is not erroneous. However, this interpretation does not fit with archaeological observations and associated artifacts that place it firmly within an early Lapita context. A number of dates on the skeletons themselves (Burials 3, 41, 43, 48, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59 and 60 [Petchey et al. 2014]) also fall within this younger age range and it is possible that we are not dealing with a single-phase Lapita cemetery. In future, detailed analysis of finds and contextual information will be undertaken to examine this issue further.

Removing the Burial 59 *Conus* sp. date from the model improved the agreement index (A_{model} = 105.9), but makes little difference to the calibrated ages for each layer (Table 4). This model (b) gives a

1 start date for the Cemetery Zone and associated midden of 2920-2870 cal BP and an end date of 2830-2710
 2 cal BP, with transitions between Layer 3 and Layer 2/3 at c. 2870-2820 cal BP and a transition between
 3 Layer 2/3 and Layer 2 at 2840-2780 cal BP, covering a period of between 60 and 200 years. Activity in the
 4 Midden Zone ends c. 2870-2750 cal BP. The similarity between models (a) and (b) is to be expected
 5 because of the model averaging nature of the Bayesian analysis. Overlap between start and end dates for the
 6 Midden Zone indicate a very rapid midden build up (span) which is consistent between both model (a) and
 7 (b) (0-150 years) (Table 4). It should be noted that the endpoint for CZ2 is based on dates primarily
 8 collected to date the start and early development of this midden deposit. A more substantial and
 9 stratigraphically refined dating of the entire CZ2 deposit is required to assess the actual duration and
 10 influence of possible disturbance.

11 Previous analysis of the cemetery zone using bone dates on the burials themselves suggested the
 12 burial ground was in regular use by c. 2940-2880 cal BP with the last interments occurring c. 2770-2710 cal
 13 BP though possible earlier use was indicated by Burial 57 (c. 3110-2930 cal BP) and later use was possible
 14 up until 2680 cal BP. Our multiphase cemetery/midden zone results agree with this evaluation. Moreover,
 15 because the midden respected the boundary of the cemetery, it is possible that the cemetery may have
 16 already been in place before deposition of the MZ3 material.

17 Continued use of the area is clearly indicated by the presence of a number of burials (Table 5)
 18 approximately 70m south and southeast from the Lapita cemetery that date to between 2440 and 2350 cal
 19 BP (assuming a single phase relationship, -21/-12 endpoints and ΔR of 40 ± 44 ^{14}C years), and represent a
 20 *terminus post quem* for site use. These burials were expected to date to the Early Erueti phase on the basis
 21 that there is no cultural material later than this phase in the CZ2 midden or elsewhere in the site area. Worn
 22 Early Erueti pottery was found in the vicinity, albeit not in firm association with the burials. Our calibrated
 23 results for these burials fall slightly later than the current orthodox dates for this archaeological phase
 24 (2800-2500 BP). Before any firm conclusions are made regarding the association of these burials we
 25 recommend that a full evaluation of extant Early Erueti dates, within a Bayesian chronometric framework,
 26 is made to refine this post-Lapita chronology.
 27
 28

| Sample ID | Context | Material | CRA (BP) | $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ vs PDB | Unmodeled cal BP (68% prob) |
|-----------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Wk-24480 | Burial 1 | Human bone gelatin | 2423 \pm 30 | -19.3 | 2440-2360 |
| Wk-24481 | Burial 2A | Human bone gelatin | 2455 \pm 30 | -19.6 | 2440-2360 |
| Wk-24482 | Burial 2B | Human bone gelatin | 2465 \pm 30 | -19.3 | 2440-2360 |
| Wk-24483 | Burial 3 | Human bone gelatin | 2423 \pm 30 | -19.8 | 2440-2360 |
| Wk-24484 | Burial 4 | Human bone gelatin | 2452 \pm 30 | -18.8 | 2440-2360 |
| Wk-30871 | Trench 3, B1 | Human bone gelatin | 2501 \pm 27 | -19.1 | 2440-2360 |
| Wk-30872 | Trench 3, B2 | Human bone gelatin | 2422 \pm 27 | -19.1 | 2440-2350 |

29
 30 Table 5. Post-Lapita burial radiocarbon dates (? Late Erueti).
 31

32 **DISCUSSION**

33 From this evaluation of radiocarbon dates from the Teouma midden deposits it is apparent that there are a
 34 number of additional uncertainties associated with the dating of different sample types that complicate the
 35 chronological evaluation of this site. More importantly, our conclusions are based on prior information
 36 (stratigraphy and associated contextual information) that constrains the radiocarbon dates accordingly.
 37 Change in this prior information will have an influence on the model outcomes. We stress, therefore that
 38 the evaluation of the Teouma chronology presented in this paper is a model only. We can, however,
 39 conclude from this evaluation that:

- 40 1. Short-lived nuts provide a robust test of site age assuming no mixing of the deposit. Unfortunately,
 41 this is rare, and it is possible that displacement can occur both up and down through a deposit. Our
 42 use of the General t-Type outlier model is designed to counteract this in combination with prior

- 1 site information such as stratigraphy.
- 2 2. *Turbo* and *Trochus* species shells are affected by ingesting carbonate material while feeding.
- 3 Therefore, in areas with limestone, where precise chronologies are required, they should be
- 4 avoided unless a program of offset evaluation is undertaken (cf., Caution Bay [Petchey et al.
- 5 2013]). Although many researchers would exclude radiocarbon results on these animals from
- 6 further evaluation, once a reservoir offset had been ascertained and applied the results are as
- 7 accurate as most other sample types, and their value is clearly evident in the Bayesian model
- 8 outlined here.
- 9 3. Radiocarbon determinations on animal bones have the advantage that they date the
- 10 hunting/gathering event. They can, however, be hard to interpret because of dietary offsets. At
- 11 Teouma, terrestrial giant tortoise bones give results that are in excellent agreement with the other
- 12 midden materials. This sample type has additional value as it provides a date for hunting and
- 13 consumption of tortoise, and additional dates may reveal a chronological pattern to the
- 14 exploitation of this native fauna. Similarly, chronological evaluation of other indigenous animals
- 15 and birds in the Teouma midden may be of interest, including the flying fox (*Pteropus* sp.), other
- 16 fruit bats (Pteropodidae), and terrestrial birds and crocodile (Valentin et al. 2010:1826).
- 17 4. Pig and chicken bone conventional radiocarbon ages are more varied due to their omnivorous
- 18 diets. A diet correction using linear extrapolation between terrestrial and marine $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ endpoints of
- 19 -21‰ and -12‰ has given calibrated radiocarbon results in keeping with other materials at
- 20 Teouma. These animals are human commensals and therefore the ability to achieve reliable
- 21 calibrated radiocarbon ages on them also has immense value to research in this region.
- 22 5. Cremated bone remains largely an unknown quantity. Recent experiments have demonstrated that
- 23 during the burning process, exchange of carbon from firewood and other organic remains can
- 24 occur, resulting in a possible transmission of the 'old wood' effect (i.e., inbuilt age). Although this
- 25 effect is often relatively small, without paired, or closely associated samples against which we can
- 26 compare, the offset remains unknown. The context and un-calibrated radiocarbon result of
- 27 cremation (Burial 26) is within that expected for a Lapita-age burial.
- 28 6. The dietary model used for Teouma appears to work well, but our knowledge of endpoint values
- 29 for human and other omnivorous animals from Pacific locales is poor. It is likely that this linear
- 30 interpolation methodology may underestimate the intake of marine protein at the 0% endpoint and
- 31 overestimate at the 100% endpoint. More complex evaluations of ^{14}C -diet corrections using
- 32 complex stable isotope mixture models and large datasets of location specific faunal isotope data
- 33 generally do not provide age evaluations that fit well with other dates for reasons that are not well
- 34 understood (cf. Dewar et al. 2010); this may be because of the numerous assumptions about the
- 35 magnitude of fractionation between trophic levels. Regardless of the shortcomings, leaving the
- 36 dates uncalibrated is not an option because this would result in greater error.
- 37 7. The recent use of a third isotope ($\delta^{34}\text{S}$) in Pacific examples has met with varying success because
- 38 of possible sea spray and/or limestone effects (Beavan Athfield et al. 2008; Kinaston et al. 2014;
- 39 Petchey et al. 2014), explaining the apparent success of this methodology in some locations (e.g.,
- 40 Kinaston et al. 2013a) but not at Teouma. Here similarity in $\delta^{34}\text{S}$ between tortoise bone and bone
- 41 from animals with a mixed marine/terrestrial diet (Table 2) could be caused both by proximity to
- 42 the ocean and by the limestone cliffs that surround the site.
- 43 8. Information on the diversity of freshwater fish and their consumption is limited in Vanuatu. It is,
- 44 however, likely that they were exploited for food, particularly as Teouma is adjacent to a
- 45 freshwater stream (Bedford et al., 2009, 2006). Although freshwater fish are typically depleted in
- 46 $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and enriched in $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ values compared to animals in dry-land terrestrial systems (Privat et al.,
- 47 2007; Richards et al., 2001), this is not always the case (Cook et al. 2001; Olsen et al. 2010) and
- 48 depends on local conditions. There is currently no way to correct for this in the ^{14}C values except
- 49 by comparison with other sample types. Based on charcoal ^{14}C determinations there does not
- 50 appear to be any significant freshwater (specifically hardwater) influence on any other sample type
- 51 except for the *Turbo* and *Trochus* shells as discussed above.
- 52

53 **TEOUMA: THE BIGGER PICTURE**

54
55 This analysis places the start date of the Lapita deposits at 2920-2870 cal BP with a possible use as early as
56 3000 cal BP, and an end date of 2870-2750 cal BP. These results are in keeping with evaluation of the

1 burials, which places earliest use of the cemetery at c. 2970 cal BP with regular use underway by c. 2940-
2 2880 cal BP and the last internment occurring c. 2770-2710 cal BP. Continued use of the area is evident by
3 later burials dating to the end of the Erueti phase and by the CZ2 midden deposits which must
4 predominantly be of post-Lapita age.

5 This Bayesian analysis of the midden deposits provides further confirmation of the chronological age
6 of Teouma. Teouma has numerous indicators of being an initial colonization site for Efate, including
7 extinct faunal remains, early ceramic forms and decoration, and New Britain obsidian, and is therefore of
8 high interest to those investigating colonization in this region. The most recent chronological assessments
9 have been by Summerhayes (2009) who divided Lapita in the Bismarck Archipelago into three generalized
10 phases; 3300-3000 BP for Early Lapita, 3000-2800 BP for Middle Lapita and 2700-c.2200 BP for Late
11 Lapita. This has subsequently been re-evaluated by Denham et al. (2010) using Bayesian techniques. They
12 suggested the earliest possible date for Lapita appearance in the Bismarck region was 3360-3240 cal BP,
13 which was followed by a "Bismarck formative phase" of c. 130-290 years before spread into Remote
14 Oceania. In their model, Lapita reached Vanuatu c. 3250-3100 cal BP and Fiji c. 3130-3010 cal BP.
15 Unfortunately, by limiting their analysis to charcoals, many of which were not identified to short-lived
16 species, Denham et al. (2010) over-estimated the antiquity of these events.

17 A more robust chronometric evaluation has been achieved using site-based Bayesian evaluations that
18 utilize a modified chronometric hygiene protocol in combination with stratigraphic information and
19 evidence of early faunal and artifactual assemblages, such as that by Petchey et al. (2014) for Teouma,
20 Nunn and Petchey (2013) for Bourewa (Fiji), Sheppard et al. (2015) for Nanngu (Santa Cruz, Solomon
21 Islands) and Burley et al. (2015) for Tonga. These works indicate that at around 3000 BP the culture spread
22 through the Solomon Islands chain, perhaps by leapfrogging to the Reefs-Santa Cruz Group (Sheppard and
23 Walter 2006), and on to Vanuatu. Unfortunately, dates from the earliest New Caledonian sites are
24 influenced by inbuilt age in the charcoal. Bayesian evaluation of acceptable dates by Sheppard et al.
25 (2015:33-34) placed occupation of Vatcha (Isle des Pins) shortly after 3000 cal BP. They noted that both
26 artifacts and faunal evidence from the sites of Lapita (New Caledonia) and Kurin (Loyalty Islands)
27 indicated a slightly earlier date for these deposits was likely despite an absence of secure chronometric data
28 to support this. The earliest data from Fiji come from Bourewa (2838-2787 cal BP) and Matanamuani (VL
29 21/5) on Naigani Island (3019-2863 cal BP) (Irwin et al. 2011; Nunn and Petchey 2013; Sheppard et al.
30 2015). Recent work using a combination of ¹⁴C and U/Th dates by Burley et al. (2015) has refined the date
31 of first Lapita landfall in Tonga to 2846-2839 cal BP (95.4% prob.), with ceramic transition to later
32 Plainware forms beginning around 2728-2716 cal BP (95.4% prob.). The current chronological model for
33 deposits at Teouma therefore spans the entire period of Lapita settlement across Remote Oceania.

34 This new regional chronology has highlighted a number of temporal problems within Vanuatu, not
35 the least being a discrepancy between the oldest Teouma layers and the earliest Lapita assemblages at
36 Makué; c. 3192-2945 cal BP (Galipaud et al. 2014). Although clearly early in the Vanuatu sequence, based
37 on the quantities of Bismarck obsidian, fine dentate stamped ceramics and turtle bone remains, Sheppard et
38 al. (2015:34-35) suggest these determinations may be too old. Moreover, dates for the disappearance of
39 Lapita across Vanuatu have not been subjected to any Bayesian/modified chronometric evaluation.
40 Previous research indicated that Lapita disappeared c. 2800 BP - at least in central and southern Vanuatu
41 (Bedford 2006; Bedford et al. 2009). This chronometric picture requires refinement to align with that of the
42 Lapita cemetery at Teouma. Similarly, the transition to Arapus and Erueti phases has not been subject to
43 rigorous Bayesian modelling

44 45 **CONCLUSIONS**

46 The multi-phased midden deposits at Teouma have enabled us to further refine the chronology of this
47 important Lapita site. Our analysis indicates that midden deposition started at the same time, or shortly
48 after, the first burial deposits between 2920 and 2870 cal BP, and spanned a period of up to 200 years. Post-
49 Lapita use of the area as a place for occasional burials continued until c. 2440-2350 cal BP.

50 This analysis has helped clarify the duration of site use at Teouma but has also raised some issues
51 requiring further analysis. As noted by Petchey et al. (2014) in the analysis of the burial remains, a single-
52 phase cemetery with rigid start and end dates does not fit the Teouma ¹⁴C data well. It is possible that a 2
53 or 3 phase Lapita cemetery is more appropriate, though there is no obvious archaeological evidence for this.
54 Similarly, the chronometric definition of Arapus and Erueti phases needs refinement. Any further dating
55 program at Teouma will require questioning of both archaeological and dating assumptions made, and
56 renewed analyses of burial-associated material assemblages. This should be possible through detailed

1 analysis of diagnostic artifact distributions in relation to particular burial contexts.
2
3
4

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34 Table 1: Radiocarbon ages for bone, charcoal and shell from the Teouma archaeological site.

| Sample ID | Context | Material | CRA (BP) | $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ± 0.2 (IRMS) ** | Unmodeled cal BP (68.2% prob) | Unmodeled cal BP (95.4% prob) |
|--|---|----------------------------------|-----------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cemetery Zone (Layer 3) burial associated | | | | | | |
| Wk-21030 | Burial 26 (Cremation) | Human bone carbonate | 2850 ± 24 | -25.3 | 3000-2890 | 3060-2870 |
| Wk-15729 | Ornament associated with Burial 11. | Shell (Conus sp.) | 3162 ± 34 | 3.0 | 2990-2820 | 3070-2750 |
| Wk-16831 | Ornament associated with Burial 4 | Shell (Conus sp.) | 3139 ± 36 | 1.9 | 2950-2790 | 3040-2740 |
| Wk-37680 | Ornament associated with Burial 17 in secondary context | Shell (Conus sp.) | 3100 ± 23 | 3.1 | 2880-2750 | 2960-2720 |
| Wk-37682 | Ornament associated with Burial 58 | Shell (Conus sp.) | 3107 ± 23 | 3.8 | 2890-2760 | 2970-2730 |
| Wk-37681 | Ornament associated with Burial 59 | Shell (Conus sp.) | 2959 ± 22 | 2.7 | 2760-2610 | 2800-2510 |
| Wk-25198 | Associated with B50 fill | Chicken (<i>Gallus gallus</i>) | 2944 ± 30 | -18.5 | 3030-2870 | 3150-2830 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|---------------------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| SANU-22513 | Layer 3 (fill in Burial 67 grave) | Charcoal (nut) | 2780 ± 30 | - | 2950-2840 | 2960-2790 |
| Cemetery zone (Layer 3) non-burial contexts | | | | | | |
| Wk-16830 | Midden | Wood charcoal (unidentified) | 2961 ± 36 | -25.5 | 3180-3060 | 3230-2990 |
| SANU-12025 | Layer 3 | Shell (<i>Turbo argynostomus</i>) | 3220 ± 25 | - | 3060-2890 | 3150-2830 |
| Wk-28389 | Layer 3, Spit 2 | Pig bone (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) | 2802 ± 30 | -19.9 | 2960-2840 | 3070-2770 |
| NZA-29450 | Layer 3, atop Burial 50 | Chicken (<i>Gallus gallus</i>) | 2747 ± 30 | -20.5 | 2870-2790 | 2930-2760 |
| Layer 2/3 Cemetery Zone midden (caps the cemetery) | | | | | | |
| Wk-28386 | Layer 3, Spit 1 ? | Pig bone (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) | 2833 ± 30 | -18.0 | 2850-2760 | 2930-2740 |
| Wk-28387 | Layer interface 2/3 | Pig bone (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) | 3005 ± 30 | -15.0 | 2930-2780 | 3010-2740 |
| Wk-28388 | Layer interface 2/3 | Pig bone (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) | 2737 ± 30 | -20.3 | 2850-2760 | 2930-2740 |
| Wk-28393 | Layer 3, Spit 1 depression feature | Pig bone (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) | 2728 ± 30 | -19.9 | 2850-2750 | 2920-2740 |
| SANU-12024 | Layer interface 2/3 | Shell (<i>Turbo argynostomus</i>) | 3190 ± 25 | - | 3010-2850 | 3100-2780 |
| SANU-12029 | Layer interface 2/3 | Shell (<i>Turbo argynostomus</i>) | 3140 ± 60 | - | 2960-2770 | 3090-2720 |
| SANU-12027 | Layer interface 2/3 | Shell (<i>Turbo argynostomus</i>) | 3240 ± 35 | - | 3100-2910 | 3190-2840 |
| SANU-12026 | Layer interface 2/3 | Shell (<i>Trochus niloticus</i>) | 3140 ± 35 | - | 2950-2790 | 3040-2740 |
| SANU-12023 | Layer 2/3 | Shell (<i>Turbo argynostomus</i>) | 3060 ± 25 | - | 2840-2730 | 2920-2700 |
| Wk-15728 | Layer interface 2/3 | Wood charcoal (unidentified) | 2848 ± 35 | -27.9 | 3010-2880 | 3080-2860 |
| Wk-28391 | Layer 3, Spit 1 | Pig bone (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) | 2748 ± 30 | -19.8 | 2850-2760 | 2930-2740 |
| Wk-28392 | Layer 3, Spit 1 | Pig bone (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) | 2837 ± 30 | -18.4 | 2920-2780 | 2960-2750 |
| SANU-22509 | Layer 3, Spit 1 | Charcoal (nut) | 2830 ± 30 | - | 2970-2870 | 3060-2850 |
| SANU-22512 | Layer 3, Spit 1 | Charcoal (nut) | 2785 ± 30 | - | 2930-2840 | 2960-2790 |
| SANU-22507 | Layer 3, Spit 1 | Charcoal (nut) | 2860 ± 30 | - | 3060-2920 | 3080-2870 |
| SANU-22516 | Layer 3 | Wood charcoal (unidentified) | 140 ± 30 | - | | |
| SANU-22514 | Layer 3 | Charcoal (nut) | 2805 ± 30 | - | 2950-2870 | 3000-2800 |
| SANU-22511 | Layer 3 | Charcoal (nut) | 2810 ± 35 | - | 2960-2860 | 3010-2790 |
| SANU-22517 | Layer interface 2/3 | Charcoal (nut) | 2800 ± 35 | - | 2950-2860 | 3000-2790 |
| SANU-22505 | Layer interface 2/3 | Wood charcoal (unidentified) | 2760 ± 30 | - | 2920-2790 | 2950-2770 |
| Wk-28390 | Layer interface 1/2 | Pig bone (<i>Sus scrofa</i>) | 2739 ± 30 | -19.5 | 2850-2760 | 2930-2740 |
| Wk-25601 | Layer 2/3 | Giant tortoise (? <i>Meiolania damelipi</i>) | 2733 ± 30 | -25.4 | 2860-2780 | 2920-2760 |
| Wk-25602 | Layer 2/3 | Giant tortoise(? <i>Meiolania damelipi</i>) | 2741 ± 30 | -23.1 | 2860-2780 | 2930-2760 |
| Midden Zone Layer 2 | | | | | | |
| SANU-22510 | Layer 2, Spit 2 | Charcoal (nut) | 2675 ± 30 | - | 2840-2750 | 2850-2740 |
| SANU-22506/22525 | Layer 2, Spit 2 | Charcoal (nut) | 2795 ± 30/2840 ± 30 | - | 2950-2850 | 2970-2790 |

**Isotope ratio mass spectrometer value measured directly on CO₂ collected during combustion of sample for dating. SANU δ¹³C values were measured on accelerator and are not reported here because significant fractionation can occur.

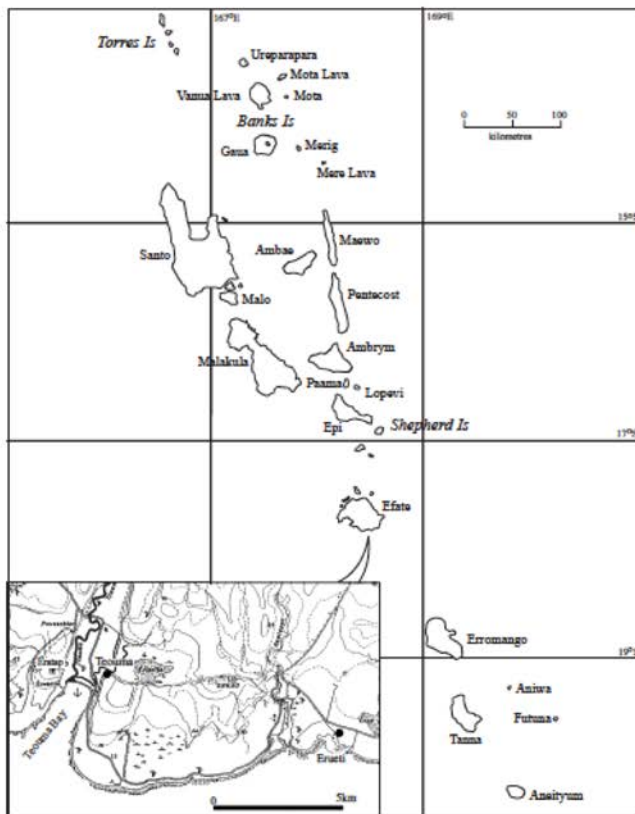
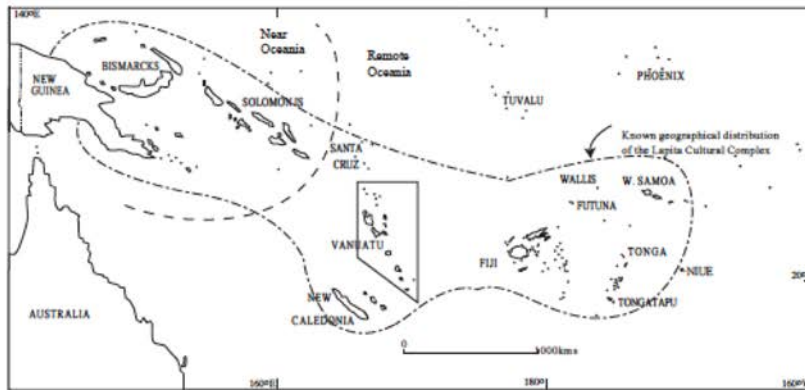


Figure 1. Map of Remote Oceania showing location of Vanuatu. Insert: The Teouma archaeological site.

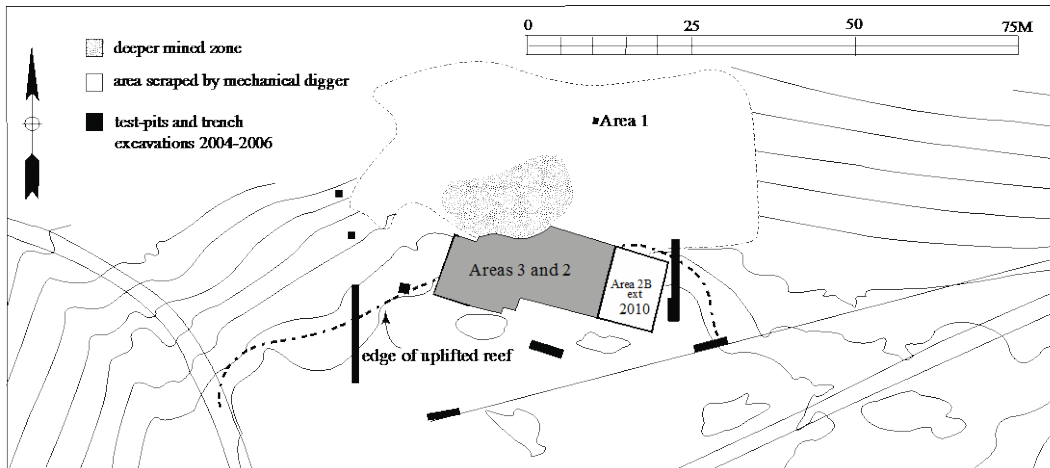


Figure 2: Teouma excavations showing location of the Cemetery Zone (Areas 3 and 2) in relation to the Midden Zone (Area 2B extension and adjacent trench) as discussed in the text.