

Genetic analysis reveals first settlers of remote Oceania islands Vanuatu and Tonga were Asian

A new study of ancient DNA could upend our understanding of the seafaring people who travelled vast distances to make their home in the Pacific.

Vanuatu and Tonga's first inhabitants may have come from Asia and not from neighbouring Papuan populations in New Guinea, Australia and the Solomon Islands as previously imagined, according a report published in the journal Nature.

"These early populations were the first people to get to the region of what we call remote Oceania ... 3,000 years ago," said Stuart Bedford, professor at the College of Asia-Pacific at the Australian National University and report co-author. "It's not an exact match, but the closest match is to Indigenous populations in the northern Philippines and Taiwan."

The movement of people around the Pacific has long been a mystery, with small clues in the artefacts left behind.

Formerly, the theory was that these people mixed with Papuan populations in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, who arrived around 40,000 years ago, before moving on to colonise the empty regions of Tonga and Vanuatu. With this report, that narrative is being reimagined.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [The first inhabitants of Vanuatu and Tonga came from Taiwan, report says](#)