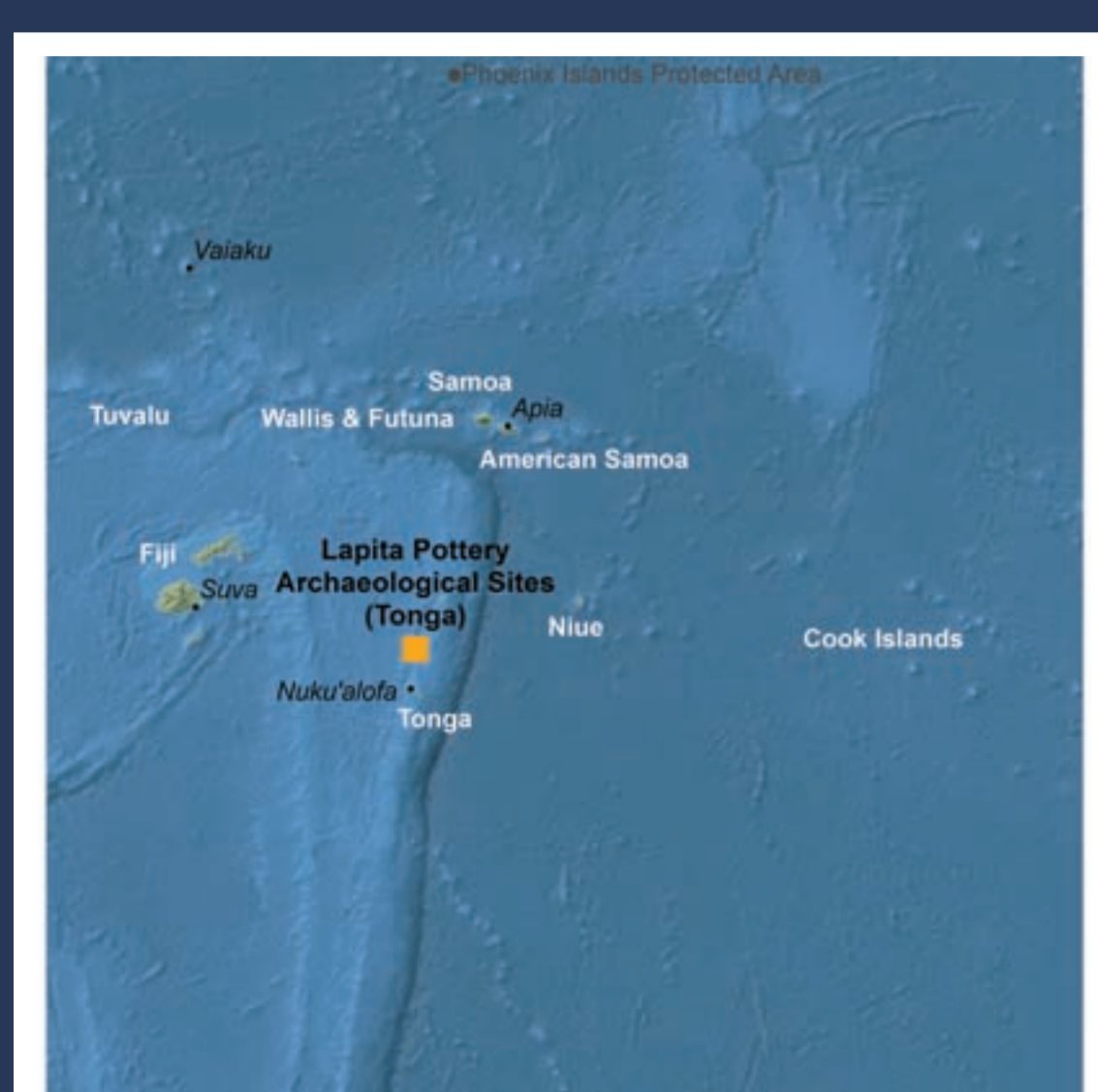


# Lapita Pottery

## Tonga



On World Heritage Tentative List since: 2007  
Criteria: testimony to cultural traditions (iii), significance in human history (iv)  
Location: Islands of Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Vava'u and Niuaotupapu

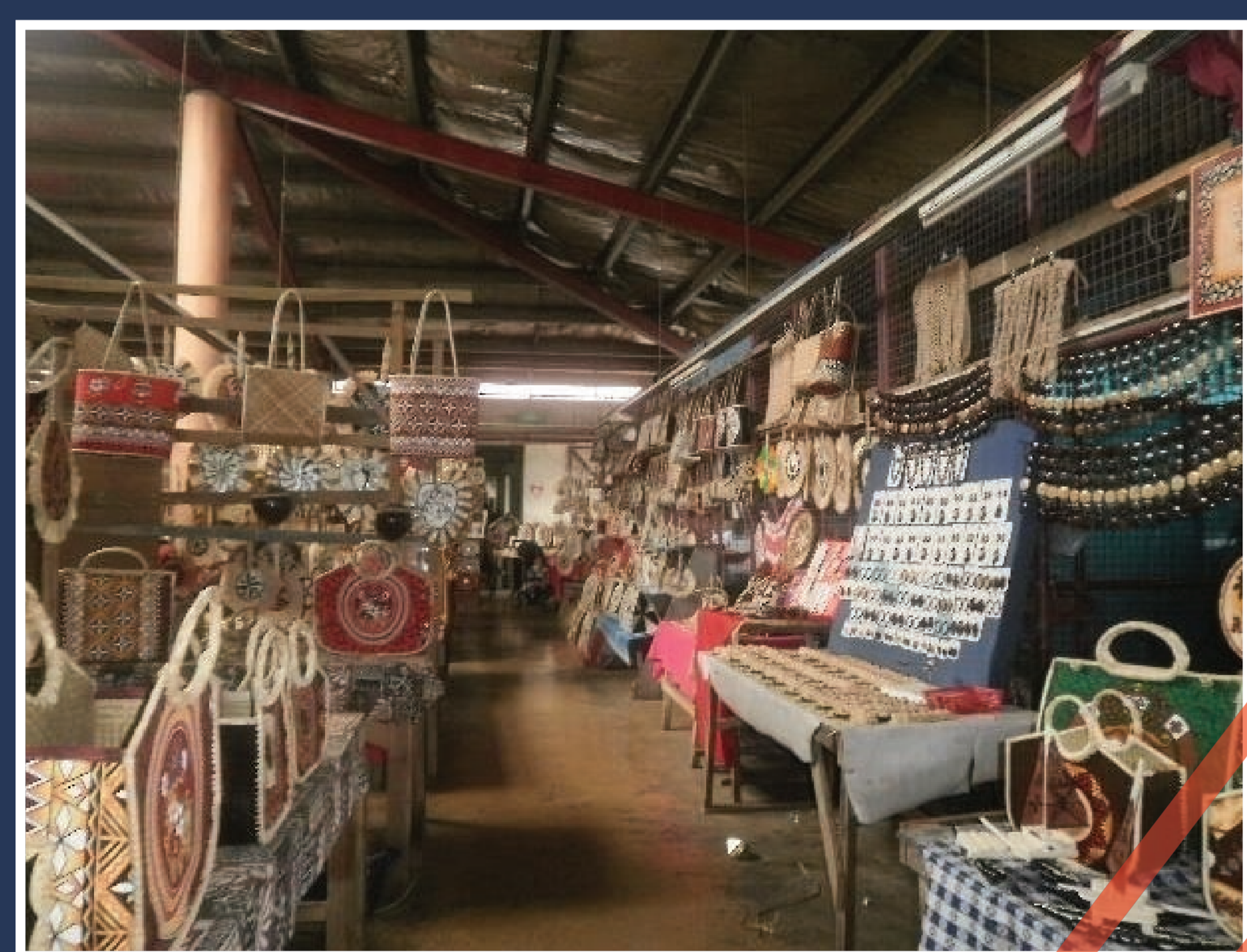
More than 30 archaeological sites containing Lapita pottery have been identified on all island groups in the Kingdom of Tonga. The ceramics with their characteristic style of decoration, a range of artefacts manufactured from shell and stone, plain pottery and faunal remains together reflect the initial human colonization of Tonga around 2800 years ago. Similar Lapita pottery sites are found in the Bismarck Archipelago (Papua New Guinea), Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa. Collectively these sites reflect major social and cultural changes in the Western Pacific around 3,000 years ago.



## Go4BioDiv Messenger

### Tavite Fisi'italia Loloa, 22

I am a youth volunteer at the Tonga National Youth Congress and I dedicate most of my time to environmental projects. We replant coastal vegetation and help with maintenance works, for instance repairing the fences around the excavation sites. Since we want to ensure that the site is respected, we educate primary school students and provide training so that they protect the environment and know the value of these archaeological places for Tonga and the whole Pacific region.



## Cultural Heritage

- Lapita sites are of international significance for the story they tell of the human colonization of the last major undiscovered region of the world, and the navigational and seafaring skills this required to successfully reach the Islands of Remote Oceania (islands to the south and east of the Solomon Islands).
- Success of colonisation depended on natural conditions of the islands and human understanding of diverse aspects: very detailed knowledge of the Oceanic environment, the natural resources of the land and sea, as well as of gardening and tree-cultivation that enabled colonizers to transport their food resources.

## Climate Change as a Threat

- The impacts of climate change severely threaten the site:
- Annual average temperature rise from 0.4-0.7°C since the 1970s causes coral bleaching and heat stress for population.
  - Continued sea-level rise (6.4 mm/year documented since 1993) results in coastal erosion and endangers large, populated areas of Tonga.
  - Increased frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones since the 1980s leads to severe damages upon natural areas, crops and food supply, infrastructure, tourist resorts, buildings. The disruption of essential services affects the wellbeing of people and communities for prolonged periods of time.
  - Predicted changes in precipitation patterns include reduced overall rainfall but higher occurrences of heavy rainfall.



## Sources

UNESCO <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5168/>  
GEF/ Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network/ SOPAC/ SPREP/ UNDP/ UNFCCC  
2010: The Kingdom of Tonga's Joint National Action plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management 2010-2015

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Climate Change as a Threat and Bottom: Shutterstock