

**Archaeological Studies of the Middle and Late Holocene,
Papua New Guinea
Part II**

The Boduna Island (FEA) Lapita Site

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ABSTRACT. The FEA Lapita pottery site on Boduna Island, West New Britain, is one of the most important Lapita sites of the Talasea region. Archaeological investigations in 1980 and 1985 concluded that the site has been disturbed and its stratigraphic integrity is insecure. Fieldwork in 1989 targeted this issue, and further work in 2001 examined the island's geological history. This paper describes the 1989 study, and concludes from the pottery from the various excavations and surface collections that there is residual evidence for stylistic change through time. Use of the island began c. 3340–3000 cal. BP, but no firm date can be suggested for the end of pottery use on the island. The island seems too small to have supported permanent occupation without importation of food or use of land elsewhere for gardening, and might have been used only intermittently by local residents or visiting groups, perhaps for special social or ritual activities similar to the use suggested by Kirch for zone C at ECA/B in the Mussau group.

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The FEA Lapita site on Boduna Island near Talasea is one of many pottery find-spots on Willaumez Peninsula in West New Britain, Papua New Guinea (Fig. 1; Specht *et al.*, 1991; Swadling *et al.*, 1992; Anderson *et al.*, 2001). Archaeologists have visited the site many times since 1974, and carried out four separate studies in 1980, 1985, 1989 and 2001. Those of 1985 and 2001 have been published in summary form

(Ambrose & Gosden, 1991; White *et al.*, 2002), and here we report on the work conducted in 1980 and 1989 (Specht *et al.*, 1989: 13–16), with observations on the other two studies and on various surface collections made from 1974 onwards.

The FEA pottery has been compared with that of the “Far Western” and “Western” stages of Lapita in the Bismarck Archipelago (Ambrose & Gosden, 1991: 187; White *et al.*,

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