

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

The Lagenda Lapita Site (FCR/FCS), Talasea Area

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ABSTRACT. The FCR/FCS site has played a major role in defining the history of Lapita pottery in the Bismarck Archipelago region of Island Melanesia, but hitherto few details have been published about the site. As the site has been largely destroyed, information about it is dependent on surface collections only. The pottery includes a range of dentate-stamped and incised designs comparable with other Lapita sites of the region, particularly in the Arawe Islands of south New Britain. It lacks several features of form and decoration present in the surface collections of FEA on Boduna Island in the Talasea area and those excavated in Area B of the ECA site on Eloaua Island, Mussau group. The start and end dates for pottery use can only be defined by comparisons with other sites. These suggest a starting date of about 3300–3000 cal. BP and an end-date no later than 2900–2600 cal. BP, though several sherds may be of slightly later date.

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The site of FCR/FCS is the largest and richest Lapita pottery site so far found on the mainland of the Garua Harbour area of Willaumez Peninsula, in the West New Britain Province of Papua New Guinea (Fig. 1). When first located in 1973, quarrying of the underlying limestone platform for road surfacing materials had already destroyed the FCS part of the site, and little if any part of the FCR section seemed suitable for excavation (Specht, 1974: 303). By 1980, renewed quarrying had also severely damaged the FCR area. Some of the surface collections made in 1973–74 subsequently formed

an important component of Anson's (1983, 1986, 1990) study of Lapita sites in the Bismarck Archipelago that led to the definition of an early ("Far Western") stage of Lapita pottery development in the Archipelago (Anson, 1986: 162). Despite this important contribution to the study of the history of Lapita pottery, the site has remained unpublished apart from the initial brief account (Specht, 1974). Here I describe the main finds, particularly the pottery, and discuss the site in relation to the FEA site on Boduna Island, the only other major Lapita site known at beach-level in the Talasea area.