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Massim art: a review of the visual arts of the Massim area, their development, diffusion and distinction

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MASSIM ART: A REVIEW OF THE VISUAL ARTS OF THE MASSIM AREA, THEIR DEVELOPMENT, DIFFUSION AND DISTINCTION.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

MASTER OF ARTS (Honours)

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by

SUSAN SIMONS, B.A.

SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS, 1986
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of the Massim Area</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Distinguishing Physical Features of the Massim and its Ethnographic Description</td>
<td>6-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 Possible Influences on the Development of Historical Art Forms from Massim Prehistory</td>
<td>15-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 Different Cultural Perceptions of Massim Art and its Characterisation</td>
<td>32-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 Rock Art Sites in the Massim</td>
<td>79-109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 Pottery Traditions</td>
<td>110-135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6 Characteristic Sets of Canoe Carvings</td>
<td>136-198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7 Canoe Imagery</td>
<td>199-218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8 Shell Valuables</td>
<td>219-234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>235-242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>243-249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

The perception of Massim\* art by members of Massim societies is contrasted with the conceptual framework from which Europeans have viewed and commented on their forms of creative expression since late last century. In particular, the recognition now emerging that there is a system of visual communication with layers of encoded meaning contained in the carved and painted designs of master carvers on canoe prow boards leads to the characterisation of sets of canoe prow carvings as the first step towards a better understanding of this system of communication.

The similarity of design motifs occurring on some rock art sites, ancient carved shells and pottery sherds with curvilinear motifs featured in present day graphic and plastic art forms is discussed in the contexts of cultural diffusion, the influence of environment and local development.

Photographs from several unpublished collections are included to illustrate the themes of art in its cultural context and the distinction of design in Massim Visual Arts.

\*The Massim art style area is geographically roughly equivalent to the Milne Bay Province, south-east Papua New Guinea.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the time this thesis was written, the Milne Bay Provincial Government was not issuing research visas which, apart from personal reasons, prevented any fieldwork being undertaken. However, some familiarity with the Massim area was gained during the writer's childhood which was spent in Papua New Guinea. For 18 years my parents, P.N. (Percy) and Renata Cochrane, were involved with recording and writing on the varied lifestyles of Papua New Guinea societies which enabled me to develop an awareness and appreciation of traditional forms of expression from an early age.

The opportunity to develop academic research from this interest is due to the encouragement of Professor Edward Cowie, Head of the School of Creative Arts, Wollongong University. A particular debt of gratitude is owed to Dr Harry Beran of Wollongong University his careful guidance as the thesis developed. Professor Cowie and Dr. Beran were joint supervisors, and their encouragement and careful criticism were always appreciated.

I would particularly like to thank Margaret Tuckson for generously sharing her extensive and highly specialised knowledge of pottery with me, and the loan of many publications otherwise difficult to obtain. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr John Waiko, University of Papua New Guinea, and Dr Jim Specht, of the Australian Museum.

The extensive record of written, illustrated and photographed material on Pacific art is a valuable tool for tracing and assessing the evolution, and extinction, of art forms, at least over the period of European contact. Archeological, linguistic and biological research assist with the piecing together the evidence of earlier developments where no written records exist. However the records left by explorers and ethnographers, missionaries and traders must be carefully assessed for ethnographic, religious or other subjective bias, and on occasions, for what was left out of their descriptions as well as what was included.

Access to rare books, unpublished manuscripts and photographic collections which provided some extra insights to the writer, was unstintingly given by Peter Hobcroft, the Chief Librarian of the Hallstrom Library, International Training Institute, Mosman. Thanks are also due to June Whittacker of the International Training Institute for access to her collection of photographs; to Mrs Shirley Waters of Melbourne for access to the papers and photographs of her father, Rev. E.P. Chinnery; the National Museum of Victoria for access and assistance with the Vivian Collection; the Uniting Church for access to the
photographs of Rev. Fellowes, and last but not least, the untiring librarians of the Mitchell Library for finding many odd bits and pieces.

The photographs and manuscripts of my parents gave me the inspiration, and it is to them that this thesis is dedicated.

The encouragement and patience of my husband, Michael, and the quizzical tolerance of my children have made this project possible.
A NOTE ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATIONS

As this thesis discusses some of the visual arts of the peoples of the Massim area it was considered useful to present as much visual evidence as possible (and relevant). The photographs and illustrations included are intended to be an integral part of the thesis, and should be examined accordingly.

Wherever possible, photographs have been selected which show art in its context, that is, being made and used by the people for whom it was created. It has been unavoidable to include photographs from museum collections and catalogues where necessary, for example to enable design features to be seen clearly and compared with similar examples.

The writer has been very fortunate in having her parents' photographs from the Cochrane Papua New Guinea Archive at Wollongong University at her disposal. Access to the photographs of R.M. Vivian, B. Malinowski, Rev. W. Fellowes, Leo Austen, Dr. Harry Beran and June Whittacker is greatly appreciated and properly acknowledged elsewhere.
Chapter 1.

THE DISTINGUISHING PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE MASSIM AND ITS ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

Fig. 1.1 Village at Dobu. Reproduced from a glass slide taken by Rev. Fellowes, 1891. Overseas Missions collection in Mitchell Library, courtesy Commission for World Missions.

Fig. 1.2 Hereditary Chief of Omerarkana (Kiriwina, Trobriand Islands) and his Heir. Rev. Fellowes, as above.

Fig. 1.3 Gabaiera turtleshell spatula from Calvados. After Seligman, op cit. p. 516

Chapter 2.

POSSIBLE INFLUENCES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ART FORMS OF THE HISTORIC PERIOD FROM THE PREHISTORY OF THE MASSIM

Fig. 2.1 a) Buhler, A: "Steingerate, Steinskulpten u. Felszeichnungen aus Melanesien u. Polynesien" in *Anthropos* 41-44. p. 263.


Fig. 2.2 a) Monkton, CAW: "Carved Shells found with Pottery and Bones at rainu, Collingwood Bay" in British New Guinea Annual Report, 1901, opp. p. 32.

b) Bellwood, P: *Man's Conquest of the Pacific*. Oxford N.Y. 1979. Fig. 9.29

Fig. 2.3 a) Golson, J: "Both Sides of the Wallace Line" in Barnard (ed): *Early Chinese Art and its Possible Influence in the Pacific Basin*, Vol III. 1970, p.580, Fig.11.

b) Bellwood, op cit; "Pedestalled Vessel, Rainu, Collingwood Bay" Fig. 9.28.

Fig. 2.4 Illustration titles "Isle Rawa: Papous soufflant une Forge" facing p. 314 in *L'Universe Pittoresque* (n.d. poss. 1890's; rare book collection Hallstrom Library, Mosman NSW).

Fig. 2.5 An engraved shell, estimated to be 2,000 years old, unearthed at Nurata Is. (near Kitava) now circulating in *Kula* Paradise Magazine, No. 4, 1977, p.7.

Chapter 3

DIFFERING CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF MASSIM ART AND ITS CHARACTERISATION

Fig. 3.1 P6. Cochrane Papua New Guinea Archive (CPNOA), University of Wollongong. Gathering for the *milamala* (harvest festival), Omerakana, Trobriand Islands, 1952.
Fig. 3.2 P.14 CPNGA. Cooking in a feast pot from the Amphlett Islands. R. Cochrane, 1952.

Fig. 3.3 P.11 CPNGA. Chief Narabutau walking past decorated yam house (note painted house boards). Photo by Renata Cochrane, 1964.

Fig. 3.4 No. 86(a) Vivian Collection, National Museum of Victoria.

Fig. 3.5 No. 11 in a collection designated "Malinowski 1919", National Museum of Victoria. Captioned "A carver at work on a canoe prow-board. He hammers a nail (in olden days a pointed wallaby bone was used) with a specially shaped piece of wood."

Fig. 3.6 P.3 CPNGA. Caption on back of photo reads "Among the best craftsmen of the Trobriand Islanders are the woodcarvers of Bwoytalu village, inland from the fishing village of Kavatara."

Fig. 3.7 Reproduced from a glass slide by Leo Austen in the Camilla Wedgewood papers held at Hallstrom Pacific Library. Used with permission of Librarian.

Fig. 3.8 Carved panel by Valaosi showing Chief Narabutau, leader of the Kabisawali Movement. Gigibori 2:1, 1975, p. 24.

Fig. 3.9 Vivian no. 81(c). Old man with betel mortar and pestle.

Fig. 3.10 Handles of staffs. Chauvet, S: Les Arts Indigenes de Nouvelle Guinee. Paris, 1930. Figs. 251-235 bis.

Fig. 3.11 a) & b) Nagega lagim and tabuya, probably a pair. (a) in Beran Collection, collector's note "same owner, probably early 20th Century." c) Munkuris, probably from Murua. No. 71 in Beran, H: Massim Tribal Art Papua New Guinea Catalogue of an exhibition at Wollongong City Gallery, 1980.

Fig. 3.12 a) Dance Paddle from the Trobriand Islands. Guiart, J: Arts of Oceania Lond. 1963 b) Vivian no. 319. Boy with a food stirrer (southern Massim)

Fig. 3.13 Selection of clubs. Chauvet, op cit. Figs. 254-9

Fig. 3.14 Characteristic curvilinear motifs of Massim art. ibid, figs. 193-201 bis.

Fig. 3.15 a) "Bird/crocodile" motifs, ibid, figs. 202-203 bis. b) Southern Massim canoe prow with "bird/crocodile" motif photo Beran. c) Canoe prow 14" long, Buffalo Museum of Science (C11029).

Fig. 3.16 a) Lime spatulas, Chauvet, op cit, figs. 223-5. b) Figure resembling description of oai tavon lime spatula handle, South Australian Museum.

Fig. 3.17 Vivian no. 416. Captioned "in a cave" among series of photos of scenes in Kitava.

Fig. 3.18 a) Malinowski 1919 no. 28. Captioned "A reconstruction of a war-magic rite, by the old hereditary war magician." b) Trobriand Is. painted shield. Chauvet, op cit.
Chapter 4
ROCK ART SITES IN THE MASSIM

Fig. 4.1 Bellwood, op cit. Fig. 9.34. Examples of rock engravinggs in Melanesia, inculding several from the Massim area.

Fig. 4.2 Vivian no. 73(a) (possibly Bellwood hh).

Fig. 4.3a) Vivian no. 73(b), very similar to the illustration (my fig. 3.3b) in Jenness & Ballantyne: The Northern D'Entrecasteaux, Cambridge, 1920, facing p. 198.

Fig. 4.4a) Rock engraving at Inakebu Cave, Kitava. in Ollier, Holdsworth, Heers: “Cave paintings from Kitava, Trobriand Islands” in PNG Public Museum Records, 1:1, 1970, p.18

b) Hand painting, ibid, p.20.

Fig. 4.5 Rock paintings, ibid, p.29.

Fig. 4.6 Egloff, B: “Rock Carvings and Stone Groups of Goodenough Bay” in Archaeology & Social Anthropology in Oceania 61. 1971. p. 147.

Fig. 4.7 Williams, F.E: “Papuan Petrographs” in Man, 1931, Plate IV.. Carved stones at Boiani.

Fig. 4.8a) Egloff, op cit, p. 151. Carved stones of Boianai/Radava (God 1) and Wedau (God 2)
b) Sketch of tattoos on a woman of Wedau’s face resembling patterns of engravings. Williams, op cit. fig. 6.

Fig. 4.9 ibid. Plate XVI. Rubbings from carvings at Bisiai, Sisiana and Boianai.

Fig. 4.10 Vivian no. 539. Stone platform holahola, men’s meeting place.

Chapter 5
POTTERY TRADITIONS

FlO. 5.1 Bellwood, op cit. Lapita sherds fig. 9.13.

Fig. 5.2a) Plate 5 “Incised pottery from Mailu” b) Plate 3, fig.1 “Bowl from Geelvink Bay” Solheim, W.O.II: “Sa-Huynh- Kalanay” in Asian Perspectives

Fig. 5.3a) Seligman, op cit, Plate LXXVIII “Sepulchral Pottery from Murua"
Chapter 6
CHARACTERISTIC SETS OF CANOE CARVINGS FROM THE MASSIM

Fig. 6.1 Malinowski 1919 no. 16, "A large party of natives from the D'Entrecasteaux Islands on the beach of SINEKETA, arrived on a big trading expedition."

Fig. 6.2 a) Haddon A.C. & Hornell G.: *Canoes of Oceania* Vol. 2. Hawaii, 1936–8. Types of Massim canoe. Type 1 “after photographs”; Type 2, from Utian, after a photograph by H.O. Brookes, 1886; Type 3, from D'Entrecasteaux in British Museum. b) Newton, D: *Massim Art* Catalogue prepared for an exhibition of Massim art at the Museum of Primitive Art, N.Y. 1975. pp. 8–9.

Fig. 6.3 a) Canoe prow from Panaeati.
   b) Lagim from Nimoa Island (near Sudest). Beran notes on photograph: "This splashboard which has been on a canoe and painted with commercial paint is now (1983) used in chapel of Catholic Mission to give it a local feeling. Figs. 5.3 a) and b) are the closest examples seen in literature or collections to Haddon & Hornell’s Type 1 lagim, copied by Newton as his Type 2. Interestingly they are both fairly recent pieces and both from the southern Massim, whereas Haddon & Hornell’s example was "exemplified by nagega from the Trobriand Islands" See other examples of nagega lagim in Figs. 5.10 and 5.13 in comparison.
   b) Lagim and tabuya of masawacanoe from D'Entrecasteaux in Musee de l'Homme, Paris. This is the type used today in the Trobriand Islands.

Fig. 6.4 a) Earliest known canoe carving collected by Europeans on voyage of the Rattlesnake, now in British Museum. Note the series of concentric lines following contours of
central motif and compare with fig. 5.11 - example c (Jenness & Ballantyne 1920) bears the closest resemblance. (photo is a very poor reproduction).


Fig. 6.5
The three main types of Massim sailing canoes
a) Ferguson masawa
b) nagegafrom Panaeati (a & b in Bromilow, Twenty Years among Primitive Papuans, Lond. 1929, facing p. 144)
c) wagafrom Brooker Is. Louisades, Plate LXVII in Seligman 1910, op cit.

c) nagegacirom Panaeati (a & b in Bromilow, Twenty Years among Primitive Papuans, Lond. 1929, facing p. 144)

Fig. 6.6
Canoes from Rossel Is. (Vela. a) ma no b) lla no c) pari no (ndap). All from Armstrong, W. Rossel Island, Cambridge, 1928 (Plates XVII, XVIII, XIX).
d) Lagim of lla no, Vivian no. 351.

Fig. 6.7 a) Southern Massim paddled canoe - Saue/Daui area. Haddon & Hornell, op cit, Fig. 141.
b) Gebo Abel, C: Savage Life in New Guinea, Lond. 1902. p. 63
c) Tavera Plate 235 in Gash, P & Whittacker, J: A Pictorial History of Papua New Guinea, Melb, 1978, after Chalmers 1884

Fig. 6.8

Fig. 6.9 a) Canoe at Warus Warus, Ceram, Indonesia (Ceram had contacts with west New Guinea) illustration in R. Brown Countries of the World1892, reprinted in Gash & Whittacker, op cit.
b) Sailing canoe, Hermit Island. Haddon & Hornell op cit, fig. 106 after Parkinson 1907.

Fig. 6.10 a) Malinowski 1919, no. 13 "A sea-going canoe being laden with pots in the Amphlettss."
b) Seligman, op cit. Plate LXV. "Canoe carvings from Kiriwina."

Fig. 6.11
Masawa lagim. Note the common use of certain design motifs, but the differences in each lagim which enable the distinction between districts and carving schools. a) stern lagim, Omerakana, Trobriands (Narabutau 1975, no. 1) b) Morima (Ferguson), Williams 1938. c) stern lagim, Yakuta, Narabutau 1975, no. 7. d) Northern D'Entrecasteaux, Jenness & Ballantyne 1920.

Fig. 6.12
Tabuya. Note as for 5.10. a) front tabuya, Kilivila, Trobriands; Narabutau 1979, no. 7 note his comment that the snake motif on the top front is a recent innovation and is an optional part of the overall design. b) tabuyaoj a canoe beached at Kavataria village, Trobriands, Paradise 1980 c) northern D'Entrecasteaux, Jenness & Ballantyne 1920 - note closer similarity to Rattlesnake piece (5.4a) d) collected Marshall Bennetts, tabuya has a row of holes as base of oval section which indicates it is a stern piece. Newton op cit., catalogue no. 49.

Fig. 6.13
Nagegacanoe showing its canoe carvings in place; lagim, tabuya and munkuris. Vivian. no. 148(b)

Fig. 6.14
Lagim of nagegacanoes. All these examples feature designs flowing vertically along the entire length of the board. a) Laughlan Isl. in Queensland Museum. b) Seligman,
op cit. from Murua collected by Cook Daniels expedition, 1906. c) in Pigorini Museum Collection “Arte del Oceania” d) Vivian no. 183 (no details given).

**Fig. 6.15** Lagim of nagegacanoes. This type of design is the most commonly used at present. 
a) Beran op cit, catalogue no. 67 b) Beran Collection from Laughlan Is. c) Narabutau op cit 1979 no. 6 d) collected from Fergusson Is. now in the Victorian National Gallery.

**Fig. 6.16** Nagegacanoes with modern type of lagim, proving that the style was in use before 1920. Vivian no. 183(a)

**Fig. 6.17** Variation 1 of prowboards (tabuya) of nagegacanoes featuring large hook motif on vertical section. Newton cat. nos. 52, 53.

**Fig. 6.18** Variation 2 of nagega prowboards. The lowest long horizontal design represents the hull of a canoe (Beran pers. comm.) a) From Egum Atoll, British New Guinea Annual Report 1901, collected by Chalmers several years previously. 2) Recent example from Gawa, Beran cat. no. 66.

**Fig. 6.19** Munkuris Variation 1; a) b) c) Murua. Seligman, G: “A Type of Canoe Ornament with Magical Significance from South-eastern British New Guinea” in Man 16, 1909, Plate 1, nos. 3, 1, 10. d) Beran. cat. no. 66 probably Murua. Variation 2; e, Seligman ibid, Plate 1 no.5, f) Rawlinson 1980 (publication reference mislaid.) g) Newton cat. no. 57. possibly Misima.

**Fig. 6.20** Nagegacanoe prow with carvings assembled. Vivian no. 163.

**Fig. 6.21** a) Lindt, W: Picturesque New Guinea, an Album. Lond. 1887. Plate LXIII. 
   b) Vivian 148(c) Louisade canoe under sail.

**Fig. 6.22** Lagim from Louisade sailing canoes (Newton Type 3) a) Newton cat. no. 62 b) collected on Rattlesnake voyage, British Museum 51.1-3.2, c) and d) examples in British Museum (1851 1-3/4 d) Sketch by Edge-Partington of from British Museum sample(photo XXIV 34).

**Fig. 6.23** Extended prowboards from Louisade canoes. Newton cat. nos. 63 & 64.

**Fig. 6.24** a) Vivian 183(c) canoe carvings tied to a tree (note munkuris on top similar to 5.18g)
   b) Vivian 153. Note bird carving on long pole attached to outrigger.

**Fig. 6.25** “Hybrids” 
a) Unusual masawaprow. Vivian No. 583. No provenance.

**Fig. 6.26** Unusual set of nagegacanoe carvings. Vivian no. 268(Fb). No provenance.

**Fig. 6.27** Unusual prow carvings – possibly gebo. Vivian No.672.

**Fig. 6.28** a) Milne Bay War Canoe. P. Hallinan Collection.

**Fig. 6.29** Rossel Island lia no. Vivian No. 302.

**Fig. 6.30** Rossel Island para no (ndap) canoe. Vivian no. 161(c)

**Fig. 6.31** Canoe beached at Yakuta. CPNGA. Same prow is in Narabutau 1975, fig. 12.
Chapter 7

CANOE IMAGERY

Fig. 7.1  P. 31 CPNGA. Anthropologist Charles Julius and local informant discussing masawa canoe and accessories (bailer). Trobriand Islands, 1960.

Fig. 7.2  P. 20 CPNGA. Canoe magic being performed while caulking a canoe.

Fig. 7.3  Vivian no. 606 captioned "north Massim type".

Fig. 7.4a) Visual distinction of dogina and uuna lagim and tabuya.
b) Tabuya – division into body parts
c) Lagim – division into body parts. Drawings after S. Campbell, The Art of Kula

Fig. 7.5  Vivian no. 140 (b). Tokabitam at work on masawa lagim. Campbell’s informants told her that the body divisions are etched in first. The doka in the centre of sections 2 and 3 are carved before any other design, as they are said to mark out the route, acting as a standard of measure.

Fig. 7.6a) Rajim from Fergusson Is. described by Williams

Chapter 8

SHELL VALUABLES

Fig. 8.1a) Sets of ndap from Rossel (Vela). Ndap are in progressing ranks left to right in each row. Photo Leip, no. 15 in Leach & Leach, op. cit.
b) Yelans discussing distribution of food to the contributors of ko in a bridewealth installment. Photo Leip, no. 16 ibid.

Fig. 8.2a) Piercing shell discs with pump drill. Vivian No. 270.
b) Grass Islanders demonstrate bagi making. Photo Lepowsky, no. 13 in Leach & Leach op. cit.
c) Men on Rossel display bagi made there. Photo Berde, no. 14 ibid.

Fig. 8.3  Process of making bagi a) chama shell b) first shapes c) pounding stone d) shaped discs e) rotary drill f) pierced discs g) rubbing stone h) assembled necklace. From Pavarocini, E. "Über das Muschelgelde der südöstlichen Salomonen." in Anthropos, XXXVII-XL 1942–45. Same process is followed in Calvados and Rossel.

Fig. 8.4  Vivian no. 408. Woman with rows of armshells, Kitava.

Fig. 8.5a) The famous mwali Nanoula. Photo Campbell, no. 5 in Leach & Leach, op. cit.
b) Roboti of Giribwa village wearing Nanoula with necklace Kasani given in the hope of luring Nanoula. Photo Campbell, no. 7 ibid.
c) Old armshell discovered buried on Nurata Island near Kitava, now circulating in kula. Photo Leach, no 6 ibid.
Fig. 8.6  Vivian no. 285. Primary burial. Note valuables suspended above the grave. These will not be buried, but will stay in circulation.

Fig. 8.7  Illustrations of shells collected from south-east Papua on the voyage of the Rattlesnake, 1849. Macgillivray, op. cit., Vol. 2, Plate 2.

CONCLUSION

Fig. 9.1  Yam houses, Trobriand Island. Note concentric circles painted on cross-cut ends of logs. CPNGA. no. P. 18.

Fig. 9.2 a)  Spoked disc on lime spatula. Beran Collection - No. 3 in 1980 catalogue.
   b)  Wooden disc with spoked design in outer circle. Museum of Mankind (illustrated in Beran op. cit., p. 18.

Fig. 9.3  Painted designs on southern Massim woman. Vivian no. 166(b).
INTRODUCTION

There are two ways to attempt a study of the art of an area foreign to one's own place of habitation and acculturation. The first, and most appropriate way, especially for researching the present or recent past of an art style, is to spend a significant period of time in fieldwork, living within the community and gaining first-hand an understanding and appreciation of their art style and symbolism through direct contact and personal communication. Most appropriate because, if the researcher is well accepted by the community, the explanations of style, technique, function and symbolism come directly from the real masters of the style and allow a deeper personal experience of, and insight into, the oral traditions and social behaviour of the group from within which the art is generated.

The second method of research is an investigation of published and archival material as well as museum and private collections of the art style. This kind of study, which aims to find and collate all the available material on one or several aspects of the particular area, is intended to produce reliable information from these scattered sources available and make it more accessible.

This thesis, in its attempt to look at Massim history through its art styles, past and present, enters the debate about the methodology to be used in attempting to write the history of non-literate societies. Ethnohistory in the Pacific is developing a recognition of the Islanders as the main protagonists in their own history, rather than, as it has been

"... concerned with the expansion of European influence throughout the world... Pacific history should focus on the different kinds of European activity (exploring, trading, evangelizing, governing, etc.) as these impinged on the activities of the islanders..." [1]

At the present phase of the debate, a number of Pacific Islanders, though trained in the Western historical tradition, have taken a stance to validate the writing of their history by themselves using alternative sources to the printed word and European academic tradition. Speaking at a recent conference on Pacific History, a Papua New Guinean historian, Dr J. Waiko, alleged that the European study of Pacific history was inherently arrogant and presumptuous because it imposed on the study of Pacific society a reliance on European written sources as its basis to the extent of generally excusing the historian from learning the language of the people under consideration and therefore being written for other historians and not for the people. As well, the European academic tradition is divided into narrowly defined areas of empirical research
and stresses a chronological approach, methods which are at odds with island societies and their perceptions, for example, his own Binandere culture which explains its history orally and in display, does not separate the past and present or religious, social, political and economic themes, and uses a thematic rather than a chronological approach in its explanations.  

However, there are benefits for both islanders and academics arising from the meeting of two cultures. For example, the late nineteenth/early twentieth century European passion for compiling ethnographic records and collecting items of the material culture of newly contacted peoples has resulted in the preservation of art forms which are no longer produced by island societies. Since 1887, the photographic record of items of Massim material culture in use and Massim art in the act of being produced or performed, whether taken as part of the compilation of an ethnographic study or simply because of its aesthetic appeal, now provides an invaluable insight into the changing lifestyle of Massim societies over the last century. Recognising that the first to benefit from any study should be the art producing society itself, and, as Guiart says,

"...avoid becoming the Pakeha's intellectual game..."
	his thesis presents a selection of photographs from various collections, old books and reports and other sources in a form which, it is hoped, will make them more accessible to islanders and others who wish to have a visual record of the past.

Ethnohistorians now recognise oral traditions as a prime data source, however other forms of communication, such as can be incorporated into the visual arts, have not yet received the same attention. One objective of this thesis is to demonstrate how items from the material culture of the people, especially in combination with oral history and myths, can provide valuable information pertaining to their recent and past history.

In all cultures, history is an expression of beliefs about the past. Art, in its many forms, also records knowledge and experience, either of the artist as an individual member of his culture, or by the artist being used as a medium to translate, record and communicate significant facts and spiritual knowledge of his culture. The emphasis of contents, sequence and the form of expression are the choice of the individual historian, using the methods condoned and appreciated by his own society.

In traditional Pacific societies where no single words exist for 'history' or 'art', man's celebration of being, the expression and communication of his clan's identity, cultural knowledge and cohesion to the land were sung, recited, performed and made into images. Myths, legends, poetry, songs and incantations narrated cultural values, heroic epics, spiritual beliefs, social customs and the covenant with the land. Waiko 3 describes of the Binandere how the "crying" about a person after their death incorporated their personality
into images which would be adapted into the clan’s repertoire, if rhythmical for
drum and dance, if not, for solo voice, thus keeping the dead within the living
tribal memory. Another example he gives of transforming history into song,
song into history, is of the “crying” for a lost stone club, which then becomes the
story of how it was made, where it came from, how it was exchanged on what
occasion and the wars, battles and hunting expeditions of which it was a part.

Throughout Melanesia, images from nature and the landscape are an
inseparable part of the peoples’ history, as it is the clan’s bond with the land
that unites them and the identification of birds, animals and plants with their
spiritual ancestors and clan personna. The symbols and representations of these
important creatures are constantly visible as they are engraved on daily used
utensils and prestige personal belongings. Tattoos and other forms of body
decoration, often extremely intricate, communicate personal and clan history.
Carved and decorated representations of direct ancestors or ancestor spirits are
often imbued with spiritual power, and the focus of elaborate rituals.

It would seem, therefore, that in the preoccupation of the European scholastic
tradition with the written word, one essential feature of the way Pacific
Islanders describe themselves and communicate their history and cultural
knowledge, that is, through their visual and performing arts, has been largely
overlooked. If ethnohistorians now begin to document oral traditions they may,
in their enthusiasm, overlook a central feature of the idiom, the way they were
performed and the context in which they were performed.

In this thesis on the visual arts of the Massim people, who inhabit the south­
eastern tip of the mainland of Papua New Guinea and the adjacent
archipelagoes, I contend that:

1) The people of the Massim area have a long and varied history
prior to their contact with Europeans. Evidence of their past cultures
exists in the rock art of the region and archaeological finds of decorated
pottery sherds and shell valuables. These remaining traces of their art
provide a source which assists us to learn their early history.

2) Knowledge of the present Massim peoples and their past
is accessible and intelligible through their oral traditions,
art and material culture.

3) By piecing together information from local sources, archaeological
evidence, historical sources, and by using some techniques of
style analysis it is possible to discover some degree of the cultural
knowledge which is embodied in specific artistic traditions

To conclude this introduction I would like to borrow a sentiment from David
Routledge that, though studies of Pacific history (and art) should be Islander
oriented, the study can be pursued with all the tools available by anyone with
the inclination,
"...Historians will be recognised by an attitude of mind, not
a colour of skin, and...history by an orientation with respect
to human action, not locale..."4

1 Routledge, D: "Pacific History as seen from the Pacific Islands", Pacific
Studies, Vol. 8 No. 2, Spring 1985, p.82
2 Waiko, J; Problems of Methods in Melanesian History, paper delivered at the
3 Pers. comm.
4 Routledge, op cit, p. 90.
MAP OF THE MASSIM AREA

Extracted from Seligman's Map of British New Guinea (1910)
Chapter 1

THE DISTINGUISHING PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE MASSIM
AND ITS ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

The Massim district of Papua New Guinea achieved the reputation of a "Melanesian Arcadia" in the European vision earlier this century when Bronislaw Malinowski released his extensive scholarly but lyrical works on the Trobriand Islands. The richness and sensitivity of the cultural life of the people of this region had been hinted at earlier by Finsch, Haddon, Macgregor, Seligman and others who had described it in glowing terms. It was found favourable for other reasons by the early administrators of British New Guinea, who recognised it as a fertile and productive area.

The name "Massim" evolved from the corruption of the name of one of the islands in the southern part of the region, Misima. Haddon credits himself with the first definition of the area, and the name Massim. The British New Guinea administration's official name for the area was the South-eastern Division of Papua, and it later became known as the Milne Bay District by the administration of the Territory of Papua New Guinea. Since Papua New Guinea gained its independence in 1975 the name for the political division encompassing the area is the Milne Bay Province.

Haddon's name "Massim" was adopted and perpetuated by Seligman who first described it as a homogeneous area on an ethnographic basis. It has become the accepted term for describing the art of the region. "Massim art" is the name which appears in the literature for items collected in this area, and as this paper is about art and not politics, it will refer to this area of south-eastern Papua and its adjacent archipelagos as "the Massim."

The following table gives the traditional names of the islands (where known) and their European counterparts. As there are many indigenous languages within the area, and some islands are therefore known by several names, the names used throughout this paper are either the traditional or European name by which they are most frequently referred.
Village scene, Dobu (Fellowes 1891)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAPUAN NAME</th>
<th>EUROPEAN NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAINLAND</td>
<td>Mullins Harbour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Cape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suau</td>
<td>South Cape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tauwarra</td>
<td>Milne Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHERN MASSIM</td>
<td>Brummer Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonarua</td>
<td>Moresby Group (Logea - Heath Is.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogeia, Logea</td>
<td>Kwato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwato</td>
<td>Dinner Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samarai</td>
<td>Hayter Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sariba</td>
<td>Engineer Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubetube</td>
<td>Bentley Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wari</td>
<td>Teste Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Louisade Archipelago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misima</td>
<td>St. Aginan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panaieti</td>
<td>Deboyne Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utian, Moturina</td>
<td>Calvados Chain (Utian -Brooker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panatinani</td>
<td>Joannet Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagula</td>
<td>Coral Haven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yieana</td>
<td>Sudest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vela (Yela)</td>
<td>Piron Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobu, Duau, Moratau, Morata</td>
<td>Rossel Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D'Entrecasteaux Group (Duau - Normanby, Moratau - Fergusson, Morata - Goodenough)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN MASSIM</td>
<td>Alcester Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egum</td>
<td>Laughland Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokunu</td>
<td>Woodlark Is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nada</td>
<td>Marshall Bennett Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murua</td>
<td>Trobriand Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gawa, Iwa</td>
<td>Lusancay Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyowa, Kitava, Vakuta, Kaileuna</td>
<td>Amphlett Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gumasila</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High Chief and Heir of Ameakana, Kirinwa
Trobriand Islands. [Fellowes 1891]
Seligman's distinction of Northern and Southern Massim

Seligman differentiated the northern and southern Massim on ethnographic grounds, including differences in physique and facial features; forms of social organisation, particularly the hereditary chieftainship in the north and the practise of cannibalism in the south.

The features which enabled Seligman to distinguish the Massim as a culture area were the organisation of the communities into hamlet groups, (contiguous villages), and the ease with which hamlets could split off the main group and settle elsewhere but maintain intimate relations even when the communities were separated by thirty or forty miles of sea. Other major features were the network of cultural and trade relations between groups maintained by long sea voyages, and the homogeneity of the art forms in the area. However, in his analysis, the most characteristic cultural feature of the Massim is the form of matrilineal descent recognised throughout the area. (Fig. 1.2)

Each of the exogamous matrilineal clans has a series of linked totems consisting of one or more birds, a reptile, fish or marine animals (octopus, shellfish) and various plants. As Lepowsky says, each clan is usually known by one of the bird totems, and a stranger is asked "What is your bird?". Although clan names and languages vary, the set of totem birds identifying various clans is much the same throughout the Massim, and a visitor from one area within the province to another may thus determine who his clanmates are, that is, those who would be most likely to offer hospitality and enter into clan relationships with the stranger.

Later researchers than Seligman have more accurately described the social, and political organisation and cultural life of various Massim societies. Although, to the writer's knowledge, no thorough studies have been done to specifically determine the differences in the art style between north and south there are some recognisable distinctions, briefly outlined in the following chapter. It should be noted here, however, that the differences distinguishing the material culture of the north and south do not follow Seligman's division. Exceptions and overlaps occur in any attempt to define boundaries of art style, the form being truest in the centre of its production, but tending to merge with neighbouring styles near the extremities of the producing area. Other problems in assigning boundaries of north and south to Massim material culture occur when one considers, for example, that the location of centres of manufacture and distribution of the characteristic Massim canoes, masawa and nagega, do not bear any relation to Seligman's divisions. Pots are produced in different centres to those which make canoes, and pottery industries are all located in (Seligman's) southern Massim with the exception of the Amphletts.
Geographic features of the Massim Area

The south-eastern tip of mainland Papua New Guinea, with its extensive capes and bays, and the several archipelagoes of the Massim containing approximately 160 named islands and hundreds of other islets and atolls, ranges over an area of 82,000 square miles. Under the present political division of Papua New Guinea, it is almost co-extensive with the Milne Bay Province.

Here, at the extremity of Papua, the ranges of the central cordillera which dominates the mainland fall steeply, leaving a narrow coastal belt. The maze of reefs encircling the coast and proximity of large adjacent islands led early European navigators to believe that the coastline of Papua was some 40 miles longer, until Captain Moresby discovered and named the China Straits in 1871.

The Louisade Archipelago is structurally an extension of mainland Papua New Guinea, and consists of mountains formed by the subsidence and re-emergence of metamorphic rock which resulted in the larger Islands Misima, Tagula (Sudest) and Vela (Rossel) having coral limestone features 1,000 feet above sea level. The linking low coral islands of the Calvados Chain form, in the Louisades, one of the largest lagoons in the south east Pacific.

The D'Entrecasteaux Islands, lying north of the mainland's extremity, gained their European name from the Frenchman who came across them in 1793, and consist of the large Goodenough (Morata), Fergusson (Moratau) and Normanby (Duau) Islands. The Amphlett Group to the north of Fergusson, and Dobu, lying in between Fergusson and Normanby, are physically much smaller islands in the group but maintain a particular significance in the intricate trading and ceremonial exchange networks of the Massim. The larger islands are extremely mountainous and inhospitable (Goodenough is one of the most mountainous islands in the world, rising to 8,000 ft. within a 16 mile diameter), a factor which has restricted their populations to the narrow coastal plains.

In contrast, the Trobriand Islands are raised coral atolls. The central island, Boyowa, has by far the greatest landmass and stretches on a north/south axis in the shape of a frog's leg, with Vakuta as the foot. The other main islands in the group are Kitava to the east and Kaileuna to the west. The Lucancay chain of islands and reefs arcs towards the west but these mostly barren atolls are very sparsely populated, unless one counts Tuma, the home of the spirits of the dead.

The small Marshall Bennett group (Iwa, Gawa, Kweawata) lie between the Trobriand Islands and Woodlark (Murua) and, along with the Laughlans (Nada) to the east of Murua, are the other major islands in the Northern Massim. Murua's volcanic origins gave it extensive natural resources, particularly ebony and other hardwoods from its lowland rain forests, and obsidian and greenstone highly favoured for making axe and adze blades and the scarcity of these
resources in the other northern islands was an incentive for indigenous trading voyages.

The considerable variation in the topography of the Massim resulted in the differentiation of local environment and the evolution of subsistence patterns and horticultural practices around staple crops best suited to the locality; sweet potato in the Daga (mainland mountains), taro in Milne Bay, sago in swampy areas and varieties of yams on most of the islands. Gardening was a central activity for all communities and surpluses were often produced which could be traded as auxiliary item on *kula* or the focus of other trading voyages, otherwise given in exchange for other goods or services or stored and used for feasts and ceremonies. Elaborate rituals, garden magic and harvest ceremonies such as the Trobriand Islands *mila mala* emphasised the importance of the yam harvest and reflected the economic and political power of the most successful producers.

The Response to Environmental Differences

A closer examination of the importance of the environment to each community in the Louisade Archipelago and the resulting effect on their clan ethos and relationships with neighbouring groups is given by Battaglia, and for Sudest by Lepowsky.10 On Sudest (Tagula), an abundance of sago and cultivated crops provide the food surplus essential for hosting memorial feasts which are central to ceremonial life and also the produce given to overseas visitors. Sago waste supports a huge population of pigs on Sudest. These agricultural activities take up most of the time of the Sudest islanders, and one of the main reasons that people from the Calvados Chain, Panaeati, Misima and Wari come to Sudest on long overseas sailing expeditions is to obtain the pigs essential for their ceremonies.

In sharp contrast to the fertile and productive Sudest, the nearby islands of the Calvados Chain are small and infertile. Their inhabitants are required to spend more time at sea, either to catch fish to supplement their diet, or to undertake bartering expeditions for extra food supplies and benefit by skillful trading. For example, the Brooker (Utian) Islanders frequently take their clay pots to Misima for barter, and act as middlemen in the trade of Misima wooden platters desired by the Sudest Islanders, which they exchange for sago.

The favourable weather and abundance of food in the southeasterly season allow an upsurge of inter-island voyaging connected with trading and feasting. The northwesterly season brings strong winds and currents which prevent net fishing and voyages, separating the people from food sources. Battaglia comments that the facts of environment have contributed to a distinctive *Weltanschauung* and ecological orientation of the Calvados people, embodied in the concept *taval*. *Taval* means *island* more precisely an isolated place with insufficient basic supports for human life, both physical and social, as
Wooden crescent-shaped spatula of a similar design to the turtle-shell ones. This serves only as a holder for the shell valuables attached. (Seligman 1911)
opposed to *hiyeba* 'lands' which are large and fertile and meet all the needs of their inhabitants. This concept is reflected in the cultural ambivalence of the Calvados people. The largest population lives on Sabarl, the most *taval* island in the Chain which has no topsoil, no fresh water and no sago, yet living with these deficiencies and natural hardships is a source of pride to the inhabitants who also appreciate the sweeping beauty of their atoll and the absence of mangrove swamps, breeding grounds for mosquitoes, sandflies and other pests. The adventures which they must undertake for trade and the 'hunger for valuables' is an integral part of the *taval* ethos, and provided challenges in which both men and women participated. The *taval* ethos, threading people onto a line of trading relationships is likened to the lacing of beads *taval*-style along the edge of ceremonial valuable (crescent-shaped turtleshell spatula), that is, upright in a row but not touching (see Fig. 1.3).

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3 Haddon, A.C: *Decorative Arts of British New Guinea*. University Press, Dublin, 1884.

4 *op cit*, p. 5


6 Seligman, *op cit*, see generally the sections on Southern and Northern Massim.


8 By 1930's studies included Malinowski on the Trobriand Islands; Jenness & Ballantyne, D'Entrecasteaux; Armstrong, Rossel; Fortune, Dobu. Brookfield was the first main researcher after World War II, and during the late 1960's - early 1980's numerous studies were undertaken. Thodse which refer to the material culture of the Massim are utilised throughout this thesis and referred to in the bibliography.

9 See entries under "Landforms" and "Milne Bay District" in *Encyclopaedia of Papua New Guinea*, Melbourne University Press, 1972 for further geographic detail.

POSSIBLE INFLUENCES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORICAL ART FORMS FROM THE PREHISTORY OF THE MASSIM

The prehistory of Melanesia, particularly Papua New Guinea, is of unrivalled complexity in the Pacific region. Evidence of early cultures is still scarce, although recent archeological and linguistic data are beginning to piece together parts of the puzzle. The mainland of New Guinea was probably first inhabited about 50,000 years ago, while the scattered off shore islands have a much more recent history of settlement ranging from 10,000 to 1,000 years. Evidence from the two language divisions, Non-Austronesian (NAN) and Austronesian, into which the approximately 700 languages of New Guinea are assigned, suggest that the NAN language family, which occupies most of the mainland, significantly pre dates the coastal and island distribution of Austronesian language families which are widespread throughout the Pacific.

Though there is much linguistic diversity within the Massim region, for example three major and one minor dialect on Sudest all of which are mutually intelligible, this diversity is itself an indication of the length of time the islands have been settled and the pattern of migration.

The expansion of Austronesian speakers into the Pacific, which Bellwood describes as

"...one of the major success stories of human prehistory..."

still poses many problems in relation to the timing and sequence of their arrival as well as discovering the cultivated plants, domesticated animals, implements, manufacturing techniques, cosmologies and material culture they may have introduced to New Guinea. Migrations of Austronesian speakers were intrusive on the already settled mainland coast, but they were the first inhabitants of many previously unpopulated islands. Archaeological investigation in the north-eastern islands of Papua New Guinea has proved that New Britain was settled 10,000 years ago, New Ireland 6,000, Manus (Admiralty Islands) 3,500. The earliest evidence to date of settlement in the Massim area comes from Egloff's excavations at Wanigela in the Collingwood Bay area on the mainland.

Evidence of Previous cultures and techno-complexed in the Massim

(i) Prehistoric stone structures

Among the theories put forward of prehistoric cultures in New Guinea is Reisenfeld's "megalithic culture" in which he incorporates all the stone
FIG. 2:1

a
NEW HANOVER

ROCK ENGRAVINGS

b
NORMANBY IS.
structures and artifacts known to exist as evidence of a widespread megalithic culture. While several kinds of stone structures exist in the Massim, as they do elsewhere in the country, there is no evidence that they all derived from a single culture. The only stone structures still in use in historic times were reported by Macgregor, rough stone enclosures with thatched saddle shaped roofs used for burials, and Seligman stone circles and pavements used as mens' debating circles and previously for cannibal feasts (see Fig. 4.10). Austen described large enclosures made of stone slabs at Ilukwaitaia and Outyam on Kiriwina, Trobriand Islands and reported other significant slab complexes at Kasanai, Kitava, Buduailaka, Kadalalai and Gumagea in the Trobriand Islands. Austen knew of Macgregor's findings and commented that bones were found in proximity of the walls, making it likely that the enclosures were burial places, but his informants had no knowledge of such mortuary customs as their traditional procedure was internment, exhumation and the placing of the bones into large wooden bowls, pots or clam shells which were then laid in caves or on ledges in cliffs.

The existence of complexes of rock art in the Massim, dealt with in more detail in a later chapter, adds a further dimension to the enigma of prehistoric cultures. When the rocks engraved with curvilinear motifs from Boianai and Wedau Wemira, and the sites themselves, are compared with rock engravings at sites in New Hanover and New Caledonia (see Fig. 2.4 a & b) they show significant similarities which may, with further archaeological evidence, prove the existence of an ancient culture complex perhaps related to stone mortars and pestles, ground waisted axes and pottery of the stylised and relief styles current in the area 200 years ago.

(ii) Distribution of canoe types

Haddon and Hornell concentrate on the distribution of canoe types as evidence of cultural spreads from Indonesia to Oceania. Newton has followed their theme and plotted a map of the distribution of canoe types in New Guinea and western Melanesia. Two major types of canoes and their decorations emerge which link into other areas of Oceania. Although local adaptations have, over time, caused distinctive styles to emerge, similarities in construction detail, decoration styles and even terminology provide hints to the history of diffusion. The first type of canoe Newton describes as having a horizontally projecting prow which can be decorated with carvings either in relief or in the round.

"...The horizontal type is characteristic of the north-east New Guinea trading complex as Tiesler has defined it: the area in which Melanesian immigrants settled the offshore islands, and later spread to the mainland between Sissano and Madang...also of the sailing vessels further east, the Huon Gulf and the Vitiaz Strait, from which it spreads into west New Britain...it occurs north of New Ireland...and in the Admiralties...it is the universal type of the Sepik district...it continues eastwards towards the Massim...beyond
the Massim it is the pattern for the entire coast and southern rivers..."

The second type has a prolonged stern or stern and prow with a vertical extension which rises above the gunwales, either carved from the hull or made as a separate attachment.

"...The vertical type, with upswept prow ornaments, does not occur in this great contiguous range...there are several sub-types of it in northern New Guinea and western Melanesia...a fore and aft slat...is the standard of Geelvink Bay...the same general form, but with a basal prolongation to make it a 'boomerang' silhouette is concentrated in north New Britain and south New Ireland and also...is the localised Massim types 2 and 3...local styles occur on the Sarmi coast...Humboldt Bay and, apparently following an actual migration, eastwards towards Vainimo...The Hermit Islands prow and stern carvings are large upright spirals: a form repeated in the Admiralties in such contexts as handles of bowls, finials of beds and one type of canoe prow..."11

As Newton points out, the vertical prow type consistently wraps around the horizontal and was possibly the earlier, but was displaced by the introduction of the horizontal type following a route along the south coast and doubling back along the north coast. The anomaly is that the Massim region lies directly across this path and retains the best examples of the vertical prow type. As well, horizontal types exist in the Massim, but mainly propelled by paddles, not as sailing canoes12. Apart from the discrepancy in canoe types, Newton notes that the settlement of the Massim is consistent with Tiesler's model of Austronesians first colonising off-shore islands and moving onto the already occupied coast because of population pressure.

(iii) Archaeological evidence from pottery sherds
The third kind of concrete evidence of ancient culture complexes existing in the Massim is the pottery sherds. Although the Massim could have been bypassed by the Lapita culture complex, sites of which have been identified at Watom Island off New Britain, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and as far afield as Fiji and Tonga13, it is unlikely that the Massim could entirely escape such a pervasive stylistic influence. The precise and complex decorations on Lapita pottery, finely executed multiple curvilinear lines, arcades, regular concentric circles or angular key designs and delicate patterns stamped with toothed combs, make it highly visible. Other evidence of the long distances travelled by people of the Lapita culture are the fragments of obsidian they carried with them originating in northern New Britain and found as far away as the Ile des Pins in New Caledonia. Shell bracelets and beads are commonly found at Lapita sites, indicating that the fondness for shell ornaments in western Melanesia has a long history.14
Fig. 2.2
Engraved shell fragments.
a. Found at Raini
Collingwood Bay
C.B.N.C. Annual Report
b. Collingwood Re
C.Bellwood 1919
A prehistoric pottery industry dating back 2,000 years has been excavated at Collingwood Bay and Massim pottery has also been investigated by Lauer. The previously mentioned Trobriand Island burial pots appear to have originated from Collingwood Bay and pre-dated the trade in Amphlett Island pottery which has existed for approximately 500 years. Bellwood suggests that there is

...good evidence in south-eastern Papua for an association of elements otherwise rare or absent in Melanesia: jar burials, Phillipine-type pottery and distinctive scroll and spiral motifs...Other Wanigela artefacts are more in the Melanesian tradition; bone lime spatulae and needles, shell bracelets and necklace units, lenticular cross-sectioned adzes, and a perforated stone clubhead. But the presence of Island South East Asian traders in south-eastern Papua about 1,500 years ago is a likely hypothesis, and it is quite strongly supported by Capell's (albeit disputed) linguistic evidence that south-eastern Papua was subjected to migrations from central Sulawesi and the Philippines at about this time.....

The diffusion of Dongson motifs through the Pacific

A further debate among art historians has concerned the possibility of the diffusion and adoption of Asian Bronze Age motifs into the art of the Pacific region. The Dongson culture, named after its archaeological type site, dates from the Chinese Han dynasty and has been traced through Southeast Asia, Indonesia and the Pacific, becoming more diluted with distance from the source. The most recognisable Dongson images are elaborately stylised crescent shaped boat designs, often in conjunction with birds, fish and foliage. The designs of these 'soul ships', so called because of their association with funerary rituals, are found to be strikingly familiar across a widely dispersed area, Badner, for example, distinguishes them in Dyak paintings, Sumatran cloths and Admiralty Island carvings.

The spiral, derived from bird imagery and associated with ancestors and the supernatural world, is an element featured prominently in Admiralty Island and Solomon Island art, both areas considered to have been strongly influenced by Dongson culture. A further frequently utilised Dongson motif appearing in the Admiralty and Solomon Islands are birds surmounting or entwined in spirals; dual figures, e.g. bird grasping fish, and bird or fish riding on a human figure. Internal developments and isolation are acknowledged to have caused variants of the prototype motifs to emerge. Although style analysis of the Dongson motifs has not yet been applied to the Massim it is likely that supporters of this theory of diffusion would find sufficient evidence of Dongson influence in the typical Massim bird's head spiral design. Those scholars more dubious of the theory would probably find that the development of a regional art style was infinitely more complex and not reliant on the influence of a single, far removed source (Figs. 2.5 and 2.6a (b) & (c) show fragments of shell
H 2.3

(Cholton 1970)

Dunoon dagger hilts
accompanied with el + re
rock and shells

(a) (4) Engraved
carved with spiral motifs, and 2.6a(a) the Wedau stone, recovered from excavations in s.e. Papua; 2.6a (d) & (e) are bronze Dongson dagger hilts with spiral motifs).

Pre-European contacts with outside sources
The material in this section is included in some detail to counter the impression that the single influence, Dongson, could have been so pervasive. This impression may be gained as a result of the volume of research which has been published on the spread of "Dongson-derived" motifs in the art of western Melanesia. The Massim was far from the areas of New Guinea with frequent outside contact prior to the arrival of Europeans. However, three factors make it possible for the spread of techno-complexes or the diffusion of artistic styles or to have reached the Massim by several routes over time;

(i) the contiguous nature of indigenous trade routes

(ii) the pattern of Austronesian migration which brought waves of new settlers along with their cultural specialities into the area

(iii) proof that established flowpaths of goods into and out of the Massim area existed at the time of contact, and others are known to have previously existed.

In addition, patterns of settlement were affected by population growth, migration, warfare and natural disasters. Any of these factors could result in changes to the material culture of a group, including the elimination of a particular variant or style or its acceptance by a larger number. The local environment and natural resources influenced art style. New ideas, conscious choice and convention all played a role in the preference for certain designs and ensured that art forms continually evolved.

(i) Contacts with Indonesia
It is now documented that inhabitants of the coastal areas of New Guinea, except perhaps for the east coast, had very ancient contacts with post-neolithic Asian cultures before its prolonged history of discovery by Europeans commencing with de Menses in 1526. Products and influences from metal age Asia (see Fig. 2.7) were brought to parts of the New Guinea littoral by Moluccan and Chinese trading voyages and Macassan fishing fleets. Though the study area is not known to have been in direct contact with these voyagers, some of the things they introduced were slowly diffused via the indigenous coastal trading networks and, as Hughes comments,

"... seem to have influenced the development and evolution of indigenous artifact styles which are one of the prime diagnostic criteria for students of New Guinea history."20
"Papous soufflant une forge." West New Guinea
of 1890
It is not surprising that the peoples of the north west New Guinea islands and coast had extensions of their seafaring trade network with the neighbouring archipelago. The Portuguese had received indirect reports about New Guinea since 1511-12, when the pilot of an expedition sent to the Moluccas by Alberqueque, Francis Rodriguez, compiled a chart which referred to

"...islands of papoia and the people of them are cafres (black)..."21

The possible sources for Rodriguez’s information, and that of another Portuguese chronicler, Tome Pires, were copies of Javanese pilot’s charts, or information given to Portuguese by indigenous traders. Pires wrote in his *Suma Oriental*

1512-15

"...People come to Bunda from a great many outside islands to buy Bunda cloth, from Bato Ymbo (Gilolo) to Papua, from Papua to the Moluccas and many other islands” and elsewhere

"...the nore parrots (papa guaios) come from the island of Papua, which is about eighty leagues from Bunda...“22

Thus the first European mentions of this land, Papua (its name derived from the Moluccan term for people of dark complexion and frizzy hair), reveals that regular trade to and from north west New Guinea was well established in the early 16th century. The period of this active contact with Indonesia is as yet unknown, although as Jack-Hinton points out, the Javanese Majapahit empire (cf. 1293-1515) claimed suzerainty over part of what is now West Irian and its off-shore islands, and it is fairly clear that trade contact existed from the evidence of the 14th century treatise on the Majapahit by the monk Prapanca, *Nagarakertagama*. The trade was not all incursive and conducted solely by the Indonesians, but undertaken by both partners. The exports which were in demand from New Guinea were pearls, areca (betel) nut, tortoise shell, cassowaries, hornbills, parrots, bird plumes, benzoni, nutmeg and black slaves. Manufactured items which were the preferred imports appear to have been bronze axes and spearheads, cloth and beads. Discoveries of manufactured metal objects from Asia include several finds of bronze axes and spear heads on the Vogelkop peninsular, three eroded Dongson drum tympani with central twelve-rayed stars in the possession of the Mejbrat people of central Cendrawasih, West Irian, and socketed axes and spearheads, a brass oil burner and brass dagger found in a burial mound in the village of Kwadaware on a small island in Lake Sentani.

Finds of decorated glass beads have intrigued explorers and ethnographers since the late 19th century, but it has so far proved too difficult to trace their place of origin and also the point of entry as they could well have entered into the indigenous trading system at a number of points and been circulating as valuables for a considerable time. van der Sande of the 1902 Dutch exploratory expedition of west New Guinea distinguished eight types of old glass beads distributed as far as 141% longitude and believed that beads had travelled much further than that. He was convinced that the beads found at Biak Island...
by the Dutch explorers Schouten and Le Maire in 1616 along with glass earrings, Chinese porcelain, cassava and herbs, were not obtained from Spanish ships passing that way the previous century as the explorers had assumed, but were from an Asian source. 25

The account of the German ethnographer, Otto Finsch 26 mentions that he collected glass beads at various places from Humboldt Bay to the Huon Gulf. He reckoned that the more modern ones could have been distributed from Mikluho-Maclay's settlement on the Rai coast, or ships which recently passed that way, but two much older "mosaic enamel" beads found near Humboldt Bay which fulfilled the role of valuables must have come from a much earlier European or Asian contact. The find of a glass bracelet from Humboldt Bay, identical to glass bracelets of Chinese origin found elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago and Micronesia and associated with glass beads of Chinese bronze/iron age origin reveals that the provenance of Finsch's beads is far from certain. All that is certain is, as Hughes says,

"...it is clear that during the first millenium of the Christian era and well in advance of the first European voyages, glass ornaments from Europe, the Middle East, India, China and probably some of local south-east Asian manufacture met and mingled in the Indonesian archipelago, and formed part of the stuff of a flourishing international trade carried on by thousands of small scale peddlars..."27

Further evidence of the emergence of a flourishing trade in the South-east Asian/Pacific region prior to European arrival was the expansion of political hegemonies which facilitated its spread. The Sumatran Empire of Sri Vishaya which preceeded the Majapahit incorporated the South-east Asian peninsular and extended a cultural influence well beyond its borders and which persisted for centuries, particularly in Thailand and Sri Lanka. After centuries of satisfaction with the limits of its borders China, under the vigorous Ming dynasty, began a period of expansion in the 14th century. The Ming Admiral, Zheng-Ho, in a series of voyages to seek tribute for the Chinese Emperor and open trade links, ranged as far as the coast of Africa and possibly Australia, as well as contacting all the major Asian ports. The following Chinese fleets changed the existing patterns of trade in their favour, innundating the South-east Asian peninsular and islands fromm the Philippines to Micronesia with porcelain and other wares.

Although there are no known Chinese records of visits to New Guinea's shores or cargoes obtained directly from New Guinea, it is most probable that the Chinese traded along the northern coastline for bird of paradise plumes, spices and beche de mer for at least 200 years, bypassing the Moluccan middlemen. After establishing themselves at Bantam in 1596 the Dutch reported that eight or nine Chinese ships of 600 tons and over came from China each year and others
visited different ports; Prado, who accompanied Torres in 1606, was told that the Chinese ships came to the west coast of New Guinea to barter for gold and black pepper; Morga listed fleets of thirty to forty Chinese junks visiting the Philippines in the early 1600's bringing manufactured goods that included beads.28

Macassans in the Gulf of Carpentaria and Torres Strait
On the other side of New Guinea, contact between Macassan fishing fleets and Aborigines is known to have taken place on the central northern coast of Australia for several hundred years before European voyagers began to arrive. The introduction of tamarind trees, Macassan dug out canoes and certain mortuary rites attest to the presence of Macassans in Arnhem Land. Flinders reported a fleet of Macassan praus in the Torres Strait, and commented that the Macassans had familiarised the Aboriginals of the Wellesley Islands at the head of the Gulf of Carpentaria with the use of iron 29. Hughes quotes Stokes 1846 account of the people of Timor recognising Australian Aboriginals as they had seen them in Macassan vessels. Considering what evidence there is for the extent of the activity of the Macassan fishing fleets (primarily collecting trepang (beche de mer) along the north Australian coastline and adjacent islands for the Chinese market), it is unlikely that the south coast of Papua and the Torres Strait Islands would have entirely escaped contact from the same source given their close proximity to the north Australian coastline.

Indigenous trading networks
For those inhabitants of the New Guinea coast and islands who were outside the area of direct contact, the link with Asian influence and importations would have been via the indigenous coastal canoe and inland trading networks. It is wrong to assume that traditional trade in New Guinea was based on an acquisitional or profit based motive, but was a complex of economic transactions entangled with social ties which channelled the movement of goods. Agriculture was the basis of pre-contact societies, and the creation of wealth started with the cultivation of crops. The production of food surpluses was often for specific ends, to allow participation in feasts; to feed others expected to help with a labour intensive activity such as building a house or canoe; to barter surpluses for scarce resources. However food was not the only item traded to balance resources, salt, pigments, fragrant oils, and plumes were among the raw materials in demand, and manufactured utilitarian goods including pottery, carved wooden utensils, stone axe blades and shell decorations were universally in demand. The point of origin was often far from the final destination of the traded items, and the intricate routes unknown except for their most immediate links. Apart from the trade in produce and utilitarian items, other systems of the ceremonial exchange of valuables such as the Kula of the Massim could be super-imposed or parallel to the more basic barter.

The complexities of traditional trading routes has not been fully defined for the whole of New Guinea, although many individual cycles have been isolated, and
An engraved shell estimated to be 2,000 years old unearthed at Nura. Now circulating in kulo. The decorations are newly added.
in all areas both macro and micro systems existed. Hughes defines overseas trade, that between major island neighbours and the mainland, and cites the reports of networks operating between Cape York and the Torres Strait islands; the archipelagoes and mainland of the Massim; and Geelvink Bay; large trans-coastal systems such as the Mailu and Motu; regular local systems embracing the coast and small groups of off-shore islands such as those of the Huon Gulf, Vitiaz Strait. Only the south west coast of New Guinea which lacks off-shore islands and was not penetrated by Austronesian settlers had no coastal canoe trade. The network of trade routes extended inland, and its antiquity has been established with the dating of shell fragments dating back 10,000 found in the Highlands.

**Archeological evidence of trade within the Massim**

Within the Massim canoes allowed communication between local groups and 'overseas' exterior communities. Initially the purposes of staying in touch with a home group, conducting warfare or raids, or exchanging scarce commodities evolved into more regular and established patterns.

As far as the development of ceremonial exchange between Kula communities is concerned Irwin comments that it must have been multi causal and complex. It has not been established why some communities did not kula when their immediate neighbours did, or why *kula* activities were confined within the Massim and excluded from exterior trade networks. For example Kaieluna, a maritime group in the western Trobriand Islands, operated most of its overseas trade outside its *kula* contacts. However the same kind of valuables which could be *kula* items, particularly armshells, regularly passed out of the Massim into the Mailu trading network and in the opposite direction, necklaces were introduced into it from the Papuan coast and Rossel Island.

Of particular interest is Irwin's analysis of the development of specialised trade within the Massim. Irwin finds similarities between Mailu (where he conducted fieldwork previously), Tubetube in the Engineer Group which is a pivotal point in the *kula* and to a lesser extent, the Amphlett Islands. In these three cases, the importance of the ecology of these resource scarce islands do not provide a sufficient explanation of their ability to attract trade and develop as specialised communities. For example, Irwin cites the position of the Amphlett Islanders as,

"...at the end of prehistory the island women were specialist potters with a virtual monopoly of supply to the Trobriands, Marshall Bennetts and northwest Dobu..."

Archaeological evidence compiled by Egloff suggests that the Massim was widely settled by 2,000 years ago. Settlements of this age have been documented on the mainland coast, d'Entrecasteaux, Amphlett and Trobriand Islands, and it is established that the communities were in contact with each other as evidence of pottery and obsidian show. However no evidence exists for
the presence of specialist manufacturers until the making of pottery at Collingwood Bay and its distribution to the Trobriand Islands cf 1,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence also reveals the precursors to Amphlett and Goodenough Islands pottery industries emerging at that time, and the subsequent replacement of mainland ware for Amphlett ware cf 600 years ago.

"...the Amphlett islands, small and impoverished in local resources, but strategically located with respect to overseas territories, evidently had developed into proprietary specialists. Further it is hypothesised that, as in the Mailu case, the ceramic standardisation and sophistication described ethnographically, was associated with this process..."35

The Amphletts did not exclude their trade to the Trobriand Islands but extended it to Kitava, the Marshall Bennetts and Woodlark where the communities (all part of the Northern Massim) were culturally similar.

Tubetube, also being centrally located and having ecological scarcities, profitably developed its pottery industry and became skilled as maritime traders and middlemen. From this development of central axis, Irwin suggests the emergence of increased interaction and specialisation, and cites Egloff's36 evidence of axe blades of Suloga (Murua) hornfels found at late prehistoric Papuan sites.

While Irwin acknowledges that shell armshells and necklaces have an antiquity of nearly 2,000 years in the Massim, the development of the kula and their use within it is apparently as recent as 500 years. Irwin discounts Brookfield's37 view that the exchange of kula valuables added incentive to trade, stating that this would not have been sufficient reason for the initiation of the system or explain the high esteem of the ceremonial exchange as opposed to gimpwali, the barter for utilitarian goods which often takes place on the same voyages.

Hints as to the reasons for the development of the kula may be found in the practices still carried on in parts of the Massim in historic times. For example, the Sabarl of the eastern Calvados differentiate their voyages,

"...sailing in search of valuables (lolobutu) and sailing in search of luxury items (habalau) are classified as separate, incompatible activities"38

and, as well, people from the fertile and productive Sudest Island who do not need to travel in search of food as the Calvados people are required to do, sail

"...on exchange trips in search of valuables which are necessary for discharging ritual obligations at memorial feasts for the dead and numerous other occasions..."39 40
This chapter has provided an overview of the Massim area and some possible occurrences in its prehistory which may have influenced its development before the historic era. A closer examination of several kinds of art or craft production, in particular rock art, pottery, shell valuables and canoe decorations in subsequent chapters may provide clearer picture of the stimulus of production, the determination of style and the elements of change.

3 Swadling, op cit, p. 61
5 Riesenfeld, A: *Megalithic Cultures in New Guinea*, 1950
6 *British New Guinea Annual Report* 1888-89, p. 27
7 Seligman, op cit. p. 464
9 Bellwood, op cit. Fig. 9.34 facing p. 277, see also p. 243
10 Haddon & Hornell, op cit, pp 57-70
12 Haddon & Hornell, op cit. Fig. 141. From its appearance it may initially seem that the masawa canoe, used principally in kula and trade in the Trobriand Islands and D'Entrecasteaux, and likewise the *mano* of Rossel Island, are of the horizontal prow type. However, both have vertical prow boards and are sailing canoes, unlike the *para no* (Rossel) and *gebo* (Suau) which have no vertical boards in their construction and are only paddled despite their size. See descriptions in Chapter 6.
14 Golson, ibid, Fig. 11
15 Egloff, op cit
17 Bellwood, op cit. p. 267
18 The evidence for this is contained in the 3 volumes of conference records, Barnard, ed: *Early Chinese Art...* op cit.
19 Badner, M: "Some Evidence of Dongson Derived Influence on the Art of the Admiralty Islands" in *ibid*, p. 597
20 Hughes, I: *New Guinea Stone Age Trade*. ANU 1977, p. 10
21 Jack-Hinton: "Discovery" in Encyclopaedia PNG, op cit, p. 246
Hughes, op cit. p. 17 quotes van Leur's information that Papuan slaves were found in Java in the 10th century

Bellwood, op cit. p. 266

Hughes, op cit. p. 16-17

Finsch, O: *Ethnologische Erfahrungen und Belegstuke aus der Sudsee.* Wien, Holder, 1893

Hughes, op cit. p. 17. See also review of Wie C-h: *Chinese Discovery of Australia* in Daily Telegraph, 23/10/72 in which the author quotes several ancient Chinese sources, e.g. in 338BC Shi Tzu reported the presence of kangaroos in China, and the Classics of Shan Hai written before 338 describes the use of boomerangs by Aboriginals. Ming porcelain has been found on Winchelsea Is. near Groote Eylandt.

Hughes, ibid, p. 18


Hughes, op cit, p. 18 quotes A.C. Haddon: *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Straits.* Vol 1. Cambridge 1900

Malinowski: *Argonauts... op cit

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Chalmers, J: *Pioneering in New Guinea.* Religious Tract Society Lond. 1887

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Hogbin, I: "Native trade around the Huon Gulf" in *JPS* Vol 56

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Swadling, op cit. p. 31

Irwin, G: "Chieftainship, Kula and Trade in Massim Prehistory" in Leach & Leach eds: *The Kula...op cit. p. 60

ibid, p. 54-59

op cit.

Irwin, op cit. p. 70


Irwin, op cit. p. 67

Battaglia, op cit. p. 457

Lepowsky, op cit, p. 472.
Chapter 3

DIFFERING CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF MASSIM ART
AND ITS CHARACTERISATION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the types of art or artefacts produced in the Massim, and to characterise what is distinctive about the Massim art style. A brief consideration of art forms, aesthetics and the artist in Massim society follows some comments on Western traditions of art appreciation and characterisation.

The chapter is intended to provide a fuller understanding of the nature and meaning of the types of art objects discussed in the later chapters. It first focuses attention on some of the concepts commonly associated with the language of art criticism and the description of art in Western society, and the difficulties involved in applying the concepts from one culture to another. For this purpose it is first necessary to establish in what way art has a universal meaning, and then to consider how art is a phenomenon of a specific culture and its context.

Cultural orientation and the meaning of terms

It has not been possible for the writer to determine whether there is a specific term for "art" or "the arts" in any of the languages of the Massim. In English "art" has been defined as

"...creative work generally, or its principles; the making or doing of things that have form and beauty; art includes painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, drama, the dance, etc...skill, dexterity, or the power of performing certain actions acquired by experience, study or observation...

...the term fine arts is usually restricted to the graphic arts, drawing painting, sculpture, ceramics, and sometimes, architecture..."¹

Other dictionary definitions broaden the concept of art to include "...the modification of nature by human skill...", "...a system of rules; a profession or craft..."; "...subjects of taste..."². Until the last inclusion the definition appears to have a universal application. It is when an attempt is made to analyse some of
the terms included in the definition, such as "taste", "beauty" and "craft" that difficulties arise with cross cultural perception.

The appreciation of the properties of an art form which, in combination, excite the senses and gratify the intellect because of its particular grace or form, are largely the result of an individual's cultural upbringing. We are attuned to art by our training in aesthetics, a term derived from aisthanesthai the Greek word for 'to perceive'. Webster's Dictionary defines aesthetics as

"...the theory of the fine arts and of people's responses to them;...that branch of philosophy which deals with the beautiful; the doctrines of taste..." \(^3\)

In the Massim the *kula*, a complex interaction of ceremonial exchange operates which incorporates its own set of metaphysics, and which art serves in combination with the medium of magic. The word *kula* is a derivative of the verb be-kuJa "to form an image". This has been described as the force of attention that transmits an image onto an object; transforms the field of image into the field of action.\(^4\)

Art is also a system of communication which encodes cultural knowledge. The design, skill of execution and colouring of a canoe prow board can be appreciated by an outsider, but knowledge of the intricate layers of symbolism incorporated into the design and the correct yet imaginative combination of motifs have a more limited audience (see Fig. 3-11).

A performance of Aida at Sydney's Opera House with its elaborate staging, huge and talented cast, its powerful score commemorating the themes of love and fidelity in a dramatic historical setting presumes understanding and awareness on the part of its audience of the cultural and artistic values it enshrines. Similarly, when witnessing the spectacle and harmony of music, song and costume in an elaborate dramatic performance, the outsider could appreciate the visual spectacle, but not fully comprehend the content of the performance and its references (see fig.3.1), or the subtleties of the actors' characterisations. Commenting on this following an Orokaivan performance, the anthropologist Eric Schwimmer said that his Orokaivan informant had described the performance as "throat good" (i.e., moving; causing the throat to constrict and eyes water because of the sincerity and quality of the performance), whereas the anthropologist had thoroughly enjoyed it though only as an exotic visual spectacle.

The distinction between "art" and "craft" is considered to be judgemental when applied cross-culturally. Returning to English language definitions, Crafts are categorised as being more the products of manual dexterity than intellectual endeavour, and serve more utilitarian purposes. In this context, the noted Japanese ceramic artist, Shigeo Shiga, who admittely vacillates both physically
Preparing food in a feast pot of the kind imported from Amphlett's. Trubriand Islands. (Cochrane 1952)
and metaphysically between two countries and two cultures, Australia and Japan, said recently.

"...The act of making pottery should be an expression of the artist himself and his experiences. If I could teach students only one thing, it would be that pottery should be transformed by experiences outside itself. Otherwise it is craft, not art."

The writer of the article continued,

"(Shiga) feels that ceramics, like the other plastic arts, must be based on a system of working principles and methods acquired to, and mitigated by, experience. What is crucial for Shiga is that nexus between art, life and environment."

The distinction of where craft ends and art begins is difficult for art historians and critics to define even in Western art styles which they know intimately. As such items as canoe prow boards and shell valuables are not part of the European cultural scenario, any attempt to categorise or classify them as "art" or "craft" in order to fit them into Western terminology of artistic classification should be suspect.

The term "ethnoaesthetics" is now generally favoured to describe the properties of the art of Pacific cultures by art historians and anthropologists working in the area, because, as Mead points out,

"...it puts the emphasis where it should be placed, that is, on the view members of indigenous cultures hold about their arts, their theories of good taste, of what constitutes "inherent grace", their ideas of acceptable and non-acceptable directions of change, their notions of standards...their hopes and dreams...fears and concerns."

That which is created with skill to be performed, viewed, used for ritual or social purposes or simply to adorn, and purposefully designed or made for the enrichment and enhancement of life seems to be the most appropriate and unconfining description of artistic endeavour in any culture.

Art in a cultural context

This paper is limited in scope to an outline of some of the features of the graphic and plastic arts of the peoples of the Massim, in particular rock art, pottery, shell valuables and canoe prow boards. This is by no means an exhaustive coverage of all of the art forms of the Massim, let alone those in the category of "fine arts". As a selection had to be made, the entire domain of the performing arts, music, singing, dancing, drama, as well as oratory, poetry and
other oral traditions has not been included. Comprehensive studies on any one of these artistic activities would be extremely worthwhile and rewarding, as would a study of the many kinds of carved wooden objects not exclusive to the kabiam 7 repertoire.

The creation of visual art in Melanesia was, as far as we know of the traditions, generally the community activity of men8, the process of which continually regenerated their society and bound them together with the spiritual and magical forces of creation and preservation. A piece could be the work of a single master artist, or a combination of the skills and talents of a number of individuals. The time that ritual or important items were being created could also be the time for the discussion of the mythology or symbolism being represented, the performance and incantation of magic to imbue the piece with spiritual power, and the opportunity to pass on knowledge to younger members of the community. The time and effort of creation were used to capture and communicate the image and power of the piece. As art forms were made to be used in ritual, ceremonial, and even practical ways, they remained valuable for as long as their function was required. Some rituals required that the often complex items made for a ceremony be destroyed immediately after use; other works of art would be discarded when decrepit. The meaning of art was partially in its constant renewal.

Differences in the physical environment, as well as the variety and availability of resources have an impact on the development of art styles 9. Even within a recognised style region such as the Massim the differences between the mainland bays, high limestone islands of the D'Entrecasteaux and the Trobriand atolls' physical environment, along with the internal development of ways of life in the thousands of years since original settlement, allowed each community to develop some unique artistic qualities, while at the same time maintaining elements of past and regional traditions. Speaking generally of Melanesian art, Guiart commented that

"...the modern notion of regional style can be held only in very general terms...as the same motifs are found everywhere, with local additions and local emphasis. There is...a complex bundle of traits, varying over a span of time..."10

The tendency of Western art since the Renaissance has been towards an ideal of artistic creativity on an individual basis. Visual art is created by the artist in isolation, each piece the vision of one portraying his personal psyche, a manifestation of his society or its ideals. The creation of art for religious or ritual purposes has declined, and more secular subjects have predominated. Possession of the most valued individual works is often in the hands of individuals other than the creator; at times initially by one who, recognising the talents of the artist, commissioned the work and later by individuals or institutions who see the object in terms of value as well as beauty. Possession of beautiful objects by an individual signifies wealth and power, therefore
Chief Narabutau walking past decorated yam house. (Cochrane 1964)
preservation becomes a paramount concern. Preservation is, as well, a result of the empirical nature of Western culture and it is a result of this empiricism that we have a panoramic visual record of the evolution and achievements of present Western civilization and its antecedents, in minute detail. Access to, and knowledge of all forms of art is widespread and encouraged and available to all through exhibitions, performances and more remotely through publications and education.

It is universal that art, in its many forms, satisfies a basic human need for expression. Art styles, on the other hand, represent the selection and interpretation of symbols composed into a form and created in a medium appreciated by the artist's society. The initial response to an art work comes from its visual impact, which evokes a response from the viewer's sense of aesthetic pleasure in relation to qualities with which he is familiar, or challenges his aesthetic sense because of the work's different qualities. If viewing works from within one's own cultural tradition, pleasure is derived from knowledge of the genre, appreciation of the technique, perfection of form and an understanding of the subject and/or symbolism contained within the artistic expression. A familiar art work may evoke a feeling of sensual gratification or reverence; stimulate a train of thought; trigger an emotion or simply provide pleasing contemplation to the viewer. Except in some societies where it is considered frivolous (particularly religious sects) we all share a love of decoration, and even everyday items are enhanced with patterns which are pleasing but not necessarily symbolic.

Viewing art from outside our culture and experience can be pleasurable on the visual level alone, the use of colour, the balance of the composition, the fineness of execution for example, we can find pleasing even without a knowledge of the artist's social milieu. It requires greater application to understand the immagery of the work, and those not brought up within the cultural scenario may never be fully aware of its meaning. In fact, in many Papua New Guinea societies (for example in the Sepik and Gulf of Papua area) where male cults and initiation rites segregate the community into the unknowing and those at various levels of knowledge, according to their admission into mens' society through initiation rites, the full meaning of art forms ritually created for ceremonial use is known only to the fully initiated men.

A comment by the editor of the Papua New Guinea arts magazine Gigibori points out that the manner and vocabulary with which the Massim people (as well as other Papua New Guineans) describe their own art has been largely overlooked by commentators and collectors, most of whom have come from a different tradition and applied their own aesthetic criteria to regional art styles. It has already been mentioned that there is no cover-all word in the languages of the Massim meaning "art". Instead there are particular terms which qualify the degree of skill and ritual knowledge of the artist, for example, Abel gives
FIG. 3.4

Admiring visiting nagego canoes. (Vivian 1917-21)
the following terms used in Maivara (Southern Massim): *pusa pusa* means to carve and decorate, and refers to the *tau pusa pusa*, a man entitled to carve a canoe. Different terminology is used for other types of carving and carvers.

The complete assemblage of a *kula* canoe, with its carved and painted prow boards, adornment of white cowrie (*buna*) shells, woven pandanus sails and fluttering streamers, is a visually stirring and pleasurable sight, to anyone who observes it (see fig. 3.4). When in place, the canoe carvings endow the vessel with magical efficacy. Early ethnographers and collectors who attempted to buy carvings from fully decorated canoes could not persuade their owners to part with individual items for any price. They were told that removal of the carving would expose the canoe and its crew to terrible dangers, both natural and supernatural. This perhaps left collectors no option but to make do with the prow boards that had served their purpose, and were no longer attached to a canoe perhaps slightly broken, faded and with their shell valuables removed. The most likely reason for the lack of sets in collections (each *masawa* canoe had two *lagim* and *tabuya*, one at each end; *nagega* and Louisade canoes had a set of *munkuris* in addition, see Chapter 6), is that the boards were often repainted and decorated and attached to a new hull with the appropriate incantations.

However, this still does not adequately explain the different conceptions held by Massim people and many European collectors and exhibitors of their art. Over the last century European perceptions of "primitive art" (into which category Massim art is classified) ranged from the Darwinian view that it was low on the evolutionary scale of artistic creation to being intensely studied and characterised by its forms and decorative motifs. Primitive art profoundly influenced European artists in the early decades of the 20th century, including Picasso and Modigliani, the Fauves and the German Expressionists with its qualities of abstraction, boldness, intensity of colour and powerful volumes, and later the Surrealists who saw in it the unhindered reflections of the subconscious mind they wished to evoke. The work of these artists created a link between primitive art and the European art-viewing public, but in the European mind, art, whether modern paintings or primitive art objects, remained something to be possessed, treasured and admired, simply as art. In such collections of primitive art, or modern art inspired by tribal styles, the function of art was to evoke an emotional reaction, and the response it evoked from the viewer was an individual one. Primitive art was collected primarily for its aesthetic value and appeal, not for its symbolic, social or ritual meaning. The European artists' forms of expression were self-oriented; their understanding of the physical attributes of primitive art did not extend to an understanding of its spiritual qualities, nor its ideology.

In the Massim, what Europeans would describe as objects of art were made to be used, and replaced when worn. The design, decoration and execution of each kind of object made in the Massim had a particular place in the material culture
and was inextricable from the cultural, ritual and social life of the people. Art was inseparable from the activities of the community, and circulated within the community in the constant pattern of reciprocal gift giving and ceremonial exchange.

In all societies of man, one of the roles of the artist is to express their societies perception of the natural and supernatural worlds. For visual artists, this perception is encapsulated in graphic or plastic, two or three dimensional forms. Some forms embody knowledge of the artist's social world and environment, others can contain or convey mythical allusion or supernatural power.

In the traditional world of the Massim people, human society, mystical and magical beings and the environment formed one entity. Human knowledge of rituals and magic enacted by specialists who had undergone years of training in their field, ensured the aid of the spirit world in the success of horticulture and community or personal endeavours.

Important works of art were not created "for art's sake", but were inextricable from ritual and social life. It should be distinguished from the outset that making and decorating objects for pleasure or practical utility can be undertaken by any man or boy who is so inclined, and does not require a knowledge of ritual or magic. The proliferation of beautiful objects, finely executed, among everyone's possessions as well as the emphasis on body decoration and appearance, reveals that the appreciation of form and beauty is universal among the people of the Massim. However, certain classes of carved items, in particular canoe prow boards, yam house boards (see Fig. 3.3), chiefs' house boards (see Fig.3.20, 3.21) and drums are carved by professional master carvers as they require the input of special knowledge gained by the artist over a long apprenticeship in technical skills and magic. Perhaps the best illustration of this is Malinowski's description of the construction of a masawa, a decorated ocean-going canoe built for the kula ceremonial exchange cycle,

"...the building of a sea-going canoe is inextricable bound with the general proceedings of the kula. The first link in the chain of kula performances...The technicalities of construction are interrupted and punctuated by magical rites (see Fig. 7.2) ...keep in mind the definite, sociological mechanisms underlying the activities, and the system of ideas at work in regulating labour and magic....the magical ideas which govern the various rites (accompanying the stages of construction) ...belong to several different systems of ideas...the myth of the flying canoe...aims at imparting general excellence and...the quality of speed to the canoe. The rites of the other type are really exorcisms...the third system is kula magic...aiming at the imparting of success to the toliwaga (master of a canoe) in his kula transactions."
In the Trobriand Islands the hull ends of these canoes are decorated and painted, and two specially carved ornamental prow boards ceremonially inserted. Each of the canoe prow boards (tabuya) and transverse washboards (lagim) (see figs. 6.11, 6.12), are among the largest items of Massim art and are intricately carved with complex interlocking designs and painted red, white and black. The mythological basis of the designs incorporated into the lagim and tabuya are localised according to their district of origin, as are the individual motifs comprising the overall design and the magical formulae and rites used to bless them. Thus the completed canoe, as well as being aesthetically pleasing, is vibrant with semiotic and supernatural effect to its creator, owner and those who will sail with her.

**Problems for the student of Massim art**

There is a reasonable body of information available on the art of the historical period, though most of it is by outsiders. Difficulty remains with comparing traditional and pre-historic art forms as Massim people profess very little or no knowledge of ancient styles, for example rock art and pre-historic pottery, and archaeological data from the area is scarce. The origins of the Massim peoples were diverse, as is revealed by their different social customs (in particular the cannibalism of the Southern Massim), physique, and differences in language. Even to the present times there are accounts of hamlet groups splitting and moving their location18 where they may or may not continue to produce pottery, canoes or some other kinds of art objects which were previously a speciality, but they would remain within the network of trade and exchange relations, perhaps developing their own speciality.

However, regardless of all these negative elements, the idea of continuity in style within the region over a long span of time is persuasive. This assumes that past events and values kept their relevance and place in the traditions of oral history and mythology, and that ceremonies and rituals, designs and emblems continued to be produced in similar ways because of the importance of the forms to be socially acceptable and validated. The degree of conformity within the art forms produced in the extensive Massim area with its scattered islands, provides the most convincing proof of the acceptance and integration of styles and values by the various communities in the region over a considerable time.

Despite the overall homogeneity, there probably sufficient evidence in the published material and in collections of Massim art, as well as what is still made and in use, to distinguish between northern and southern Massim items. No thorough study has been conducted on this distinction to date, and it is outside the scope of this thesis to do so. A brief mention of some noticeable distinctions in certain items of material culture will give an indication of the differences between north and south, however, it must be remembered that the differences in material culture between northern and southern Massim does not exactly coincide with Seligman's distinction of north and south.
Tokobitom (master carver) working on tabuya (prowboard)
Trobriand Islands. (Malinowski 1914)
(i) Pot making is exclusive to the Southern Massim with the exception of the Amphlett Islands. Each pottery industry has its own distinguishing features (see Ch. 5).

(ii) Three types of shields were made in the Massim. Fig. 3.18 a & b shows the distinctive Trobriand Islands ovoid painted shield. Newton includes in his catalogue an example of the Milne Bay style of shield, and also the third typically Massim type found in the south.\(^{19}\)

(iii) The Trobriand Island drum is smaller than the other Massim style of drum. Rossel Island has no drums.\(^{20}\)

(iv) The southern Massim bowls, such as those from Misima, can be distinguished by the individual motifs or combinations of motifs carved in low relief on the outside surface of the bowl below the rim. Trobriand Islands wooden bowls feature an incised pattern on the rim itself.\(^{21}\)

(v) Food stirrers tend to be larger and have wide blades in the south (see Fig. 3.12 b), and have slender blades in the north. The difference may be related to differences in the staple crop - southerns consume sago, while the principle northern crop is yam.

Prestige objects such as the painted and decorated boards of yam and chiefs' houses can also be recognised in terms of northern or southern provenance, and would be a subject deserving study by themselves.

The Artist in Trobriand Society

As the greatest body of material was available on the Trobriand Islands for this section on the artist in society, the following discussion is particular to the Trobriand Islands. Although similar art-producing systems operate throughout the Massim, all the features pertaining to Trobriands artists cannot be generalised to cover all areas of the Massim. For example, the Trobriands are not a pottery making group, and import many specialities from other communities. The following discussion is basically concerned with woodwork; pottery and shell valuables are discussed in other chapters.

The carver's tool kit today contains several nails, each with its end beaten into a different shape to cut different kinds of lines; a wooden paddle or hammer to hit the nails (see fig. 3.5); a small hand knife to gouge out lines; an axe and an adze. More traditionally the adze (see fig. 7.5) would have been made of
imported stone; pigs tusks, dog's teeth, thorns, and kaniku shells used for gouging and scraping and the skin of a stingray or a special leaf with a hard, rough surface served as sandpaper. An essential part of the carver's knowledge is where to find desirable types of wood and how to cut and season it.

As far back as it is remembered or recorded there have been two classes of carvers in the Trobriand Islands; those who carve with magic, tokabitam, and those who carve without magic, tokataraki. The former carved articles of ceremonial value, the others items for personal use or pleasure. Tokabitam can also carve lime spatulas or any other articles that do not call upon his ritual and magical knowledge.

Tokabitam carvers receive their specialised training by serving a long apprenticeship to a master carver, and gain their skills and knowledge by following the master's instruction in design and technique, and by imbibing magical potions - both elements are equally essential. The apprentice learns the rules of conduct, techniques, designs and conventions of the system as well as character, form, placement and patterning of design, the animals represented in the kabitam repertoire and why they are kabitam. Kabitam identifies the entire body of knowledge which is most highly valued. The knowledge of kula canoes, including all of the magic, technical information, techniques of construction, etc., is called kabitam masawa. Kabitam ginigini is the knowledge of what is necessary for the execution of carvings for kula canoes (see Fig. 3.5). The word kabitam implies the acquired ability to exercise the knowledge at any given time - the carver prepares the wood and the magical knowledge he has imbibed guides his hand and unleashes its power into the image he is creating. The title tokabitam denotes a person's possession of the specific knowledge of the rules and patterns of a characteristic school of carving. Each sopi(school of carving) should have only two representatives at one time; the master and his apprentice. When he has absorbed the knowledge imparted to him by his training and drinking the magical solution, the apprentice's knowledge and ability is sought and he can seek the payments due to a specialist. However, while his master lives, the apprentice gives him most of the payments he receives for his commissions.

Women in the Trobriand Islands have their own specialisation which requires kabitam knowledge, the design and making of banana leaf skirts, as well as the kabitam of female sorcery and flying witches. Kabitam knowledge of garden magic, carving or in other areas can be passed to a girl if there are no suitable boys to apprentice. In these cases the woman does not actually use the knowledge but holds it until a suitable apprentice gives her the opening gifts, pokala, and she initiates his magical purification and instructs him. As an owner of kabitam she receives the same deference as is accorded to any male owner of kabitam.
Men who display artistic talent, but have not achieved apprenticeship to a *tokabitam*, can carve but have to be satisfied with the lower status of *tokataraki*. *Tokataraki* are sometimes asked to make canoe prows or yamhouse boards for clients who can’t afford *tokabitam* fees, however these pieces will be less effectual for their owners as they do not have the component of magic. As well, the *tokabitam* own all the traditional designs and have to be paid for their use. The *tokataraki* would have only two options, to copy the traditional designs or to be innovative. Campbell notes that on Vakuta, if a man who is not a *tokabitam* does a carving in a traditional style he is by social definition copying the designs from one of the four schols of carving. He must pay the owner of the designs (designs are a recognised economic resource), any *vakapula* (payment) received, otherwise the *tokabitam* from whom the designs were copied has the right to destroy the carving.24

Apart from *tokabitam* and *tokataraki*, the Kuboma district in the Trobriand Islands specialises in carving artifacts such as figurines and utilitarian items, wooden bowls, weapons, spatulas, mortars and pestles and so on which are used as solicitory gifts, *pokaia*, to soften up prospective *kuia* partners, or for other exchange or trading purposes. Kuboma is particularly infertile, so their clients bring food and valuables to exchange for the carvers’ specialities.

Outstanding woodcarvings of a personal, prestige and utilitarian nature came from the carving village of Boitalu (see fig. 3.6), where the clan considered outcasts of Trobriand society live. Although other clans expressed an aversion to the people of Boitalu because they ate stingray and bush pig, their carvings were sought after. Boitalu carvers specialised in wooden bowls with incised rims, an essential trade item; combs and fibre armlets for personal adornment; mortars and pestles for crushing betel nut and lime spatulas to accompany them. The top of pestle and spatula handles were often carved in representations of human and animal figures which had the generic name of *tokwaiu*.25

Specialities produced elsewhere in the Trobriand Islands, at least to the mid 1930’s were:

**Baskets** - Luia, Bwatavaia and Okobobo all produced yam baskets of various sizes as well as the three-tiered baskets preferred for personal use which were also made at Yalakala.

**Ebony carvings** - Boitalu carvers preferred *melia* (ebony) for their work but also used softer wood for bowls. (Ebony, a greyish colour when freshly cut, is buried in particular clay pans to season it until the required blackness is produced.26). Where ebony was obtainable near the villages of Obweria, Vakuta, Omarakana and Kaibola, betel pestles and mortars were made in this more durable wood; lime spatulas were carved in these villages as well as Yalumigwa and some villages on Kaileuna.
Collection of Trobriand wood carvings for curio trade

(Austen of 1935)
Lime containers - made from carved gourds, were an important product of Wabutima and Yalaka villages.

Turtle shell earrings were made by people living beside the Kiriwina lagoon.27

Austen noted that a change occurred in the kind of articles made in Boitalu when the administration located a permanent representative in the area, cf 1908. When the Boitalu discovered that Europeans would buy their tokwalu (carvings of human and animal figures) for their own use or to sell as 'curios', elsewhere, they were willing to adapt to the preferences of the buyer, and produced larger tokwalu animals, figures and even tables with tokwalu as the supports (see Fig. 3.6, 3.7).

In the early 1920's Amy (Ma) Lumley, a longtime resident and trader in the Trobriands, encouraged carving for purely commercial purposes. Giving any starters a cross cut piece of hardwood, an adze, half a pair of scissors and showing them a copy of the "London Illustrated News" featuring Egyptian carvings in the British Museum, she encouraged the woodworkers to increase the size of tokwalu figures until they were up to two feet high, or acted as stands for bowls or table tops. The figures were incised with Kiriwinan motives and the top of the table decorated with traditional spiral patterns.28

Austen praised Ma Lumley's foresight in developing "...an art worthy of further cultivation...". and for giving the outcast Boitalu an extra source of income which could develop into an important trade in curios for the Trobriand Islands. However, the scale had shifted by the 1970's. The attraction to a cash income and ready sales of curios to tourists had caused a decline in the quality of carvings, but of more concern, was the decline in food production and the consequent slackening of traditional activities associated with surplus production29.

An incentive scheme devised by Chief Narabutau to produce surplus of betel nut and other traditional foodstuffs, which would allow feasts and exchanges to be held and thus revive traditional activities to bring the people together again, developed into the Kabisawali30 Movement. Within a relatively short time Kabisawali had grown into an active movement with a philosophy and political stance led by Narabutau's nephew, the writer John Kasaipwalova.

Under its cultural development programme, Kabisawali emphasised the importance of cultural revival and the value of traditional ceremonies in achieving the recognition of the unique identity of their society and encourage its cohesion. It also assumed control of the artefact trade, creating a central buying agency which would encourage quality control, and opening a shop in
Carved panel by Valaosi
(Cigibori 1975)
Port Moresby as the primary outlet, taking the trade out of the hands of the Europeans who had previously managed it. Thirdly, Kabisawali recognised the value of the initiation of new art styles into the community,

"...the society is being deliberately and consciously geared towards the acceptance of change. Change is considered inevitable; it must be accepted but controlled. It is significant, therefore, that Kabisawali has produced some entirely new artists who are working neither in the traditional context nor in the tourist market...."³¹

This group of artists, led by Valaosi, carved panels which were unique in Papua New Guinea in that they were a comment on contemporary social and political life (see Fig. 3.8).

The Kabisawali Movement has since died out, but contemporary attitudes to traditional and modern art forms are elsewhere commented on by Geoffrey Mosuwadoga, also from the Trobriand Islands, who has been described as a traditional artist in his own right, a multi-media, trans-cultural artist by training, and the director of Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery.³²

Mosuwadoga defends the emergence of new art forms resulting from the impact of new pressures and ideas, and comments that among the mediocre, some very interesting work was appearing. He is also of the opinion that tourist-oriented art performs a valuable function in that it acts as a buffer between people who simply want an artistic memento of Papua New Guinea, and the works of traditional artists which have spiritual and social significance in their societies.

Mosuwadoga sees that Kaeppler's classification of Polynesian art is equally appropriate to Melanesian (and by extension to Massim) art. Kaeppler devised four categories:

*Traditional art* - that which was being produced at the time of European contact

*Evolved traditional art* - a continuation of traditional art with basically the traditional structure and expressing the traditional sentiment although techniques of production may have changed. Massim canoe carvings, house boards (*kabi*am works) belong to this category.

*Folk art* - the 'living art of the community'. This form is open to influence and adaptation, but has largely retained its identity and use in tribal societies. Pottery, grass skirts, shell jewellery and carved wooden items for personal or ceremonial use fit in here.

*Airport art* - consists of items produced purely for commercial purposes. It includes such items as the *tokwalu* tables
Man with betel nut mortar and pestle.
(Vivian circa 1929)
and figures from Boitalu which were unknown to the pre-European contact Papua New Guinean.33

**Aesthetic Terms from two Massim Communities**

Returning to the qualities of traditional art forms, we will see how appreciation of them is expressed locally. A minimum aesthetic vocabulary has been documented for the Trobriand Islands 34 (Northern Massim), and for the Suau (Southern Massim)35 The following terms are those of appreciation for the visual impact of an object, or admiration for the skill of the artist:

**Suau Aesthetic Terms**

*ta' i iloro* "it's so beautiful" - appreciation of a well carved design, could also refer to a beautiful woman.

*ta' i amna* "it is so sweet" - real excitement over a design, also applicable to girlfriend

*i mata ai* "it eats my eye" - expression of praise

*ni mana ibiga ariri* "his hand is very gentle" - praise of good craftsmanship

*taubiga* painstaking

*itomatoma* "it has no salt" - expression applied to clumsy or beginners work

*dudurai* "straight, true, accurate" - associated with canoe carving, correct repetition of design

*gigibori* "heat" - in the sense of power, authority or prestige of a ritual carving deriving from the magic performed on it (previously applied to spirit figures, presently the *gigibori* of Christianity is considered stronger)

*pusa pusa* "to carve and decorate" - only applied to a *tau pusa*

*pusa* "the man who carves" of a hereditary carving family

**Trobriand Islands Aesthetic Terms**

*kegi vayelu* "He who follows the voice" - a carver who is a good craftsman but does not initiate, lacks fluidity in his work
Stylised human figures on the handles of staffs. (Chauvet 1930)
sope (sopī) a quality only possessed by inspired artists. Literally “water”, means that the design flows from the artist freely and naturally; innovative and individual work has sope. Artists with sope would concentrate on canoe prows, chief's houses, yam houses and drums.

migila “expression” - a statement of quality used when judging the work of an artist; can only be imparted by a man with sope and depends on the artist’s knowledge of magical symbolism and ritual which he incorporates into the design.

“...the quality of migila is demonstrated most dramatically during the launching of a canoe. The prow is seen like a face - half human, half spirit. People see the face as tender or aggressive, serene or flamboyant. When a canoe is launched, people weep; “It was made by human hands”, they say, “but when it moved, it became a human being”...

kakapisi lula “it moves my inside” - an expression of the emotion of beauty aroused in an onlooker; applies also to a woman or a flower. Referring to a carving it signifies a response to both form and content, especially magical content.

kala migileo isolates the formal aspects of a carving, its “evenness” and “clarity”. A pure, clean line is what Trobriand Islanders seem to appreciate above any other aesthetic quality.

sena boena a good, clear carving with balance achieved by perfect weighing of the red, black and white lines against each other. (“Too much white diffuses the design” they say).

sena gaga a bad, poor carving

lakeda vau “the path of the black”) must all be distinctive. Each path must be worked on a different plane, the 3 forming a subtle flat relief. They must be evenly balanced & most importantly of all, the 3 paths must end in a single point.

lakeda malakavā “the path of the red”

lakeda pakwa “the path of the white”
FIG. 3-11
Carvings from nagego canoes

a. majim or lagim (splashboard)
b. tabuyo (prowboard)
c. munkurs (finial)
*bitilari* any kind of carving activity

*lelai* to carve and decorate

*ginigini* to incise fine lines

In his critical appraisal of fourteen prow boards from the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery’s collection, Chief Narabutau often refers to *sopo* (also spelt as *sopi*), which he defines as

"...the flowing quality of line and rhythm that only artistic genius is capable of..."

and frequently refers to a design having the correct "tension", or lacking it. The inclusion or omission of traditional motifs is acceptable if the carver, aiming at boldness or intricacy, innovates within the original design (see handles of staffs, Fig. 3.10). Chief Narabutau is critical of particular motifs within the overall work which he detects have been carelessly executed

"...The *sakwabu* (motif representing coconut husks) have lost their springiness. They look limp, as if they had been lying in the rain."37

Campbell comments that *sopi* literally means water, the major aesthetic attribute of which is that it flows freely, unhampered by obstacles. It is likewise desirable for knowledge to flow unhindered from the mind of a wise person with the water-like characteristics of clarity, precision and depth. The transmission of knowledge from master to apprentice is through *sopi*, that is, by the initiate imbibing a magical liquid and having it painted on his body. Tokabitam belong to one of the schools of carving (*sopila*), defined in terms of what magic the person has drunk.

Campbell says that in 1977 there were four separate stylistic schools represented on the island of Vakuta, formulated in terms of what magic (*sopi*) the master carver had drunk. In relation to carving, the term *sopi* can be used to refer to the magic, style, school of carving and the specific representation of *kabitam* animals (of which certain designs and representations are specific to certain schools). Although canoe carving has definite rules in relation to the motifs used and their patterning and placement, there are certain areas where the artist is allowed his "signature" and that of his particular school. As a result, knowledgeable people could identify what school the carving comes from and thereby the artist who, at any given time, is the representative of that school.40
FIG. 3.12

a. Dance paddle. Trobriand Is. (Guiart 1963)

b. Boy with food stirrer. Gith. Mossim (Vivian c.18)
Brief historiography of the recording of Massim Art

European attempts to describe and define Massim art since the late 19th century often reflect their own conceptions, and until recently, showed a preoccupation with sculpted and decorated two or three dimensional objects. Intensive study and analysis of form and motif of primarily wooden objects allowed for their characterisation and the definition of "style areas" in Melanesia, now twenty or so in number. When these are plotted on a map of New Guinea they are shown to be mainly on the coastal areas and island groups which have strong traditions of carving and decorating, and can lead to the false impression that "art-styles" were practically non-existent elsewhere in New Guinea. This is not so. Many Highlands societies, for example, prefer body decoration, song and performance, oratory and poetry as their main forms of creative expression.

Style analysis is a useful tool, providing a methodology by which the formal elements which characterise an art style can be recognised. It may also show patterns which are related to the symbolic system of a culture, though any evaluation of the symbolic systems of any culture must be tentative without expert information from local sources. Information on symbolic systems provided by informants from an existing culture is invaluable when considering the relationships between the structural form of the art, its surrounding mythology and its purpose or function.

Forge comments that art "styles" are systems of communication, and emphasises the unique quality of art as a visual system of communication. The question of meaning is central to the analysis of visual communications systems, but, Forge warns, "...the meaning is not that a painting or carving is a picture or representation of anything in the natural or spirit world, rather it is about the relationship between things." But Forge's appreciation of style as a visual system of communication is a later interpretation of the meaning of style. Some earlier analysts applied the techniques of formal style analysis to characterise Massim art, that is, to isolate the features which distinguish it from other New Guinea art styles. On the other hand it is the hypothesis of others that the similarities existing in art styles over a wide area provide a medium for tracing the spread of cultural diffusion.

To isolate the style characteristics of Massim art, various authors have concentrated on the prolific sculpted, three dimensional pieces (such as lime spatulas, figures, paddles, weapons, etc. as Chauvet's collection of clubs, Fig. 3.13), and to a lesser extent on the engraved and painted two dimensional objects (canoe prow boards, chiefs' and yam house boards, etc.) made throughout the area. The distinctive character of Massim art has been described as,
Selection of war clubs (Chauvet 1930)
"...a great variety of curvilinear design motifs...it is primarily an art of line; designs are precisely composed and carefully executed...Surface carving is important, but each object is carefully and precisely shaped to receive the decoration...it is an art of curves, free, interlocking, intricate and rhythmic..."47

"...This style reveals what we may call a "horror vacui" - an aversion to empty spaces, implicitly an aesthetic urge to fill these spaces with ornaments..."48

Some see connections and derivations in Massim art from ancient Chinese sources.

"...(in his) rather bland art, the Massim man enjoyed nuances and subtle distinctions of taste...No masks and few figures were made...instead the Massim artist turned his consummate skills to lavish canoe ornaments, mysterious painted shields, dance paddles, swords, clubs, and prestige carvings such as neck rests, bowls and spatulas. The use of the knee-elbow-chin, orant, and the splayed position and Dongson reverse spirals underscores the fastidiousness and complexity of Massim artistry..." (the features Fraser describes are all apparent on the figures in Fig. 3.10)49

The first European to provide a system of classification for Melanesian art was A.C. Haddon50, who devotes a significant section of his book, *The Decorative Arts of British New Guinea*, to an analysis of certain motifs characteristically found in Massim art. His study was based on the plentiful samples of carved wooden objects already held by British museums and collectors. The method he devised for classification was objective and "scientific".

"...In the following Memoir the decorative art of a particular region has been studied in much the same way as a zoologist would study a group of fauna, say, birds...the problems of geographical distribution have a particular fascination...zoologists take pleasure in mapping out the geographical variations of a particular species and in endeavouring to account for their form and colour..."51

Haddon's method assisted him to define several art style areas in (then) British New Guinea on the basis of their form and decorative characteristics. In the Massim area Haddon found a uniformity of style and decoration on the objects which were widely traded and commonly used throughout the area, in particular lime spatulas, clubs and paddles, and was particularly impressed with the seemingly infinite variation of the incised scroll patterns on these objects (see fig. 3.14).
characteristic curvilinear motifs of Massim art (Chauvet 1932)
He concentrated on the identification of motifs representing the abstraction ("degeneration" according to Haddon) of a bird's head design into spiral forms. He describes how a bird's head design can be located by identifying the eye-spot and the hook of the beak, the design often flowing on in a linear series forming scrolls. When the eye spot of the bird design is omitted, the pattern develops into a more convolute scroll, and the shifting of the hooks results in a guilloche, or rope pattern. Haddon also found that series of scrolls often ran longitudinally, divided by three lines and perhaps surrounded by a border. Vertical rows of scroll patterning divided into panels, often with the centre panel reversed or bearing a variation of the design, were also characteristic. The separation of the eye and its development into a separate motif of concentric circles or elongation into ovals was a feature often used in centre panels. A more definitive bird's head and neck design is described by Haddon on a piece which he describes as a turtle shell spatula from the Louisiades in the British Museum (see Fig. 1.3 with a similar design, but on a wooden spatula).

Another frequently used motif which Haddon identifies as "bird and crocodile" design (see Fig. 3.15) was frequently used on the handles of paddles, axes, spatulas and clubs, and as a secondary motif on other objects. Haddon conjectures that this design was found mostly on objects with a Southern Massim provenance (in which he is correct), but is elsewhere critical of the careless manner of the travellers and others who collected the pieces, finding the lack of information regarding the pieces' origins and uses, the status and methods of the artists, their psychology and the symbolism of their art a frustration to the serious scholar and collector. Fig. 3.12b is just one example of this problem. This photograph (c.f. 1920) by R.M. Vivan of a boy with a ceremonial food stirrer has no notation or comment regarding the place it was taken or provenance of the food stirrer. Certain carved motifs on the food stirrer, and comparison with other examples of known provenance permit it to be recognised as southern Massim, but not to be more specific.

The adoption of wrong terms and the reliance of later writers on an 'expert' from their own culture instead of the artistic source is exemplified in this reference of Haddon's to the "bird and crocodile" motif. Relying on Haddon, who never travelled to the Massim area, "bird and crocodile" has become the accepted term for the design. Contradictory evidence that the motif in fact represents a barracuda and bird comes from Cecil Abel's discussion of Suau (Southern Massim) art forms and aesthetics - the Abel family having been closely associated with the Southern Massim area since 1884 at the Kwato Mission. More recently local informants confirmed that the motif represented a crocodile and bird to Peter Hallinan, who was seeking information in the field regarding details of design and provenance when collecting art objects from the Massim area. Beran was given a further interpretation of the motif when examining a finial he wished to purchase. Via a translator, the vendor described that the whole design represented a boi (reef heron), with
FIG. 3.15

"Bird and crocodile" motif, southern Massim
components of the design representing body parts of the bird (see sketch below); this was confirmed by another man who had carved similar esika.

Chauvet, a French scholar and traveller whose work replicates Haddon's to some degree, emphasises other particular qualities of Massim carved objects, apart from their incised spiral decorations.

"...les objects en bois fabriques par les indigenes, sont polis avec un soin tout particulier(1), si bien qu'ils ont, surtout quand ils sont en ebene, un patine brillante du plus beau noir; et comme les artisans melanesiens remplissent du poudre blanche (chaux calcinee) les entailles qui circonscrivent les decors, il en resulte une opposition de blanc et noir, tout particulierement heureuse...

(1) Chauvet's footnote reads "...Avec un morceau de peau de queuq de raie sechee, ou certains feuillues de plantes marecageuses qui deviennent rapeuses a l'etat sec."

The glossy patina of the highly polished wood and the highlighting of the finely executed designs with white lime are two important features of two and three dimensional Massim pieces of this genre. Chauvet again examines in minute detail the complexities of spiral decorative motifs, providing many illustrations, of the carefully sculpted, intricately incised, highly patinated pieces he examined (see Figs. 3.10, 3.13, 3.16 reproduced from his book), but including only a few carved and painted items in his selection (shields and dance paddles, no house boards or canoe prows).

The glossy patina of highly polished wood and the highlighting of the finely executed designs with white lime are two important features of three dimensional Massim pieces of this genre. As illustrations in Haddon, Chauvet, Lewis, Linton and Wingert, Guiart, and other publications show, the delicate decorative scrolling appears symmetrically, often in mirror image on the front and back of clubs and lime spatulas, or the top and bottom of dance paddles. Variations of abstracted scroll designs, bird's heads and "bird and crocodile" motifs can appear by themselves, in association with other frequently used motifs such as snake and zigzag patterns, or embellishing anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figures carved either as freestanding objects or as the handles, for example, of lime spatulas.

Later collectors and chroniclers, including Newton and Beran, have tended to concentrate on specific classes of objects from the Massim, for example, things
Fig. 3.16

a.
Lime spatulas. (Chauvet 1930)
related to betel-chewing (see fig. 3.9), sailing, fishing, and food preparation, as well as attempting to trace their provenance (often difficult after decades), in order to establish the age of the objects, and the existence of art producing centres which possessed specific styles or traits as their speciality. This approach will assist in establishing a more composite and comprehensive picture of traditional societies. For example, lime spatulas (*kena*), traditionally a prized personal possession ubiquitous throughout the Massim and widely traded as a secondary item on inter-island voyages conducted for ceremonial exchange, can be divided into several dozen types, with some groups having sub-styles 57 (see fig. 3.16). Apart from the whalebone and crescent-shaped tortoiseshell spatulas, *gaibera*, which have greater value and significance, wooden lime spatulas can be categorised as having naturalistic or stylised animal or human figure handles, clapper handles, four ridged handles, flat or slit handles and many other forms. Beran commented that, when the provenance of several spatulas with similar handles had been precisely determined as coming from the same place, a step was taken towards establishing the features of a local style.

Beran 58, also indicated the similarity of design, for example the facial features and limb positions, of the figures on lime spatula handles to free standing figures. Three dimensional, free standing sculpted figures, are rare in the Massim, at least, few exist in collections. It is not known if they were previously more prolific and for what purposes they were made, though one indication that this may have been the case is contained in Abel’s description of a carved figure *oi tau* (hewn man) from the Suau area, Southern Massim:

"...a rare use of the human figure, though a very important one, was as magic objects. I have seen a spirit figure about 4 feet high, with a long snout and huge ears. Such an object is called *oi tau* - a hewn man. Life like qualities and naturalistic features were not expected in such carvings...." 59 (See Fig. 3.16b, *oi tau* on spatula handle)

Seated figures, such as the large one on the far left of Fig. 3.7 and no. 62 in Newton’s catalogue are fairly common and not known to have any significance, and and most probably are “airport art”. But for the “standing figure 361/2” high (Newton catalogue no. 69), Newton comments on the stylistic correspondence of this carving with figure sculpture from Lake Sentani (west coast Irian Jaya)

"...Most faces have horizontal brows, straight noses, eyes expressed as circles and small, toothed mouths. In a number of figures the arms are carved as narrow relief bands down the sides, curving upwards and in so that the tips of the fingers meet on the chest. This description applies, word for word, to Massim
Carved figures in a cave - Kitava
(Vivian c. 1920)
figure sculpture, with the slight difference that in Massim art the shoulders are more accentuated and the arms detached from the torso."  

Newton compares other correspondences between Massim and Lake Sentani art, and, together with his revival of interest in Haddon and Hornell's painstaking study of canoe types in Oceania, argues for the reconstruction of pre-historic technocomplexes and conceptual systems throughout Melanesia.

A photograph in the Vivian Collection (see Fig. 3.17) shows three free-standing human figures in association with other objects including a masawa canoe prow "in a cave" on Kitava, Trobriand Islands, taken around 1920. This may indicate that carvings of human figures were once associated with secondary burials for which bones were exhumed from the primary burial and placed in large pots, clam shells or canoe prows and placed in caves. As this form of burial was rigorously quashed by the first Governor, Macgregor and the early missionaries, this could explain the scarcity of this kind of carving.

The only type of human figure carving still in existence which still have magical significance are the \textit{boaJai} figures carved at the centre of masawa canoe washboards (see fig. 6.11). They are incorporated into the overall design of the canoe washboard (\textit{lagim}) of masawa canoes, which itself comprises of a set of ritualised and symbolically significant designs.

Prestige items for personal use and utilitarian or 'household' objects were made in several media and executed with skill and finesse. The partner of the lime spatula was a lime container made from a hollowed gourd fitted with a finely plaited fibre stopper (between human figures in fig. 3.17); these were either plain or pyroengraved. Fine baskets were made in several areas, the most popular and complex type made in the Trobriand Islands having a 3-tiered interior. Wooden mortars, often decorated with similar themes as spatulas, were used to crush betel nut, and mortars and pestels (fig. 3.9) are also reputed to be used for the preparation of magical concoctions which apprentices had to drink in order to internalise master carver knowledge. The shafts of spears, clubs and ceremonial axes also featured lime filled engravings on patinated wood (figs. 3.10, 3.13, 3.16). Taro pounders, food stirrers, bowls and platters frequently had areas of scrolled or zigzag patterns on their rims or handles; floats for fishing nets and pighook staffs often bore carved embellishments or representations of figures, reflecting an overall love of design and decoration.

Pottery was manufactured in several centres, each featuring its own specialities in form and style. Pots were (and are) widely distributed as secondary exchange items on \textit{kula} voyages, for example, the Trobriand Islands imports all its pottery from the Amphlett Islands as they have no pottery industry of their own. Archaeological findings in the area provide a fascinating insight into the changes which have occurred in the Trobriand Islands over time, reflecting not
FIG. 3.18

a. Re-enactment of war magic rite—Tröbriand Islands (Malinowski 1914)

b. Painted shield, Tröbriand Islands (Chauvet 1934)
only changing preferences for pottery styles, but also different purposes for which the pottery was imported and utilised (see chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of pottery traditions).

None of the classes of objects discussed above were painted, however painting features prominently in the larger, two dimensional pieces (canoe prows, shields, panels of chief's houses and yam houses) and on two smaller kinds of objects (dance paddles and all three types of shields), where painting enhances the low relief engraving of complex designs.

One type of object which stands out because of its radically different appearance from other Massim styles, is the ovoid painted shield peculiar to the Trobriand Islands. This kind of shield is unique in several respects; firstly, it is the only known item to be painted and only so lightly incised that the lines can hardly be distinguished, thus giving the impression that the surface is only painted. The background is coloured white, with a complex central design predominantly in red and black connected to a crescent form towards the upper border (see Fig. 3.18b). Within the central design are several recognisable motifs such as a snake, certain fish, etc., which have been individually identified for one shield, probably by Malinowski's informants \[62\]. However other interpretations have described the overall design as representing the genitals of the dreaded flying witch, *mulukwasi*\[63\]. The other unusual features of these shields are the tiny pronged impression in black scattered regularly over the white surfaces. Apparently these shields were only used by important men, those of ordinary men being undecorated. An unpublished photograph of Malinowski's\[64\] (see Fig. 3.18 a) shows a reconstruction of a war magic rite with this kind of shield in the background.

The engraved and painted house posts, lintels and panels for chief's houses (see Fig. 3.19 a & b, 3.20) and yam houses (see Fig. 3.3) are one category of Massim art which seems to have been neglected in the literature on Massim art and overlooked by collectors (possibly because of their significance, the people concerned did not wish to sell them). These boards, alongside the carving and decorating *kulac*canoes, are acknowledged to be the work of master carvers and they must be correctly carved with ritual and magic. In the literature on Massim art, photographs of decorated houses are more prolific than comments. Seligman notes that the men's club houses (*potuma*) at Wagawaga are decorated with painted boards along their front, back and sides (Seligman Plate LIV), as is a ceremonial platform photographed by C. Abel (Seligman Plate LVI)\[65\], the painted facades of yam houses at Kiriwina (Seligman Plate LXXVI), and the carved timbers of a chief's yam house (Seligman Plate LXXVII)\[66\]. Jenness and Ballantyne\[66\] illustrate several decorated houses in the d'Entrecasteaux group. Other photographs from the same sources indicate that ordinary village houses are not decorated.
a. Men approaching chief - note chief's house panels. (Malinowski 1919)
b. Painted house posts (Sth. Massim) (Vivian c. 1920)
Among the largest and most elaborate carved and painted art works executed in the Massim are canoe decorations associated with the ornamentation of sea going canoes (illustrated in detail in Chapter 6). Canoes which participate in overseas exchange expeditions, have an element of supernatural power because of the magical properties imbued in them during their making because of the ritual observances of their creator and the time honoured correctness of their decorations. Haddon and Hornell describe three types of canoe prows in the Massim area, each having horizontal and transverse prow boards. Each board is elaborately carved in low relief over the entire surface, and the designs then painted in red, black and white. Each canoe has two sets of boards, one each for the bow and stern and the stern prowboards (tabuya) can be distinguished by a row of holes at the base. The origin of the canoe can be distinguished by motifs incorporated into the design of the prow boards as well as their overall shape, for example whether the lobes are equivalent or one is enlarged, the attachment of munkuris; and so on (see chapter 6).

It may be possible that the significance of painting in the Massim area has been overlooked. In other areas of Papua New Guinea, carved ancestor or spirit figures, utilitarian objects and even pottery can be both incised and painted. The preference in the Massim for the sheen and feel of densely grained wood and light, flowing decorative motifs may be sufficient reason in itself for the absence of painting on many types of objects. But the fact that several classes of objects which are seen as important within the culture to be both painted and engraved by the hands of a master artist should, perhaps, be investigated further.

The various themes outlined in this introductory chapter will be referred to in more detail as the discussion progresses into the possibilities of the development and diffusion of art styles within the Massim area.

1 Definition from Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, 2nd Ed. 1959 p.105. quotation incomplete.
2 In sequence Webster's, ibid; Collin's English Dictionary, 1976 reprint; The Oxford Dictionary, 1964.
3 Webster's Dictionary, ibid, p.31
4 Pers. comm. John Kasiapwailova to Jutta Malnic recorded in her research project on the kula conducted with his collaboration. Unpublished. John Kasiapwailova is a leading contemporary poet and playwright from the Trobriand Islands.
5 "Zen Potter reflects two very different cultures" in The Australian 30/10/85
Carved house boards, probably 5th Massim
(Vivian c.1920)
The distinction between *kabitam* carvers and other carvers is made in detail later in this chapter. Briefly, *kabitam* carvers are those who have undertaken an apprenticeship with a master carver to learn specific techniques, designs and magic, and who is commissioned to ritually carve canoe prow boards, chief's house boards and yam house boards.

In traditional PNG societies, women were generally restricted to working with fibre and where pottery industries existed, clay. Pots, some shell ornaments, baskets, mats and clothing made from various leaves, tapa cloth or woven from fibre were all produced by women. Painting, applying or incising designs onto these objects in accordance with the local convention was also carried out by women. Men frequently used the same substances, but to create different forms. Body decoration, either permanent, i.e. tattoos, or painted and applied decoration was another form of creative expression used by women.

Forge, A: "Art and Environment" in *Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies*, Melb. 1971 p. 102

Guiart, J: "Studying Art in Melanesia" in *Mead (ed) Exploring... op cit.* p.408


Gigibori 1:1, 1974 p.34

Abel, C: "Suau Aesthetics" in *ibid*, p. 34. Explanations of other aesthetic terms are given later in this chapter.

Seligman, C: "Some Canoe Carvings with Magical Significance from south-eastern British New Guinea" in *Man*, 16, pp. 33. 1909


Malinowski, *op. cit.* p. 124

Seligman mentions the recent movements of several groups in the Southern Massim in his section on that area (Seligman 1910 *op cit*); May & Tuckson mention the Amphlett Islanders legend telling of their origin in the Trobriand Islands in *The Traditional Pottery of Papua New Guinea*, Sydney, 1983 p. 78; Armstrong, W, discusses movements between Sudest and Rossel in *Rossel Island*, Cambridge, 1928.

Newton, D: *Massim, Art of the Massim Area, New Guinea*. Museum of Primitive Art, N.Y. 1975. Milne Bay shield catalogue no. 36; other southern Massim type (from Normanby & South Cape) catalogue nos. 34, 35.

Beran, pers. comm. from examples in his collection, likewise for food stirrers.

Campbell gives the following definitions of Trobriand Island terms for master carvers and other woodcarvers in her paper and includes much more detail on the training, commissioning, etc. of tokabitam. The Art of Kula. Unpublished PhD thesis. ANU 1984. pp. 58-81. See also Austen, L: "The Woodworkers of Boitalu" in *Mankind* 3:7, 1945 which also describes the training of tokabitam. The system does not seem to have changed significantly in the last 50 years since 1935 when Austen's article was written (though not published till 1945).


ibid, p. 8.

Austen, ibid, p. 193.

M. Tuckson, pers. comm.

Adapted from Austen, op cit. p. 193.

Oral history of Ma Lumley as told to R. Cochrane is in a broadcast recorded for the BBC, 1959 in the Cochrane PNG Archive, University of Wollongong Library.


Kabisawali roughly translates to "communal self-help". See Beier, U: "Kabisawali: The Impact of a Self-help Movement on Cultural Life in the Trobriand Islands" and also Kasaipwalova, J: "Philosophy and Historical Reality of Kabisawali" both in *Gigibori* 2:1., 1975 for greater detail on the movement.

Beier, ibid. p. 21.


Abel, C: "Suau Aesthetics" in ibid. p.34-35.


Campbell, *Art of Kula*... op cit. p. 78.

Campbell, Restricted Access... op cit. p. 3.

ibid p. 81, see also Chief Narabutau, op cit. 1975 and 1979.


the theory followed by Campbell in her analysis of the designs on Vakutan canoe prows, see Chapter 6.
45 See generally Haddon, Chauvet, Linton & Wingert, Guiart regarding characteristics of New Guinea style areas
46 Heine-Geldern, Fraser, Golson, Newton are some proponents of this theory.
47 Linton & Wingert: The Arts of the South Seas, pp. 141-145
48 Adams, L: Primitive Art in Oceania, p. 145
49 Fraser, D: Primitive Art, p. 194
50 Haddon, A.C: The Decorative Arts of British New Guinea, Dublin, 1894
51 ibid. p.4
52 Abel, Suau... op cit, p. 33
53 Referred to in correspondence between H. Beran and P. Hallinan. Hallinan is a well known Queensland dealer and collector of Massim art.
54 Chauvet, S: Les Arts Indigenes de Nouvelle Guinee, Paris, 1930, p. 263. Translation: "... wooden objects made by the natives are polished with a particular care, especially when they are in ebony, to give them a brilliant patina of the glossiest black; and, as the melanesian artisans fill the scrollwork which decorates the shapes with white powder (chalk), the resulting effect of the opposition of black and white is particularly pleasing. (footnote) With a piece of the skin of a sting ray, or leaves of certain plants which become rough when dried.
56 Both authors catalogues op cit.
57 Beran, op cit. p. 7
58 Beran, pers. comm. July, 1985
59 Abel; Suau... op cit, p. 35
60 ibid. p.12
61 Vivian Collection, National Museum of Victoria, no. 416.
62 Tindale, S: "A Reply to the Trobriand "Medussa"" in Man, 1959, p.49
63 Leach, E: "A Trobriand Medussa?" in Man, 1954, p.90
64 No. 28 in a collection of Malinowski's photographs in the National Museum of Victoria designated "Malinowski 1919"
65 Seligman, G: The Melanesians... op cit.
Chapter 4

ROCK ART SITES IN THE MASSIM

Introduction
The oldest evidence of an art producing culture or cultures in the Massim area of Papua New Guinea are the nine recorded rock art sites\(^1\). Man made stone arrangements, including stone enclosures, circles and pavements are more frequent in the Massim area than rock art sites. However, certain rock art sites occur in the proximity of other stone arrangements\(^2\) and, although archeological data is still scarce, the possibility is being investigated that these sites may be evidence of an early culture complex, perhaps associated with Lapita pottery, existing in eastern island Melanesia c.f. 2500 to 3500 B.P. (Before Present)

For the purpose of this discussion, rock art is considered to be distinct from the stone arrangements or stone structures such as those described by Williams\(^3\) and Austen \(^4\) as "megaliths". This chapter will attempt to trace a connection between certain motifs and designs of the Massim rock art and the ethnographically described art of the historic period. In order to arrive at some credible comments for discussion on the possible connection between ancient rock art and historically recorded forms, this chapter will incorporate the following elements;

- a definition of rock art
- reference to a recognised system of terminology and methodology established in recent studies of Australian Aboriginal rock art \(^5\)
- a description of the rock art sites, with reference to the available recorded descriptions including photographs/illustrations.
- evidence that the designs and/or motifs were still utilised in the historical period.

Definition
Specht discusses previous definitions of rock art, which he finds wanting in some respect, before putting forward the following definition:

"...Rock art includes all markings of presumed human origin on natural or prepared rock surfaces, except where it can be demonstrated that the markings are the by-product of a manufacturing activity, unrelated to any other designs at the site..."\(^6\)

Manufacturing activity, in this context, could be a stone quarry, the making of stone blades, or abraded grooves in rocks used as sharpening and grinding stones.

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Fig. 9.16. Rock engravings in Melanesia (bb, gg painted in red and white): (a-r) New Caledonia (after Chevalier 1958; 1963); Luquet 1926; (t, v, x, u, z) Normanby Island (after Williams 1931); (a-r) New Hanover (after Lampert 1967); (w-z) Goodenough Bay (after Williams 1931; Egloff 1970); (bb-hh) Sogeri, Papua (after Williams 1931).
The terminology and methodology for describing Aboriginal rock art was developed by Maynard and applied to the rock art of the Western Pacific by Specht (Specht considers the sites from an archaeological perspective and does not include design analysis in his paper). The following categories, which have been selected from Maynard and Specht are used to assist with the description of the rock art sites in the Massim area: age of the art; techniques of production; design; style; composition; location of sites.

Age of the art
It is difficult to establish the age of rock art unless, as Specht suggests, any of the following criteria can be established:

- the artist was observed creating it, or the local informants have knowledge of its makers
- the art depicts any historically identifiable features, for example, at the Sisiana site Williams noted, "...some obviously modern markings, viz. some poorly incised native names in European characters..."7
- the art appears in a dated, excavated archeological site
- the designs can be compared with other dated archeological material found locally (for example pottery sherds), though this can be deceptive as designs can persist over centuries.

Maynard 8 suggests that a technique for measuring the age of rock engravings may be developed by comparing the patination of the original rock surface with the incised surface. Rock engravings are usually encountered on outcrops of hard rocks. The exposed surface of the rock is patinated and hardened to a small depth, and is a different colour to the inner rock due to the process of chemical change due to water penetration. When the engravings were made they exposed fresh, unpatinated rock, the colour contrast to the exposed surface perhaps giving them a desired visual effect. However, exposure of the incised surface over time would have caused it to have become re-patinated to the original surface colour. Therefore, Manyard suggests, the age of the engravings must be at least as old as the duration of the age hardening process.

Techniques of production
The system of classifying and describing techniques of producing rock art used in this paper was devised by Maynard and adapted for the Pacific region by Specht. Rock art is primarily classified as painted (additive) or engraved (subtractive). These two categories can be further sub-divided, as indicated in Table 1.
Some of the terminology may need further explanation to make the meaning precise for the purposes of this paper.

**Engraving techniques** are subtractive, i.e. achieved by removing the original surface and consist of the techniques of

- **Abrading**, which can cause deep grooves to form, is generally associated with the sharpening of tools
- **Pounding** is a technique of striking the rock surface with another rock to make an outline, thereby removing the surface patina
- **Pecking** also removes the surface patina, but is done by using a sharpened stone and hitting it with a hammer stone, allowing a good control over line
- **Rotation**, using a drill to penetrate the rock is not apparent at any of the sites discussed

**Painting techniques** are additive, i.e., apply new elements to the surface of the rock:

- **Stencils** are painted by holding an object against the surface and spraying paint around it, thus leaving a negative impression
- **Imprints** are positive stencils, achieved by colouring the object with wet paint and pressing it against the rock surface
- **Wet painting** can be done by using a hand or object covered with liquid and rubbing it over the rock surface; splattering or flicking paint with the fingers or an object; blowing a spray of paint from the mouth; applying dots or lines of paint with a dry pebble or stick; finger painting; brush painting using brushes made of different materials (chewed bark or twigs, feathers, hair)
- **Drawing**, i.e. delineating outlines, is most frequently done with a dry stick of charcoal
Rock engravings highlighted in chalk—"Complex figurative design."
Site in photograph unnamed, but figures resemble F.E. Williams's (1935) rubbings from Bisial and Sogi. (Vivian c.1920)
Design
Maynard includes engravings and paintings in her style analysis, and considers that the two categories of rock art should not be separated on the basis of technique. All the designs and symbols occurring at rock art sites should, in Maynard's view, be placed in one of the following categories:

- **Non figurative**: geometric forms and abstract such as concentric circles, spirals, barred lines, complex meanders and grids, lacking human or animal shapes
- **Simple figurative**: recognisable objects or zoomorphic or anthropomorphic figures formed as outlines or solid shapes without further embellishment or decoration
- **Complex figurative**: polychromatic; figures displaying complexity in the depiction of musculature or movement; portraying ornamentation, e.g. human figures wearing decorative apparel (See Fig. 4.2, figures could be wearing headdresses).10

Style
A rock art "style" can be considered to exist where the forms and designs are consistent and use a relatively narrow range of techniques, forms and motifs.

Composition
Composition relates not only to the individual figures or motifs depicted at the site, but also includes their relationship to each other as well as the spatial dimensions of the surface on which they occur, and perhaps, other features of the local environment. For paintings, which generally occur in caves or rock shelters, composition includes their placement within the cave site. The grouping of engraved rocks may not be random, and the location of each rock and its engraved surface in relation to the whole site should be considered as an entity.

Isaacs11 notes that one of the problems of interpreting rock art sites is knowing what to include as part of the scheme. She argues that scholars educated in a European tradition tend to take into account only those things which have been modified by human intervention... interpretation of Aboriginal rock art sites has not included unmodified features of the environment which, for Aboriginal artists, may have great importance. As she rightly points out, most published and archival work recording and photographing rock art sites have concentrated on the images themselves, frequently isolating individual motifs and ignoring the combination of forms and formations.
Location and nature of sites

Specht 12 has analysed the geological and geographical context of the 314 recorded rock art sites in the Western Pacific, and suggests that the sites were consciously selected with regard to rock type and location for specific purposes. He found that painting is mostly done on limestone which is light coloured, providing a background against which the colours are highly visible. Paintings usually occur in caves or rock shelters (on the coastal areas such as the Massim, these are formed from uplifted coral reefs). These locations provide protection from the weather and indiscriminate use. Engravings, on the other hand, usually appear on rocks of igneous origin, more specifically on boulders located in open space near, or actually in, river courses or the sea.

Other factors which could assist in the analysis of particular rock art sites are whether they were sited near habitation (past or present); on productive or non-productive land; easily accessible or remote and difficult to reach. These factors could provide clues as to whether the art was done casually, for example, hunters doodling in a cave while waiting for a storm to clear, or purposefully, such as in the preparation of a ritual place.

ROCK ART SITES IN THE MASSIM AREA (MILNE BAY DISTRICT)

In 1966 Pretty published a catalogue 13 for the Port Moresby Museum listing every known site of archaeological interest in Papua New Guinea by Districts, including rock art sites, stone enclosures, quarries, etc. Using this listing and other resources, Specht extracted all the rock art sites, which he also lists according to the District in which they occur (though his analysis includes the greater Western Pacific region as well as P.N.G.) According to Pretty and Specht, nine rock art sites are known in the Milne Bay District, the administrative division which is virtually equivalent to the Massim ethnographic area. These known sites were recorded at various times by ethnographers, government officials and missionaries whose descriptions were published in various journals, sometimes accompanied by photographs or illustrations. Some sites have been intensively reported while information on others is very scanty. The writer was able to locate the sources utilised by Pretty and Specht, and found as well, some additional photographs of rock art sites in the Massim in the Vivian Collection14 which seem to supplement the published illustrations and photographs. However, as the notation on the Vivian photographs is poor, this cannot be completely verified.

In this section the nine known rock art sites will be described, using information derived from the reports. Secondly, the sites will be discussed in the context of the previous section, i.e. with regard to their age, technique of
a. Rock painting at Iyavali Niala (Vivian 1928)

b. Iyavali Niala site (Jenness-Ballantyne 1928)
production, style and so on. Thirdly, the sites and the motifs occurring there will be examined for any consistencies which may exist.

**ROCK PAINTING SITES**

(1) (Specht no. 110): Goodenough Island, Iyavali Nails area near Mt. Madava'a. (BDP)

This site was described by Jenness and Ballantyne as having

"...the most remarkable specimens of painting (in the Northern d'Entrecasteaux)...

From their single photograph of the rock paintings (Fig.4.3b; 4.3a is the same site photographed by Vivian) it is difficult to establish the size of the paintings and the overall context of the site. From the brief description it appears that the rocks formed a partial shelter

"...two large rocks, with flat, inclined surfaces, overhung the track..."

Jenness and Ballantynes' informants, a group of villagers sitting around a fire at the base of the rock, apparently had no knowledge of the creators of the art, or of the significance of the motifs although one related several drawings to specific birds and reptiles.

"...The present day natives know nothing about them, but merely believe their forefathers drew them. They are even uncertain as to what the patterns represent..."

The rocks themselves were distinguished by individual names, *bwaiobwaio* and *kawaloana*, but again the informants had no knowledge of the reasons for these names.

From the information given to Jenness and Ballantyne, and the look of the paintings in the photograph, it appears as if the designs, which are simple figurative, were wet painted. The outline of each design (at least those visible in the photograph) consists of a series of white dots with the centres entirely infilled in black. The authors noted that the paintings, in two places on the "first" rock were very faint,

"...but the second was covered over half its surface with weird fantastic figures in black and white...the drawings were still quite fresh, though they evidently dated back several generations..."

The informants around the fire said that the white dots were made with lime and the black with charcoal, leading Jenness and Ballantyne to presume that coconut oil must have been mixed with the paints. If the paintings on the first rock were more exposed to the weather, or perhaps the accidental contact of people or animals brushing the surface as they passed by, this could account for the fact that they had faded to a trace. However, it is possible that the designs
on the second rock had been retouched, perhaps more than once, after their original execution.

No dimensions are given for the figures, nor for the surface area on which they occur, and any other details of the site and its location have already been quoted. The only individual design on which Jenness and Ballantyne comment is "...the curious 'star fish' pattern which is sometimes tattooed on the body is also found burnt in or carved around the orifice of the pipe..."

(2) (Specht no. 113) Fergusson Island, Ebadi, Koke-weo-weola (BDQ)
Williams reports this site, but as the rock bearing the paintings had fallen on its face sometime before 1929, no actual description was possible. Local informants told Williams
"...it had marks in red, blue and white ([Williams comments] I have no doubt that "blue" means black, for natives commonly fail to make a distinction...blue was probably unknown when Koko-weo-weola was painted...)"

Williams presumed that the site was a rock shelter as it features in a local legend as the hiding place for two boys who had stolen fire from the legendary woman Wine Wai'ea.

(3) (Specht no. 114) Fergusson Island, Mapamoiva (BDQ)
Once again Williams is the only recorder of this site and his description is very brief and vague, noting only that there are two or three small designs in red on low coral cliffs at the water's edge. His local informant had no knowledge of the paintings except that
"...they were made by one Apau Ogo, who subsequently left for Goodenough..."

The reports of the last two rock art sites are disappointing, offering very little information for analysis. As they represent half of the rock painting sites in the Massim area this effectively prevents comparison of sites and designs.

PAINTED AND ENGRAVED SITE
(4) (Specht no. 109) Trobriand Islands, Kitava Island, Inakebu Cave, (BCI)
This is the only site in the area where painting and engraving occur together. There is only a single engraving, a spiral approximately 6cm in diameter, with a tail extending a further 2cm on the lower right (Fig. 4.4a)

The rock art site at Inakebu cave was first investigated in 1968 by Heers and Meiwada, the head of the clan associated with the site. The local population was aware of the site, knowing of it as a 'bwalu', a place where the original
FIG. 4.4

a. Rock engraving
Inakebu Cave
(Collier et al. 1976)

b. Hand
Stencil
Inakebu Cave
(Collier et al.)
ancestor of a sub-clan had emerged from the ground (this belief of origin is common to all Trobriand Island clans), and believed that if they entered the cave, they would sicken and die. As Heers and Meiwada suffered no ill effects from their initial investigation of the cave, several men accompanied them on the next occasion and discovered the drawings in the final chamber of the cave. The authors comment that

"...none of the men, many of whom were quite old, had ever seen the drawings or heard mention of them before..." 19

and also

"... the present inhabitants have no idea of what the drawings represent and were unaware of their existence until they were re-discovered..."20

The location of the site is well described. Kitava Island is an uplifted coral attol, and the cave is situated on the high inner rim. There are three chambers in the cave and the paintings are located on surfaces towards the back of the last chamber.

"...the drawings are all on a...clean bedrock surface on cream coloured, fairly dense and uniform limestone, with a suitable rough texture...protected from flows of dripping water...the one drawing on a flowstone column is also still on the surface and not covered by later deposition. A film of later deposit would be good to show the age of the drawings,, but since the drawings appear to have been deliberately located on dry sites the lack of cover does not indicate that they are necessarily young..."21

Several techniques of rock painting have been used at this site. Plate 1 shows the stencil of a hand, one of three hand stencils on the same surface. The hands all appear to be mutilated, each of the hands having one finger missing (see Fig. 4.4b where the left thumb appears to be missing). The paint sprayed around the outline if the hands is described as being dark brown or black, but fainter than the line drawings.

It is interesting to note in this context Jenness and Ballantyne’s comments on the Northern D’Entrecasteaux practise of cutting off a finger joint as an act of mourning, and that Beran has a carved wooden janus figure in his collection on which the right hand on both sides of the janus figure is represented as having the little finger missing.22

Apart from the stencils and line drawings which are both black or brown/black, there are several patches of red ochre applied in indeterminate shapes. These appear above the other paintings and are the only areas where a coloured pigment is used.
Line drawings - Inakebu Cave
(Ollier et al 1970)
The authors assume that the line drawings were made by finger painting, using the black mud from the floor of the cave. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that, since the caves were found, people have written their names on other rocks within the site and three drawings have been retouched. The un-retouched drawings can be distinguished as the newly applied mud shows smear marks and fingerprints in contrast to the old drawings which have no fingerprints, but on which hairline cracks are visible, revealing ageing due to drying.

The line drawings are either non figurative (of which there are 5) or simple figurative (of which there are 18 in the cave, see examples in Fig. 4.5). Many of the simple figurative drawings appear to be fish-like forms. V's or inverted V's appear to be dissecting the centre of 10 of the figures, and in 5 instances these V's have appendages at their extremities. The authors speculate that the V's represent the shafts of weapons, indicating that the drawings were used as "hunting magic", however this is their personal opinion and could be questionable as the forked ends of the shafts are furthest from the 'body'. As in every case of rock art in the Massim, there is no evidence for the significance or symbolism of the paintings. In the Ollier, Holdsworth and Heers' article, photographs of the line drawings (their Plates 2 & 3), indicate the positions of the drawings in relation to each other, showing that they are placed at approximately regular intervals and range between 20cm to 60cm in length. In their view

"...There seems to be no order in the arrangement of the drawings and they do not form groups. There is no accidental superimposition."24

ROCK ENGRAVINGS.


Rock engravings and/or stone groups occur along the coast of Goodenough Bay, on the north eastern tip of the mainland of Papua New Guinea. Egloff divides the occurrences into four categories, arrangements; pavements; rock carvings an stones associated with mythical beings. At the two sites where engraved rocks occur, at Boiani/Radava/Meitepana and Wedau/Wemira, they are associated with the stone arrangements he calls "pavements". Boiani/Radava/Meitepana and Wedau/Wemira are contiguous settlements composed of several hamlet groups (see Fig.4.6).

Boiani is the commonly used name for the contiguous villages of the first group. The engraved stones of Boiani were first reported by Etheridge in 1908, and by the time of Williams report in 1931 were already well known.

Unlike other rock art sites, the stones were within an area of habitation.

"...standing in exposed places in the village for all to see..."26 (see Fig.4.7)
FIG. 4.6

SKETCH PLAN OF BOIANAI VILLAGES
Site-God 1

Goodenough Bay

Distribution of rock art sites, Boianai (Egloff 1970)
Figs. 1 and 4.—"Wakeke's House," Boianai, before and after excavation, showing remains of pot covering skull.

Figs. 2 and 3.—Carved stones, Boianai. (Fig. 2 lined with chalk for photographing.)

Engraved rocks, Boianai (Williams 1981 - n.b. photograph acknowledged to Vivian.)
That the people of Boiani regarded the sites with respect and did not want them to be interfered with by outsiders is evident in both Williams and Egloff’s reports. Williams attempted an excavation of a stone circle called *Wakeke’s House* in which one upright stone was carved. The excavation revealed a burial with the remains of a pot covering the skull, but, as the villagers

"...showed strong disapproval of the excavation it had to be stopped before it reached a conclusive stage..." 27

When Egloff examined the Boiani stones in 1970 he located ten engraved stones and noted that, while he was investigating them, other probable rock carvings were being concealed with copra sacks and hidden by the villagers. The following is Egloff’s description of the engraved stones he located:

*God 1a.* Two carved stones called *riri* are part of *Wakeke’s House* and are said to be the foundation stones of the village. They are decorated with simple scroll and concentric circle motifs.

*God 1c.* This pyramidal shaped boulder has two of its faces covered with large concentric circles surmounted by a series of concentric arcs (Plate 1 B).

*God 1f.* Concentric circles, both separate and cojoined, cover the north eastern face of this large boulder. Figure 2 (1f) illustrates a particularly clear and well executed portion of the design.

*God 1g.* This stela is decorated with a symmetrically rendered stylised face formed by three interlocking scrolls (Figure 2 1g).

*God 1h.* Elaborately carved interlocking scrolls and circles are found on the smoothest face of this large boulder. Figure 2 (1h) is a rubbing of a section of the carving which illustrates the complexity of design common to scroll work in the Massim.

*God 1i.* This large dark basalt boulder has its eastern face covered with deeply carved concentric circles.

*God 1j* and *Ik.* These stones lie side by side on the bridge embankment, having been placed there in recent years. *lj* is decorated with a scroll and *lk* bears a complex pair of interlocking scrolls (Figure 2 (lj) and Ik).

*God 1l.* This shaft is 45cm high and ovoid in cross-section. Except for a portion at the base, it is covered with concentric circles, interlocking scrolls and a series of nested hooks. A significant feature is the stylised face motif on the obverse side. The *croix a enveloppe* on the reverse is of further interest (Figure 2 (ll)).

Two of the carved rocks in Mietepana (*le* and *lf*), as well as three uncarved boulders, are elements of the cassowary myth. This myth tells of a woman’s anger with a husband who did not bring home any food from the garden. She changed into a cassowary bird and ran away into the bush. The
Although the investigators' informants had no knowledge of the carving of the stones, Egloff quotes the Boianai peoples' conviction that, while the stones stand, the village will be secure, the gardens alright and the people strong in every way. Several decades earlier Seligman had noted that, in some parts of the Southern Massim, stone circles (gahana) were appropriated to cannibal feasts, but otherwise stone circles were used as squatting and debating places by the men. Once again, an circular design with hooks enclosed is associated with the patterns of womens' facial tattoos. This is referred to by Williams and also Egloff who comments that

"...The carved curvilinear motifs are referred to as giripina. This word in Boniki (the language of Boianai) is used to refer to female facial tattoos which are often composed of intricate scrolls with hook attached as well as the croix a enveloppe..."31

Judging by their appearance in the photographs, the engraved stones appear to be deeply and evenly incised and well patinated. Williams used chalk to highlight the engravings for photography. No date has been established for the rock engravings at this site, though the hooked circle and croix a enveloppe designs, as well as their location and association with other stone arrangements may link them with a wider ancient regional art style, a possibility which archaeologists are presently investigating.

(6) (Specht no. 107) Goodenough Bay. Vedau Wemira, engraved (BCB).

Seligman described the stone circles bolabola he located at several places among the Wamira settlements as mens' debating places, and noted that a few of the bolabola stones bore lightly incised designs. At the stone circle at Irere, which measured 16ft. in diameter, and was forbidden to women, Seligman's informants told him that the upright stones in the bolabola were family property and inherited and certain stones were named. The designs on one called Garuboi bore no relation to a snake, garuboi in the local language. Previously a large shallow pottery dish was placed in the centre of the circle, purchased especially for this purpose from east of Cape Frere.

In William's opinion, the incised stones he saw at Wedau

"...were on the whole inferior. They do not appear to be as ancient as those of Boianai..."34

His informants related that the stone arrangements were given to the people by bushmen, along with the appropriate magic, and were considered essential for successful gardening. Williams was also assured that other decorated stones existed in the locality but he did not investigate them.
Engraved rocks - Baiani/Wedau (Egloff 1970)

b. Woman's facial tattoo resembling patterns of rock engravings. (Williams 1931)
By the time of Egloff's investigation, one stone circle (said to be a clan burial place) and three stone pavements existed in Wedau Wamira, but were not regarded with as much esteem as those of Boianai. Egloff's illustration Fig. 2 (2b), a rubbing of the incisions on the stone and his description of it give more detail than William's line drawing (Fig. 5). Egloff notes that, in comparison to the Boianai engravings, the Wedau stone's motifs are

"...V shaped incisions, rather than the U shaped grooves of the Boianai carvings. The concentric arcs and circles at the top are made with V shaped grooves. The U shaped grooves result from a pecking technique, while the V shaped grooves are primarily incised..."35

The rock art sites at Boianai and Wedau Wamira differ from the other Massim rock art sites in several important aspects:

> they are within, or proximate to, existing settlements
> they formed part of composed, man made stone arrangements
> the rocks and stones on which they are carved are not so large that they would be unable to be moved
> The arrangements in which they occurred were still used in historical times, though the purpose for which the sites were originally created may have been different.
> The designs, non figurative curvilinear forms (except for the two stylise 'faces' formed from spirals), are internally consistent and closely resemble motifs commonly used in ethnographically recorded Massim art.

(7) (Specht no.108). Normanby Island, Sewa Bay, Bisiai, Engraved (BDG)
The engravings at this rock art site are found on a very large rock mass in the centre of a creek, both on exposed rocks and inside a cavern formed by large upright stones. Both F.E. Williams and H.T. Williams 36 who investigated the site found it impossible to photograph or accurately produce the engravings in the "tunnel" or "cavern" because of the darkness within, the awkwardness of their position and the worn nature of some of the designs. Both concluded that the ground level and watercourse must have changed their relative positions since the carvings were executed and noted that it would have been physically impossible to engrave designs in the positions in which they found them.

H.T. Williams gives the most precise description of this location

"...The twelve stones examined stand in a valley along which a stream only occasionally flows. Ascending the valley, two stones bearing markings are passed and then a cavern is reached which consists of a number of large upright stones, about 15 to 20 feet high. The interior of this cavern contains many designs, but owing to the darkness and their worn condition they were not traced. After rising to a level river bed area, the next series of stones
bearing marking is reached. All these design bearing stones are in an aim straight line, about 250 feet in distance..."37

He also comments that the "better preserved" engravings were consistent in the width and depth of their incisions, being about half an inch wide and three eights of an inch deep.

F. E. Williams 38 describes the engraving of an anthropomorph in the tunnel as one of the best carvings in Bisiai. He also located another anthropomorphic figure on the main face of the tunnel and several non figurative designs of concentric circles, one with attached spirals (unfortunately he does not indicate whether his illustration g in Fig. 4. p.132 is this last motif). On the mass of rocks further upstream he noted several good anthropomorphic figures, further series of concentric circles, concentric ellipses, concentric circles with spokes and circles with radiating hooks. Although both F. E. Williams and H.T. Williams illustrated several of the engravings in their reports39, neither gives precise details of the position of the individual motifs they chose to illustrate, or if they were grouped with other motifs. In both cases the selection for illustration seems to be a random choice.

As with other rock art sites in the Massim, nothing is known by the present local inhabitants of its origin. Williams's (1931) informants told him that the carved rocks were called Nawai'waia. Williams (1954) could only report that "...The near villages have ceased to exist...The Papuans living close to Sewa Bay believe the markings to be the work of sprites and of very old origin. They would not attempt any interpretation of the designs except to say they did not belong to their art..."40

(8) (Specht no. 113) Normanby Island, opposite Dobu. No name, engraved. (BDR)
The only mention of this site is in Jenness and Ballantyne, in the context of a discussion of the most commonly used motifs found in the art of the region. "...At Dobu, a water bottle was incised with a number of series of two concentric circles, and on top of a large flat rock in the hills of Normanby opposite that island we found the same figure graven..."41

Again there is a disappointing lack of details with regard to any aspect of the site or engraving.
FIG. 2 - BISIAL. FACE OF FIGURE CARVED ON THE SMALLEST OF THE INSCRIBED ROCKS.

FIG. 4 - BISIAL.

FIG. 5 - SISIANA.

FIG. 6 - SISIANA.

FIG. 7 - SISIANA

FIG. 8 - SISIANA.

FIG. 9 - BOIANA.

Rubbings of Massim rock engravings (Williams 1931)
At this site there are approximately 20 carvings and numerous deep pock holes located on the top of a large rock called *Bureva Pouia* 42. The carvings are attributed to a local spirit, *Burela*la, who is responsible for success in pig hunting. The pock marks were said to be caused by the spirit cracking *mapwea* nuts on the rock, but William's informants could give him no information for the carvings. A brief description of the is given by Williams:

"...the actual carvings...were rather faint, averaging perhaps hardly more than one eighth of an inch in depth. They included 1) spirals; 2) concentric circles; 3) a spiral attached to what resembled a Melanesian reversed coil; and 4) a more primitive looking carved oval with a lateral cross bar and a little tail..." 43

**Conclusion**

The predominance of curvilinear forms, in particular concentric circles, single, hooked and interlocking spirals and coils occurring at the rock art sites in the Massim are probably significant to the evolution of present day Massim art, as it is the combinations of these forms which typify the Massim art of historical times. Secondly, the preference for curvilinear motifs to be incised could be considered to be part of a long continued tradition in the area, although the later medium used is wood. (Wood carving may have been prolific in prehistoric times but of this there can be no archaeological verification). The absence of large polychromatic painted surfaces in the rock art, and their absence as well in the historically known art of the area, may also be an indication of the continuance of a tradition of incised curvilinear motifs. As well, the fact that the sites were known to residents of the area, although the originators of the art were not, raises the possibility that the motifs had at least a passive influence on the continuance of style.

Engraved curvilinear forms occur at Boianai, WedauWemira, Kitava, Sisiana and Bisiai. Egloff and Specht have noted the likeness of the Boainai and Wedau Wemira complexes to other sites in New Britain, New Hanover and New Caledonia, suggesting the possibility of an ancient rock art style region in the eastern section of island Melanesia. Certain motifs, in particular the hooked spiral and croix a envellope, bear a close resemblance to markings on prehistoric pottery sherds of the Lapita culture.

There are two theories presently being researched as to the origin of the curvilinear motifs. Golson quotes Soldheim's view that

"...some at least of these motifs may have, not an extraneous origin as sometimes proposed, but a source in an ancient regional art tradition to whose existence the early decorated pottery now being reported for the area would testify...." 44, before putting forward another hypothesis, i.e. that the motifs have visual parallels with images and concepts derived from the Dongson Bronze Age tradition emanating from South East Asia. One of the primary Dongson themes is
Stone platform (Vivian, 1920)
"bola bola" in Seligman, 1910
the "ship of the dead", and elements of this theme have been described as occurring in the art of the Admiralty Islands and elsewhere in Melanesia. Golson remarks that...

"...the essential elements of these canoe (ship of the dead) images appear on an incised slab in Wedau village at Goodenough Bay on the New Guinea mainland, of which F.E. Williams (1931:134) notes that the technique of incision differs from that of the other carved stones of the area..."

Golson finds other evidence of Dongson ship of the dead motifs on incised shells found at Wangiela, Collingwood Bay (the next bay west of Goodenough Bay).

William's comment, mentioned previously, noted that the incisions on the Wedau stone were "fainter", "more inferior" and "less ancient" than the Boaianai engravings. Egloff also commented on the engravings on this stone, noting that on the lower portion of the stone the designs were incised with V shaped groove, while the concentric circles on the upper portion are made with a different technique resulting in U shaped grooves. Perhaps this stone represents the incorporation of a new design into an older tradition. A speculative view is that the older tradition was pre-ceramic, perhaps part of the Papuan megalithic culture. There are two instances cited in the Goodenough Bay area where stone bowls are set within the stone circles; one at Wakeke's House, and another at Mietepana (Boianai). It is then interesting to note Seligman's description of the stone circle "bolabola" at Ivere in the Wamira area.

"...nowadays a fire is sometimes lit in the centre of the stone circle but formerly the place was occupied by a large shallow pottery dish called noma, brought specially for the purpose from the east of Cape Frere where pottery was made..."

The bowls apparently contained water and were used as mirrors when applying facial decorations. It is not known if this was their original purpose.

Another function of the Wedau stone and other stone engravings of hooked spirals was to provide the pattern for facial tattoo designs. In the same context Jenness and Ballantyne note that the "starfish" pattern they noted at the Iyavali Niala rock painting site was used also as a design for body tattoos on Goodenough Island, and at Suau on the south east coast of the mainland, as well as being commonly used as a burnt in or incised design on other objects, for example bamboo pipes.

The case for continuity in design in the Massim area from long disappeared traditions to the present day is centered on certain curvilinear motifs. In a recent symposium (Exploring the Visual Arts of Oceania, Hawaii, 1979) art historians debated the probability that an originating cultural complex spread across island Melanesia to western Polynesia. It incorporated the ceramic style,
Lapita, after which it is called, and which is reckoned to be the ancestral decorative style for this extensive area. The surface decorative patterns found on Lapita pottery, were adapted for use as elements of design on barkcloth, tattoo designs and carved wooden objects. One of the primary decorative motifs of the Lapita style are complex returning and interlocking scrolls, perhaps the ancestor to the ubiquitous 'bird's head' derivatives of the historic Massim art style. However, no Lapita site has yet been discovered in the Massim area, although its immediate neighbours to the north, New Britain, the east, Solomon Islands, and adjoining westwards on the mainland, Collingwood Bay, have yielded evidence of the Lapita culture. There may have been sufficient contact with the neighbouring areas for the style to penetrate the Massim area (by means of trade routes), and be adapted into the local art style from these outside sources. An alternative suggestion is that the preference for the curvilinear decorative motifs apparent in the rock engravings had already developed, and that other Lapita motifs could have introduced and incorporated into Massim art at a later date.

In contrast, the simple engraved anthropomorphic figures occurring on Normanby Island at Bisiai and Sisiana, as well as the rock painting sites at the Inakebu Caves Kitava, and at Iyavali Naila on Normanby Island might represent smaller scale local styles which have not had a great influence on other types of art production within the Massim. The Inakebu Caves, for example, present five different kinds of images; hand stencils, red ochre patches; two styles of line drawings and one engraving. The diversity of styles at this site suggests that perhaps the art was produced at different times by different people. With the exception of the engraved spiral, the designs are certainly inconsistent with those at any other site, nor are they recognisable as being incorporated into any other kind of Trobriand Island or Massim art. The existence of several different rock art styles and techniques within the Massim area are probably further evidence of the movement of various groups through the area in the complex pattern of migrations which took place in prehistoric times, and which was still occurring in ethnographic times.

The following conclusions can be reached regarding the rock art sites of the Massim area:

**Age of the art:** None of the nine sites has been archeologically dated, nor do the present populations know of their origin. From the data available it appears that the engravings are all fully patinated, as the designs either had to be outlined with chalk or rubbed in order to make them distinguishable for photography. Should the engraved rock from Wedau Wamira prove to be associated with Lapita it would be dated to between 2,500 to 3,500 B.P. If William's assumption is correct, and the Boainai engraved rocks are more ancient than Wedau, then they may belong to an even older culture.

**Techniques of Production:** The engravings all appear to have been produced by pounding and pecking techniques, rotation was altogether absent. The only
scratching appeared to be recently incised names in European characters at Sisiana, which was also the site marked with pock holes.
The painted sites incorporated all the techniques described with the exception of imprinting, the most diverse site being the Inekabu Caves. Colours were limited to red, black and white and a maximum of two colours appeared at the visible sites.

**Design and Style:** All of the rock art in the Massim area falls into the categories of non figurative and simple figurative. The most frequently recurring engraved motifs, curvilinear designs of concentric circles, spirals, circles with hooks, etc. have been recognised as being part of an ancient art style extending beyond the region under discussion. Many designs and motifs were only mentioned in text and not illustrated, making comparisons difficult. None of the anthropomorphic figures was a repeated design.

**Composition:** Many details which would have assisted a compositional analysis were lacking. Many of the earlier reports (pre 1970) concentrated on individual motifs, as is evidenced by the photographs and illustrations referred to in this paper. The exception is the information available for the Boianai and Wedau Wemira sites which are by far the best documented, and a great deal of attention is given to the integration of the engravings within their immediate area, the village, and the surrounding locality.

**Location of Sites:** The three painted and one painted/engraved sites all occurred within rock shelters or caves, although one rock shelter had fallen in concealing the painting.

The location of the engraved sites varied from being isolated and difficult to reach, to being sited within inhabited areas, although all were near water. Again there is generally insufficient information to provide clues as to the purpose of the art, with the exception of Boianai and Wedau which have had the following purposes noted for the sites themselves and other stone arrangements within the immediate proximity:
  > cannibal feasting place
  > mens' squatting and debating place
  > burial place

It is debatable, however, whether any of the above constituted the original purpose for the engraving of the stones.

In contrast to the "symbolic landscapes" integrated into the carved and painted canoe prow boards, and the wealth of mythological and legendary reference that is associated with canoe carvings, shell valuables and, to some extent, pottery, rock art in the Massim does not seem to have the same recognition. Two inferences can be drawn:
(i) that the rock art in the Massim area are the relics of an ancient culture and have little or no relevance to the local communities' known past. In comparison to the abundance of songs, legends and myths associated with canoes, shell valuables and even pottery, this would explain the absence of mythological reference and even total lack of knowledge of some sites recorded by the various authors. Or

(ii) information has been withheld from outsiders as the sites still represent a sacred or otherwise significant tradition to the society associated with it. A comparison can be drawn with the carved and painted designs on the prow boards of Massim sea going canoes (discussed in detail in later chapters). It is a recent development that the "symbolic landscape" incorporated into the individual designs and overall patterns have been divulged to outsiders by knowledgeable men. Malinowski, for example, was aware of the wealth of mythological and legendary material associated with canoes, but neither he, nor other respected ethnographers including Seligman and Williams obtained any information on the meaning of designs. Informants gave Seligman and Williams the names of individual motifs, but neither obtained any details on a deeper level although it is difficult to determine whether they were seeking such information.

It is concluded that a historical continuity exists between the curvilinear designs present on some rock art sites in the Massim area and historically recorded surface decoration on body tattoos, incised wooden objects and painted surfaces. Evidence for this can be most clearly drawn from the designs represented in Fig. 4.9. In this collection by F.E. Williams of motifs from three rock art sites in the Massim, at least three can be directly related to decorative motifs on objects made within the historical period. In Fig. 4.9, fig.1 Bisiai, a design of concentric circles can be compared with the design of concentric circles appearing on the cross-cut ends of the logs of yam houses (see Fig. 3.2) and on the hulls and outriggers of seagoing canoes. The design in fig. 6 Sisiana, closely resembles one of the main recurring motifs of Massim art, the representation of a bird called boi (reef heron); this is a central motif in the design of the lagim of masawa canoes (see p. 207, sketch of doka - boi design). The concentric circle with striations in the outer circle (fig.9 Boianai) are comparable to the handle of a lime spatula and a wooden disc.

Apart from the motifs described above is Williams's comparison of the hooked spiral design of a woman's facial tattoo (Fig. 4.8b) with the curvilinear motifs engraved on stones at Boianai (Fig. 4.8a). In all instances, however, whether the designs originated from an ancient regional art tradition or an extraneous source is uncertain to date.

2 Egloff, B: "Rock Carvings and Stone Groups of Goodenough Bay" in *Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania* 52, 1970, pp. 147-56


5 Maynard, L: "The Archaeology of Australian Aboriginal Art" in Mead, ed: *Exploring the Visual Arts*: op cit, p. 93


7 Williams 1931, op cit, p. 133

8 Maynard, op cit, p. 93

9 Adapted from Specht, 1979, p. 60

10 Maynard, op cit, p. 93-4


12 Specht, op cit, p. 65

13 Pretty, op cit.


15 Jenness, D & Ballantyne, A: *The Northern D'Entrecasteaux*. Cambridge, 1920, the following quotations all occur pp. 199-200, see also photographs facing p. 198

16 Williams 1931, op cit, p. 130

17 ibid, p. 131

18 Ollier, Holdsworth, Heers: "Cave paintings from Kitava, Trobriand Islands" in *PNG Public Museum Records*, 1:1, 1970, Fig. 2
19 ibid, p. 16
20 ibid, p.28
21 ibid p. 18, see also Map, Fig 1
22 Jenness & Ballantyne, op cit. p.116 with illustration. Beran, op cit. Catalogue no. 139 and pers. comm. Note that it is the top joint of the little finger in both cases.
23 Ollier et al: op cit. Figs. 2-7, Plates 2-3
24 ibid, p. 28
25 Egloff, op cit. p. 149
26 Williams 1931, op cit. p. 133
27 ibid, p. 134 see Plate X, Figs. 1 and 4
28 Egloff 1970, op cit, p. 150
29 Seligman 1910, op cit. p. 464, see also Vivian photograph no.539.
30 Williams 1931, op cit. p. 138-40, also Plate X Fig. 2
31 Egloff 1970, op cit. p.152
32 Williams 1931, op cit. Plate 10
33 Seligman 1910, op cit. pp. 465-6
34 Williams 1931, op cit. p. 135
35 ibid, p. 153
37 H.T. Williams, ibid, p. 508
38 Williams 1931 op cit. p. 131
39 Williams 1931, Fig. 4 and Plate 16; Williams 1954 p. 509
40 Williams 1954 ibid, p. 511.
41 Jenness & Ballantyne, op cit. p. 198
42 Williams 1931, op cit. p. 133
43 ibid, p. 133
44 Golson, J "Both Sides of the Wallace Line...." op cit, p. 582. See also Soldheim II, W.: "Sa-Huynh-Kalanay" in Asian Perspectives 8, 1964, pp.207-211.
45 Badner, M: "Some Evidences of Dong-son derived Influence in the Art of the Admiralty Islands" and Fraser, D: Early Chinese Influence in Melanesia?" in Mead, ed: Early Chinese Art...Vol 3, op cit. See also Reisenfeld, A. "Some probable Bronze Age Influences in Melanesian Culture" in Far Eastern Quarterly, Vol. 9, 1950
46 Golson, op cit, p. 585 and Fig 11B
47 Egloff op cit, p. 153
48 Reisenfeld, "Megalithic Cultures...." op cit.
49 Egloff, op cit, p. 149 Fig. 1a and 1c.
50 Seligman, 1910 op cit, p. 466
51 Williams 1931, op cit, p. 139 Fig. 6
52 Jenness & Ballantyne, op cit, p. 199
53 Specht, op cit, p. 74
54 Williams 1931, op cit, p. 139
As this thesis was being finalised, and too late for inclusion, the writer saw an extensive collection of photographs taken by Jutta Malnic over 8 visits to the Massim to record the *kula* voyages. Concentric circles painted on canoe outriggers and hulls were not uncommon.

Beran catalogue, op cit. item no.3 (p.18) spatula with 'spoked wheel' motif collected D'Entrecasteaux, 1930's. Also on the same page a photograph of a disc probably worn on the head as part of a dance costume, the example is from the Museum of Mankind.
Prehistoric Pottery Styles in South-east New Guinea

Discoveries of pottery sherds at archaeological sites in the Massim provide a significant amount of information regarding the earlier cultures in the area and the transitions which took place in prehistoric times. This chapter will discuss the various pottery styles which exist or have existed in the Massim; Lapita and Collingwood Bay as the antecedents of the present day pottery industries of the Amphlett and Goodenough Islands, Engineer Group and Calvados Chain. Lapita ware and Collingwood Bay funerary pottery are exceptional in the artistry of their design and decoration. The tendency to produce pots which are aesthetically pleasing as well as functionally efficient is still evident in the Massim, where the present day industries are flourishing despite the introduction of alternative utensils.

Lapita Culture Pottery

Lapita is included in the discussion because, although no Lapita site has yet been discovered within the Massim, the style was so distinctive and pervasive in the neighbouring areas. Watom Island (situated between New Britain and New Ireland) is possibly the origination site of the Lapita culture, which spread across the Pacific as far as Tonga, and several sites where sherds showing the characteristic Lapita decorative technique have been found in the Solomon Islands, immediately to the south-east of the Massim. Evidence of Lapita influence has been traced along the south coast of Papua in the pottery of the Mailu, Motu and as far as Yule Island. Further archaeological investigation of the Milne Bay District will give a more definite answers to the prehistoric cultures of the area.

The importance of Lapita in Pacific prehistory has been highlighted by Specht for the following reasons:

"(1) Its widespread distribution, from New Guinea to Tonga
(2) its possible relationships to pottery from the Phillipines, Southeast Asia, and South China, and
(3) the possibility that it represents one of the earliest, if not the earliest intrusion by man into the islands of the Southwest Pacific...."1

These arguments are supported by Bellwood,2 who adds that the Lapita potters, who spread rapidly through Melanesia in the mid/late second millenium BC, were highly mobile groups of sea-borne colonisers, and quite possibly the first pottery making Austronesians to enter Melanesia. He qualifies this by saying...
FIG. 5.1

LAPITA POTTERY (Bellwood 1979)
that, on the basis of linguistic evidence, the Lapita potters were themselves intruders into areas of Melanesia which had been settled by other Austronesian groups for at least a thousand years.

Fragments of other artefacts found at Lapita sites on Watom Island which are of types still in use in Massim cultures at the time of European contact are bone spatulae, shell cutting implements and parts of shell bracelets and necklaces, obsidian flakes, and polished stone axe/adze blades.

The following description of Lapita ware found at Watom Island is derived from Specht\textsuperscript{3}. In conjunction with the description of Lapita ware, it is interesting to bear in mind stylistic features characteristic of Massim art, viz, its highly decorative and formalised nature; concern with surface decoration using a limited vocabulary of motifs but giving them an infinite variety of form; heightening incised designs with white lime, and, in pottery, the use of slab or coil building techniques.

Lapita potters produced both plain and decorated ware, the plain made with a paddle and anvil technique but the decorated ware appears to have been slab, ring or coil built, showing no signs of paddle and anvil marks. Four decorative techniques were identified; applied relief, linear incision, nail impressions and dentate stamping, the last being the major technique identifying Lapita style. The basic elements of decorative motifs are

a) simple straight lines
b) crescents
c) "rope"
d) triangles
e) small circle stamps.

Combinations of these elements fall into three categories:

1) narrow bands of repeated elements, e.g. single or multiple rows of crescents; combinations of straight lines and crescents, one of the most important being the "arcade". These narrow bands are generally restricted to the neck, rims and shoulders.

2) wider bands of interlocking and repeating motifs, including "interlocking key" and "interlocking Y" shapes, repeated in broad bands around the body of the vessel between rim and shoulder or below the shoulder.

3) all over motifs. Although the excavated samples are too small to reconstruct examples, they appear to be based on a series of concentric circles or arcs outlined by 'rope' with triangles, circles or crescents between the rope lines (See Fig. 5.1).
Other distinctive features of Lapita pottery are the closeness of spacing, care of execution, symmetry of spacing, strict zonation of the motifs, and, while no two sherds are identical, the repetition of basic motifs. Some of the dentate stamped sherds have a white substance filling the impressions which can be distinguished from any other calcerous substance which may have adhered to the sherd over time.

The shapes of Lapita vessels from Watom, where identifiable, are flat based bowls with everted rims, vertical sided 'beakers' and pots with sharply carinated or gambrelled shoulders among the decorated ware, and spherical, narrow mouthed pots among the plain ware which were probable round based. No ring-feet, legs or pot stands were found among the 4,028 sherds excavated in 1966, with the exception of one "leg", and one definite and one possible handle.

Most of the decorated Lapita pottery appears to predate 500BC, with pottery styles throughout the area of its dispersion becoming increasingly plain. Bellwood, Solheim and Golson agree that the range of Lapita motifs is most closely paralleled in the ceramic tradition of Kalanay, Masbate Island, Central Philippines and the related Sa-Huynh in South Vietnam. Although the connection is "hazy", these authors suggest that Lapita pottery bridges the gap between southern Melanesia and Southeast Asia. Two reasons are cited in evidence; the range of decorative motifs and techniques of decoration, and the significant aspect of Lapita culture, that it was concerned with long distance, inter-island transport of goods. Evidence that the coastal pottery styles of the Central District of Papua (Mailu, Motu and Oposisi) are derived from Lapita has been gathered by Solheim II (See Fig. 5.2a, Mailu) and Vanderwal, increasing the probability that the Massim area could not have escaped this influential culture which pervaded all the surrounding areas.

**Collingwood Bay Ceramic Tradition**

Archaeological excavations in Collingwood Bay, conducted by Egloff, and on the Trobriand and Amphlett Islands, conducted by Lauer, have revealed another ceramic tradition including burial jars which may be derived from the Philippines. Of the Wanigela (Collingwood Bay) sites Bellwood comments that there

"...is good evidence in south-eastern Papua for an association of elements otherwise rare or absent in Melanesia; jar burials, Philippine-type pottery, and distinctive scroll and spiral motifs... Other Wanigela artefacts are more in the Melanesian tradition; bone lime spatulae and needles, shell bracelets and necklace units, lenticular cross-sectioned adzes, and a perforated stone clubhead..."
a. Mailu pottery decoration (Soldheim, 1964)

b. Geelvink Bay pot. (Soldheim, 1964)
In Collingwood Bay, at the Wanigela excavations, Egloff recovered good sized pottery sherds with complex channelled, incised, shell impressed and dentate decorations. A typical bowl (See Fig. 2.3b &c), has a tall, slender base, opening out to a wide, shallow dish decorated with the rim decorated with triangular cut-outs. This type of pottery was traded to the Trobriand Islands from potteries in Collingwood Bay between 700 - 1400 AD after which this contact seems to have died out and been replaced over the last +-500 years by pottery from the Amphlettt Islands of the style which is, to the present day, traded in the Kula ring.

The existence of strong trading links pre-dating the Kula between Collingwood Bay on the mainland, the Trobriand Islands, Nuamata, and possibly other islands in the Massim including Murua, are further evidenced by the distribution of burial jars from Collingwood Bay to the Massim islands. Golson 10 mentions that the motifs on old sepulchral vessels found in caves on Murua by Lyons in 1922, as well as those from Paneati Island discovered by Tindale and Bartlett in 1937, are similar to present day Mailu motifs and bear a general resemblance to some within the Sa-Hunynh-Kalanay tradition of Southeast Asia. Bellwood supports this contention, arguing that an association of elements including the custom of jar burial, Philippine-type pottery and distinctive scroll and spiral decorative motifs link south-east Melanesia with Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines. He adds as well, Capell's linguistic evidence that south-east Papua was subjected to migrations from Sulawesi and the Philippines about 1500 years ago and mentions the possibility that trading links existed between Island Southeast Asia and south-east Papua at that time.11

Funerary Pots

Leo Austen, Resident Anthropologist in the Trobriand Islands in the 1930's, recorded the details of burial pots found on Kiriwina and Vakuta12. He commented that the traditional Trobriand Island method of burial was complex, consisting of a primary burial by internment, followed by exhumation of the bones, and a secondary burial in which the bones were placed in large clay pots, wooden bowls or clam shells and concealed in the cavities of cliffs by the sea. Austen clearly differentiated the burial pots from other "village" pottery sherds which he found all over Kiriwinan garden lands, though neither kind of pottery sherd resembled the contemporary pottery obtained from the Amphlett Islands.

"...The Trobriand and Kitavan pots of the present day all come from the Amphlettts, but some of the prehistoric pots found in caves at Vakuta were alleged to be from Kwatota (in the Amphlett Group), but of a different make from those of today. Other prehistoric pots found in Kiriwinan caves with bones in them are of some unknown origin, certainly not of Amphlett manufacture. It may have been that in the past special pots were made for mortuary purposes, but it certainly seems that no pot of the present day type used for cooking purposes has been used as
FIG 5.3

Funerary pot, Nuamata
(May & Tuckson, 1984)

a. Funerary pots, Murua
(Seligman 1910)

(b) Funerary pots, Murua
(Seligman 1910)

(c. Funerary pots, Trobriand Islands.
(Austen 1939)
a burial urn... (Fig. 5.3c shows some of Austen's sketches of burial pots)\textsuperscript{13}

Seligman\textsuperscript{14} found cliff burials in the Marshall Bennets and Murua, where large clay pots contained the bones of more than one individual. Seligman notes Captain Barton's identification of the burial pots of Murua as coming from Kwatota. In most cases the pots had a small round hole in the base, seemingly intentionally made, and were (See Fig. 5.3a)

"...usually approximately hemispherical bowls. Their rims are often ornamented with impressed or incised patterns, and the latter generally form a band running around the pot immediately below the rim..."\textsuperscript{15}

Austen illustrates one pot found in the Kaulaka caves, Vakuta, which he positively identifies from information given by Amphlett Islanders as having come from Kwatota, as there are differences in the shape of the lip and design along the rim to present day Amphlett pots. Austen equates his informants "very long time ago" with 70 years, and also noted that the pot had formerly been used for cooking.\textsuperscript{16} This pot is obviously different in form and decoration from the other sepulchral pots from Kiriwina and Vakuta illustrated and described by Austen, particularly as it has the inverted lip characteristic of modern Amphlett pots. Apart from the Kwatota pot, Austen's informants had no knowledge regarding the origin of the pots.

From Austen's illustrations\textsuperscript{17} and description of the funerary pots, the following summary of style characteristics can be observed

+ the pots are round pots with rounded bases, $\frac{3}{4}$ sphere
+ depth of pots 10" - 12"
+ diameter at lip 11" - 14"
+ narrow everted lip
+ decorative motifs cover slightly more than the top half of the pot from the lip down.
+ bottom half undecorated
+ colour brownish red to brick red

Decorative motifs:
+ a line of punch marks around the lip
+ decoration finished with a definitive line of decoration
+ decorations made by patterns of straight and curved incised lines arranged in parallel formations horizontally, vertically, diagonally across top surface of pots
+ the rows of lines radiate from a central motif or a recurring centered motif.

No information is available as to the building techniques used to make these pots.

The above descriptions do not fit Seligman's illustrations of Murua funerary pots, except in that they are round based and wide-mouthed. In his Plate
Feast pots imported to the Trobriand Islands from Amphlett Islands. (Malinowski 1919)
LXXVIII (Fig. 5.3a) the top pot, which is photographed from underneath, appears to have nearly all its surface covered with punched wavy lines and two applied circular decorations towards the centre of one side. The bottom pot has a definite shoulder and the incised decoration (rows of wavy lines top and bottom and a central row of scrolls) occurs between the lip and the shoulder. However, there is a good degree of similarity between the middle pot illustrated by Seligman and Austen's Fig. 9 (see Fig. 5.3c(ii)), both of which are stated to have come from Kwatota Island and have the distinctive inverted rim and absence of decoration on the body below the rim which distinguish modern Amphlett pots. May and Tuckson illustrate, but do not give any detail about, an "old burial pot" from Nuamata Island\(^{18}\) which would seem to be of the 'old Kwatota' style. It also features a hole in the centre of the bottom (Fig. 5.3b). The pot is decorated on the rim with incised grooves, and its patterns of parallel grooves and punch marks bear a similarity to Austen's illustrations, except that his 'Kwatota' pot is undecorated below the rim. It is also interesting to note that Solheim II\(^{19}\) illustrates in his discussion of the Sa-Huyhn-Kalanay style, a bowl from Geelvink Bay which appears to be a combination of the Collingwood Bay and Kwatota funerary pots (Fig. 5.2b). This pot has an inverted rim under which is a decoration of rows of parallel inclined incised lines finished by two horizontal lines with punch marks in the centre. However, as he says, nothing conclusive can be claimed regarding the diffusion of style, 

"...without reasonably close resemblance in form, decoration and style in combination, it cannot be claimed that present day pottery is related to a specific prehistoric pottery tradition..."\(^{20}\)

**Modern Pottery Traditions in the Massim Area**

Since Melanesian cultures have been recorded in the historical period it seems to have been a universal practise in Melanesia that women were restricted to working with the media of fibre, clay, and occasionally shell. In some areas, though not the Massim, further restrictions are applied to what women can make with these media, for example in the Sepik where men decorate the pots made by women and create cult and ritual objects from clay which women are not permitted to make. In the Massim, apart from the performing arts, women's creative activity was traditionally confined to executing body tattoos, making fibre skirts and baskets and clay pots, though not all Massim societies made pots or practised the art of tattooing.

Wherever pottery of the present tradition is, or was, made in the Massim it is the craft of women, though this can only be assumed of the past traditions. No study has been made of the symbolic references which may be contained in the designs incised on pots. Design motifs on pots may resemble tattoo patterns, but, once again, there is no evidence to verify this or comment on the significance of these patterns. Massim pottery is functional, and no pots or clay objects are known to be made for ritual purposes. However, being a utilitarian craft should not detract from the fact that a considerable amount of skill and knowledge of
form and design are necessary to make and decorate the specialised forms of Massim pottery, particularly considering that they are entirely formed by hand and fired in the open. Specialisation is evident in the variety of pots produced by the various industries, and the differences in the receptacles used for particular foods should be noted as another instance of the effect of environment on art.

May and Tuckson's map of the distribution of traditional pot making industries of Papua New Guinea differentiated by methods of manufacture\(^\text{21}\) (Fig. 5.5), and the available information on the Massim industries, is indicative of the process of diffusion of a pottery style followed by the development of local characteristics within that style.

The ancestry of Amphlett pottery is obscure. Firstly it is very significant that the pot building technique used in the Amphlett group is unique in Melanesia, and possibly unique in the world,

"...the vessels are built upside down, starting with the rim and finishing with the rounded bottom, in a technique combining slabs and rolls of clay for the main body and paddle beating to smooth and shape the body and finish the rim..."\(^\text{22}\)

The only other group of potters in Melanesia who work from the top of the pot to the bottom are from Bunduna on neighbouring Goodenough Island, but they use thin coils for building instead of slabs.

Secondly, the origination myth of the Amphlett Islanders does not help to unravel the mystery. Malinowski mentions that the Amphlettans claim to have migrated from the Trobriands and that their language is a derivation of Kiriwinan. May and Tuckson quote a version of Amphlett oral traditions in which they say that they migrated from the Trobriand Islands and settled on Gumwana island, taking clay and the art of pottery with them. The clay was deposited at Tumonomono, a high point on the island. One day a dispute arose between two men, Tolalabena and Tolosipipu, since Tolalabena accused his wife, Namaleo of infidelity with Tolosipupu. Tolalabena was defeated and left for Fergusson Island with his wife, Namaleo, where they settled at Yayavana. Before leaving she filled her basket with clay and took it with her, and ever since the clay on Gumawana has been unsuitable for making pots and the men must get clay from Yayavana.\(^\text{23}\)

As the Trobriand Islanders have always been importers of pottery\(^\text{24}\) (See Fig.5.4, Trobriand Islanders holding feast pots imported from the Amphletts), it might be the Amphlett's link with Goodenough Island which could provide a clue to the puzzle. Amphlett men sail to Goodenough on pottery exchange voyages and stop to collect clay at Yayavana on the return journey. One could speculate that men saw the technique of pot making on Goodenough while on trading voyages and encouraged their wives to make pots, or else married Goodenough potters who brought their knowledge to the Amphletts. But they
SGI ♦
in smiE GarainaTV.

A IE U I (MAPRIK)

BROOKER key-------t'Ailrvtf.ftay R'ow irvce. CM asstm)

Ball or lump opened by hand or stone; completed by paddle-and-anvil — women

Slabs, strips, slices or rolls added to beaten base; completed by paddle-and-anvil — women

Spiral coiling — women

Spiral coiling — men

Spiral coiling — men and women make or women make and men decorate

Ring building — women. Men decorate certain pots

Spiral coiling; completed by ring building — women

Spiral coiling; completed by ring building and beating — women

Spiral coiling (or slabs, Amphletts); completed by beating — women

Spiral coiling; completed by beating — men

Language groups who make pots or have made them in the recent past

Villages and small islands who make pots or have made them in the recent past

Pot making industries or villages now defunct

Unverified pot making villages or areas

Temporary government centres and missions
found that the clay of the Amphletts was unsuitable, and it was only when the outcasts from Gumawana found a suitable source at their new home, Yayavana, that good clay became accessible and the pottery industry began to develop²⁵.

In common with the other main pottery centres of the Massim; Wari, Tubetube, Brooker and Panaeati, the Amphlett Islands are infertile and scarce in natural resources, providing the incentive to produce pots and undertake extensive trading expeditions to exchange this valued commodity for others. Irwin²⁶ describes how these island groups function as pivotal points in the intricate ceremonial exchange and trade networks of the Massim. The specialities of canoe building and sailing, as well as highly developed pottery and shell valuable manufacturing industries tend to be centred on these islands. The greater incentive to voyage and exchange perhaps originated from the scarcity of resources, but has, over time, developed into an ethos such as Battaglia describes of the Sabarl, whereas those living on fertile islands did not have to venture out in search of basic or ritual necessities.

Irwin²⁷ discusses the development of pottery styles, contrasting the evolution of the Mailu pottery trade with the longer established Massim and Motu industries. He contends that, as the trade develops and women become more expert in the mass manufacture of pots, the number of styles and finishes decrease and the product becomes standardised around a few "best sellers". Of the several distinctive local styles in the Massim the most valued and best made are those from island groups which have specialist pottery industries. Pottery is made in many other locations but these are usually only cooking pots for local use.

Women are the potters in the Massim. Scrutinising the map of traditional pot making industries of Papua New Guinea (Fig.5.5)²⁸ one can see that, along the north coast from the Huon Gulf down to Normanby Island, the technique of pot making is spiral coiling (or in the Amphletts, slabs) completed by beating. From East Cape to Mailu, and throughout the southern Massim archipelagos, the basic pot making technique is spiral coiling completed by ring building. In their observations on the pottery building techniques of Papua New Guinea, May and Tuckson found that a similar method of forming coils, that is by using the heel and palm of the hand to roll coils of a uniform thickness, was used in the inland Sepik (except Aibom), the Ramu river, inland Madang, by Binandere potters (Northern and Morobe province), and at Goodenough Island, East Cape, Brooker and Panaeti Islands in Milne Bay. They also commented on three unusual ways of starting a coiled pot found in southeast Papua; building up coils on a ball of clay - Midaeba, Normanby Island; adding coils to a pinched and scrapped-up base - Wanigela and Cape Vogel; coiling the pot upside down - Goodenough Island.²⁹

The Amphlett Island method of squeezing on handfuls of clay to raise the wall of the pot upwards from the bottom is unique (see Fig.4.6a&b) Moving around
Amphlett potters forming pots by coil building upwards from base. (Cochrane 1954)
Amphlett potter finishing shape of pot working from base upwards. (Cochrane 1954)
the pot, supporting the wall from the inside, the potter adds handfuls of clay, scraping it upwards and inwards to form a cone. After closing the hole at the centre top, the potter smooths the outside wall with a paddle. The pot is finished after drying for a couple of days to a "leather hard" state. The inside wall is thinned by scraping with a shell, the rim is beaten into its characteristic inward shape with a paddle and trimmed, and the outside burnished with a small stone or bean pod leaving diagonal burnishing marks which are another feature of Amphlett pots. The pots are then decorated with incised lines, applied strips and stippling.

"...There are seven named types of vessels produced by the Amphlett Islanders, each of which is characterised by size, shape, function and decoration...the basic form is a round-based, cone shaped container with an inward turning rim...The vaegatoina and nofaewa are identical in shape and characterised by an inverted rim area separated from the upper body by a marked shoulder. The vaegatoina is an everyday cooking pot while the larger nofaewa is used during feasts for boiling yams and taro and has a greater range of decorative elements and greater complexity of design. The kaokao (no longer made) and nokuno are both distinguished by a rounded shoulder and inward arching rim; the nokuno is decorated on the upper body and rim by symmetrical stippled parallel grooves which run in different directions, applied rolls of clay forming U shapes and applied semi-circular discs of clay. The nosipoma, aidedeya and alimanu have composite forms and are similar in size but the most striking differences between them appear in the treatment of the rim and involve the absence (nosipoma) or presence of two (aidedeya), three or four (alimanu) protrusions spaced at equal intervals around the circumference. Lauer describes a divided cooking pot used on Goodenough Island to separate foods such as fish and vegetables but he makes no mention of one from the Amphletts; a newly made one was collected by the authors at Nabwega Island in 1975 and the name given to it was wabodapaia."
FIG. 5.7

a. Wari potter decorating pot
(May-Tuckson 1984)

b. Tubetube-gulewa pot (May-Tuckson 1984)
and Goodenough have a common origin. While Goodenough pottery has declined, Amphlett pottery has gained in the skill of decoration. As Goodenough did not participate in the kula ring, Lauer considers that this may account for the wider distribution of Amphlett pottery; also, since contact, restrictions on traditional trading patterns have weakened, and Amphletts expanded their pottery marketing to Goodenough, causing a decline in the Goodenough industry.

The Miadeba people on the large island of Normanby have the only other pottery industry in the D'Entrecasteaux group. Their pot building technique, spiral coiling onto a ball of clay, is again unusual, but more closely related to the Amphlett and Goodenough style than the spiral coiling and ring building of the southern Massim. Their pottery is only produced for local consumption, and the pottery industry does not seem to have been any more widespread on Normanby Island in the past.

May and Tuckson place Wari, an island south of the Engineer Group, at the centre of the second major pottery industry in the Massim with a readily identifiable style (Fig. 5.7 a & b). This style encompasses East Cape on the mainland; the islands Tubetube, Kwaraiwa and Skeleton of the Engineer Group and Anagusa and Dawson close by; Panaeati, in the Deboyne Group and Brooker in the Calvados Chain. They describe the most common type of pottery vessel from this area as being

"...composite in shape, thin walled, with a rounded base, a definite shoulder (usually marked at the inflection point with a horizontal design) and a neck, usually decorated, which can be straight sided, restricted or unrestricted. It is difficult to distinguish the origins of the vessels by form or even use of design elements."³³

Whereas Tubetube seems to have been the centre par excellence of this type of pot earlier this century, as reported by Seligman and Malinowski, this reputation of superiority passed on to Wari. Oral tradition³⁴ describes the Wari people as having migrated from Badilau Island, off Normanby, carrying a ceremonial pot. After a short stay at Nuamata, they arrived at a small island where they split into two groups, one going to Bonarua Island, nearer to the mainland, and one settling on Wari. In 1935 Belshaw reported that Wari pottery was traded to the mainland and Tubetube, Basileke, Wagawaga, Suau, Normanby and Samarai, but May and Tuckson found that the market for Wari pots had greatly extended by 1975 and that they were considered superior in appearance and quality.

Pots are called gulewa on Tubetube and Wari, and are differentiated by size only, though Tubetube pots have a distinctive rim made by overlapping the final coil on the outside. Sizes range from small pots called kikidoydoy, about 10 cm high, to unsansan, about 22cm high. Sharply pointed three or four
Decoration on Panaeat pot
(May + Tuckson 1984)
pronged combs are used to decorate the pot on the exterior surface from the level of the shoulder to the rim. These tools make "...parallel wavy lines...forming vertical and horizontal set patterns repeated in separate registers around the circumference. Each series of design elements had a name in the past and in some cases the informants were able to identify both the name of the design and its representation of a particular aspect of nature, for example, the cross section of a leaf, a net sinker, a butterfly. The shoulder point itself is defined by gouge marks made with the end prong of the incising tool or the exterior edge of a mussel shell."35

Although pots from Panaeati and Brooker Island can be distinguished from others of the southern (Wari) style, they are considered to be an extension of this style because of similarities in forming technique, shape and decoration (see Fig. 5.8).

Panaeati potters' most distinctive vessel is a ulunbwala, water pot with a rounded base and dramatic flaring neck. Pots, ulun, are named for the function they perform; ulunligaliga is a common cooking pot about 40 cm high; ulunbwana, a large vessel about 60 cm high used for community cooking; ulunsabia, a cooking pot reserved for feasts and mourning rites; ulunmoni, a large (60cm) pot used for cooking sago; ulundelevega, a small pot, about 12 cm high used as a serving or eating bowl, storing dry food and making sago cakes.36 Funeral pots, discussed above, were previously used, but this burial custom has ceased.

The names for pots on Brooker are similar, as are the techniques of manufacture and decoration, the main difference between Panaeati and Brooker pots being in the texture of the clay. Other Brooker vessels with particular names are ulunssagede which a restricted neck, an inverted rim and pronounced corner point; ulunabgabom, ulungurekeke, and ulunsiel, three different sized versions of a simple unrestricted vessel with a flaring neck and decoration covering the upper area; ulunbwana, a hemispherical unrestricted vessel used for cooking feasts and ulunmorni, used for cooking fish at feasts and shaped like ulunbwana, but having for decoration a single applied coil running around the circumference to form a ridge ending in a scroll.

May and Tuckson quote an unpublished paper by Berde on the use and tradition of Panaeati pots. Pots were given for betel nut, foodstuffs and sago as forerunners to more serious transactions such as pigs and wealth items in exchange for the most important item of Panaeati manufacture, canoes. Before mission activities reduced the constant inter-island hostilities from the end of the nineteenth century, pots were made mainly for local use, but with increased island trade becoming possible, and a growing preference on nearby islands for food cooked in pots instead of earth ovens, Panaeati men took to the seas to
Pots from Silo Silo Bay
(May & Tuckson 1984)
trade their canoes and the pots of their women. Although the literature on Panaeati and Brooker Islands is extremely limited, and no archaeological work has yet been undertaken there, in the light of the evidence referred to previously in this paper on the existence of well established trade cycles between islands of the Louisade Archipelago, Calvados Chain and neighbouring Misima, Berde's explanation of widespread pottery trade being a fairly recent development appears to be too facile. The limitations of their environments inclined the people of these islands to sea-faring expeditions, despite the likelihood of warfare and piracy.

The third style of pottery which can be differentiated within the Massim area is produced along the south coast of the mainland and neighbouring islands, from Bonarua (Brummer) Island, near Suau, to Bonabona Island in the eastern corner of Orangerie Bay. The style is similar to that produced at Mailu, but as Mailu is in the next district and not discussed except in comparison.

The original settlers of Bonarua Island were of the split Badilabedabeda clan, who originated from an island near Normanby and migrated to Wari and Bonarua. Bonarua still acts as a middleman for trade between Wari and the mainland though its pot making activity has now ceased. The pots were of the Wari style.

The pottery of the Silosilo Bay/Konemaiaua/Kaukau/Bonabona Island region show a transition between the Wari style and the Mailu style, with the technique being similar to Wari, but the vessel shape changing towards that characteristic of Mailu (see Fig. 5.9).

"...Silosilo pots are deeper in proportion; they are simple restricted or unrestricted forms, conical or ellipsoid, and do not have a shoulder...They are also more round based than Wari vessels. The general cooking pot is called gulewa (as at Wari) and a sago cooking vessel is called odo odoi. A pot used especially for cooking fish is iataledu and a deeper, very large vessel called laulsuelii is used during feasts. A pot with an inverted rim, hatu mo'do, is used to cook tough meat. The salaki gulewana, a Mailu-inspired shape, is used for cooking pig at feasts..."

The legends from this area which are related to pottery feature a female witch who possesses this secret knowledge. In the legend which tells of how the use of fire and pots came to the people of Silosilo Bay, men spy on the witch and discover the use of the fire and clay pot which she hides in her anus, bringing them out only to prepare her own food. They ambush her and steal the fire, taking it back to their villages. The village women threatened to kill her unless she showed them her secret of cooking, as they previously ate only sun-dried food. The witch taught the women to make clay pots and cook food in them. Taking this knowledge, the women returned to their villages and taught other women, as they do today.
In a complementary legend, the women of Silosilo Bay needed to find a source of clay so they could make their pots. They enlisted the help of the witch women, and flew around Milne Bay at night, until they located clay on Wari. They filled their baskets with clay and flew home, landing at Aloalo village on Waybumari Bay (the adjacent bay), where they planted the clay. When the clay grew bigger, they transplanted some to Weweyateha in Silosilo Bay, which is the present source.39

These legends, added to the evidence of style and technique, indicate the origin and spread of the technique of pottery making from Wari to this part of the coastal mainland where it was adopted by the existing inhabitants in preference to their previous style of food preparation. If all the legends concerning pottery from the Massim area were systematically collected and examined, the history embedded in these oral traditions could assist in tracing the movements of people and their cultural knowledge through the area.

A variation of the South Coast pottery style is called 'East Cape' by May and Tuckson and has been found at Wagawaga, Samarai, Alotau and Dobu as well as along the East Cape peninsular itself. East Cape is an infertile, rain shadow area, and the people need to import food to supplement their subsistence crops.

As the Silosilo Bay area pottery shows a trend towards the Mailu shapes while using a building technique very similar to Wari, East Cape pottery is more influenced by Wari forms, but differs in the building technique.

"... There are three types of vessels produced at East Cape. The first, called nauwokatulatama, is a basin shaped pot with a rounded base, a distinct shoulder and a decorated neck area. It is similar to Wari/Tubetube pottery except that the base of East Cape pots is much thicker and the shoulder forms a distinct angled corner point... A variation of the nauwokatulatama, in which the coils between the lip and shoulder are not smoothed, is called oguperopero. Both are cooking pots. A third type, the habaia, which is used specifically for cooking soups, is unrestricted and has little decoration..."40

East Cape pots have a distinctive decoration, achieved by the use of fine, multi-pronged combs, animigiluma, which have between six and twelve teeth instead of the two to four used elsewhere in the Massim. The nauwokatulatama is decorated from the corner point of the shoulder to a line just below the slightly everted rim. These two horizontal lines around the circumference are marked in with the serrated edge of a shell, and the area between them is infilled with combinations of geometric forms engraved in parallel lines with the animigiluma to form repeating patterns.
It would be interesting to undertake a study of the gender aspects of pot making and contrast them to the masculine conceptualisations of canoes discussed in the next two chapters. Without evidence from the field one can only speculate that pot making is a female activity because of its relationship to the earth. Campbell comments in her discussion of Vakutan symbolism that women are said to be anchored to the earth and associated with land/fertility/regeneration. In the Silosilo legend, women 'plant' the clay which 'grows'; the association with gardening activity is continued in that it is mainly the women who dig clay for pot making, except in the case of the Amphlett Islands where the source is offshore and clay is collected by men, or men and women jointly, as it requires a journey by canoe. Women are seated on the ground while making pots, thus emphasising their connection with the earth, (except where Amphlett women walk around the pot as they are forming its basic shape), and, as Campbell points out in Vakuta, men squat or sit on something for their activities. However it is not possible to assume that these perceptions are ubiquitous throughout the Massim, especially as no Trobrianders make pots. It is also tempting to apply a more universal conceptualisation, that pots are essentially female items in that their pleasing round shape contains promises of many delicious and satisfying things.

2 P. Bellwood; "Mans' Conquest...." op cit, p.244.
3 Specht: Preliminary... op cit p.128-130.
5 Bellwood provides evidence of obsidian flakes transported from Talasea in northern New Britain to Watom(240 km), Ambitle (500km), Santa Cruz Islands (2,000km) Ile des Pins, New Caledonia (2,600 km). ibid, p.247.
6 Research described by Bellwood, ibid, p. 258
Bellwood, op cit. p.267
Golson, op cit. p.582.
Bellwood, op cit. p.267
G. Seligman; The Melanesians..., op cit, p.732
Austen: Megalithic... op cit, illustration and caption p. 53
ibid, Figs. 1-5, 7, 8.
May, P & Tuckson, M: The Traditional Pottery of Papua New Guinea, Bay Books, Sydney, 1984. p.21, Fig. 1.19 and 1.20
Solheim II, op cit p.213, Plate III, Fig. j
ibid, p.207-8
May & Tuckson, op cit, Map 3, Distribution of Pot Making Industries, See also Table of Techniques, both in Introduction, p. 24-26.
First described by R. Cochrane; Negode of Nabwegeta, Oxford University Press, 1961, and later in P. May & M. Tuckson, ibid, p.79, Figs 4.4-4.7)
ibid, p.78-9
Archaeological methods of carbon dating and clay analysis clearly indicate the origin of pottery in the area.
This story has an interesting modern parallel. When visiting the Amphletts, Margaret Tuckson was told that the price of Yayavana clay had become exhorbitant, and the women had refused to pay the price, and attempted to use the local clay instead. Pots made from the local clay were brittle and broke when being fired. Fortunately an amicable settlement was reached and clay from Yayavana was imported again at a reasonable price.
Irwin: Chieftainship... in Leach, op cit. p. 57
ibid, p.59
May & Tuckson, op cit, Map 3, p.25
ibid, p.36
ibid, p. 87-88. All names are in Amphlettan dialect.
Purchased while researching for Negode of Nabwegeta, these were similar in size to vaegatoina and nofaewa, they were kept in the family until accidentally broken. Colour slide of divided pots in Cochrane PNG Archive, Amphlett Islands Pottery Nos. 16, 17.
May & Tuckson, p.94
ibid, p.99
ibid, p.100
ibid, p. 104 - words in italics Panaeati names
See papers by Battaglia and Lepowsky in Leach & Leach: The Kula... op cit.
Men, on the otherhand, do not have the assurance or ability to reproduce each generation of *dala* (clan) blood, and must rely on their powers of attraction and seduction to achieve reknown...therefore men can detach themselves from the land both physically and in a symbolic detachment from group identity in *dala*. See pp240-58
Chapter 6

CHARACTERISTIC SETS OF CANOE CARVINGS FROM THE MASSIM

Introduction
Each district of the Massim makes, or used to make, several distinctive types of canoes ranging from the simplest dugouts to outriggers paddled by 25 men and rigged sailing canoes for long overseas voyages. There is a general similarity in the techniques of construction and decoration of the several types of Massim canoes, partly due to the cultural homogeneity of the area and otherwise to the fact that the canoes themselves are traded widely. However, there are sufficient significant differences to enable the classification of several types within each class of canoe.

A distinguishing feature of Massim sea-going canoes are the characteristic sets of carved and painted boards and ornaments attached to the prow and stern. Of the three main types of Massim sea-going canoes first described by Haddon and Hornell and later revised by Newton; the nagega, in historical times the most widely used on the kuJa and trading routes which intersect the north and south Massim; the masawa of the D'Entrecasteaux and Trobriand Islands, and the Louisades sailing canoe, each has a recognisable set of canoe carvings.

Considerable artistic skill is expended on the decorations carved on the solid sides and ends of the dugout hull; the masts, outrigger spars, even the paddles and bailers are finished with often superb carvings. When it is prepared for a voyage the canoe is embellished with rows of white ovulum shells (buna), crinkled pandanus streamers and fine fringes, a form of decoration which itself is highly characteristic of Massim canoe art.

However, in the following discussion of canoe carvings, the decorations carved and/or painted onto the hull or spars and masthead, i.e. those permanently in place on the canoe, are not included. The chapter is concerned with the carvings which, at least in the Trobriand Islands, are made by to-kabitam (master carvers) and imbued with magical properties to ensure the canoe’s seaworthiness, speed, and the success of its ventures. Haddon and Hornell’s "general description" describes the salient features of these carvings:

"A very noticeable feature of these waga is the rich and elaborate painted and often perforated carving at the end of the breakwaters and end erections. The breakwaters which close up the strakes are higher than the strakes and are usually lobed, carving is assymetrical. Between the breakwater and the end of the dugout is lashed a vertical board, the end erection, which usually
a. HADDON and HORNELL

b. NEWTON

Characteristic sets of canoe carvings
Haddon + Hornell Type 1, Newton Type 2 - nagega
Haddon + Hornell Type 2, Newton Type 3 - Louisade
Haddon + Hornell Type 3, Newton Type 1 - masawa
springs from an elongated plain base, though it may be fixed in a
groove on the upper surface of the end of the dugout; occasionally
it is low, but usually has the form of a richly decorated, elongated
slab that slopes upward; the top is often prolonged into a long flat
spur, to which is lashed a carved finial, termed riri or lili by the
Suau and munkuris in Murua.5

The characterisation of canoes and canoe carvings in this chapter is based on the
evidence gathered by Haddon and Hornell. Since their seminal work was
published in 1936, photographs, illustrations and descriptions of Massim canoe
carvings have appeared sporadically in books on Oceanic art, catalogues for
collections and exhibitions, journal articles, etc. Haddon and Hornell’s three
types of canoe carvings were revived by Newton6 in a catalogue based on an
Newton reallocated the type numbers, though retaining Haddon and Hornell’s
profiles as characteristic (see Fig. 6.2 (a) and (b)).

Research conducted for this paper indicates that the three main profiles given
by Haddon and Hornell and revised by Newton are substantially correct, but
that some further distinctions can be made especially regarding internal
variations within the components of the three characteristic sets of attached
canoe carvings. Pictorial and documentary evidence is given throughout the
chapter to support the following points:

(1) That Haddon and Hornell Type 1, which they describe
as “the characteristic type of Murua and the adjacent
islands, exemplified in the nagega canoes of the Trobriand Islands” was superseeded in the Trobriand Islands by
the masawa canoe (Haddon & Hornell Type 3, Newton Type 1).
Newton’s identification of the masawa canoe as predominant in
the D’Entrecasteaux and Trobriand Islands is correct from early
this century7.

(2) Studies of masawa canoes have revealed that it is
possible to distinguish several sopi (schools) of carving by the
combination of design motifs on the lagim (washboards) and
tabuya (prowboards)8. (Fig. 6.3c shows a set of masawa lagim
and tabuya)

(3) The breakwaters or washboards (called lagim or rajim
- see Fig. 6.3a) of nagega canoes depicted as characteristic of Type
1 by Haddon and Hornell (Newton’s Type 2) have several major
variations in their outline and design motifs. For example, the
design profile which is most typical at the present differs from that
presented by both authors. Though these have not been studied or
FIG. 63

Prow of nogega from Panaeati

b. rajim from Nimoa Island (photographed by Berain, 1919)

c. Prow of masawa (Guiart 1963 - in Musée de l'Homme, Paris)
distinguished as have the carvings of masawa canoes. A preliminary investigation of the available data reveals the possibility of distinguishing some persistent styles. Likewise the prowboards and munkuris can be seen to have consistent identifiable variations.

(4) Production of the carvings of Louisade sailing canoes (Haddon & Hornell type 2, Newton type 3; my figs. 6.22, 6.23) seems to have been discontinued early this century. Very few exist in museum collections and none are recent examples. To the writer's knowledge none have been sighted or photographed in the Massim for several decades.

(5) Research has shown that, at least in the Trobriand Islanders' perception, it is the totality of the combination of the ritually carved canoe boards and other decorations which enhance the canoe naturally and supernaturally, endowing it with speed and potential success as well as beauty. Individual detached canoe carvings can be aesthetically assessed for the correctness and flow of their design, but do not have the same appeal or power as when they are ritually assembled and decorated for a voyage. Therefore, where possible photographs of the canoes prepared for use, fully rigged and decorated, are included to convey this impression. They serve, as well, to verify the combination of canoe carvings designated as a characteristic type.

The photographs which illustrate this chapter cover a period of almost 100 years, the earliest being Lindt's of a canoe at Teste Island from his 1887 album (Fig. 6.21), reveal a remarkable consistency in style and quality of workmanship in the characteristic sets of Massim canoe carvings from the time of their first recording until the present. Drawings and photographs are scarce until the 1920's when several ethnographers were undertaking research in different parts of the Massim.

The lack of early pictorial records of canoe carvings is equalled by their lack of representation in the objects of Massim art collected by Europeans in the second half of the 19th century. In his comprehensive 3 albums of drawings of artifacts from New Guinea in British private and public museum collections, 1890 - 3 Edge-Parkington only illustrates one Massim canoe breakwater, two prowboards and one munkuris. It is likely that it was the tendency of the first Europeans in the area to collect small carved items such as those illustrated in Edge-Parkington's album, which were pleasing to the eye, readily bartered, easy to transport and had a ready market in Europe. Barter for this kind of small carved item can be seen taking place in the illustration which is the frontispiece.
Tabuya collected on "Rattlesnake" voyage, 1849 (British Museum)

Frontispiece from Macgillivray "Voyage of the Rattlesnake"
Massim canoe at Brummer Island.
of Macgillivray's journal of the voyage of the Rattlesnake, and verified by his comments that the "natives were always ready to barter" (See Fig. 6.4b). There were several brief earlier European encounters with the Massim. Torres landed at Tagula (Sudest Is.) and Sideia Is. in 1606. In 1793 D’Entrecasteaux sailed through the Louisade archipelago and north of the group which bears his name. D’Urville sailed past in 1827. A Marist mission was established on Murua (Woodlark Is.) in 1847. The writer did not discover any but the most passing references to Massim canoes in the journals of the earlier explorers, nor was she able to establish whether any canoe carvings were collected by Torres, either of the French expeditions or the Marists. Canoe tabuya collected on the Rattlesnake’s voyage (see Figs. 6.4a, 6.22b in the British Museum) is possibly the oldest known piece collected by Europeans, as are Huxley’s drawings which appear in both his and Macgillivray’s journals of the 1849 voyage the first known pictorial record made by a European. It is not unlikely that canoe carvings were collected or illustrated prior to 1849, either by members of one of the voyages of exploration, or whalers or blackbirders who were operating in the area earlier in the 19th century.

Seligman was one of the first of the ethnographers in the area, coming to the Massim in 1906. He was followed by Jenness and Ballantyne, Malinowski, Armstrong and Fortune who had all published ethnographic accounts of Massim communities by 1930. Resident Magistrates such as Monkton, and missionaries, including the Abel family of Kwato and the Revs. Brown and Fellowes based in the Trobriand Islands, also contributed to the growing documentation on Massim societies. These accounts cover many aspects of Massim life, and the photographs which accompany them are of equally diverse subjects. Canoes and canoe carvings are mentioned in each account, and it was the information and illustrations from these sources that provided most of the data for Haddon and Hornell’s compilation.

There is, however, one valuable source from this period which seems to have been previously overlooked, namely the extensive collection of photographs of R.M. Vivian, Resident Magistrate of the South-Eastern Division of Papua from 1917-1921. To the writer’s knowledge Vivian’s photographs have not been published, although they provide much collaborative evidence to the documentation gathered together by Haddon and Hornell and followed by Newton, as well as providing some further insights into the various types of Massim canoe carvings. Many of Vivian’s photographs show Massim canoes fully rigged and decorated, in use or ready for use. The information provides more visual proof of which sets of canoe carvings and decorations were used together in the 1910’s -1920’s; the photographs assist in confirming the combinations of Newton types 1 and 3, but reveals several variations of type 2 jajim. As well, Vivian’s photographs of Rossel Island canoes are superior to
FIG. 6:5

a.

nagega (Bromilow 1929)

b.

masawa (Bromilow 1929)

c.

Louisades (Seligman 1910)
Classes of Canoes

The following discussion of Massim canoes is mainly concerned with overseas sailing canoes. Paddled outrigger canoes used by war parties and for headhunting raids are mentioned briefly, but smaller canoes used for domestic purposes are not included. In most areas, several types of canoes based on a hollowed out log hull were present, such as Malinowski describes for the Trobriand Islands:

- **kewo'u** - small, light canoes for local transport, unadorned
- **kalipoulu** - fishing canoe, could be sailed or paddled, sometimes with prow boards, capable of carrying several persons for short distances
- **masawa** - overseas canoe, stronger construction and greater carry-capacity, painted and decorated with prowboards

The main classes of overseas sailing canoes (waga) in the Massim are:

(i) the masawa canoe found throughout the D'Entrecasteaux group and in the Amphlett and Trobriand Islands which have Newton type 1 carvings (fig.6.5b).

(ii) the larger nagega canoe, found throughout the southern Massim and at Murua (Woodlark Is.), Iwa and Gawa (Marshall Bennett Is.) and the Laughlan Islands. These carry Newton type 2 carvings (fig. 6.5a).

(iii) Canoes from the Louisades carrying Newton type 3 carvings. The pictorial evidence of this type is much scarcer than for the first two, likewise the number of canoe carvings of this type in collections (fig. 6.5c).

Rossel Island (Vela) Canoes

The two variations of Rossel Island canoes, the ma no (male canoe - fig. 6.6 a&b), a sailing canoe, and the ceremonial para no (also called ndap canoe fig. 6.6c), which is paddled, are quite unique in appearance. Though sharing several features of Massim canoe construction, including a decorated lagim (fig. 6.6d) attached to the washstrakes which are built up from the hull, their style and decoration is entirely different to other Massim canoes and characteristic to their own style. As one is a sailing canoe but does not undertake extensive overseas voyages, and the other is paddled, they cannot be categorised with the sailing canoes described above but deserve inclusion as a distinctive type of Massim canoe in a category of their own.

Paddled canoes

Evidence of the decorations used on the long, slender canoes of the Southern Massim which carried crews of up to 20 paddlers, and were preferred for their speed and manouevrability by war and raiding parties, is scarce. These canoes...
a. ma no

b. lia no

c. para no (ndap)

(a, b, c, photographs in Armstrong, 1928)

ROSSEL ISLAND CANOES

d. Splashbox (logim) of Ra ia no (Nivin)
**FIG. 67**

MASSIM PADDLED CANOES

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*a.* Suau/Davi outrigger. Note oitau figure at tip of prow. (Haddon & Hornell, 1926)

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*b.* Gebo, Wagawaga (Abel, 1902)

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*c.* Tawero, Stacey Island (Chalmers 1877)
ceased to have a raison d'etre with the advent of the pacification measures of
the colonial government and missionary activities in the area.

Canoe styles which ceased to be made soon after European contact became
relatively frequent include the style from the Suau/Daui area (see fig 6.7a) 22
described to Haddon and Hornell by Armstrong. These canoes were outriggers,
around 25 feet long, which could be paddled or sailed and featured an elongated
horizontal prow decorated with incised scrolls. The prow illustrated in fig. 6.7a
ends in the carving of a seated figure with a long snout and big ears. This figure
is of interest as it is similar to the carved spirit figure referred to by Abel 23 as
oi tau (hewn man - see fig. 3.18b which has this figure on the handle of a
spatula) which had a magical and ritual function. Oi tau also had the
important quality of gigibori, "heat". The concept of "heat" is related to ritual
objects associated with raiding in head hunting societies 24 elsewhere in New
Guinea. In contrast, no other canoe prow in the Massim has a carved human
figure on the prow, though the motif of a small human figure (sometimes two) is
featured at the centre of the top panel of jagim on masawa canoes and is
called 'baby', or sometimes Matakapotaiaataia (a mythical Massim monster-
slaying hero) 25

The Suau/Daui outrigger canoes had a top strake is decorated with a flowing
zigzag pattern in relief, and a neat row of ovulum shells attached to the
underside of the prow. Other reports of similar canoes included comments 26
regarding a decoration peculiar to them:

"...a vertical stick springing from the connectives of
the end boom which might have a nautilus shell at its end or a
crescent cut from the husk of a coconut (a wooden crescent is
found in some Louisade canoes in the same position)" 27

The tall vertical sticks with a nautilus shell or other decoration at the tip
(unfortunately indistinguishable in the photograph) appears again at the prow
and stern of a tavero outrigger with horizontal prows, photographed at the
founding of the LMS Mission Station at Stacey island, South Cape, in 1877 by the
Revs. Macfarlane and Chalmers (see fig.6.7c). 28

Armstrong reported that the art of canoe making was lost among the Suau by
1921, but in 1932 Williams reported to Haddon that a Suau man had learnt to
make waga at Orado, near Misima, in the Murua style of canoe known as
nagega. 29 This is indicative of the relative ease with which knowledge and
skills were transferable among people from different areas of the Massim.

The gebo, found only in Milne Bay and nearby islands Rogeia, Kwato and
Samarai, were unusual in the Massim, being canoes without outriggers and
propelled solely by paddling. Abel 30 reported them to be almost exclusively
confined to Tauwara with Wagawaga being the manufacturing centre (see fig.
Map of kula routes in 1970's (Irwin & Leach, 1982)
6.7 b). They were made from a cedar trunk and tapered to very delicate lines. As their is no other report of gebo having prow carvings, Haddon suggests that the "finest Papuan carving upon the tall thin prows of these vessels" described by Abel refers instead to the end erections of the sailing vessels vaga-ve, also made in the area31. Seligman 32 confirmed that the gebo were used for raids and enabled a large number of men to travel fast. Le Hunte 33 gave the following account of a gebo at Waimara, Milne Bay

"...They use long narrow canoes without any outriggers, which they paddle...one we saw was 65 feet long with carved ends; on one there was a representation of a European firing a gun from a sitting posture at a large bird (pelican?) which was protecting a young one behind it...

This description is of particular interest as it is the only reference which mentions a canoe carving on a contemporary subject in an apparently realist style. 34

The tavero or war canoe, was a larger version of the gebo, but with an outrigger. One was described by Powell 35 held 30 men and the outrigger was hung with shields and spears. Macgregor included in his 1890 Annual Report36 a description of a tavero over 70 feet long and seated for 25 rowers which he procured from Wagawaga. However, by 1902 Abel reported that they had entirely disappeared during the last ten years.37

Trading voyages and kula - the uses of overseas sailing canoes

Before proceeding with the description of sailing canoes and their special sets of carvings it should be mentioned that these canoes are built for the purpose of ceremonial exchange voyages in the kula ring and other ceremonial exchange circuits in the Massim, extensive trading voyages, or both. This should give an additional insight into the high regard the Massim people have for their sea-going canoes, for the greatest exploits and achievements of men are made on the voyages they undertake in search of valuables. The feats of heroes are exulted in myth and song, and the secrets of success engraved into their canoes.

The kula is the circulation in definite directions of articles of great ceremonial value. The system of delayed exchange of valuables is traditional, public and ceremonial and is accompanied by magical rites. Though each kula participant has partners with whom he negotiates independently, the undertaking of a kula voyage is the activity of a community of men. Success in kula, apparent by the temporary possession of highly prized shell valuables which possess personal names and long histories, is a mark of personal achievement. The magical rites which are performed over a canoe and the symbolic references in its carvings, (described in the next chapter), transform it into a vessel imbued with power which will not fail on its kula voyages.
FIG. 6.9
VERTICAL CANOE FROWNS, NEW GUINEA

a. Canoe at Ceram (Brown 1892)

b. Sailing canoe, Hermit Is. (Haddon+Hornell, 1936)
c. New Britain canoe. (Fellowes, 1891)
Exchange patterns between island communities are well established (see map fig. 6.8). The north western sphere of *kula* extends from the Trobriand Islands to the Amphletts and thence to Dobu. The Trobrianders have no other *kula* relations in the D'Entrecasteaux group, but *kula* to Iwa and Gawa (the Marshall Bennetts), Murua (Woodlark) and Nada (Laughlans) in the north eastern sector. From the D'Entrecasteaux, particularly through the energetic Dobuans, the current flows to Tubetube, a great trading centre, and from Tubetube to Murua. Misima and Panaleti had *kula* links with Murua, but by the time Irwin and Leach compiled the map (late 1970's) these were very intermittent.

Apart from voyages undertaken for *kula* or other ceremonial purposes, each community has complex networks of ordinary trade relations. Some communities are highly specialised middlemen operating an exchange of commodities to balance the varying resources of the different island groups.

**The Diffusionist argument for the presence of vertical canoe prows in the Massim**

In the introduction to his catalogue Newton presents a diffusionist argument for the existence of vertical canoe prows in the Massim area. He has used as the basis for his argument the intensive research of Haddon and Hornell on the distribution of canoe styles in Oceania and augmented it with other evidence garnered from designs on Lapita pottery sherds; traditional trade routes along the littoral and adjacent islands of the New Guinea coast; some stylistic aspects of Geevink Bay and Lake Sentani figure carving which are similar to those of the Massim, and the theory that the original root of this cultural spread (traceable through the distribution of certain key motifs repeated in various art forms through the south east Asian peninsular into the Pacific) from east Asia into the Pacific was the Chou Chinese bronze age culture known as Dongson.

Newton plotted the distribution of the two basic types of canoe prows, horizontal and vertical, throughout Melanesia and Polynesia. He points out that...

"...Geographically speaking, the vertical type of prow forms a belt which consistently wraps around the horizontal, with only two overlaps..." and argues that the vertical type was due to a later incursion, rather than as it may appear, the horizontal type displacing the vertical type and pushing it further out. This supports Tiesler's model of the settlement of Austronesian immigrants on off-shore islands and their subsequent spread onto the mainland. Newton proposes that Geevink Bay was a key distribution point and from here the vertical prow style moved into southern New Ireland where Watom Island, in the straits between New Britain and New Ireland, was an important canoe building centre. From here it could have penetrated the Massim where it is likely to have remained fairly true to its parent style, the
Massim being located slightly off-centre to the main east/west flow of migration, trade and, consequently, new influences.

Other possible influences cited by Newton which may have had a significant bearing on the evolution of design motifs are the proposals of Badner that Dongson sources inspired the double spiralled designs in the Admiralty Islands from where they could have diffused into the Massim, and Golson's argument based on the spread of the designs occurring on Lapita sherds. Later evidence from archaeological work, which is still in progress, may indicate that Watom (New Ireland) was an origination site of the Lapita culture and more influential in the development of regional styles than previously recognised, partly because of its centralised location. Newton notes, for example, that the woodcarving tradition of Hermit Island may be a survival of a Lapita associated style. However, complex double-spiral designs occur in many New Guinea art styles including the Sepik. Its origin is far from certain and may be the result of localised development rather than diffusion.

The similarity in form of vertical canoe prows from Geelvink Bay to those of the Massim provides another path for Newton's theory. He traces a degree of similarity with the vertical panels of spirals characterising the Geelvink Bay canoe prowboards (see fig. 6.9a, Ceram canoe), Massim canoe prowboards and other Massim objects, especially clubs. Halfway, and north east of the Massim, the prow boards of the Duke of York Islands feature tight parallel lines and have scrolls carved approximately in the position where human heads were placed on Geelvink Bay boards. Closer to the Massim, the prow boards from New Britain (see fig. 6.9c) and New Ireland are only similar in overall form. Newton accounts for this by contrasting the self-contained nature of the *kulat* exchange system, which limited the extent of exchange/trade partners in the Massim, with the divergent trade paths of New Britain/New Ireland which, because of their less restricted trade and exchange mechanisms could have allowed a greater degree of cultural diffusion, and thus the large number of local variants.

Decorated transverse boards, i.e breakwaters of the *rajim* type, are much more rare, with their possible antecedents in Indonesia. The central point of their distribution is the Sepik area, where they are stylised as three upright panels rising from a central panel with a human mask at the centre. There are several variations of this style in northern New Guinea; at Geelvink Bay it can be reduced to a single figure, head between upraised arms; around the Schouten Islands, the human figure is attached behind the breakwater at the prow; in the Huon Gulf the Sepik style triple motif is simplified but still recognisable.

In the *rajim* of the Massim, the transverse boards are not divided into three distinguishable panels, but, as Newton points out, in that they have two lobes and a central panel, the tripartite effect is retained. In the Massim the human element is present in the small single or double figures at the top of the central panel.
From the evidence he presents, Newton concludes that

"...a sequence which begins with the incursion of an Austronesian group which settled on the offshore islands of New Guinea, and established trade relations with the mainland and west New Britain. A subsequent Austronesian group with an art style incorporating an angular style of face convention, figures with hands clasped at the breast, scroll design, and vertical canoe carvings, found a focus at Geelvink Bay and made contact with coastal people to the east, as far as Lake Sentani. Representatives of this group reached the south New Ireland-north New Britain area and subsequently the islands of the Massim area. The Massim retained a close affinity with the parent style; in New Britain-New Ireland the style and form became diversified through adaptation to local styles..."

A possible fault with Newton's diffusionist argument is that he is relying on the spread of a parent style, probably linked to the movement of Austronesians into the Massim area which occurred between 4000 and 2000 years b.p. However, if Irwin's theory based on archaeological evidence is correct, the kula is a fairly late development in the Massim perhaps only 500-600 years old. The previous trade links which existed in the Massim, for example those between Collingwood Bay on the mainland and the Trobriand Islands, may have been more purely economically based and not as ceremonial and restrictive as the kula.

Newton's arguments assume a passive flow of culture, an acceptance and continuing repetition of ancient designs and patterns. Though, of course, the original migrants into the Massim area must have brought their existing culture and technology with them, there is sufficient evidence within the Massim area of the influx, acceptance and incorporation of new ideas and styles to indicate that there was and is natural desire for innovation as well as respect for tradition in the art of the Massim.

One part of Newton's discussion which raises an interesting point concerns the frequent relationship of canoes with recent and mythical ancestral beings, and the concept of them as supernaturally powerful objects. Mortuary feasts on Fergusson, Murua and Rossel are all mentioned in the literature as having ceremonies which entailed special voyages. In this context also are the miniature burial canoes and canoe prows associated with burials mentioned by Gerrits. The photograph of Vivian's (fig. 3.19) which shows three carved wooden figures and other objects (including what appears to be a modern type of canoe prow, although this placement could be accidental), in a cave on Kitava could possibly be representative of a class of ancestor carvings associated with cave burials. Progressive burials were rigorously suppressed by the early administrators, probably with the effect that carved ancestor figures rapidly became redundant, and this is the reason for their scarcity.
a. Masawa canoe 'Nigada Bua', Trobriand Islands (Malinowski, 1919)

b. Lagim and tabuya of a Kiriwina masawa canoe. (Seligman, 1910)
SECTION II
TYPES OF SAILING CANOES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTIC SETS OF CARVINGS

A close examination of the published details and archival records available on the distribution of canoe types and prow designs in the Massim show differences in form and design, especially of Newton's types 1 and 2 which, along with some records of provenance, enables several sub-styles to be differentiated and located. In other instances, there is only a single photograph or illustration and a less than complete description of a type of canoe or canoe carving which can only be noted for the record.

To add to the difficulties of positive identification, the exact provenance of the canoes photographed or described in the literature is sometimes unknown, as the canoes were often on voyages when reported, and, as well, were often traded hundreds of miles from their place of origin. For example, in the case of Kiriwina in the Trobriand Islands, master carvers from Kitava were often imported to construct the canoe, as in the case of the canoe *Nigada Bu a* (name translated means "begging for an areca nut" - see Malinowski's photograph fig. 6.10a) made for the chief of Omerakana. Malinowski noted significantly that the Boyowan (Trobriand) canoe mythology and canoe industry was heavily borrowed from Kitava, a fact which would add credence to Oberoi's theory that the Kiriwinians were late-comers to the Kula, but their entry was facilitated by their prestige in other areas. This could mean that the designs of the Kiriwinan *sopj* is representative of a relatively late development in style (although well established by the time of European contact - see Seligman's photograph of Kiriwinan *lagim* and *tabuya* 6.10b), and the design is possibly heavily influenced by Kitavan motifs.

Malinowski and Fortune acknowledge that the prevailing type of *waga* in the D'Entrecasteaux, Amphlett and Trobriand Islands in their observations was the *masawa*, which had spread north from the D'Entrecasteaux group. The lighter structure of the *masawa* made it faster sailing and easier to build than *nagega*. One of its distinguishing features was the mast which, instead of being fixed in position as on other Massim *waga*, was secured only by lashing and was required to be moved from one end to the other when a change of direction was required as the *masawa* could not tack. The designs of *masawa* *tabuya* (prowboards) and *lagim* (splashboards) are very distinctive. Because the canoe was reversible, bow and stern had sets of *lagim* and *tabuya*. In its typical form the *lagim*, is composed of two asymmetrical lobes and a central panel and features a small human figure or figures, either realistic or stylised, at the top of the centre panel (see fig. 6.11). The *tabuya* is an oval shape infilled with conventionalised curvilinear designs (see fig. 6.12).

Malinowski's informants assured him that the *masawa* canoes, used by the Trobriand Islanders when he was there researching in 1919, had been
introduced from the D'Entrecasteaux, supplanting the *nagega* canoes previously made in the Trobriands only a few generations before. Malinowski noted that

"In olden days, that is, about two or three generations ago, the *nagega* was used exclusively in Iwa (between Kitava and the Marshall Bennetts), Kitava, Kiriwina (the northern part of Boyowa) Vakuta and Sineketa (a village on the east coast of the Trobriand lagoon), while the Amphlettans and the natives of Kayleuia would usually use the *nagega*, though sometimes they would sail in *masawa* canoes. Dobu was the real home and headquarters of the *masawa*"

Malinowski could not determine when the shifting began and was completed. Neither could he tell whether the Trobrianders actually made *nagega* canoes or whether these were imported from Kitava or made by craftsmen imported from Kitava. He continues,

"There is no doubt, however, that in olden days, the natives of Kitava and Iwa used themselves to make *nagega* canoes (as is confirmed by myth)...Thus in this district at any rate, and probably in the Trobriands and Amphletts as well, not only the use, but also the manufacture of the bigger canoe has been superseded by the smaller one, the *masawa*, now found in all these parts."

A brief report by Whitehouse who was in the Trobriand Islands as a government official at the same time as Malinowski, gives even more detailed information of the names of the variations of sailing canoes made in the Trobriand Islands:

- canoe with two strakes on each side: *bwadula*
- large fighting canoe, not made now: *masauwa*
- canoe with three strakes: *masauwa-kikita*
- with 4: *masauwa*
- with 5: *masauviaka*
- with six or seven: *masauviaka-isiosi*
- with any number over five: *monosaki*

Gerrits 1974 report of canoe burials at Kitava (Trobriand Islands) and Iwa (Marshall Bennett Islands) confirms that a type of canoe called *bwadila* or *bwadula* was made in the Trobriands early this century.

Assisted by the elders at both locations, Gerrits found both minature canoes and cut-off canoe prows used as burial containers in caves, crevices and platforms in cliffs. Giant clam shells, large pottery urns and wooden bowls were also used as containers for human bones in the same area. Of the three minature canoes
found, all were carved in the shape of a reptile’s head at both ends, a feature called *uJau*, (snake) but only one was decorated with incised designs. One informant, Regineiya, recalled his father telling him that old men used to carve their own small canoes to be their coffins “long ago”.

The cut-off canoe prows, called *poessa*, all came from Kitava island and appear to have been cut off the hulls of real canoes. Of interest here is a photograph by Vivian taken (between 1917-21) on Kitava “in a cave” showing a canoe prow with *tabuya* attached, together with three carved human figures and a decorated lime gourd. However, as this *tabuya* seems to fit the type 1 category, it is difficult to relate it to an earlier style of canoe such as Gerrits informants describe. It may be the case that the two types of canoe existed side by side for a time until the *masawa* dominated.

Gerrits noted that by the 1970’s the canoe type *masawa*, then used throughout the Trobriands, had spread to some extent to the Marshall Bennetts. *Masawa*, are said to have originated from Dobu and are known in Kitava as *to-Dobu* (man from Dobu). The Marshall Bennett Islanders also utilise the larger *nagega* canoe. The likelihood that they representative of an earlier version of the present day *nagega* is confirmed by the comments of one of Gerrits’s informants, Yolimatua, who told him,

“...The cut-off prows (*poessa*), used for burials, originate from a now extinct type of canoe, that was called *bwadila*. This was made long ago in Kitava as well as in Iwa and was not like the modern *masawa* (now in use on both islands) but like the modern *nagega* of the other Marshall Bennett and Woodlark Islands. However, while both sides of the modern *nagega* are curved length-wise, the *bwadila* had one curved and one straight side...”

Given this information one can speculate that the profile of the *lagim* given as Haddon and Hornell’s Type 1 and Newton’s Type 2, of which Haddon commented “...is exemplified in the *nagega* canoe of the Trobriand Islands”, was of a style preferred in the northern Massim late last century but which was phased out by early this century. Malinowski does not report sighting any *nagega* canoes in the Trobriand Islands during his stay there.

An explanation of the adoption of *masawa* canoes in the Trobriands and the use of different prow carvings is not available. The only connection with the D’Entrecasteaux where this type of canoe originated, is a mythical one told about two of the prows from the Dabadaba location. The myth relates that they are the canoes in which the female ancestors of Kudeuli village sailed to Teula (FergussonIs.) and back to Kitava. The Kudeuli people have all died out, and it is their bones which the prows contained. The connection between Kitava and Fergusson contained in the myth of the Kudeuli ancestresses, (since Kitava had no direct connections, at least in the historical period, through *kula* or trade with Fergusson or Dobu) leads one to speculate that these ancestors introduced
FIG 6.11

a. Stern Lagim, Amerakana, Trobriand Islands
   (Norabutov, 1979)

b. Lagim, Morima, Ferguson Island.
   (Williams, 1938)

c. Stern Lagim, Vakuta, Trobriand Islands
   (Norabutov, 19)

d. Northern D'Entrecasteaux (Jenness & Ballantyne
   1920)
Southern Massim influences to Kitava including the preference for the *masawa* canoes from that area, and the motifs of the bird on reptile’s snout, (ubiquitous in the Southern Massim) found on one of the canoe prows, and the snake represented on their canoe prows, perhaps associated with the southern deity/witch Yaboaine.

A further shred of evidence which echoes the possibility of the *masawa* being introduced to Kitava from Dobu and spreading from there to other centres in the Trobriand Islands is to be found in the information collected by Haddon and Hornell. According to their sources, the best centres for the building of *masawa* were (then) the islands of Vakuta, immediately south of Boyowa, and Kayleula, to the west. The island of Kitava, farther to the east, “is the traditional and mythical centre; the finest canoes and carvings are made there”.

The set of detachable canoe carvings for *masawa* canoes

(NEWTON TYPE 1)

*Masawa* canoe carvings have been well documented since the beginning of this century. Recent research and commentary from Chief Narabutau, a *kula* participant and *toliwaga* (master of a canoe), has revealed that the designs carved and painted on the *lagim* and *tabuya* of *masawa* canoes can be differentiated into *sopi* (schools), and are the property of *to-kabitam* (master carvers) who pass on the knowledge of the designs to their apprentices. An analysis of the design components and motifs of Vakutan canoe carvings is given in the next chapter; the illustrations which accompany this chapter serve only to identify, where possible, characteristic examples of canoe carvings.

*Masawa* canoes are also made in the Amphlett and D'Entrecasteaux Islands, and in the latter group are locally called *keama* for the larger variation and *aiyebu* for the smaller canoe. Jenness and Ballantyne informed Haddon and Hornell that the washboards (called *hodawa*) rose slightly higher than the washstrakes, and describe them as follows:

“...each upper corner is carved into a volute and in the centre of the upper margin one or two human figures are almost invariably represented... A carved end erection (*vagavaga*) in front of the breakwater extends along the proximal, solid end of the bow end of the hull, the distal part of which is covered with ovulum shell; the breakwater and the forepart of the strakes are similarly ornamented...”

Haddon and Hornell also comment that sporadic examples of *masawa* canoes occur wherever the influence from the D'Entrecasteaux has spread, even as far as Brummer Island. Specimens from Brummer Islands collected on the voyage of the Rattlesnake are now in the British Museum (see figs.6.4a and 6.22b).
a. Front tabuya, Kilivila, Trobriand Islands (Narabutau, 1979)

b. Tabuya of a masawa beached at Kowatario village, Trobriand Is. (Paradise, 1980)

c. Masawa prow, Northern D’Entrecasteaux (Jenness, Bellanqua, 1970)

d. Stern tabuya (Newton, 1975)

Note row of holes at base of oval.
Campbell, in her analysis of the Vakutan artistic system relating to ritual carving, points out the assistance given by following procedures of formal analysis in understanding style. Style, she says, conforms to the shared cultural perception extant in a particular society. Massim artists tend to interlock lines to form spirals and volutes, however sub-styles in the Massim area can be differentiated by formal analysis. Substyles identify different sopis (schools of carving) and the individual carvers who represent those schools. Though there is a shared system of form throughout the Massim, the encoding of meaning within the forms may not be shared. The to-kabitan (master carver) holds the knowledge of the carved forms and their representations to himself, only passing on the complete knowledge of technique, design and accompanying ritual to his apprentice. Thus it can be understood why, Seligman's informants on Tubetube did not know what the carvings on their canoes (most likely procured from Murua) meant, or Williams could only discover the names of individual motifs on a Fergusson Island prowboard, but not their significance.

Campbell's informants gave her detailed explanations of the canoe carvings made at Vakuta. Using examples from Vakuta, (discussed in detail in the following chapter), Campbell distinguishes the elements of design and explains the semiotics of canoe prow carvings of sopi Vakuta. However, this does not mean that the particular sopis strictly geographically located.

Although only one master carver of each sopi can practise at the time (though his apprentice, when trained, can assist him with commissions), there could possibly be three or four to-kabitan belonging to different sopis working in the same place, each within his own speciality. Thus it would be possible for a canoe made in Vakuta to have a set of lagim and tabuya carved in sopi Kitava or sopi Vakuta, depending on which master carver the canoe owner commissioned.

Each masawa canoe has two sets of lagim and tabuya. The sets are distinguished linguistically, the set placed with the outrigger on the left is called dogina, and on the right uuna. Campbell notes that, at Vakuta, the dogina end faces Dobu, the uuna end faces Kitava, a distinction connected to wind directions - when the south west winds blow, it is the best time to go to Kitava and the uuna faces the direction of sailing; a northwest wind is needed to sail the more difficult voyage to Dobu, therefore there is more emphasis on the boards of the dogina ends.

Within the sets the lagim are visually distinguishable by the physically larger loop positioned on the outrigger side of the dogina lagim. Chief Narabutau says "...The outrigger of a canoe is always on the side of the larger wing. The larger wing on the prow is on the right, and on the stern the larger wing is on the left."
Characteristic set of carvings of nagega canoe
(Vivian c. 1920)
On the *tabuya*, *dogina* and *uuna* are distinguished by a row of perforations along the bottom of the oval of the *uuna* as well as a change in the line of its "nose" - altogether the *uuna tabuya* has less room for design placement.

"...The tabuya is placed at right angles to the lagim...The tabuya at the back of the canoe (which is called the "root") has a line of holes at the bottom..." (see fig. 6.12d - the holes can be distinguished at the bottom of the oval shape where it adjoins the base)

Unfortunately, it has not been possible for the writer to see a full set of *dogina* and *uuna* boards as the photographs are usually of individual boards, not sets, and those of assembled canoes only show one perspective of the canoe.

In his two articles describing Trobriand Island canoe prows, Chief Narabutau identifies the individual boards according to their *sopi* and whether they are stern or prow pieces. In his discussion Narabutau points to design features on some of the boards which distinguish their provenance.

"...(referring to his fig.1) This canoe prow comes from Vakuta. This is evident from the *sakwab* designs, which run along the central axis from top to bottom of the canoe prow. In Kilivila these *sakwab* (they represent coconut husks, drying in the sun) curl upwards, in Vakuta they curl downwards....

"...(his fig. 3) Probably from Kumagea. The relatively steep line sloping from the larger down to the smaller *beba* (butterfly - refers to lobes) is typical of that area. The left *beba* has a snake design (top left). This design is optional."  

The illustrations selected from Chief Narabutau's articles begin to reveal the enormous scope for variations within a conventionalised form and style. As Campbell says, formal analysis can differentiate major sub-styles, for example Trobriand Islands, Murua, Amphletts, etc. Closer inspection, together with information from local informants, will enable differentiation to be made within these groups to particular districts, for example, Kuboma, Kitava, Vakuta substyles in the Trobriand Islands. Complete familiarity with the practitioners and *sopi* within a district, such as that of Chief Narabutau, enables him to nominate the carver, his school and the village from which a piece originates. It is beyond the knowledge of the writer and the scope of this chapter to do more than indicate that the variations exist to such an extent.

**Sets of carvings from nagega canoes**

(*Newton Type 2*)

*Nagega* canoes are the largest and most widely used of the Massim overseas sailing vessels. They are made at several centres and exported to other communities which do not make canoes, in exchange for other valuable commodities.
FIG. 6.14
DISCONTINUED VARIATION OF NAGECA SPLASHBOARDS (éjim)

a. Collected Lauglan Is. (Queensland Museum)

b. Collected Cook Daniels Expedition 1906. (In Seligman File)

c. Pigorini Museum Collection (Rome)

d. Unknown provenance (Vivian, c. 1920)
FIG. 6.15
VARIATION OF NAGEGA SPLASHBOARDS (ra'ijim) STILL IN USE

a. No provenance given (Beran catalogue, 1980)
b. Collected Laughlan Islands (Beran 1981)
c. No provenance (Narabutau 1979)
d. Collected Fergusson I's (National Gallery, Victoria)
The first description of such a vessel was given by Macgillivray who sighted it in 1849 at Brummer Island, though it was probably there on a trading voyage. The features of the canoe noted by Macgillivray were that it was

"...constructed of a hollowed out tree raised upon with large planks forming a coffin like box, closed with high end boards (breakwaters) elegantly carved and painted. Two rows of carved fishes ran along the sides, and both ends were peaked, the bow rising higher than the stern, and, like it, but more profusely, decorated with carving painted red and white, streamers of palm leaf, egg-cowries, and plumes of cassowary feathers. The outrigger framework was completely covered over, forming a large platform above the centre of which a small stage rested on a strong projecting beam (shoe spar) the outer end of which was carved into the figure of a bird, while the inner reached the centre of the body of the canoe and served to support the mast..."  

Newton characterises the carved attachments of *nagega* canoes (his Type 2); note that his first comment on distribution is not accurate for recent historical times.

"...The second type is found throughout the Massim area, except in East Cape and the D'Entrecasteaux. The *rajim* is taller than in the first type and has one lobe slightly enlarges, while the *tabuya* is a boomerang form, with a long slat at the high outer end supporting a small subsidiary carving (*munkuris*), of figures of birds)...

Malinowski described the *nagega* canoes as one of the two types of canoes in the *kula* district, used in the section of the *kula* running from Gawa to Tubetube, as well as occurring in the Massim outside the *kula* area at Sudest and elsewhere in the southern archipelagoes and on the southern coast. Although their use was widespread due to their use as a valuable trade/exchange item, Malinowski nominated the (then) main centres of manufacture as Gawa, a few villages on Murua, Panaeiti, and one or two places on Misima.

Seligman nominated Murua as the main centre of manufacture,

"...The great built up canoes... were built at Murua and numbers of them appear to have been exported to Tubetube whence some at least passed to the islands nearer the mainland. The *waga* built on the Marshall Bennets and the Trobriands may have been traded to the D'Entrecasteaux though I doubt whether this occurred... though I did not go to the D'Entrecasteaux I gathered that these islanders used smaller built-up canoes (called *kebwai* at Tubetube)...It is, however, certain that the *waga* built in the Marshall Bennets and Trobriands do not pass south in any quantity; I enquired into this matter in the Trobriands and
Characteristic set of carvings of nagego.
(Vivian c.1920)
Marshall Bennetts and not only could I not hear of canoes traded in this direction, but in those parts of the territory of the southern Massim which I visited I saw no waga made in the Marshall Bennetts or Trobriands, the origin of these craft being easily identified by the carving on the wooden cross pieces (rajim) which close in their ends. Plate LXV (fig. 6.10b) shows a typical piece of this sort, the original having been carved in the Trobriands, while Plate LXVI (fig. 6.14b) is taken from a photograph of two rajim collected on Murua and now in the British Museum. The carving on the Louisade waga differs from both if these as will be readily appreciated from Plate LXVII (fig. 6.5c)...

This quotation from Seligman confirms that, at the time of his investigation (1906), masawa canoes were predominant in the Trobriands.

Returning, however, to the sets of carvings from nagega canoes. A comparison of the rajim (breakwater) illustrated in the profiles of the canoe carvings (Type 1 Haddon and Hornell, Type 2 Newton - refer to fig. 6.2)) and that of the rajim from Murua in Seligman's Plate LXVI (fig. 6.14b - see other examples in fig. 6.14), will immediately show a difference in style. The drawn profiles show a rajim, the lower section of which appears to have vertical designs while the upper section has a horizontal axis with a circular design (which appears to have a star shape in the centre in the Haddon & Hornell version) featured in the enlarged lobe.

In contrast, on the rajim collected from Murua by the Cook Daniels Expedition of 1906, two examples of which are illustrated by Seligman (my fig. 6.14), the lines flow vertically from the bottom to the top of the rajim, although the lobes of this section appear as exaggeratedly asymmetrical as the first example, there is no division in the design into upper and lower sections. A fluid snake motif, the intaglio of which forms a fishlike shape, links the asymmetrical lobes. The design is focused on the circular designs at the centre of the lobes. No interpretation of the motifs is given. It is interesting to note that the only rajim of his Type 2 that Newton includes in his catalogue is not similar to the drawn profile he gives, but is very close to Seligman's sample and possibly the same specimen. Another example of a rajim with designs flowing vertically for the length of the board is in the Vivian collection (fig. 6.14d), but no details are available as to its whereabouts or provenance.

The style which appears to be favoured for the rajim of nagega canoes at present has two distinct sections (see fig. 6.15); the lower section tapers towards the bottom and features horizontal designs, frequently featuring a snake motif, repeated as opposite panels; the top section features a slightly asymmetrical but balanced design of inverted volutes. A star motif enclosed by the arms of the volute, repeated in each lobe, is often incorporated in the design, and the lobes
FIG. 6.17

NAGEGA PROWBOARDS - VARIATION 1

From Newton catalogue (1975)
nos. 52, 53 - no provenance.
FIG 6.18

NAGECA PROWBOARDS - VARIATION 2

a. From Egum Atoll. (Collected Chalmers before 1901)

b. Recent example collected on Gawa (Beran catalogue 1980)
are separated by a smaller design in the centre. Borders frame both the top and bottom sections.\textsuperscript{74}

This style of \textit{rajjim}, which is widespread today, was already present in the early decades of this century. Three photographs by Vivian, taken between 1917-1921, show beached canoes with \textit{rajjim} of this style, though no information is given as to where the photographs were taken, or where the canoes were from (figs. 6.13, 6.16, 6.20).\textsuperscript{75}

To summarise, there appear to be (or have been this century) three main variations of \textit{rajjim} of nagega canoes:

(i) as illustrated in fig. 6.15a, b and c, which appears to be the only type now being made.

(ii) as illustrated in fig. 6.3 a and b, which seems to be the closest to the Haddon and Hornell drawing (fig. 6.2a), and which seems to have been discontinued.

(iii) as illustrated in 6.14 a-d and 3.13a, which also seems to have been discontinued since early this century.

Bromilow includes a photograph of a "Panaeiti Canoe Decoration" (fig. 6.5a)\textsuperscript{76}, which, although it is difficult to see all the detail of the design on the \textit{rajjim}, appears to show a further variation. Again the designs on the bottom section run vertically; the lobes are very asymmetrical and the design appears to be stepped into the larger and smaller curves of the upper section.

As has been mentioned previously, several major manufacturing centres exported nagega canoes throughout the Massim. However, this did not necessarily restrict the eventual owners to the style and decoration of carved canoe boards preferred by the canoe builders. Haddon and Hornell note that on Wari (Teste Is.), a major commercial centre, canoes were imported from Murua but the carvings and decorations were completed on Wari,

"... spirited patterns were deeply cut and red and black pigment smeared on..."\textsuperscript{77}

Unfortunately they give no example of Wari carving.

\textit{Nagega} canoes have prow and stern sets of carved attachments, each consisting of a \textit{rajjim}, an elbow-shaped prowboard and a \textit{munkuris}. From the published and archival material available it can be recognised that there are two basic variations in the designs of both prowboards and \textit{munkuris}, however there is no study comparable to Campbell’s analysis of Vakutan canoe boards or commentary on the aesthetics and provenance of individual boards such as Narabutau’s on Trobriand Island pieces.

The carvings on the elbow-shaped prowboards, have more the appearance of fretwork than other canoe carvings, with the spaces created forming an intrinsic part of the design. Two noticeable variations occur in the illustrations of this
MUNKURIS (finials)
OF NAGEGA CANOES

VARIATION 1

VARIATION 2
type of prowboard. In the first variation (see fig. 6.17), commencing at the centre top of the board, just under the spur to which the munkuris is attached, is a design resembling a long hook. The curve of the hook faces outwards, away from the canoe and the surrounding designs repeat or emphasise the main motif to the 'bend of the elbow'.

The second variation (fig. 6.18) features an elongated shape in the top section in which there is no carving, enclosed with elegant borders. It is most likely the case that there is one prowboard of each variation in a set of nagega canoe carvings.

Likewise, there are two main variations in the carving of munkuris, the first in which the carving is on a horizontal plane (see fig. 6.19 a-c), and the second in which the design is tilted diagonally (see fig. 6.19 e-g). Seligman commented on several munkuris collected from Murua by the Cook Daniels expedition in 1906. He was aware of their magical significance, as both he and Captain Barton had attempted to buy munkuris from canoes on voyages.

"...but the crew of the canoe, although obviously anxious to sell the carving, said they could not do this as there was no one who could carve another that night to serve as a substitute, and without the munkuris they might have all sorts of difficulties during their voyage to Murua..."78

Seligman was able to establish the names of motifs of one of the specimens from Murua, his example No. 1 (see fig. 6.19a), which is carved on a horizontal plane.

"...No. 1 may be regarded as a typical munkuris; its base is formed by the co-joined bodies of two long-beaked birds which represent the reef heron (boi), the wings of these two birds coalesce to form an oval black intaglio area, which represents a fish called aiswan, said to live in mangrove swamps. The paired red (outer) and black (inner) intaglio areas, curved like commas, which spring on each side from the tips of the beaks of the two reef herons, represent the curve of the nautilus shell (ovagoro) as do the much less strongly curved red intaglio areas above and below the comma-shaped intaglio. The bird’s head derivatives below the highest nautilus intaglio represent the heads of a bird called weku, and this also applies to the pierced scrolls immediately above the lowest intaglio, supported on the head of the two reef herons. I could not ascertain the names of the three birds which form the highest part of this munkuris, but it is to be noted that one of these has a head at each end of its body...."79

The munkuris (Seligman’s no.5, see fig. 6.19e), which he calls "an interesting variant", from at the village of Modau, renowned for its carvings, has the parts described in the same way as No. 1, though the birds on the top were called
Characteristic set of ragedga canoe carvings. (Vivian 1920)
makarakea, the name for tern. No explanation was given by the informants for this munkuris being designed on a diagonal plane.

Seligman's no. 10 (fig.6.19c), is said to have come from Rudawog, a village near Suloga on Murua and is probably representative of a different school. All three birds were said to represent the cockatoo. Seligman comments that the significance of the lines lightly carved on the flat areas below the two highest cockatoos could not be determined though he was given the name ginigin, and the row of scrolls beneath the central cockatoo were obviously derived from bird's heads, but were given no special name.

Further examples of Seligman's numbers 1 and 5 are in Beran's catalogue, No. 69 being a horizontal and no 71 a diagonal specimen. Beran also illustrates a munkuris from Misima (No. 70) of which the design is equilaterally balanced. Newton illustrates the same pieces from the Cook Daniel's collection as Seligman.

It is impossible to conjecture the correct assemblies for nagega canoes with insufficient examples and no local information, but one combination of nagega canoe carvings (Newton type 2), shown in several photographs of the canoes fully rigged where each piece is fully discernable (e.g. fig.6.16), seems to make up a set consisting of:

- **Rajim of the type commonly in use today, that is, only slightly assymmetrical with distinct lower and upper sections** (see fig. 6.14);
- **prowboard of variation 1 with the hook design in the top section** (fig. 6.17);
- **munkuris on a horizontal plane** (fig. 6.19 a-d).

However, it becomes obvious that extensive field work would have to be undertaken in order to properly characterise the sets of canoe carvings in use today and the recent past. Attempting to analyse the components from photographs and specimens with no, or very poor, records of provenance, and no information of what constitutes a full set of nagega carvings for the prow and stern of a canoe leads only to speculation.

**Canoe carvings from the Louisadzes and Calvados Chain**
(Haddon & Hornell Type 2, Newton Type 3)

Haddon and Hornell could glean little information regarding this much rarer set of canoe carvings:

"...At Utian (Brooker) and perhaps generally in the Calvados there is a special type of end erection (their Type 2 - see fig. 6.2a). The basal part is low but it is provided with a tall angled spur which ends in a carved bird. Tied to the spur and parallel to it is a long-stemmed finial, the carved design of which seems to be
Louisade canoe (Lindt 1887)
Louisade canoe under soil (Vivian c. 1920)
characteristic of this type. I do not know whether the carving of
the fore breakwater is peculiar to this type; the aft breakwater is
small and plain, and there is no aft end erection. The only book
illustration of this type is that given by Seligman of a canoe at
Utian. Lindt took two photographs of 2 canoes at Wari in which this
end erection can just be made out....82

... The probability is that all canoes with this type of fore
end erection were made in the neighbourhood of the Calvados
Chain. As the Wari (Teste) Islanders obviously do not build large
sailing canoes, any canoe in Wari must have come from
elsewhere.83

... The Utian canoe photographed by H.O. Forbes in 1886 is
the model for (Haddon & Hornell's) Fig. 146 b. There is a specimen
of the same type in the British Museum collected by the Woodlark,
doubtless from the Calvados Chain..."84

Newton's example of a rajim of this type (see fig. 6.22a) is captioned "Breakwater. Tubetube, imported from Panaieti; 13 1/2" high, and he describes
the characteristic features of the set of carvings as:

"...In the third type, the rajim, although as squat as those of
the first type, resembles that of the D'Entrecasteaux variant in
having one lobe greatly enlarged and with a rounded small form
attached. The tabuya is a horizontal panel from which, near the
forward end, rises a double strut: this is topped with a carving of
the munkuris type, just below which another long strut angles
forward again and terminates in the figure of a bird. This type is
only found in the Louisades (where it probably originated),
Tubetube and Wari...."

There is, however, no supportive evidence that this type is made on either
Tubetube or Wari.

The sketch "Catamaran and Natives at Brummer Islands" (fig. 6.4b), which forms
the frontispiece of the journals of the voyage of the Rattlesnake, is probably
similar to the rajim collected by the Rattlesnake in 1849.85 The illustration is a
poor representation of the rajim and does not show the tabuya or munkuris
in any detail at all.

Lindt's photograph of a canoe at Teste Island taken in profile (fig. 6.21) only
shows an indistinct outline of the rajim, but more clearly depicts the struts
with large carved birds extending from the stern of the canoe.86

Seligman's photograph of "waga from Brooker Island (Louisades)" (fig. 6.5c) had
only one set of carvings at the prow; the larger lobe of the rajim is on the
outrigger side, and again it is difficult to distinguish the details of the tabuya
and munkuris.
FIG. 6.22

SPLASHBOARDS OF LOUISAIDE CANOES


b. Collected on "Rattlesnake" voyage 1849 (British Museum)

c. Examples in British Museum

d. Sketch by Edge-Partington of example in British Museum (1949)
PROWBOARDS and FINIALS from LOUISADE CANOES

Newton catalogue nos. 63 and 64
a. Bird carvings tied to a tree (Vivian c. 1920)

b. Beached canoe (shape of a bird appears to be Noua Island) - double bird carving on long pole extending from outrigger
A photograph by Vivian of a canoe under sail (fig. 6.21b) shows a clear profile of a *rajim*, once again with the large lobe facing the outrigger. The other decorations are not discernable because of the angle. Although the decorations in this photograph are ostensibly at the stern of the canoe, this does not prove that sets are made for either end, as the canoes are reversible as are *masawa* canoes.

An interesting photograph of several large bird carvings and a diagonal *munkuris* tied to a tree trunk (fig. 6.24a)\(^8\) give much better detail of this kind of carving. The lowest bird is definitely attached to a strut, and is similar in outline to the bird attached to a pole on the outrigger of a canoe in another photograph (fig. 6.24b)\(^8\). Lindt’s photograph referred to earlier, shows two bird carvings at the stern of the beached canoe, although it is difficult to see to what part of the canoe they are attached, one may be attached to the outrigger. It is concluded from the available evidence that the type of bird carving described above should be included in the characteristic set of canoe carvings from the Louisades.

It is assumed, on the basis of the recorded and photographic evidence, that Louisade sailing canoes with Newton Type 3 carvings have disappeared from the Massim area since the turn of this century. This disappearance of a recognised style can be added to the style of *rajim* (*lagim*) carved for *nagega* canoes as illustrated in Newton’s Type 2 (see my fig. 6.3a & b), and the type of *rajim* for *nagega* canoes, examples of which are given in my fig. 6.14.

"Hybrids" - combinations of types or possible new types.

Another photograph by Vivian (fig. 6.25b)\(^9\) resembles the "waga of unusual type, Moturina, near Utian" illustrated in Haddon and Hornell as Fig. 140. Vivian shows a similar canoe in profile with an unusual combination of canoe carvings; it appears to have two kinds of prowboards, the lower one ending in an elongated bird and the other having a closer resemblance to the prowboards of Newton Type 2. The angle of the photograph makes it difficult to determine whether the *rajim* is Newton Type 3, or a variation of Type 2. Williams sent Haddon and Hornell photograph taken in 1932 of an canoe at Suau which is a "hybrid of styles"\(^9\), and it is not unlikely that other "hybrids" were built to fit particular local conditions or because of the whim of the canoe owner or builder - fig. 6.25a is probably such an example. The assembly of canoe carvings in fig. 6.26 provides another puzzle. In outline the *rajim* is most similar to my fig. 6.3a and b, which in turn bear the closest resemblance to Haddon and Hornells’ Type 1 (Newton Type2), however it is unlike these examples in that the vertical design flows from the centre of the single large lobe to the base of the board. The u shaped motif in the centre of the lower section of the board is recognisably a Massim design, but rarely used in this context.
Unusual set of canoe carvings
(no provenance - Vivian 1920)
Unusual prow carving - possibly on gebo or taverno
(Vivian c.1920 - no provenance.)
"MILNE BAY WAR CANOE?"

Two puzzles from the southern Massim also remain to be solved. The first is an unusual prow, again photographed by Vivian (fig. 6.27), of what is presumed to be a *gebo* or *tavera*, featuring a carving of a standing lizard along the elongated tip of the prow. The interlocked spirals on the raised section of the prow below the elongated tip are a typical Massim design.

The second query relating to a type of canoe prow with southern Massim provenance arises from three distinctive carved and painted prows from Milne Bay. The example in Peter Hallinan's collection (fig. 6.28a) is called 'Milne Bay war canoe prow' and he notes it as being similar to an example in the British Museum. Another similar prow is in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery (fig. 6.28b). The question is, are three examples sufficient to establish a new type of canoe prow? One can speculate that, if one was carved recently for a Royal visit, the style must have been significant in the area in the recent past.

**Characteristics of Rossel Island canoes**

Rossel Island, the most easterly of the Louisade Archipelago, is regarded as being within the Massim though its population has distinctive cultural traits and speaks a Papuan language, and are therefore possibly descendents of an earlier migration than the Austronesian speakers who populate the rest of the area. Armstrong, an anthropologist who made a study of the area in the 1920's, described Rossel canoes in detail.

"Four distinct types of canoe are made on Rossel, three of which differ markedly from the canoes of the Massim, although all are of the same general single-outrigger pattern that we find from Sudest to Orangerie Bay. The simplest type is the small unplanked outrigger canoe, universal...amongst the Massim. This is the *no* (generic Rossel term for canoe), or *pia no* (female canoe). The other three types are the *ma no* (male canoe), *lia no* (sailing canoe) and *para no* (ndap canoe)...the *pia no* is the only canoe which is not taboo to women."

The distinctive features of the other three types of Rossel Island canoes are the infilling of both ends of the dugout with decking so that the ends of the hull project for and aft a long way in front of the platform which attaches the outrigger (see fig. 6.6a & b), and the one or more wasstrakes in the central section. *Lia no* and *ma no* are built up with at least two strakes, which are enclosed with carved boards, similar in shape to the *rajim* of Massim sailing canoes, but with very different decorative motifs (see fig. 6.6d).

The *ma no* (male canoe) occurs mostly at the eastern end of Rossel Island and is a small outrigger not made for sailing. Both ends of the *ma no* are extended
Rossel Island lia no (Vivian c.1920)
Rossel Island paranoia (ndap) canoe
into a horizontal "nose" (tiliwalolo) is a stylised crocodile's head painted white. The slight projection at the base of the solid extremity is called the eye (walo). A few raised carved lines on the upper surface represent a stingray (yvarado), and the raised lines on the side of the bow represent a bird, mbu, flying in a high wind. The washboard appears to be painted predominantly white with a simple central motif.  

The larger, sailing version of the ma no, the lia no, also features decked ends and a central platform, but the platform extends some distance on the side opposite the outrigger (see fig. 6.29). The carvings at the ends of the dugout and washboards are similar to those of the ma no. Ovulum shells and hollow nuts are hung along the sides and apparently act as charms against storms, they are added in one of the rituals used in the preparation for a voyage. Lozenge shaped designs in red, blue and black painted on the sides were said to represent a bird called do.

The para no or ndap (fig. 6.30) is peculiar to Rossel Island, and has some exceptional features not only in appearance, but also in its functions. Armstrong accounts for the lack of earlier descriptions being due to the fact that the para no is only used for specific ritual purposes and is therefore not often seen in the water. As with the two previous types of Rossel canoes, the dug out is decked in for a distance fore and aft and it is fitted with a single straight strake on the side away from the outrigger, and an unusual strake bent at a 90 degree angle on the outrigger side; it does not have washboards. The canoe is built for speed and beauty, being of a considerable length with a slender outrigger and is not suitable for rough seas. The photograph by Vivian (fig. 6.29) shows the characteristic decorations of para no, the nose is similar to ma no and lia no but the body of the hull is decorated with a series of ovals, red in the centre and black on the outer circumference, which represent the exclusive Rossel ndap money or the shell from which it is made. Plumes of cassowary feathers are attached behind the noses of the canoes, and ovulum shells line the upper edges of the decking.

According to Armstrong, some of the uses of the para no are mysterious; it could only be owned by a chief, and conversely, in order to be a chief of any importance it was necessary to own a para no.

"...Its alternative name of ndap canoe depends on the fact that it is used on expeditions for the collecting of shell money required in connection with important feasts, probably its principal use. Races between chiefs are also held with these canoes on certain occasions. It may be noted that the canoe is designed principally for speed in calm water, and I imagine that no canoe of the same size in New Guinea could compete with it...Finally it is connected with certain types of songs and dances known as dama. These are sung by the crews, particularly when racing, and when sung on shore are sometimes accompanied by the beating of
paddies on the *para no*, which thus takes the place of the drum of the Massim...The losers in the race have to pay the winner a no.18 *ndap*, which means that the stakes are very high...A certain sacredness seems to attach to these canoes, and women are forbidden to look upon them..."95

**Conclusion**

The origin of a Massim canoe is most easily recognised by the carvings on its prowboards (*tabuya*) and splash boards (*lagim* or *raijim*). Three main types of sailing canoes are recognisable by their techniques of construction and their characteristic sets of carvings. Rossel island canoes, both the sailing canoes, *mano* and *lia no*, and the ceremonial paddled canoe, *para no*, have distinctive features and decorations which set them apart from other types of Massim canoes. Several types of large paddled canoes, including the *gebo* and *tavero*, used for war and raiding parties in the the Suau, China Straits and Milne Bay area of the southern Massim previously existed.

The characteristic sets of carvings of sailing canoes consist of either two or three components. They are ritually carved by specialists and serve to protect and enhance the canoe with supernatural power as well as aesthetic appeal. Variations within the characteristic forms denote the provenance of the canoe and depending on the amount of knowledge the viewer has of these forms, allows them to be distinguished progressively from district, to island, to village, to carving school, to individual carver.

The use of attached decorations of pandanus streamers, fringes and ovulum shells is ubiquitous through the Massim and characteristic of it, although again placement varies with locality as does rigging, type of sail and other details of construction.

Though we can perceive from the written accounts and photographs assembled since the 1850’s and referred to in this chapter, that in the last 130 or so years the canoes of the Massim have undergone a number of changes, canoe building, carving traditions and voyages still occupy a central position in the life of seafaring Massim societies. It is interesting to note that the discontinuance of headhunting raids was paralleled by the raiding canoes, *gebo* and *tavero*, becoming defunct by the turn of the century, along with other carved objects such as the *oi tau* related to the heat and power of headhunting, and the Kitavan ancestor figures and burial canoes.

The canoes used for long sea voyages, *nagega* and *masawa* and Louisades sailing canoes, though fewer in number and no longer made in as many centres have, however, retained their traditional distinguishing characteristics. By piecing together information from written records, photographs, oral traditions and information given by local residents, as well as details of canoe construction and carvings, it can be established that the building of *nagega*
Masawa canoe logim featuring "spade" design
canoes and their use by Trobriand Islanders was supplanted by masawa canoes originating from Dobu.

Observable changes have occurred in the shape and designs of the characteristic sets of canoe carvings of the three types of Massim sailing canoes. The Louisade type has entirely disappeared, as have certain types of rajim of nagega canoes.

The kabitam repertoire, i.e. the representations and designs which the master carver combines in the carving of a canoe board, and and the system of meanings and values which it encodes, has maintained its significance. Tradition and convention are maintained, but innovation still occurs, allowing the individual carver to leave his mark. Chief Narabutau comments on one of the rajim from Vakuta (fig. 6.31).

"...The artist appears to be a card player, for he has incorporated two upside down spade designs into the central part!..."96

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3 The distribution of canoe types in the Massim does not accord with Seligman's division of north and south Massim, nor the distribution of other features of material culture which distinguish north and south. In historical times, nagega dominated the north western kula area (see Fig. 6.8). masawa were used in the north western section, and the Louisades sailing canoe in the south eastern archipelagoes (except Rossel Island) which did not participate directly in kula.
4 waga - generic name for canoe throughout the Massim with local variation, e.g. vaga-ue at Suau.
5 Haddon & Hornell, op. cit. p.250
6 ibid. Fig. 146. p. 250 and Fig. 160. p.277 and Newton,op cit. p. 8-9
7 See Malinowski's comments in Argonauts..op cit, p. 121
9 Personal communication from three people - Margaret Tuckson, Harry Beran, Jutta Malnic - who have recently travelled extensively through the Massim collecting or researching, and who each have considerable photographic evidence of present canoe styles, verifies this.
10 Lindt, W: Picturesque New Guinea, an Album. Plate LXIII, p.112. 1887
11 Parkington, Edge- : An Ethnographic Album of the Weapons..op cit. plate 278

Recent information from Michel Sourges, a French art historian/curator and the descendant of a member of Dumont D'Urville's expedition (presently located at Queensland Art Gallery), disclosed that boxes of artifacts from D'Urville's and D'Entrecasteaux's expeditions remain unpacked in French museums. Other collections of Massim artifacts from late last century, including some of Sir William Macgregor's collection are also still boxed in the custody of the Queensland Museum.

Huxley, J; *Journal of the Voyage of the Rattlesnake* and Macgillivray op cit, Frontispiece and illustration p.32

Gash & Whittaker, op cit, Plate 48: "19th century whaling grounds in New Guinea waters".


Now held by the National Museum of Victoria on behalf of the Victorian Archeological and Anthropological Society.

Armstrong, W; *Rossel Island*. Cambridge. 1928.

Malinowski, B; *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Lond.. 1922, p122.

*waga* is the common term for canoe used throughout the Massim area (it is an Austronesian word for canoe used throughout the Pacific with minor variations. *Masawa* and *nagega* are local terms for specific types of canoes.

Haddon & Hornell, op cit, p.242

Abel, C: "Suau Aesthetics", *Gigibori* Vol 1, No 1. 1974 p.35


Seligman and Armstrong to Haddon: Haddon & Hornell op cit, p.243

Haddon & Hornell op cit, Fig. 141 p.243

In Gash & Whittacker op cit, p. 114 Plate 235

Haddon & Hornell, op cit, p. 247


Haddon & Hornell, op cit, p. 248. Note: *vaga-ue* regional variation of *waga*

Seligman, : *The Melanesians...* op cit, p. 527

Le Hunte 1900, quoted in ibid, p. 248

Vivian no. 118 captioned "Carved decorations s.e. Papua at Gunawara" shows a seemingly identical carving of man with gun and birds, though it is impossible to distinguish whether it is attached to a canoe.

Powell quoted by Haddon & Hornell, op cit. p. 249

Abel, op cit, p. 62

See "Introduction" in Leach & Leach New Perspectives...op cit.

Newton, Massim Art...op cit.

Newton op cit 13 - 16

See map of the distribution of canoe prow types, ibid p. 14


Newton, op cit 13 - 16

Specht, J: "Preliminary Excavation"...op cit

Irwin, G: "Chieftainship, Kula and Trade..." in Leach & Leach eds., The Kula...op cit

Malinowski: Argonauts...op cit p.121-122, see also Plates XLI, XXII)

Singh Oberoi, P: Politics of the Kula Ring 1960

Malinowski, Argonauts...op cit p.144 and Fortune, R: Sorcerers of Dobo, Lond. 1932 p. 189.

50 Malinowski, Argonauts... op cit, p.145


Vivian no. 416

ibid, p.230

55 Haddon, Decorative Art...op cit, Plate XII

56 Fortune, Sorcerers...op cit, p. 122

57 Haddon & Hornell, op cit, p.268


Many of the canoe carvings on masawa are associated with the kula mythology and ethos; toliwaga is the Trobriand Island term for canoe owner.

59 Haddon & Hornell, op cit p. 272. See also Jenness and Ballantyne, op cit, illustration facing p. 198.

60 Campbell, "Restricted Access..." op cit, pp. 1-10

61 Seligman 1910 p.

62 Campbell, op cit, p. 103

63 Narabutau 1975 op cit, p.1

64 Narabutau 1979 op cit, p.41. caption relating to Fig. 10 & Fig 10 p.46.

65 One collected by P. Hallinan has recently been assembled at the South Australian Museum, but the writer did not get to Adelaide to see it.

66 ibid, 1975 and 1979

67 ibid 1979 p. 40
Macgillivray, *The Voyage*. op cit, p. 267-9
Quoted in Haddon & Hornell, op cit p. 249
Newton, *op cit*. p. 9
Malinowski, *Argonauts*. op cit, p. 122
Vivian Photograph no. 183.
See examples in Narabutau, *op cit*. 1979 Fig 6; Beran 1980 *op cit*. fig 67;
Gerrits 1974, *op cit*. fig 5. Other examples in unpublished photographs of M.
Tuckson.
Vivian photographs nos. 148(b), 163, 183(a).
Bromilow, W: *Twenty Years among Primitive Papuans*. Lond. 1929.
Facing p. 32.
Haddon & Hornell, *op cit*. p. 253
Seligman, G: "A Type of Canoe Ornament with Magical Significance from South-
eastern British New Guinea", *Man* No. 16 1909 p. 33. Illustrations p. 32
ibid p. 33-4
Campbell says that "...the execution of carvings on kula canoes is called
kubitam giniginii", and "giniginii" is the term given for the carving of fine
lines in Trobriand Island aesthetic terms (see Narabutau)
Vivian Photos. No. 163, 148(b), Gerrits 1974 *op cit*. Fig. e p. 229. See also
Haddon & Hornell Fig. 146a, with different lagim.
Vivian No. 183(a) has the same lagim and munkuris, but the second
variation of prowboard (blank shape at top).
Haddon and Hornell, *op cit*. p. 276
ibid, p. 254
ibid, p. 256
Macgillivray, *op cit*. frontispiece
Lindt, *op cit*. plate XLIII p. 112
Vivian photograph no. 183 (c)
ibid, 148(a)
Vivian photographs 141(d), 161(a), 148(c)
Haddon & Hornell, *op cit*. Fig. 161
Armstrong, W: Rossel...*op cit*. p. 21
ibid, Pl. XVII, description p. 24
ibid, Pl. XVIII
See Diagrams A & B and Plate XIX, *ibid*. p. 29. Also Vivian 161 (c)
Armstrong, *ibid*. p. 30. See also entry "Rossel Island currency" in
Fig. 12 in Narabutau 1975, *op cit*"Trobiand Canoe Prows..." p. 12.
Images of kula canoes in oral traditions

With cowries aligned,
And lintel carved,
Prowboard painted,
They gather wealth.
With cowries aligned by Uweilasi,
With lintel carved by Galawai,
And known to Tobauwola of Gumasila,
They gather and hang their wealth.

The extent to which the visual imagery of kula canoes, and the part they play in historical accounts, myths and songs of kula communities, can give us some indication of the wealth of historical detail and cultural knowledge that can be contained within the oral and artistic traditions of a non literate society.

Malinowski classified five basic categories of oral tradition:

"...First of all, there is what the natives call libogwo, "old talk", but what we would call tradition; secondly, Kuk wanebu, fairy tales, recited for amusement, at definite seasons, and relating to avowedly untrue events; thirdly, wosi, the various songs and vinavina, ditties, chanted at play or under special circumstances; and last, not least, megwa or yopa, the magical spells. All these classes are strictly distinguished from one another by name, function, social setting, and by certain formal characteristics..."  

Leach further classifies libogwa narratives into two sub-types. Firstly, lirereni, narratives which revolve around an explicit pedigree or geanology linking what someone has in the present (magic, tree, ornamentation rights etc.) with a line of transmission to their origin. Secondly, libogwa, narratives of cultural significance used for educating children, disputes and as metaphoric purposes, including the stories of legendary heroes such as Tuvada and Kasabwaybwayreta, and thirdly he adds the category of livsu, narratives regarded as true accounts of actual people within living memory. Leach comments that most types of stories can be referred to as livalela tomways
or 'talking come down from our ancestors', which could generically be called 'our beliefs' and include the names of things and people, taboos, symbols, and knowledge of things unseen.

In a dispute unintentionally started by Campbell, when she commissioned two kabitam carvers to make canoe prows for her to test her theory that they should be identical because both carvers had been trained by the same master, the argument as to which carver had the right to be the recognised practitioner of his school was resolved by reference to jirereni. The outcome was based on the genealogy of the dala (sub-clan) of the carvers and their master, and the loser could not then practise his craft until the death of the winner.

All categories of oral tradition carry implicit messages about social life which are seen to be serious even if disguised as playful or funny. A popular tale quoted by Malinowski, The Louse and the Butterfly, but for which he gave no interpretation, is shown by Leach to convey specific messages regarding kula underlying the superficial meaning:

"...A louse and a butterfly embark on a bit of aviation, the louse as passenger, the butterfly as aeroplane and pilot. In the middle of the performance, while flying overseas between the beach of Wavela and the island of Kitava, the louse emits a loud shriek (in the version recorded by Leach, a fart), the butterfly is shaken and the louse falls off and drowns..."6

The clues to the meanings in this humorous tale are, on the first level, beware of alienating people by anti-social behaviour. Deeper and more interesting meanings are associated with perceptions of the characteristics of the animals involved. The carved and painted washboard of a canoe (lagim) has two lobes which are called beba (butterfly), and a canoe sailing in the distance is likened to a butterfly's dancing flight; there are no lice on butterflies, only on humans, therefore the louse represents a man; the louse falls off the butterfly and drowns because of its behaviour. Therefore the meaning of the tale is 'don't act improperly towards a canoe which protects you'.

In the myth of Ksabwaybwayreta, the hero possesses magic which empowers his canoe to fly. Thus he can outdistance his competitors and arrive at their destination first. Although he is old and has a diseased skin, Ksabwaybwayreta possesses powerful beauty magic which enables him to slough off his old skin and appear radiant and irresistible to his Kula partners who give him the best valuables. When his brother and sisters, jealous of his powers, persuade him to teach them his magic before killing him, Ksabwaybwayreta takes the most valuable ornament, Gomarakeda (Monitor Lizard) with him as he ascends the heavens, where its tail can be seen trailing down from the stars. His brother, and thus all men, soon learn that he had not taught them the flying canoe magic and they must continually attempt to regain it. His sisters, who are recognised
FIG. 71

*Tolivaga describing masava canoe to C. Julius, anthropologist* (Cochrane 1960)
as witches, retained the power of flight as do all women potentially. The symbolism in the myth of the flying canoe is constantly referred to, both directly and indirectly, in the stories, spells and carvings associated with Kula canoes. The conventionalised representation which often appears in the centre of the lobes of *nagega lagim* represent *Gomayawa* (the Pleiades) which assisted *Ksabwaywayreta* on his sky journey\(^8\), as well as the constellation *Kibi* and other stars by which the sailors navigate.

The snake, which features prominently on many *nagega* canoe prows, also features in *kula* foundation myths, as well as origination myths of some communities, particularly in the southern Massim. The ability of the snake to slough off his old skin and emerge rejuvenated, with a perfect skin, adds another dimension to the symbolism behind the use of this motif.

An important folktale (*kukwanebu*), *Imdeduya*, is also described by Leach as operating at two levels. Superficially it is a love story containing important truths about male/female relationship, implicitly contrasting the improper conduct of those in the story with culturally correct behaviour. As well, it is a tale about *kula* transactions in which *Imdeduya* is a famous *mwali* (armshell) and Yolina, the seeker, a necklace of equivalent rank searching for its mate, or a *kula* man desiring the highest prize. The quest follows the route of the *kula* ring, involving Yolinda in many dangerous acts, and is doomed to failure as other men will certainly take *Imdeduya* away. Leach relates the story's messages on this level as being 'don't seek the highest shells at the outset of one's career'; 'a man cannot give his own name to a *kula* shell' and, most importantly, 'what remains after *kula* transactions exists only at the level of ideas; men are left with only talk about their conquests'.\(^9\)

Malinowski emphasises the social and cultural importance of *kula* canoes when he wrote,

> "...(Consider) the most vital reality of a native canoe. For a craft, whether of bark or wood iron or steel, lives in the life of its sailors, and is more to a sailor than a mere bit of shaped matter. To the native, not less than to a white seaman the craft is surrounded by an atmosphere of romance, built up of tradition and of personal experience. It is an object of cult and admiration, a living thing, possessing its own individuality....He has spun a tradition around it, and he adorns it with his best carvings, he colours and decorates it. It is to him a powerful contrivance for the mastery of nature...It is associated...with threatening dangers, of living hopes and desires to which he gives expression in song and story..." (see fig. 7.1)\(^10\)

The central part played by sea-going canoes in the achievement of goals and prestige in the Massim accounts for the meticulous care taken with their
Canoe magic being performed during construction of a new canoe (Cochrane 1964)
construction, the esteem in which they are held and their association, through magic, with supernatural power.

Complex magical rites and incantations are associated with every aspect of canoes; canoe making, propitious sailing, shipwreck and salvage, kula and trade, fishing, obtaining spondylus and conus shell, protection against the elements and attack by mythical creatures or hostile tribes. The efficacy of the magic performed over a canoe is recognised in its superior performance and the power inherent in the symbollic personification of the canoe with the flying witch, mulukwasi, and the mythical hero Matakapotaiataia. It is not the streamers or lagim and tabuya, or the individual motifs incorporated in their designs, which specifically become potent with the incantation of magic, although they represent speed, flight, and victorious undertakings.

Malinowski details the series of spells associated with the making and decorating of a kula canoe, in which the poetic imagery is only part of the transference of magic into the canoe and must be accompanied by the appropriate actions and concoctions (see fig. 7.2).

"...the canoe body is light; the pandanus streamers are aflutter; the prow skims the waves; the ornamental boards leap, like dolphins; the tabuyo breaks the waves; the lagim breaks the waves; Kaplanu Duku spell for imparting speed to the canoe. The spell ends with the onomatopoeic sound which imitates the flying of witches - saydididi...saydididi

"...Bind your grass skirts together, O canoe, fly!"

Ligogu Spell - in this spell it is implicit that the canoe partakes of the nature of the flying witch." 12

It is instead, the assumption of the attributes of supernatural beings, in order to channel their power into the success of the sailors' undertaking; for example, by associating the canoe with the mulukwasi through its fluttering streamers, it shares their magic. As Newton puts it, kula voyagers are mindful of the following associations:

for themselves


and the antithetical set for their hosts/partners
Thus, by decorating the canoe with the emblems of supernatural beings, superheroes, birds, and so on, the canoe owner provides a medium which, when activated by magic, provides a channel through which they can exercise their power and which allays his fears of the dangers facing him. Fortune 14 says that for the Dobuans, an incantation is a speech of power over a spiritual being, on the influencing of whom success depends. Thus, calling on the legendary hero Kasabwaybwayreta, will endow the person with some of his irresistible charm, and invoking Yarata, the spirit of the west wind, will ensure fair sailing.

From these few examples of Trobriand Islands oral tradition in some of its different forms, the depth of the peoples historical knowledge, understanding of human behaviour and the patterns of society, familiarity with the environment and the natural world can begin to be realised. By turning our focus to the messages embodied in the symbols of visual communication on canoe carved and decorated prow boards, particularly from the island of Vakuta in the Trobriands, a greater awareness of their cultural knowledge can be achieved.

The references above apply particularly to sea-going canoes of the Massim employed in the kulaul ceremonial exchange cycle. In the Southern Massim, Fortune draws attention to the a male/female deity Yaboaine, on the one hand the male patron of raiding, hunting and fertility and in the female role identified with the flying witches. Some clans in the Southern Massim, particularly in the Milne Bay area, were headhunters, and used an entirely different style of canoe, gebo%, for raiding. This slender outrigger was paddled by up to 30 men, and was designed to be extremely fast and manoeuvrable for the purpose of raiding. The motifs of oi tau, crocodile/bird and several conventionalised representations of birds which are recognisably southern Massim specialities feature on the different types of canoe prows from that area (see description in previous chapter, and fig. 6.7 a-c) and must have the equivalent depth of reference in their symbolic landscape as that which is carved into the jagjum and tabuyati wasawa canoes which is discussed below.

Likewise the designs incorporated into of Rossel Island canoes, of which we only know that...

"...the lozenge-shaped designs represent ndap coins"15 must also be as potent with magic and rendolent with symbolic images to the people of Rossel (figs. 6.25, 6.26 and description in previous chapter).

With the exception of Sudest Island and the Calvados Chain where there are big women as well as big men who can lead prestigious overseas trading and exchange expeditions called ghiva, canoe making, decoration and overseas
Masawa canoe and crew arriving (Vivian c. 1920)
expeditions to procure ceremonial valuables are the preserve of men. All of the accounts of the Massim which discuss overseas expeditions comment on the intensity of purpose with which the planning and preparation is undertaken, the meticulous skills and magical knowledge which the master carver must exercise in his task, and the gatherings of men both prior to and during the voyage which recall the legends and mythology of the kula, and recount the achievements and prowess of the men who undertake these voyages. However, it is wrong to imagine that women are excluded entirely from having a part in the exchanges. Women can possess wealth in their own right and often receive valuables as kitom which they then control. Shell valuables thus removed from circulation in the kula can re-enter when given to a male relative who participates. Women have their own networks of relatives and affines who can be drawn into her husband’s series of partnerships, and can advise their husbands or brothers on exchanges and pit the strength of their magic and sorcery towards the success of their favoured male relative.

**Sexual symbolism of kula canoes**

The sight of sea-going canoes drawn up on a beach, with their sleek lines and up-thrusting prows, or cleaving the waves under full sail, strongly suggests an aggressive male image of lithe strength, power and assertion. It would appear that the design of the lagim and tabuya, the prowboards, though not explicit, are inherently sexual symbols. As Campbell describes of the Vakuta (Trobiand Islands) masawa canoes designed for kula expeditions, each canoe has two sets of prow boards (tabuya) and wash boards (lagim). As masawa canoes do not tack in order to change direction, the ends are distinguishable visually and linguistically in male/female terminology. The dogina (male) end receives slightly more attention in carving and has an exaggerated lobe (always having the outrigger on the left). The dogina end, cut from the branching end of the tree which faced the elements, now faces Dobu, to which destination voyages over perilous seas must be undertaken during the season of northwest winds. The uuna end, that end which, when the tree was in its natural state, was rooted in the ground and thus, according to Campbell’s information, is associated more with the feminine characteristics of being earth-bound and fertile. The uuna end faces Kitava, a closer destination reached by an easier journey during the season of southeast winds. Regardless of whichever end of the masawa sails first for most of the journey, when approaching its landing the canoe is always turned to its dogina end, so that, “...arriving at the shores of their partners’ land they (Vakutans on a Kula voyage) pierce the beach with the dogina tabuya, laden with its male symbolism and powers of attraction and seduction...”

The mwasila magic endows the kula canoe with its unique and radiant personality. Thus when a canoe or fleet of canoes arrives, it is perceived as a great honour to the host to be visited by such beauty.
a) VISUAL DISTINCTION OF DOGINA AND UUNA
LAGIM AND TABUYA

b) TABUYA - DIVISION INTO BODY PARTS

c) LAGIM - DIVISION INTO BODY PARTS.
Leach's controversial interpretation that the designs on painted shields, *kaiktatske: ra*, used by important men, are highly symbolic representations of the genitals of the flying witch, and not simply a sum of many elements associated with Trobriand mythology and totemic systems, is also applicable to the overall impact of *lagim* and *tabuya* designs. Though outwardly symbols of male aggression, there is nevertheless a strong awareness of the dangerous side of the female; this cannot be referred to specifically, but must be incorporated into the canoe's (or shield's) designs and decorations in order to harness these feminine powers to the advantage of the canoe (or shield) and its owner.

In this context it is interesting to note the attitude of men to their canoes from another Papua New Guinean society. According to Waiko, Binandere men, when felling a tree for a canoe, deliberately cut the trunk into a phallic shape instead of straight across; the shaped tip is called "penis" and suggestive songs are sung as the log is hauled to the place where it will be carved. Bindanere canoes are distinctly recognised as male in their design and terminology.

**The symbolism encoded in lagim and tabuya**

A detailed description and semiological analysis of present day Vakutan *masawa* canoes, in particular their prow boards (*tabuya*) and wash boards (*lagim*) is given by Campbell. As this is the first time such an analysis has been attempted for the Massim area and no other first hand or source accounts are available to verify or extend Campbell's recent research, the ensuing explanation of symbolic content follows her description.

Layers of encoded meaning incorporating a system of representation and colour associations relating to Vakutan (and by extension, Trobriand) male ideology exist within the design of *lagim* and *tabuya*. Within the several schools *sopila* of master carvers on Vakuta (Vakuta (or Gawa), Kitava, Kaileuna, Dobu, each a geographical area in Northern Massim), a certain repertoire of *kabitam* motifs exists, although each school possesses specific designs and arrangements.

The *lagim* and *tabuya* are internally composed of several sections which, in the first instance, are described as parts of the body (see diagram opposite).

The second layer of representation involves the *kabitam* repertoire of 'animals'; two birds, a mollusc, a shellfish, an insect, two mammals, several plants, the moon and mythical or imaginary creatures:

"...rather than representing the 'animal' as an end in itself, the system encodes attributes of the animal that are relevant to the system of meaning associated with *kula*..."
Tokabitam at work on a logim. (Vivian c. 1920)
Kabitam animals are distinguished from those in the natural world by the classifier -ma-, which is significant in the perspective of ‘wild versus domesticated’, but which also applies to women, a symbolic ambiguity which becomes increasingly apparent.

"...Kabitam animals are chosen for their beneficent features, which are constrained by magic into the board. However, if the craft is endangered, the magic breaks and the ‘animals’ are released to perform their malevolent role, associated with flying witches feeding on the flesh and internal organs of men..."28

The ‘animals’, beba, doka and tubuniwola, assist in the overall design to delineate areas and contain other animals within their boundaries:

Beba (butterfly), located at the “wings” of the lagim. Admired characteristics of the butterfly are its effortless flight, and the intelligence in its antenna which guide its path, characteristics which the canoe should emulate.

Doka, highly abstracted version of the white egret (boi) with additional attributes. Located at head of lagim on either side of human figure, also within the centre coil of beba’s wing; on tabuya forms the “throat” the inner curve of the oval with a head at both ends (see diagram 7.4b where it is marked Section 2). This motif is carved first “to mark out the routes for other designs”. Egret (boi) stalks the beach (area between land/female/domesticated and sea/male/undomesticated) is white (pure/unblemished) and accurate in capturing prey (kula valuables).

Tubuniwola (moon) the other ‘animal’ which organises the spatial dimensions of design on the tabuya. The moon has an aesthetic, smooth appearance, is white (pure), and an essential aid to navigation.

"Animals” within the structural forms:

Bilibwali (osprey), is considered to possess a particular magic which enables it to observe the world below from the heights and, discerning movement, to strike accurately. It is placed in the key position at the front curve of the tabuya”... the
bulibwali always lands first in kula because it will never fail to get all the vaiguwa and mwari (kula valuables). Bulibwali represents particularly important associations within the discipline of kula, including preparedness, alertness, and the ability to see over a wide horizon.

Dodoleta, a large fleshy leaf used by children as toy sails. A masawa in full sail invokes the praise "Oh! dodoleta." Represented as a sequence of curved lines, which also serve to hold the lime in place and emphasize another shape.

Dudwa, a small round green snail admired because of its perfectly round shape. A tale reveals the layers of symbolic content in this single motif. One day the snail and the sky were talking. The snail said, "Oh, Sky, I am so tired of hearing about how beautiful you are, how big you are, how you span the earth, when you know perfectly well that I am bigger than you. The Sky replied, 'You are so right. Your spiral begins at such a tiny point and unwinds to infinite size, but it also returns from the largest to the most infinitesimal point; of course you are much larger than I.' The compartments internally dividing the snail's shell refer to the 5 disciplines of kula (named after body parts and associated with particular qualities of a kabitam animal). By concentrating on the motif of the snail one concentrates the 5 disciplines into one perfect act of attention, essential for success in kula.

Ginareu, small hermit crabs leave a trail of fine lines on the sand as they scuttle over it which the carvers desire to emulate.

Kaidada, though not an animal has the -na-classifier in kabitam repertoire. It represents the carved yam house board on which people lean and relax, the designs of which recall the deceased and their achievements in the community.

Kapaiyauwa, the horseshoe bat (hipposideros diademe) has a very significant place on both the lagim and tabuya and several layers of associations. Its perfect blackness is considered aesthetic, its
flight pattern, speed and agility desirable characteristics for a canoe. Moreover it is used as a euphemism for flying witches as it is dark, night flying and bears live young like human females. As it is considered unsafe to represent witches, the bat appears instead. On the lagim the bat always appears in the central section (4) in a highly abstracted representation of the bat viewed from underneath. On the tabuya the side view is represented section 3.

Karawa, an unfurled fern frond, is a device of carvers of the sopi Kaikeuna chosen for its aesthetic curve.

Minotoula, not an 'animal', but a design handed down by ancestors, occurs with various adaptations along the length of the hull of the canoe.

Mwata, the snake, is generally incorporated into the carvings on lagim in section 5, which is optional. In Kula myths, old men shed their skin and their renewed beauty attracts valuables to them. Snakes smooth, slippery quality is sought after by carvers.

Papa, an imaginary 'animal' from the sea, is used as a design along the length of the canoe.

Sawila, sandpiper, is carved in a row along the very top of the lagim and is a design exclusive to sopi Kita/a. The design resembles a row of sandpipers perched on a log waiting for the correct weather conditions.

Taregesi, are shelfish which attach themselves to the trunk of sago palms. The design embellishes others.

Tokwalu, the human figure (or figures) at the centre top of the lagim, represents humanity in the distinction of human/non human.

Ubwara, an inedible yam, is represented because of its aesthetically pleasing attribute, a cross section of the yam resembles a set of perfect concentric circles.
a. Rajim from Fergusson Is. described by Williams

b. Tabuya from Duau described by Williams
Weku, another imaginary 'animal' but one which possesses a beautiful voice, recognised as the ultimate persuader, occupies section 5 of the tabuya in a complex design of red/white/black.

Though there is no exact relationship between natural animals and their kabitam graphics representation, it is their perceived qualities and attributes which have been selected and re-combined to create a system of meaning. As Campbell says,

"...In summary, tabuya features several representations concerned with success (bulibwali), flight (kapaiyauwa), effective magic (kapaiyauwa and bulibwali), the power of attraction (weku), and wisdom (bulibwali and doka). Other elements which reinforce these major themes include representations from spatial opposites (land/sea) and individual fame (kaidadau)."

Seligman and Dickson, in an earlier attempt to unravel the complex web of designs and associations on Massim canoe carvings, drew on several sources describing rajim and tabuya from the D'Entrecasteaux group. The Seligman & Dickson analysis is much more generalised and cannot satisfactorily provide a comparison to Campbell's analysis, though it provides an interesting contrast (see fig. 7.5 a & b). The type of rajim described were only noted as being

"...so widely distributed that although it may have originated in the D'Entrecasteaux it may be doubted whether at the present day it is characteristic of any particular locality..."

The information provided by Williams to these authors regarding a rajim from Morima (Fergusson Island) and a tabuya from Duau (Normanby Island), describe the rajim in its body part names, and only mention the 'baby' as a feature, as Williams was unable to detect any significance in the other motifs for which he was given names. Similarly with the tabuya which is illustrated by Williams and several motifs named, only a superficial description is given. The design is designated as belonging to the "Tishhawk claw" pattern (a category probably devised by Haddon, not a Massim classification). In this analysis no references to the attributes of the 'animals' represented are recognised in comparison to the symbolism contained within similar Vakuta carvings, for example

"...The obvious bird's head design at the top of the 'claw' was called naranara-bwasi, described as a sea bird resembling a duck..." (compare to bulibwali of Vakuta).

Overall the authors infer that, because Williams detected body part symbols and the presence of the 'baby' on the D'Entrecasteaux rajim
"...It may perhaps be inferred that some lingering memory of the human figure persists, and that a new series of conventional non-realistic patterns having been evolved or adopted - perhaps more probably the latter - the new designs were equated with the parts of a vaguely memorised body..."36

In a 1909 article, Seligman37 drew attention to the carved finials, munkuris, which occur on nagega canoes from Murua (Woodlark Island- see fig. 6.19). As he was in the area at the time of collection, he questioned Muruans on the motifs featured in the designs, but was again satisfied with having them recognised as representing a particular creature38 and being "magical" and did not enquire further into their significance. For example,

"...No. 1 (my fig. 6.19a) may be regarded as a typical munkuris, its base is formed by the conjoined bodies of two long beaked birds which represent the reef heron (boi), the wings of these two birds coalesce to form an oval black intaglio area, which represents a fish, asiwan, said to live in the mangrove swamps. The paired red (outer) and black (inner) intaglio areas, shaped like commas, which spring on each side from the tips of the beaks of the reef herons, represent the curve of the nautilus shell (ovagoro)...The bird's head derivatives below the highest nautilus intaglio represent the head of a bird called weku..."39

The meaning of colour

Returning to Campbell's report, it emerges that colour is a vital element and carries its own symbolism in association with other components within the design of canoe carvings. Red, white and black are the only colours used, each colour occupying specific areas which are complementary to and highlight other contexts within the conceptualisation realised on the lagim and tabuya. Campbell emphasises that, in Vakutan society, colour is overwhelmingly identified with stages in the physiological life cycle of men and other organisms, and in the course of nature: white = new born/ uncontaminated/ day; red = youth/growth/ sunrise and sunset; black = age/ maturity/ death/ night.40

All of the colours have an inbuilt ambiguity. White, which represents the purity of a new born baby who has not acquired a personal history, likewise a new shell ornament, is considered to have a "safeness" in its character which is desirable. But as the child or valuable matures, "reddens", it becomes more exciting and erotic, dangerous to acquire, and therefore more challenging. Red is equated with sexual attraction, desire and rank, but it is incomplete. Where youth has vitality, seniority is superior in knowledge which outwits youth. Black carries both the implications of age/death and maturity/knowledge. Sorcerers and witches are black (negative) because they can cause illness and death; old people are black (positive) because they have gained social maturity through
knowledge and experience. When the colour association is recognised as being another attribute of the kabitam ’animal’, another layer of encoded meaning is revealed on the lagim and tabuya.

The semantic link between verbal and non-verbal communications systems is a simpler task when relating Massim myths and legends to visual art, which together recorded and celebrated the achievements of man in his environment, and motivated the continuance of their traditions, than when attempting to blend it into the study of ethnohistory with its more rigid parameters. The assumption of ethnographers, anthropologists and historians dating from late last century and reaching well into the present century, that “primitive” art did not carry meaningful information (other than totemic implications), and that material culture, songs and legends were aspects of life which may deserve to be noted and catalogued, but not investigated, took their studies down a dangerously narrow track towards a widening cultural gap. That the many individual paths are now beginning to converge onto a broad road taking all kinds of vehicles is the best direction for the future.

1 Verse from Usilauma, a Trobriand wosior contemporary song performed with dancing and drumming, recorded by B. Baldwin; “Kadaguwai; Songs of the Trobriand Sunset Isles”, Oceania, Vol. 20, 1949-50 p.262.
2 B. Malinowski; Argonauts...op cit. p.299
4 S. Campbell; The Art of Kula. Unpublished PhD Thesis...op cit. p.29
5 The master had broken tradition by training two apprentices within the same generation.
6 Leach: Imdeduya... op cit, p.54
7 Slightly different versions are quoted by Fortune from Dobu (in Sorcerers...op cit) and Malinowski from Trobriands (in Argonauts...op cit)
8 Fortune, The Sorcerers...op cit, p. 219
9 Leach: Imdeduya, op cit, p.57.
10 Malinowski: Argonauts... op cit, pp. 105-106
11 Spells for every process are given in detail in Malinowski, ibid, Ch. VI
12 ibid, pp. 131-132
13 Newton: Massim... op cit, p.10, Newton uses terms rajim for washboard, vayguya for valuables.
14 Fortune: Sorcerers...op cit, p. 231, spells Kasabwaybwayreta differently.
15 Armstrong: Rosset...op cit, p. 28
16 Campbell, S. “Attaining Rank: A Classification of Shell Valuables” in Leach & Leach, eds. The Kula... op cit, p.232
17 ibid, p. 238
18 Campbell: The Art of Kula... op cit, p.225
19 ibid, p.227.
Although several of the names of “animals” and aesthetic qualities are mentioned in Chief Narabutal; *Trobriand Canoe Prows...* Gigibori, April 1975 op cit and Chief Narabutau; *Eleven Canoe Prows...* op cit, Gigibori, Aug. 1979. 

*sopila*, the word for school is derived from *sopi*, literally ‘water’. The major aesthetic attributes of water are its free flow (from master to apprentice through drinking magical fluids, as well as fluidity in the act of carving), its clarity, precision and depth. Campbell "Restricted Access..." op cit describes the schools operating in Vakuta in 1978.

26 *kabitam* denotes a body of magical knowledge, carving techniques, technical information, etc. confined to a person who has undergone a long apprenticeship to a master. The knowledge of Kula canoes is thus *kabitam masawa*, the execution of carving and decorating them, *kabitam ginigini*. 

*Tokabitam* (master carvers) are commissioned to carve lagim and tabuya and are the only persons who can appropriately do so, particularly as they must imbue the canoe with the magic which will empower their carvings.

27 Campbell, p.126

28 *ibid*, p.128

29 Informant to Campbell, *ibid*, p.138

30 Jutta Malnic, pers. comm. Feb. 1986

31 Noted at a lecture given by J. Malnic from material to be published by J. Malnic & J. Kasiapwalova at a later date.

32 *ibid*, p.189


34 *ibid*, p.129

35 *ibid*, p.134

36 *ibid*, p.134


39 *ibid*, p.34.

40 Campbell, *op cit*, p. 163
Chapter 8

SHELL VALUABLES

All that has been written about the many aspects of kula shell valuables apparently misses one essential point, that is, that the highly ranked and named mwarí (armshells) and soulava (also called vaiguwa, necklaces),¹ are themselves the receptacles of history. Just imagine what a source we would have if we could hold in our hands a handwritten journal, several centuries old, containing a sequence of individual entries by men who survived the long and challenging voyage following the keda (path) in search of an elusive goal. Mwaríkau and bagiriku, the highest ranking and exceptionally famous valuables with personal names, whose histories extend over generations are, in fact, original sources.

It has probably been difficult for Europeans to conceptualise either the material of shell and the medium of shell as a valuable and highly aesthetic substance because of its irrelavence to European cultural perceptions of valued objects and substances. In order to reach a better assessment of kula valuables as objects d’art and historical sources, some of the perceptions of shell valuables should be reviewed.

“Valuable*, in the Western conception, is a term which has an economic implication; possessing an item of value means having personally accumulated wealth and prestige, and sharing the fame associated with the object. The last two concepts of value are shared by those in kula communities for whom the possession of a kula shell valuable can only be temporary, as it must continue on its path in the course of the reciprocal gift-giving which is the ethos of kula.

Mwarí (armshells) and soulava (necklaces) do, however, have an economic function outside the Kula. Not all communities within the Massim area are involved in the Kula ring but all use shell valuables. Several other partnership alliances exist in which pretestations of shell valuables are part of the exchange relationship, for example kune in the Southern Massim. Shell valuables are also required throughout the Massim for affinal gifts, mortuary pretestations, as part or all of the purchase price of canoes and pigs for feasts, or in payment for services rendered such as sorcery, garden magic, etc.

Within the kula ring, when a shell valuable is functioning outside the domain of kula, it is classified as kitom². A kitom shell may be one which is newly made or recently acquired from a source outside the kula, and is not obligated to its
a. Nkó laid out in progressing ranks l. to r. (Leip 1982)

b. Discussing distribution of nkó as bridewealth (Leip 1982)
reciprocal flow, or else it may have reached a point where all obligations regarding it had been fulfilled. A *kula* valuable may be withdrawn to fulfill another function, for example as a marriage or mortuary gift, and may be returned to circulation by the new owner.

Shells are used as 'currency' only on Rossel island, and to a lesser extent on Sudest (Tagula) the most easterly islands in the Louisade Archipelago. Rossel is the only island in the Massim whose inhabitants speak a Papuan language, and was isolated from its neighbours, at least back to 1900, by the lack of a long range seafaring tradition, treacherous seas and a fearsome reputation. Rossel currency had two kinds of 'coins,' *nko,* within which classification there were 16 ranks, and *ndap,* with 22 ranks (fig. 8.1a). The different denominations of *nko* were recognised through their diameters; *nko* were shell discs strung in sets of 10, and the wider the diameter, the higher the value. *Ndap* 'coins' were individual pieces of which the value was distinguished by its grading of colour and shape. Sudest *daveri* is likened to lower denomination Rossel *ndaffi.* Both *ndap* and *daveri* were accorded a mythical origin which acted as a restraint on production, thereby protecting the value.

Lepowsky recounts collaborating myths from Goodenough and Sudest Islands telling of a snake which left Goodenough in anger and journeyed to Sudest, creating certain geographic features on its way. On Sudest the snake was sheltered and fed by an old woman, who was rewarded every day with a piece of the snake’s excrement (*daveri*). Chased away by the old woman’s grandchildren, the snake left Sudest, but asked the old woman for its sandalwood bark to use as its boat. After a perilous journey the snake reached its present hideout on Rossel. The Goodenough version tells of a ‘special snake’ which lived on a pile of flat stones, the traditional meeting place, in a Goodenough village. An old woman fed it, but one day her two sons frightened it away. The snake left for Sudest and Rossel, taking with it all the fish and valuable shells.

The Goodenough version states that the snake was the bringer of valuables, and that the result of the snake’s flight is the scarcity of these resources in the seas around Goodenough. When the snake was likewise driven away from Sudest it took its sandalwood with it to Rossel from where this valuable commodity it must now be imported. As Lepowsky comments, “...It is tempting to speculate that the whole snake-myth represents an otherwise forgotten migration from Goodenough to Sudest and Rossel, or at least an early exchange voyage!”

Returning to the Rossel Island currency, the limitations on it being classed as ‘money’ should be considered. Rossel currency had the effect of multiplying social ties because of its function as payment for purchases and in the conduct of marriage or mortuary rites which in turn created situations of being in debt.
a. Piercing shell discs with pump drill. (Vivian c. 1920)

b. As above, Grassls. (Lepowsky 1982)

c. Rossel Is. men displaying bags made there. (Bende 1982)
or credit to others. Though it supported ritual and ceremonial purposes, the
aim was not to invest in productive enterprise but to participate in social
activities and create reciprocal obligations. Baric says that, by convention,
articles that serve as a medium for exchange, a unit of account and a store of
wealth are called money; as well, such articles should be divisible,
interchangeable and portable, all attributes which can be applied to ndap and
nk. In addition to these functions of Western money, Rossel currency has a
place in the social sphere which cannot be related to economic purpose.

Rossel is one of the main manufacturing centres for another kind of shell
valuable, bagi (called vaiguwa or sowała in northern kula areas), important throughout the Massim. Bagi are necklaces of shell discs threaded
closely together which are graded and valued according to age, fineness, colour
and length. Savisavi, necklaces made of large discs from the same shell, but
threaded to sit flat, are favoured for body decoration but are not in the same
class of valuables as bagi. Although the people of Rossel, as well as the other
bagi making centres of Sudest and the eastern Calvados islands, do not
participate in kula, their necklaces are essential to the kula exchange system.
Bagi enter the kularing from Wari, the southern nexus of the ring. Bagi of a
distinctive lilac colour are made on Murua where they are obtained by
islanders from Misima and Paneati and exchanged at Wari, either entering the
kularing or travelling down the Louisades where bag Murua are appreciated
alongside the local product.

Leach points out that bagi necklaces are made from the shell Chama (plicifera)
imbricata, not spondylus as is conventionally reported. Bagi consist of two
lengths of matched shell discs, ideally 90cm long joined by pendants of different
shells. In the eastern Calvados, where some bagi originate, Battaglia describes
that the black banana pods at the centre and ends of each strand divide the
bagi into an “away” and a “return” side, symbolically inhibiting them from
straying forever away from home. The attachment of a helmet shell pendant
enhances the value of the necklace, marks it for ritual or ceremonial use and
activates it symbolically. The pendant itself may carry the decoration of a
chiming shell fringe. The following gradings of bagi from the eastern Calvados
are given by Battaglia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Thickness, colour based</th>
<th>Necklace with claws of Black-breasted Bussard (Hamirostra melanocephala) attached at clasp end and middle of each side.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bolovagela</td>
<td>Light coloured (orange); thick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kautaubagi</td>
<td>Slightly redder than above; slightly thinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bak hawara</td>
<td>Slightly redder than above; slightly thinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bak yalumoi</td>
<td>Small, thin, dark red discs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakmurua (Murua)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagilugu (Engineer Group)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the classification system of *vaiguwa* (*bagi* necklaces used as one of the valuables within the *kula* ring), the placement of a necklace in the hierarchy is based on its length, the combined fineness and smoothness of the grinding of the whole strand, the thickness and dimensions of the individual discs and, very importantly, the colour. The best *vaiguwa* should be smooth, like oil, and slip through the hand (see fig. 8.2c).

Campbell's informants, Kiriwina (Trobiand Islands) *kula* participants, referred to *vaiguwa* as the female of the *mwari/vaiguwa* pairing in contrast to her Vakuta informants. In Vakuta, *mwari* were seen as female because they were made and worn by men (on the upper arm at breast height), whereas *vaiguwa* were made and worn by women and were considered to have a male spur (the pendant). Kiriwinans considered *mwari* to be male for the reasons that they were worn by men and relatively easy to exchange, which paralleled the easier, day to day relationship between men as opposed to the difficulties of courting a woman or attracting a *vaiguwa* from a partner.

Kiriwinans referred to the parts of *vaiguwa* in terms of the roots, trunk and growth of a tree. The end featuring the ovula ovum (*buna*) shell is the *u una* end and should always be held in a lower position to the *dogina* end which has a mother of pearl crescent attached. The middle section, the long strand of shell discs, is called the *tapwana* (trunk), and it is primarily the size, shape and colour of the discs comprising the trunk section which rank the necklace.

The shell (*chama pacifica imbricata*) from which necklaces are made ranges in colour from a light pinky red to a dark brownish red, with a rich salmon hue being the most highly valued colour. The manufacturing of the discs and strands is a long and painstaking process. First the shells are broken into roughly angular pieces by being struck with a mortar on a flat stone, and then more gently tapped into roughly circular discs with the same tools. The discs are stuck to a piece of wood and their surfaces polished smooth by being rubbed on a moistened stone. When the discs are fairly even in thickness they are pierced through the centre with a pump drill (fig. 8.2a & b) and then matched in colour and threaded closely together. The edges of the discs are still rough and uneven so the strand is laced to a board and polished with a stone, deeply grooved from
Kitavan woman displaying wealth of mwali.
(Vivian c.1920)
many hours at this work, along the length until a uniform diameter is obtained (see steps in manufacturing process fig. 8.3). The desired fineness and flat sheen can always be improved upon by further honing, and this is occasionally done by one of its temporary owners in order to increase a vaiguwa's value and move it further up the hierarchy.

Vaiguwa in the kula are ranked in the following categories:

- bagiriku (highest)
- bagidou
- bagiyeru
- bagisan
- taituyanabwa
- bagitorobwa (lowest)

The qualities of the bagiriku (riku means to shake, i.e., to shake with desire at the thought of obtaining one) are perfectly even salmon colouration, the fineness of its individual discs and its overall thinness and uniformity. Bagidou (dou means to call, i.e., to call famous mwari to them) and bagiriku, are the only two classes of vaiguwa which are given personal names, merited by the long and eventful histories they have accumulated. Lepowsky comments on her meeting with a Misima man who purported to have the oldest and most valuable of all bagiriku in the kula region called Kumakala Kedakeda, and said he was exposing himself to grave danger from sorcery for having kept it for too long out of circulation. The oldest and most esteemed kula valuables are held in awe as it can be said of them that men have died on their behalf, thus adding to the challenge of obtaining one. Lepowsky found two myths associated with Kumakala Kedakeda (name means 'in the path of the monitor lizard'), the myth from the kula sector being the Misima version of the tale of Kasabwaybwayreta recorded by Malinowski in Kiriwina and Fortune in Tewara, and a different tale, said to originate from Wari and featuring the famous bagi, in the eastern Calvados.

Mwari (armshells) are made from several species of Conidae, Conus leopardus, Conus millepunctatus and Conus literatus for smaller ones. The shells are collected by men, and often pass through several stages of manufacture, each stage being undertaken at a different centre. For example, some of the shells gathered by Kaileuna men would only be roughly cut and used as a subsidiary trade item on voyages to the Amphlett Islands; here they would be processed further and sent on again, receiving their final decoration and finishing touches at Tubetube from where they would either enter the kula ring, get diverted to the Louisades or elsewhere in the Massim, or go further afield to Mailu. Cone shells are also collected in the Louisades and used as a trade item in their natural form to Misima and Wari where they would be made into armshells. Murua is a traditional manufacturing centre for armshells and still produces them, but Leach comments that by the 1970's the production centres at Kaileuna and Katavaria in the Trobriand Islands had stopped making them.
a. High ranking mwali (Campbell 1982)


c. Ancient valuable now circulating in kula. (Leach)
Mwarj are made by cutting a wide circlet from the thick end of the shell. The outer epidermis of the shell is removed by and the shell polished until it is white. A new white mwarj is said to be clean and uncontaminated physically and metaphorically. Its clean and glossy 'forehead' (dabaJa), which will later show the red striations and discolouration of age, shows no record of use. As Campbell's Vakuta informants told her,

"...a white mwarj has not yet accumulated incidents which have involved the jealousies, desires, manipulations and death of men. It is said that with increasing age a mwarj becomes coloured and begins to accumulate its 'history'. Mwarj with histories are considered to be dangerous in that they cause death and competition for them...as a mwarj becomes more experienced in the hands of kula men and begins to colour from being handled many times, its status changes and it becomes a more dangerous shell to acquire..."18

Unlike the shells used for bagi which have a permanent colour, the removal of the epidermis, age and exposure cause red striations to appear on the surface of the armshells, which also attain a yellowish patina through handling.

Campbell's information from Kiriwina19 is that a mwarj is judged by its heaviness, circumference at both ends, the number of buna (ovula ovulum) across its width and its signs of age. The best mwarj are wide enough in circumference to be worn on a man's upper arm at breast height, in fact the mwarj will only attain fame if the small diameter end, wadola (= mouth) is wide (fig. 8.4 is an unusual photograph by Vivian of a Kitavan woman wearing considerable wealth in mwali, judging by their circumference - no information available whether this was 'posed'). To define the size, and therefore its potential rank, a number of buna shells, given the special name of mwaridoga, are attached to the wider circumference. Buna are also attached to the overlapping lip, called kudula (= teeth), and these are known as buna kudula. The number of buna kudula which can be attached is a measure of rank; a low ranking mwali will only accommodate one or two, while the highest ranking armshells have five or occasionally six buna kudula. Campbell notes that the buna decorations do not add to, but only indicate, status differentials. The appearance of the mwarj is further enhanced by the addition of small ovula costellata shells, black banana seeds, trade beads, rope, etc., which are laced through the large buna shells (see fig. 8.6a). The tinkling sound produced by these additional ornaments, called bwibwi, has the effect of announcing a successful exchange as the kula man walks back to his cohorts at night. Young men are regularly deceived as to the real value of an armshell by the attractive decorations; knowledge and the higher ranked mwarj take many years to attain.
FIG. 8.6

Primary burial - note kaiguwa suspended above grave. (Vivian c. 1920)
The use of trade beads, coloured string or rope, coins and other trinkets on *mwari* and *vaiguwa* (such as the famous pair worn by Roboti, fig. 8.6b) are, naturally, a fairly recent innovation, although these newer versions of *bwibwi* can be attached to very famous shells such as *Nanola*. The traditional decorations were said to be "like a grass skirt", and made of *buna* shells, wild banana seeds and fibre, and occasionally a pendant hanging from the joint said to be "like a chief".20

Researchers Leach, Campbell and Weiner who have worked in the Massim since 1970's agree that there is a lack of consensus on the male/female symbolism of the two kinds of *kula* valuables although Leach21 considers that this may be a fairly recent shift, as the number of *mwari* available these days far outweighs *vaiguwa*. However, the ideal of the symbolic marriage of shells remains firmly entrenched, with the "marriage", i.e. the meeting and winning of two opposite valuables, the dream of every *tula* participant. Previously armshells were paired, the pairs having within themselves a male (*tau*) and female (*vivi*), which was more stable than an armshell/necklace marriage but still unable to be permanent because of the *kula* rule of constant circulation.

The high regard for shells as valuables within the Massim is probably of considerable antiquity. A fragment of Conus shell covered with curvilinear designs was recovered at Collingwood Bay in a site dating back to A.D. 70022, and more recently a complete Conus shell was discovered buried on Nuratu Island near Kitava carved with wave like engravings and a crocodile/bird motif. This antique shell (fig. 8.6c) has 8 *buna* attached to its lower lip and is now circulating in the *kula*. Leach considers it may have been an earlier *kula* valuable.23

Two reasons for there being a dearth of ancient shells recovered at archaeological sites are that, although bodies were decorated with shell valuables during mortuary rites, only a few insignificant decorations are actually buried with the corpse (see fig. 8.7); secondly, the shell decorations were always removed from a carved object (e.g. canoe prow) when it had served its purpose. It is interesting to note that many Massim artifacts collected by Europeans, who were attracted by the artistry of the carving, have had their shell decorations removed (this is obvious because of the perforations on objects where shells were attached). In this context Battaglia notes that, in the eastern Calvados, the ceremonial valuable *nijyenge* (a crescent shaped, two dimensional spatula made of turtle shell), or its carved wooden counterpart, *gobsela*, (see fig.1.3)

"...is sought merely as a support for the mollusc shell discs attached to it. The number of shells determines the value of the object..."

These crescent-shaped spatulas are ornately carved. Lime powder is pressed into etched lines and shell discs are knotted onto fibre and threaded through holes along the edge of the crescent-shaped section so that the discs stand
Shells from southeast Papua collected on voyage of the "Rattlesnake", 1849
upright in a row in the type of threading called "tava" (island). Black-lip shell pendants dangle from the ends of the crescent.

Conclusion

The shapes of shells found within the Massim area contain all the elements of the curvilinear designs favoured in Massim aesthetics, whorls, spirals, crescents, fluted edges, circles and curves of all sizes and shapes. Their smoothness, lustre, colour and power to attract are all recognised and appreciated in many ways, a few of which have been mentioned briefly in the above chapter. The intimate knowledge of natural objects held by Massim people, and the intricate symbolic associations as well as physical and metaphysical attributes accredited to things selected from nature (such as those described for the "kabita" repertoire in the previous chapter), are just beginning to be appreciated by outside scholars. It has become necessary to consider the use of shells in the Massim as more than a superficial preference for shells as valuables and as an item of body decoration, and to see them as a significant and integral part of the complex cultural life of the people.

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1 *mwalli* and *soulava* are Trobriand Island names widely used in *kula* circles. *Bagi* is the overall name for *kula* valuables, except in the Calvados where the name is used for the necklaces which are made there. *Vaiguwa* is another widely used name for *kula* valuables. Slight differences in spelling occur throughout the literature (e.g. *mwar*ii) as the names vary slightly with locality.

2 J.W. Leach; "Introduction" in Leach & Leach, *op cit*, p.24


4 M. Lepowsky; "Sudest Island and the Louisada Archipelago in Massim Exchange" in Leach & Leach, *op cit*, p.487

5 ibid, p.490-92.

6 ibid, p.492

7 Baric, *op cit*, p. 1022

8 *op cit*, p.23.

9 D. Bataglia; "Syndromes of ceremonial exchange in the eastern Calvados" in Leach & Leach, *The Kula... op cit*, p.454.

10 *op cit*, p.454
11 S. Campbell: "Attaining rank: a classification of kula shell valuables" in Leach & Leach, ibid, p.230
12 S. Campbell: The Art of Kula... op cit, p.
13 According to Leach this is correct, but in a more detailed paper on the manufacture of similar shell discs in Malaita, Solomon Islands, Paraoacini specifically says that chama gryphoides is used to obtain the red shell discs, and chama pacifica for other ornaments. E. Paraoacini: .......Anthropos37 -40, 1942-45, translated from German by Gretel Eveleigh for the writer.
14 Campbell; "Attaining rank..." op cit, p. 241
15 Lepowsky, op cit, p.493.
16 Leach, Introduction... in Leach & Leach, op cit, p.23
17 ibid, p.22
18 Campbell, The Art of Kula..., op cit, p. 165.
19 Campbell; "Attaining rank...", op cit, p.232-3
20 Leach;, A Kula Folktale...", op cit, p.57
21 ibid, p.58
22 Bellwood, op cit, Fig. 9.29
23 Leach, E: in Leach & Leach, The Kula..op cit, caption under Fig. 6.
CONCLUSION

The myths, legends, performing and visual arts of the peoples of the Massim, together recorded and celebrated the achievements of man in his environment, and motivate the continuance of their traditions.

The assumption of ethnographers, anthropologists and historians dating from late last century and reaching well into the present century, that "primitive" art did not carry meaningful information (other than totemic implications), and that material culture, songs and legends were aspects of life which may deserve to be noted and catalogued, but not fully investigated, took their studies down a dangerously narrow track towards a widening cultural gap. Some of the European observations on the features of Massim art which have been discussed can be seen in retrospect as being concerned more with form than content. The observations made by Europeans were not deliberate misinterpretations, but largely a result of the training and cultural perception of the individual observer and the information he had managed to gather. Changing attitudes in European perception of Massim art and its social significance in the over 130 years since the first pieces of Massim art were collected on the voyage of the Rattlesnake become apparent when approached historiographically. Our understanding of Massim art is becoming much better as we widen the avenues of our perception and are willing to approach the study without pre-conceived notions regarding the definition, meaning, purpose and functions of "art". To further increase our understanding, it is necessary to learn from knowledgeable members of the art-producing society.

One of the aims of this paper was to indicate the degree of variation which exists in the so-called "Massim art style". Particular features distinguish the specialised creative works of each island community, and reflect the nature of their environment in the selection of materials, functions, techniques and symbolic associations. The distribution of certain items of material culture supports the distinction of a north/south division, although this does not match the division into northern and southern Massim conceived by Seligman. The distribution of the three types of sailing canoes and the main types of paddled canoes bears no relation to a north/south axis.

The distribution of canoes is more closely related to the links between certain communities and their relationships in kula, trade and exchange. The D'Entrecasteaux, Amphletts and Trobriands prefer the masawa canoe in their network of kula and trade relationships; the Marshall Bennetts, Murua and other islands in the north eastern sector and southwards to Misima and Panaeti favour the nagega for their voyages; the southern archipelagoes including the
Yam houses, Trabriand Islands. Note concentric circles on cross cut ends of poles. (Cochrane 1964)
Louisades, Wari Island and the Calvados Chain used the "Louisade" type of sailing canoe and had established trading links.

One can learn to recognise the three main types of sailing canoes by their characteristic sets of carvings, and further to distinguish the origin of a canoe by the elements of design in the carvings on the Jaguar, Tabuya and Munkuris.

The characteristic sets of carvings consist of two or three components. They are ritually carved by specialists who have imbued a particular knowledge of the magic and designs which serves to protect and enhance the canoe with supernatural power as well as aesthetic appeal. The designs of the carvings contain a symbolic message within the representations of Kabitam "animals" which comprise the overall design. Variations within the characteristic forms denote the provenance of the canoe and depending on the amount of knowledge the viewer has of these forms, allows them to be distinguished progressively from district, to island, to village, to carving school, to individual carver. The use of attached decorations of pandanus streamers, fringes and ovulum shells is ubiquitous through the Massim and characteristic of it, although again placement varies with locality as does rigging, type of sail and other details of construction.

Though we can perceive from the written accounts and photographs assembled since the 1850's, that in the last 130 or so years the canoes of the Massim have undergone a number of changes, canoe building, carving traditions and voyages still occupy a central position in the life of sea-faring Massim societies.

By piecing together information from written records, photographs, oral traditions and information given by local residents, as well as details of canoe construction and carvings, it can be established that the following changes have taken place over the last 130 years in the types of canoes constructed in the Massim and their sets of decorations:

(i) The discontinuance of headhunting raids was paralleled by the raiding canoes, Gebo and Tavero, becoming defunct by the turn of the century, along with other carved objects such as the Oi Tau related to the heat and power of headhunting.

(ii) The building of Nagega canoes and their use by Trobriand Islanders was supplanted by Masawa canoes originating from Dobu late last century.

(iii) The characteristic set of carvings made for the Louisade sailing canoe was discontinued around the turn of the century, and no Louisade sailing canoes have been observed in the Massim for decades.
FIG. 9.2

a. Spoked disc on lime spatula (Beran collection)

b. Wooden disc with spoked design in outer circle. (Museum of Mankind)
(iv) Only one type of rajim for nagega canoes appears to be made at present, although at least two other distinctive types were collected in the first decades of this century.

(v) Further extensive research could reveal that other characteristic canoe carvings should be established for types of Massim canoes, such as the Milne Bay war canoe.

The intimate knowledge of natural objects held by Massim people as well as the intricate layers of symbolic associations attached to what are, in the European perception, very humble life forms, leads towards the conviction that the unique features of Massim art were, to a significant extent, inspired by nature and the environment.

It is also the writer's belief that whatever form(s) of material culture arrived with the first settlers in the Massim area and existed in the distant past became very diffused over time, leaving only a residual influence, such as a preference for curvilinear designs.

It is submitted, however, that some historical continuity exists between the curvilinear designs present in some of the prehistoric rock art sites in the Massim area and designs used to this day. Evidence for this can be found in an examination of some of the motifs used at the rock sites discussed in chapter 4. Concentric circles, such as in my fig. 4.9 (Williams fig.1 Bisiai), are frequently used to decorate yam houses (see fig. 9.1), and the hulls and outriggers of masava canoes². William’s tracing of a rock engraving (fig. 6 Sisiana in my fig. 4.9) closely resembles the present day conventionalised bird’s head design bulibwali which is used throughout the Massim. William’s fig. 9 Boianai (see fig. 4.9), a design of spokes contained in the outer circle of a concentric circle can be compared with the lime spatula and disc in my fig. 9.2. The hooked spirals on the Boianai and Wedau stones (fig.4.8a) were noted by Williams to resemble the patterns of facial tattoos used by women in the area (fig. 4.8b).

In contrast to the spiral designs tattooed on women’s faces in the Boiaiai/Wedau area, elsewhere in the Massim Vivian took several photographs of women displaying white designs painted on various parts of their bodies (fig. 9.3) which resemble the more angular designs etched on pottery - see designs on figs 5.7, Wari pots; 5.8 Panaeti pot; 5.9 Silo Silo Bay pots. It is interesting to note that the designs on pottery from the various industries in the Massim³ tend to be more angular than curvilinear, although it is possible to achieve curvilinear designs with the implements used for decorating. In contrast, the photographs of pottery from Mailu (adjacent of the Massim), show distinctly curvilinear designs (fig. 5.8a).
Painted designs on southern Massim woman (one of several variations, Vivian, c. 1920)
In the traditions related to the manufacture of pottery in the Massim, local legends, when added to the evidence of style and technique, indicate the origin and spread of the technique of pottery making from Wari to part of the coastal mainland where it was adopted by the existing inhabitants in preference to their previous style of food preparation. If all the legends concerning pottery from the Massim area, as well as the elements of style in design and manufacturing technique were systematically collected and examined, the history embedded in these oral and visual traditions could assist in tracing the movements of people and their cultural knowledge through the area.

Whether the designs preferref in Massim art originated from an ancient regional art tradition or an extraneous source which penetrated the area is uncertain to date. Newton's arguments assume a flow of culture accompanying incursions from Asiatic sources, a passive acceptance and continuing repetition of ancient designs and patterns. Though, of course, the original migrants into the Massim area must have brought their existing culture and technology with them, there is sufficient evidence within the Massim area of the influx, acceptance and incorporation of new ideas and styles to indicate that there was and is natural desire for innovation as well as respect for tradition in the art of the Massim.

The response to local environment and the development of a high degree of specialisation has resulted over a long span of time as the people have adapted to their land, formulated their ideas, organised their society and established complex links with other communities for their mutual benefit and the enchancement of life.

This thesis has not attempted to correct any theories, but, by comparing several theories and methods previously used in an attempt to explain the development of the art of a homogeneous Pacific Islands culture, sought to approach the problem in an interdisciplinatory way. By using the library, archival and collected resources available this thesis has attempted to relate the occurrences in prehistory which may have influenced the development of Massim art; to consider the effect of local environment on material culture; to highlight the complexity of ideas and associations of Massim visual art forms, and to analyse the components of style which characterise individual forms, and which, overall, give Massim art its distinctive character.

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1 The generous assistance given by Chief Narabutau and John Kasaipwalova of the Trobriand Islands to researchers and other commentators on aspects of Massim cultures, both indirectly through their published work and directly in
some instances, has been of unmatchable value in providing insights into the art and aesthetics from the point of view of members of the culture. The end result of the years of research into all aspects of the *kula* presently being undertaken by John Kasaipwalova should be eagerly anticipated for the perspective it will provide regarding the integration of art into the social structure, and the beauty and originality of its expression.

2 Several examples of concentric circles painted on canoes from the Trobriand Islands are in the Cochrane PNG Archive colour transparencies (Kula section) and more recent examples (colour slides again) taken by Jutta Malnic between 1980-85. As no black/white photographs were available they are not reproduced here.

32 See selection of Massim pottery illustrated in May & Tuckson, *Traditional Pottery*...op cit.
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