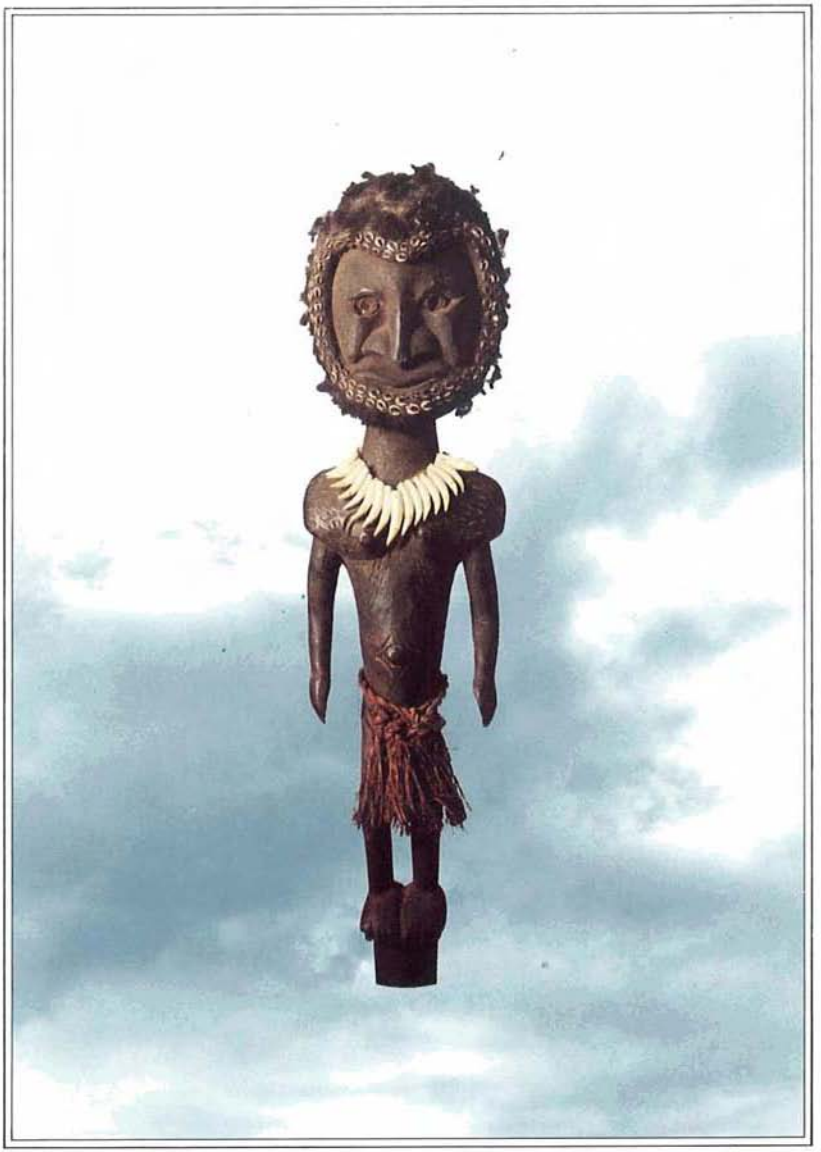

TRIBAL ART OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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FOREWORD

Amongst my small collection of Papua Niu Gini art pieces, are a pair of wood sculptures from the Sepik Valley. One is a squatting male figure with his hands raised to his ears. The other is a bare-breasted, cross-legged female with her hands firmly placed upon her knees. Both have a quizzical expression on their faces and sport their sex with cheeky but dignified aplomb. They are not classic examples of Sepik sculpture. Nor are they particularly old. But together the pair have a great deal to say about male-female relationships depending on how they are placed and the juxtaposition of one with the other.

Face to face, side by side, back to back, standing or lying, the figures make fun of the frailties inherent in the everyday interactions between man and woman. I am reminded that ethnic art, generally regarded as being locked into the nuances of its own culture, can in fact make universal comments relevant to all mankind.

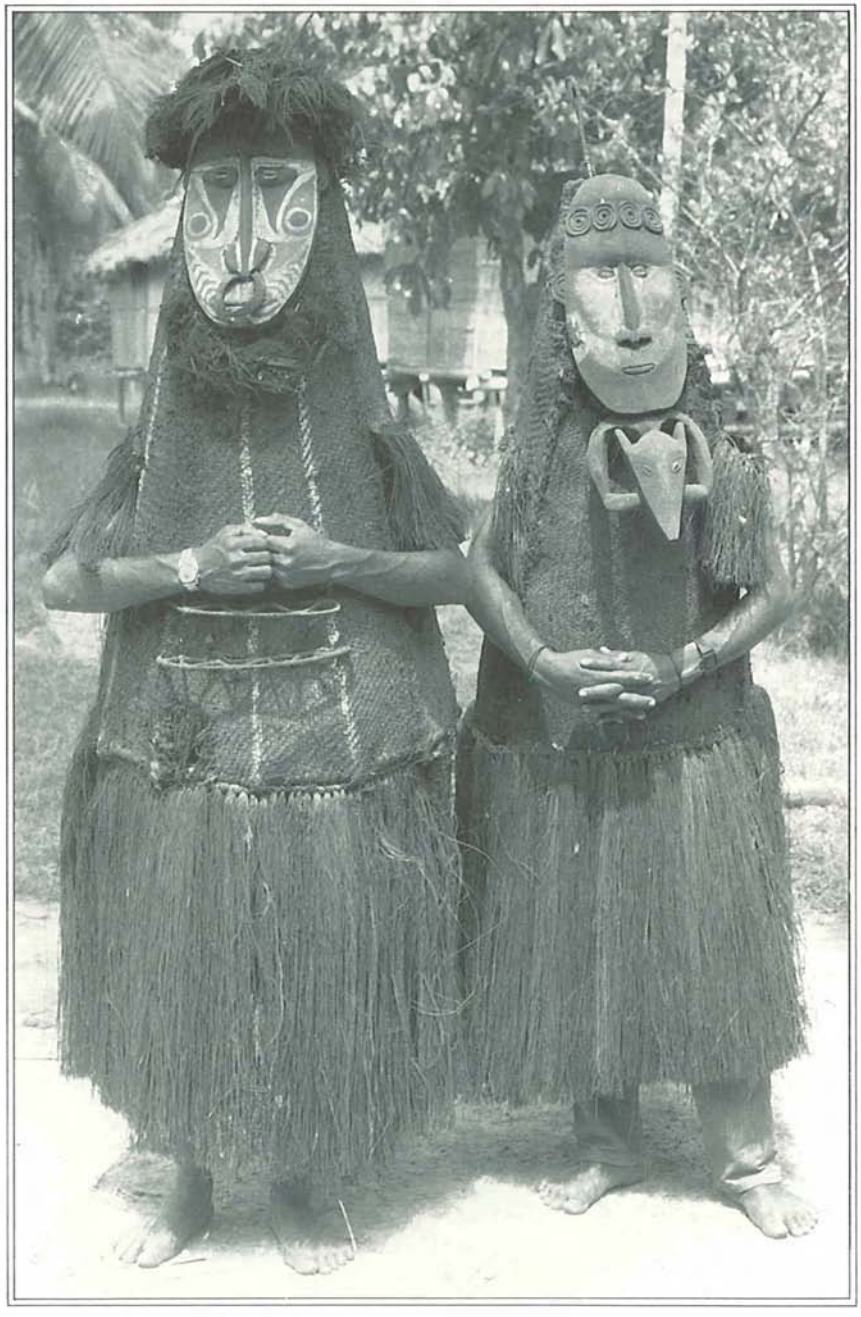
At present both sculptures are looking directly at me as though they were challenging me to say something profound about Papua Nui Gini art. But I am neither art critic nor anthropologist. Rather, I regard myself as a fellow artist whose response to the art of others is essentially subjective and therefore personal. I would no more impose my responses upon others than I would expect them to impose theirs upon me.

Suffice to say that the art world should consider itself fortunate that in this turbulent century when the rest of the world competes to master the sophisticated technology associated with electronics, space exploration and nuclear energy, Papua Nui Gini asserts its commitment to a policy which acknowledges the right of its diverse peoples to maintain the ancient ways of their forefathers. What a marvellous anachronism that art works which properly belong to an ancient time are still being created in the present.

But Papua Niu Gini is also committed to the future and the modern world. While many of her citizens live as their ancestors did centuries ago, subject still to ancient Gods, rituals and customary law, as many of her sons and daughters have leapt into the 20th Century equipped with the skills necessary to tweek the ears of the modern world. The leap has caused Papua Niu Gini art to flourish. Unlike her South Pacific cousins, neither missionary nor colonial influence appears to have affected Papua Niu Gini art adversely. If anything, the opposite is true for these alien influences have brought with them new concepts, new challenges and new conflicts to harrass the creative mind into greater productivity.

It is perhaps this unique dichotomy — the mix and match, the thrust and parry, the challenge and response of the old and new which gives Papua Niu Gini art its particular flavour of earthy dynamism. The best of Papua Niu Gini art is for me the nearest thing to viewing a caged but living dinosaur.

Katerina Mataira



INTRODUCTION

Works of art seen in the majority of exhibitions presented in New Zealand art galleries are extensions of the western european tradition of fine arts.

Values, inherited and shared through western art history, give a visual kinship to art collections in cities as distant as Avignon, Auckland, Adelaide and Edinburgh. Our vision is often focussed outwards towards Europe, failing to recognise the wealth and diversity of art forms of the Pacific community to which we in New Zealand belong.

In assembling this exhibition of Tribal Art of Papua New Guinea the Robert McDougall Art Gallery's intention is to help create an awareness of the art of a pacific people whose visual language is one of exceptional vigour and richness.

We acknowledge with gratitude the considerable assistance provided by Mrs Helen Dennett and Mr Saroi Marepo Eoe. We are also grateful to Cathay Pacific Airlines for their very willing support in making the exhibition possible.

John Coley
DIRECTOR

Papua New Guinea forms the eastern half of the island of New Guinea the world's second largest island. The western half comprises the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya. With a land area of 462,840 square kilometres it includes the large islands of New Britain, New Ireland and Bougainville and over 600 small islands many of them archipelagos. Over 700 languages are spoken in Papua New Guinea. With the total population just under three million there is a bewildering number of cultural groups. This exhibition brings together a variety of sculpted and woven works from two of the most prolific art-producing areas in the country; the Papuan Gulf and the Sepik.

In an exhibition of this size the profuse variety of Sepik art forms can only be hinted at. It has not been possible to include exhibits from a number of areas such as the Upper Sepik which in itself includes a number of sub-styles or the Yuat River, home of the Mundugumor. Nevertheless, apart from the cultural context, an overall view gives the outsider some idea of the ability of the Sepiks to use available natural materials which include cane, clay, wood, bamboo and gourds to create a great diversity of forms. They also highlight another noted feature of Sepik art, that is, the widespread use of extraneous material such as feathers, paint, shells and bone to enhance and ornament sculptured and woven works.

Before the introduction of steel, tools were made from available materials. Stone adzes were used for preliminary cutting and shaping of wood. Drilling, cutting and finishing tools were made from shell, bone or animals' teeth. Special leaves, pigs tusks and in some areas various types of scaleless fish skins were used as abrasives. Needles for sewing and weaving were made from animal bones.

The Sepik River rises in the Victor Emmanuel Range, takes a westerly course, crosses the border into Irian Jaya and twists back in great loops. It flows eastwards for over a thousand kilometres before emptying into the Bismark Sea south east of Wewak, the provincial headquarters.

Ethnographers and art historians have split the Sepik area into style provinces. The boundaries shown on the map indicate areas with distinct style characteristics. However, over a long period there appears to have been considerable exchange of objects, songs and even ceremonies. Similar design elements are found over a wide area and it is often difficult to assign objects to a particular provenance.

The artists who created the works in this exhibition may be placed in two general groups; firstly the Kwoma and the southern Abelam or Wosera, the former living in the Ambunti Hills immediately north of the river, the latter living in the southern foothills of the Prince Alexander Range to the northeast of the Kwoma. Secondly, the Chambri, the Iatmul, the Sawos, the Karawaris, the Kambot and the people of the Lower Sepik. The Kwoma and the Abelam are primarily yam cultivators and hill dwellers while those people in the second group are riverine dwellers who either live on the main river or on the tributaries or lakes connected to it.

Subsistence agriculture, hunting and in the riverine areas, fishing, form the basis of daily life. Sago is the staple food in areas bordering and adjacent to the river while in the hilly areas yams usually supplemented with sago are the major staple in the people's diet. Nowadays rice and other imported foods supplement traditional fare.

To gain some understanding of Sepik art, it must be seen in its cultural setting. It cannot be interpreted purely from an aesthetic viewpoint. In earlier times the prime motivation for Sepik art was religious. Despite the cultural modifications caused by the coming of Europeans there is still a firm belief in the spiritual world existing as a dimension of the visible world.

In riverine villages the men's cult house was the focus for elaborate ceremonies, the most important of which related to the cult of head hunting. Masks, figures, musical instruments and other ceremonial paraphernalia were produced specifically to give visual and aural reality to the spiritual forces, that, with due ritual could assist man to keep a measure of balance and control in his cosmos. Ritual objects were not a mere concrete representation of a particular spirit. A man who wore the mask and other paraphernalia of a spirit was actually that spirit. When a man played a musical instrument in a ritual context, the sounds produced were not simply beats or notes but the actual voices or footsteps of inhabitants of the spiritual realm.

Rites are still performed to ensure success in hunting, gardening and other seemingly mundane activities. For example before setting out to hunt game a man will by his ritual actions spiritually enliven his hunting spear. Spells are recited, bespelled plants are rubbed on it and various rites ordained by custom to be efficacious are performed. Usually the spear is engraved with a spiritual or totemic motif. In the Middle Sepik area a motif personifying the bush spirit 'winjimbu' is frequently engraved on spears. A hunter explained it thus:

Wingimbu's power must be with me. I carve him on my hunting spear. I speak to him realizing that without his help I will not hunt successfully. He is in my spear. My spear is a part of me. I cannot eat a pig that dies by my spear for my blood travels through the spear and into the pig.

The hunter representing a Sepik prototype, sees himself as part of a world made up of interdependent material and spiritual realities.

As already mentioned, head hunting was once the main focus for a number of Sepik cultures. The taking of a head was one of the major pre-requisites for initiates becoming true men. Skulls with lifelike features overmodelled in clay were treasured as a source of spiritual power. Homicides proudly wore insignia that denoted their achievements.

Catalogue No. 4 is an example of a cult figure referred to in Pidgin English as 'wanlek' (one leg). Traditionally figures of this type were the personification of spirits associated with headhunting and the hunting of game. Throughout the Karawari area one finds variations on the myth of origin of these figures. The following version was recounted by Michael Uliau of Klaimbit Village:—

A female ancestor close to death charged her son to carve a log drum ('garamut') from the tree that would spring from her grave. Four days after her death the son felled the massive tree that had appeared and from it he carved the first 'garamut'.

From the pieces left over he fashioned 'wanlek' figures. He was surprised to find that these objects were endowed with the powers of speech and movement. In war expeditions the figures, bounding along on their single legs, would precede the warriors to kill and sow confusion in the enemy village. They were also of great assistance in hunting. The 'wanlek' used to live in the men's cult house. One day an inquisitive woman climbed a tree close to the cult house on the pretext of picking some edible leaves and saw the 'wanlek' lounging about inside. She was killed for the sacrilege but from then on the 'wanlek' reverted to immobile pieces of wood.

For generations men of the Karawari area have carved 'wanlek' figures to which were attributed spiritual powers. Placed in the rear of the cult house hidden away from the eyes of women, children and the uninitiated, they were once the focus of magic rituals performed to ensure success in hunting. Head hunting raids were a co-operative effort involving all the men in a hamlet or a whole village. Before undertaking a raid, participants gathered in the cult house. Magicians addressed the cult figures, rubbing themselves and the figures with ginger, betel nut juice, stinging nettles and other bespelled plants and objects sometimes including dried pieces of flesh taken on earlier hunts. The magician indicated to the assembled men whether the 'Wanlek' gave positive signs of a successful hunt. If the omens were not favourable a head hunting raid might be postponed until a more propitious sign was given. 'Wanlek' which appeared over a period of time to be unresponsive or unlucky were discarded and replaced by newly carved figures. The return from a successful raid was heralded by the beating of drums and the blowing of wooden trumpets. During the feasting and dancing that followed, the victim's blood was rubbed on the cult figures thereby increasing their potency. 'Wanlek' may vary in size from those only a few centimetres long that are carried in the hunter's string bag as amulets to figures more than 200 centimetres long.

Successful head hunting was related to a belief in this activity bringing prosperity and fertility to the group and as a matter of great pride to the individual killer.

There are a number of elements in Karawari head hunting practices which are common to most of the riverine groups. These include ritual preparations that focus on sacred objects, the decoration of the trophy heads and ceremonies that mark the conclusion of a successful hunt.

The Wosera are usually referred to as the southern Abelam. The interdependent focal points for the Abelam culture are the tambaran cult and the cult surrounding the growth and exchange of long yams. Small yams are grown among other food crops in family gardens. Long yams are only grown in special gardens under the direction and control of village elders known for their success with yam magic and their knowledge of esoteric lore. Women are believed to be inimical to long yams and are forbidden to enter ceremonial yam gardens. Yam growers abide by a series of taboos — avoiding sexual relations with women for certain periods and not eating specified foods which might make both the yams and their grower 'cold' or 'soft'. Heat or 'hotness' is equated with manly vigour and spiritual power. A man closely identifies with his yams, seeing them as a symbol of his manhood and industry. He does not eat his own yams. The rituals surrounding the growing of yams commence with the clearing of the ground and culminate in a colourful festival during which the yams are ceremonially displayed and exchanged. Some yams grow to over 200cm in length. Before appearing on public display, yams are decorated. A basketry mask or sometimes a wooden one is affixed to the 'head' of the yam which is then either leant against a specially constructed fence or tied to a support pole by loops of cane. Yams are believed to have some human attributes and when fully decorated they resemble men and women in ceremonial dress. During dancing and feasting the yams are admired and criticised and eventually exchanged between traditional partners.

As Catalogue Nos. 1, 2, and 3 show there is considerable variety in the forms of yam masks.

The bark painting, Catalogue No. 20 portrays Raminggen a female spirit. To the Abelam paint itself is regarded as a magic substance. Men paint in secluded places and completed paintings are placed either on the exterior facade of the cult house or assembled inside, along with polychromed carvings personifying clan spirits. The cult house or 'Haus tambaran' occupies a prominent site in the

village and some of the graded initiation ceremonies take place within or close to the cult house. Paint is made from earth colours and vegetable matter. Red ochre is obtained by burning pieces of wood found submerged in the mud of waterways. Feathers and crushed stems are used as paint brushes.

Catalogue No. 28 is a male body ornament which on everyday occasions was worn down a man's back, being suspended from a string around his neck. During one of the initiation stages elaborately decorated initiates hold this type of ornament between their teeth. With their eyes plastered shut with yellow clay and their mouth blocked it is believed that the spiritual force with which the initiates are especially imbued at that time will not be able to escape through the bodily orifices. In earlier times painted and decorated warriors held the ornaments between their teeth as they set out to attack their enemies.

Among the wealth of objects created for ceremonial purposes are masks found in a great variety of forms. Catalogue Nos. 22, 24, and 26 are of the type that are attached to woven frames that almost completely cover the body of the man who appears in the costume as the embodiment of a particular spiritual being. Frequently a grass fringe or skirt is attached to the lower edge of the frame.

An important focus of Kwoma religion was the cycle of rituals related to the cultivation and harvesting of yams. Towards the end of each year the Kwoma commence ritual preparations for the yam harvest. The open ends of the cult house are fenced off to prevent women and children from seeing the preparations being carried out by fully initiated men. No yams may be eaten until the necessary rituals have been performed. A basket-like enclosure is built inside the cult house and filled with part of the yam harvest. Different types of sacred carvings are set up either inside the basket or in close proximity to it. Catalogue No. 29 is an example of a minor carving,a number of which form part of the ritual assemblage.

Catalogue No. 8 is said to be the personification of a specific water spirit seen near a lagoon by a villager when he was alone in the bush. The carving of a prawn (shrimp?) on the head of the figure symbolizes the spirit's association with water.

Catalogue No. 6 follows closely the traditional form of figures from the Lower Sepik area. Originally small figures like this one were kept in cult and dwelling houses. They embodied spiritual beings whose power could assist in warfare and hunting and promote the general well-being of the clan who owned them.

Although Catalogue Nos. 7, 9 and 27 were made for sale their creators carved them with an eye to traditional artistic values. They are worthy examples of their kind.

In almost all areas of the Sepik, flutes are among the most important musical instruments used on ceremonial occasions. Although many myths tell how women were the original discoverers or creators of flutes, as well as much other ritual paraphernalia, control of all sacred objects including flutes, was always taken over by men. Traditionally it is taboo for women and the uninitiated to see flutes. Sounds issuing from these instruments are believed to be the voices of spirits, especially those of bush and water. Flute-players, although hidden from public gaze when playing, are very conscious that women make an appreciative audience. Men try to excel in flute playing, believing that the sounds emanating from these symbols of virility and male authority are enticing to women. Flutes are given individual names and are almost always played in pairs. In the Chambri Lakes and Middle Sepik area, flutes are referred to as elder brother and younger brother with the junior flute being pitched one tone above the elder. Elaborately carved and decorated stoppers embodying totemic or ancestral beings are a feature of many flutes.

The stoppers Catalogue No. 11 were carved for transverse flutes which are made from pieces of bamboo about 200 centimetres long. A single mouth hole is cut into the bamboo near the end which is sealed with a stopper.

Hand drums known as 'kundus' are found throughout the Sepik. While they may not necessarily be regarded as sacred as flutes or other musical instruments, they are an integral part of many ceremonies. Individual 'kundus' which have special names may be a source of spiritual power or be thought of as the drum or voice of a specific mythical or ancestral figure. Catalogue No. 25 is an example of a typical drum from the Lower Sepik area.

In the Sepik, as in many other areas of Papua New Guinea, betel nut, the fruit of the areca palm is used as a stimulant. It is chewed with lime and parts of the pepper vine or aromatic bark. Apart from everyday use it forms an element in gift exchanges and may be an ingredient used in magic potions. Throughout the Sepik, natural materials including bamboo, gourds and coconut shells are used as lime containers. These containers are often elaborately etched or engraved with a wide variety of designs. Carved and decorated lime spatulas made from wood or bone are dipped into the lime before being places in the mouth. Ones with serrated edges are on occasions scraped repeatedly against the container's mouth as a sign of male aggression or as an accompaniment to the sound of drums and flutes during dances. Catalogue No. 13 features an engraving of a

villager with his wife and two children. On their bodies are marks representing armbands, legbands, shell necklaces and other ornaments. Catalogue No. 12 is a polished gourd with a finely carved spatula.

Among the tools used by Sepik carvers are wooden mallets almost always made by the carver himself from a single piece of strong wood. Catalogue No. 17 is an example of how a practical tool may be carved and ornamented to enhance its form while ensuring that the functional aspect is not impaired. The scroll design is found in many areas of the Sepik. Some say that it represents a vine.

Catalogue No. 5 is a food hook. In many Sepik households, carved wooden hooks are suspended from the roof beams. Baskets and bags of food and other perishable goods are hung from the hooks to protect the contents from rats. To make these measures more effective, the cord from the hook is often passed through a hole in a disc of bark or wood which is affixed above the hook to obstruct the rats' movements. While hooks of this type might appear to be purely practical objects, in many cases they may have spiritual powers especially if they are hung in cult houses to accommodate hand drums or ritual objects.

In the Sawos area pottery is still made in the villages of Kamengaui and Koiwat. As with all Sepik pottery it is hand-moulded. Catalogue No. 21 is an eating bowl, one of several types of pots made in these villages. Women prepare the clay and make the pots using the coil method. A completed pot is set aside in a shaded area until it reaches a leather-hard stage. It is then engraved. This is done only by men. Small shaped or sharpened sticks are used to incise the design. After pots are fired on an open fire men highlight the engraved designs by painting the cut away areas with earth colours. However they soon become smoke-blackened as they are stored on racks suspended above household fireplaces. Smoking strengthens the pots. The designs may be broadly described as being based on plant and animal motifs. Sawos eating bowls serve no ceremonial purpose but in the past and even today they are traded to nearby villages.

Catalogue Nos. 14, 15 and 16 are examples of relief plaques carved from the buttress roots of ficus trees. This type of carving appears to be quite a recent development. The evolution of this form is not clear. In the past the Kambots were noted for their figurative bark paintings which decorated their cult houses. Traditionally the bark surface was primed with black before the composition was outlined in white paint. Some of the earlier plaques with their flat surfaces combined with cut away areas filled in with lime, gave, at a distance, the impression of paintings.

While the contents of bark paintings had religious significance and rarely if ever portrayed movement or action many plaques today often depict everyday activities such as the successful conclusion of a pig hunt seen in Catalogue No. 14. Catalogue No. 15 depicts the legend of Lawena and Dawena recounted by Simon Novep as follows:

Lawena and Dawena were two men who lived in Kambot village on the Keram River. They used to kill the domestic animals of others and plunder their gardens. On being eventually found out, they fled into the bush taking some shells with them. From the shells they prepared lime which they put into a bamboo container. They killed two cockatoos whose heads they put on over their own. They made themselves invisible by chewing betel nut mixed with the special lime from the container. Then they went back to the village and climbed a coconut tree to get the fruit. The noise drew the people from their houses. The two bird-men began to shriek wildly and the village men flung up spears which the two caught and held. After the shrieking had stopped, the villagers sent a young man up the tree to solve the mystery. His head was cut off by Lawena and Dawena and his body fell to the ground. Without a sound and still invisible, the bird-men flew off into the bush and ate the head.

Some time passed and they decided to return to kill another victim. They flew into a garamut tree near the village. This time they were not completely invisible because their lime supply had nearly run out. A man spied them and alerted the other villagers who came out with spears and axes. They set to work to cut down the tree but to their amazement, just as it seemed ready to topple, it became whole again. For three days they laboured without success, but on the fourth day the tree suddenly came crashing down with the top falling into the river. Dawena who was caught up in the branches of the tree, was thrown into the river and slipped away unnoticed in the water. Lawena flew off, but after the people had given up the search for the two evildoers, he returned to look for Dawena. He called softly from the river bank and Dawena answered him, barking like a crocodile. Dawena had changed into a crocodile and could not go back with him to the bush.

Ninety eight years have passed since Dr Otto Finsch became the first European to travel on the Sepik River. Understandably the Sepiks have had to constantly adapt themselves to changing circumstances. In 1912 the Germans mounted a wide-ranging expedition to survey and examine the river and the people living along its banks and tributaries. At the outbreak of World War 1 Australia took over the area. The Australians made determined efforts to eradicate head hunting practices. For many years labour recruiters had encouraged able-bodied men to leave their villages to work on plantations along the coast and on the

islands. By the start of the second World War head hunting had almost died out. During the last three years of the war much of the Sepik was under the control of the Japanese. Some cult houses were bombed or burnt when Australia and its allies attacked and eventually drove out the Japanese. Others fell into disrepair. With many of the young men away on plantations village elders must have seen their pre-contact positions of power and authority irretrievably diminished. Thousands of ritual and secular objects were acquired by European collectors. The Sepiks quickly realized that they could obtain steel tools and other trade goods by handing over all manner of ritual and secular objects. A photograph taken in Angoram in the thirties shows a selection of new carvings made for sale. As time went by some artefacts such as feather mosaics which were very time consuming to produce died out.

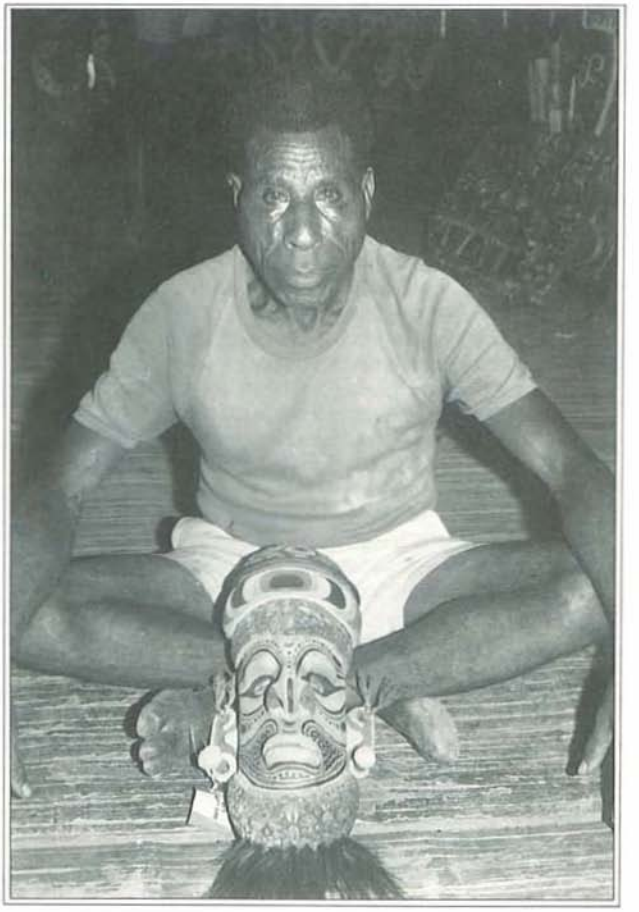
All the artefacts in this exhibition have been made in the last ten years. With the emphasis now on the production of artefacts for commercial purposes some modifications have been made to suit market demands. For example, it is probably difficult for most people, unfamiliar with Sepik art, to imagine how masks such as Catalogue Nos. 22, 23 and 24 could be worn by anybody. As already mentioned this type of mask was originally attached to a woven cane frame big enough to almost cover a man's body. Detached from their frames these masks become easily portable and therefore more saleable to the average tourist. Similarly the pair of flute stoppers from the Chambri Lakes [Catalogue No. 11] were presented for sale minus the 150 to 200cm long pieces of bamboo into which traditionally they would have been plugged.

There are still numerous objects made for use in a ceremonial context only to be offered for sale after they have fulfilled their ritual function. The yam masks from the Wosera fall into this category. The carver's mallet and the eating bowl have fulfilled their traditional purpose for some years before being sold.

In the last ten years there has been an accelerated migration of people especially from the river villages to towns all around Papua New Guinea. The accidental introduction of the aquatic plant **salvinia molesta** into the Sepik river about ten years ago has had what may prove to be a devastating effect on life on the river. Lagoons [the main source of fish] and channels, which allow people to travel from one area to another, have in some areas become completely choked with this plant. Hundreds of people have forsaken their villages. In towns such as Wewak, Lae, Madang and Rabaul many Sepik squatters eke out a living by producing lifeless objects to sell to tourists and expatriates. An example of what has become known as 'airport art' are the small masks with a shoe polish finish made by the Chambris, the group which has been most affected by salvinia molesta. They are churned out by the hundreds and in the last two years a Japanese company has been producing facsimile Chambri masks in its factory in Japan presumably for their home market.

However, the ingenuity and skill of many Sepik artists still living in their villages gives one hope that they will be able to rise above the pitfalls of art-consumerism and the worst aspects of acculturation and continue to produce objects worthy of the rich artistic traditions of the Sepik.

Helen Dennett



The Papuan Gulf Art area covers some 200 miles across the Papuan Gulf. Most of the area is a swampy region of rivers, shifting deltas and islands.

From this region we find an art style which is definitely one of the most homogeneous of all New Guinea's art styles. Whatever the form of creation, we find the art style shares many traits in common. However, particular variations have developed as a result of many years of cultural evolution.

Oral traditions indicate that essential aspects of Gulf culture were created in the west by the Kiwais of Fly River estuary and were carried eastwards as far as Purari Delta. Those who settled on the Omati River founded the rich cultural area of Kerewa, on the Goaribari Island.

Various writers, Newton (1961), Parson (1972), Smidt (1975), Crawford (1980) have identified the existence of several different tribal and stylistic sub-divisions ranging from the Fly River in the west and Elema to the east. The major areas are; Gogodara (Gogodala), Kiwai (lower Fly River); Bamu, Taurama, Kerewa (Goaribari area); Wapo Creek, Urama (Era River), Namau (Purari Delta), Orokolo (Western Elema) and the Eastern Elema.

Generally the people practised a mixture of animism and belief in the spirits of their ancestors. The important aspects of cultural practice of headhunting; cannibalism, the performance of dramatic rituals and prolonged ceremonies therefore are based upon this belief system. Perhaps one of the important features which is central to Gulf culture is the ceremonial long house; eravo (Elema), ravi (Namau) and Dubu (Kerewa). This house is the religious, ceremonial and artistic centre of the village. Essential parts of certain ceremonies, such as initiation of young men, are performed here.

The production of religious objects were done as a means of establishing contacts and to draw strength, knowledge and guidance from the spirit world. These objects were kept in the ceremonial long houses as sacred objects, not to be seen by the uninitiated and the female population. However, occasionally, a few of these objects were seen when used in special ceremonies.

The art of Papuan Gulf is essentially two-dimensional and symmetrical. However, three-dimensional sculpture also occurs, but rarely to the east. Furthermore, samples of various forms, carved, woven or painted and arranged either vertically or horizontally, are also found.

Painted ornamentation using incised carving on a flat surface is characteristic of Papuan Gulf art. The motifs are often limited to circles, chevrons with double loops and the human figure are also a predominant motif. The animal motif occurs very rarely.

Construction of religious objects were done in great secrecy in a secluded part of the bush. The final stages of perfection and the decorative aspect were done in the interior of the ceremonial long house. Appropriate rituals were performed to transform a piece of wood or a mask into a ritually living object.

The raw materials available to Gulf artists are extremely limited; the most notable being wood, cane and bark. (Newton, 1961.)

The tools used in making the early carvings in wood were stone adzes and axes (for the rough shaping of the objects). Shells were used for scraping surfaces and the teeth of sharks and animals were used for finer work such as making an incision.

Generally the following colours are used: red, made from ochre (ground earth or plant material), white, made from lime or clay; and black, made from charcoal. The paints are applied with a brush made of frayed pandanus root, coconut fibre or betelnut husk.

The Gulf objects in this exhibition come from three related Art Style areas: Kerewa and Kivaumai (Urama) and Koriki (Namau).

KEREWA

The rich Kerewa culture was founded by emigrants from the Kiwai Island to the west. This is shared more or less by about 25,000 people, half of whom speak Kerewa dialect of Kiwai language, (Newton 1961). Amongst the important art objects of the area are Gope which are said to have developed in the Kerewa and gradually spread to other stylistic areas of Wapo Creek and Urama.

KIVAUMAI (URAMA)

Kivaumai is one of the villages which forms the Urama art style area. The Urama area is centrally located on the Islands of the mouth of Era River; Kerewa to the west, Wapo to the north and Namau to the east. Urama culture therefore shows the strong influence of its neighbours while having developed characteristics of its own. It was noted that Agiba are considerably fewer, but the Gope far more in number, and having a greater variety of design.

KORIKI (NAMAU)

The Koriki are one of the four tribes living in the swampy flooded delta of Purari River which makes up the Namau Group. The Koriki claim to be the delta's indigenous inhabitants, and live in seven villages. Oral traditions indicate that they have migrated from the foothills at the source of Purari River. The Koriki culture has a strong influence on migrating tribes from the west as well as from nearby tribes to the east.

Five types of objects can be viewed in the exhibition.
GOPE: Ancestor boards
BIOMA: Two-dimensional figures
AGIBA: Skull racks
KAKAME: Three-dimensional figures
UPURA: Bullroarers
BARKBELTS

Traditionally these types of objects played a very important role in the religious and ceremonial life of the people. Today, however the important aspects of cultural practice in which these objects were used, are now almost extinct. Like other groups in Papua New Guinea; Kerewa, Kivaumai (Urama) and Koriki (Namau) areas have undergone an enormous change. As such, the type of objects on display do not have any particular religious significance, but are now made mainly for sale.

GOPE

Catalogue Nos.: 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25
Gope are mostly oval-shaped wooden boards, with carving in relief. The incised designs are filled in with pigment. Usually they are carved out from the bark of trees, although the sides of old canoes were also used.

Generally, the gope represents a personified supernatural spirit or ancestor. The ownership of gope differs from tribe to tribe; gope can be clan property or an individual's property. The gope boards are usually kept in the mans long house and are considered very powerful. They are only used in times of warfare and some ceremonial dances. Another important function of gope is to ward off illness. The gope boards were displayed in the mens houses. In front of the gope, skulls of pig and crocodile are arranged and on top of these, Bioma and Kakame figures are placed.

In the Kerewa, the gope boards were associated with head hunting which in turn is associated with fertility. Before the raid the gope boards were taken out of the long house. The names of enemy villages were called and the gope would stir to indicate who was to be raided. The following day the raid was carried out.

(Newton, 1961, Smidt, 1975.)

BIOMA

Catalogue Nos.: 27 and 29
Bioma are two-dimensional figures with relief carving. Their legs and arms are clearly cut out. Sometimes these figures have two sets of limbs; one upraised, one lowered. The main characteristic of Bioma is that often they have upraised hands and legs set apart. Bioma are found in Era River and Wapo areas. They are found displayed on the skulls of pigs and crocodiles in front of Gope.

AGIBA

Catalogue Nos.: 18 and 19
Agiba are two-dimensional figures with a predominant face and without legs, as in the case of Bioma. A particular feature are two long vertical projections between the arms, to which human skulls are attached. These were mainly enemy skulls although sometimes skulls of important relatives were attached. Normally these skulls were decorated with seeds, shells, and rattan or carved wooden loops in their noses. Some writers have reported that Agiba are found predominantly among the Kerewa of Goaribari. It has been suggested that the practice of attaching skulls would indicate that the dead are assimilated into the world of the living. Among the Kerewa, Agiba are clan property; each clan having its own. Furthermore, the Agiba were only carved by men who had killed a enemy. The production and use of Agiba is confined to Kerewa and Bamu Districts.

KAKAME

Catalogue Nos.: 26, 30, 32, 33 and 34
The Kakame are three-dimensional figures, which are carved utilizing the natural forms of tree branches. They are found displayed in the same manner as Bioma, on top of pigs and crocodile skulls in the ceremonial house. They are often displayed with their legs standing in the eye sockets.

The Kakame figures are found in areas west of Koriki tribe in the Purari Delta. In the Koriki tribe, Kakame are produced by villages of Ipiko and Era Maipua which are in the western fringes of the Koriki tribe. Both villages are remnants of the eastward migration from the Kiwai estuary.

UPURA (BULLROARERS)

Catalogue No.: 31
Bullroarers are oval shaped and are made from thin wood. They are considered very sacred and are kept hidden in the men's long houses. They are only used in special ceremonies such as initiation. The Bullroarers produce thundering sounds when swung around. The sound is considered to be the sounds of spirits. In the strictest sense it cannot be considered as a musical instrument. In some areas, they feature in a bullroarer cult, as it is in the case of Namau and Western Elema.

It has been reported (Newton 1961) that bullroarers were absent in the Kerewa area. the presence of bullroarers now could be attributed to recent developments in the art style of the area.

BARKBELTS

Catalogue Nos.: 35 and 36

Barkbelts are made from the bark of a tree. Two types of belts can be found; decorated and undecorated. The former is decorated with incised designs filled in with lime. This type are only worn by men on ceremonial occasions. The undecorated barkbelts are often used daily by men.

In the Orokolo area of the West Elema, the belts were usually made and given to young men by their maternal uncles. The incised design belong to the mothers' clan, often identified with clan totems.

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Curator of Anthropology
National Museum and Art Gallery
Port Moresby

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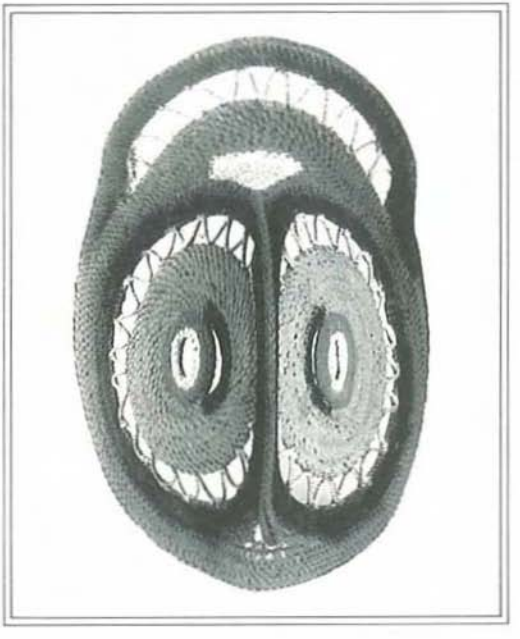
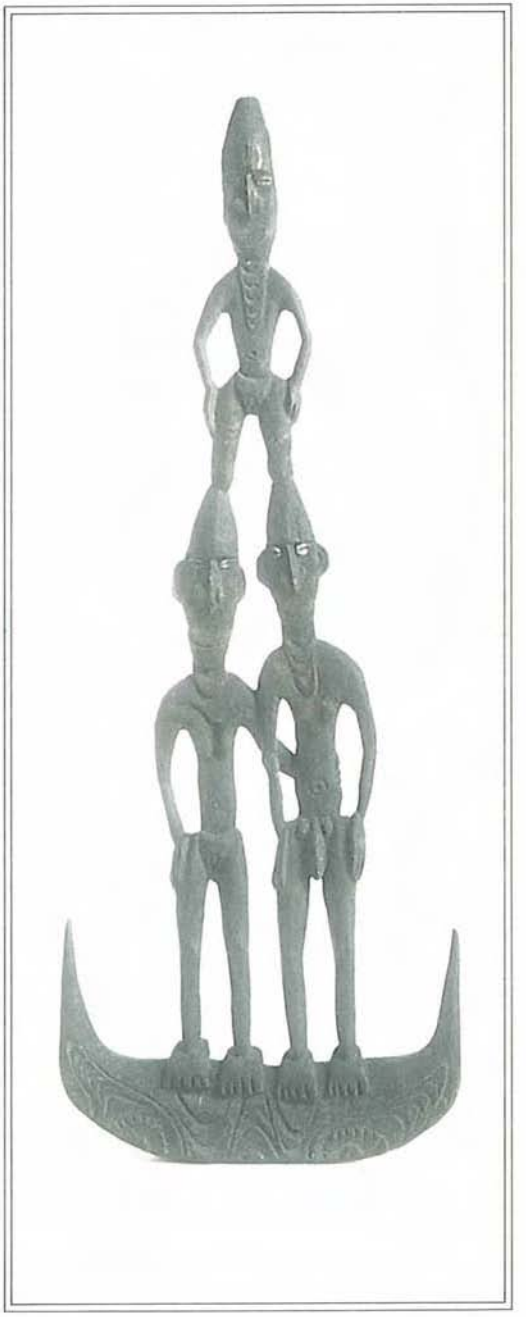


1
Yam Mask
Artist Unknown
Sarikim No. 1 Village
Wosera Area
East Sepik Province
27cm×18cm

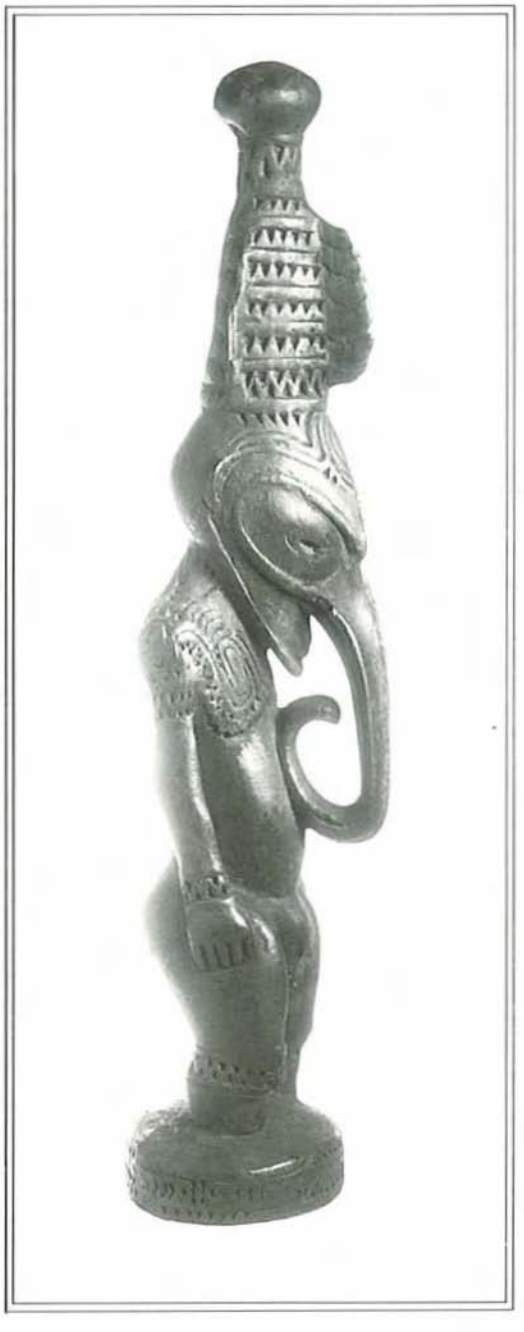
3
Yam Mask
Artist Unknown
Maprik Area
51cm×36cm

2
Yam Mask
Artist Unknown
Sarikim No. 1 Village
Wosera Area
East Sepik Province
28cm×16cm

4
Cult Hook
Artist Unknown
Mafiamai Village
Karawari Area
87cm×12cm



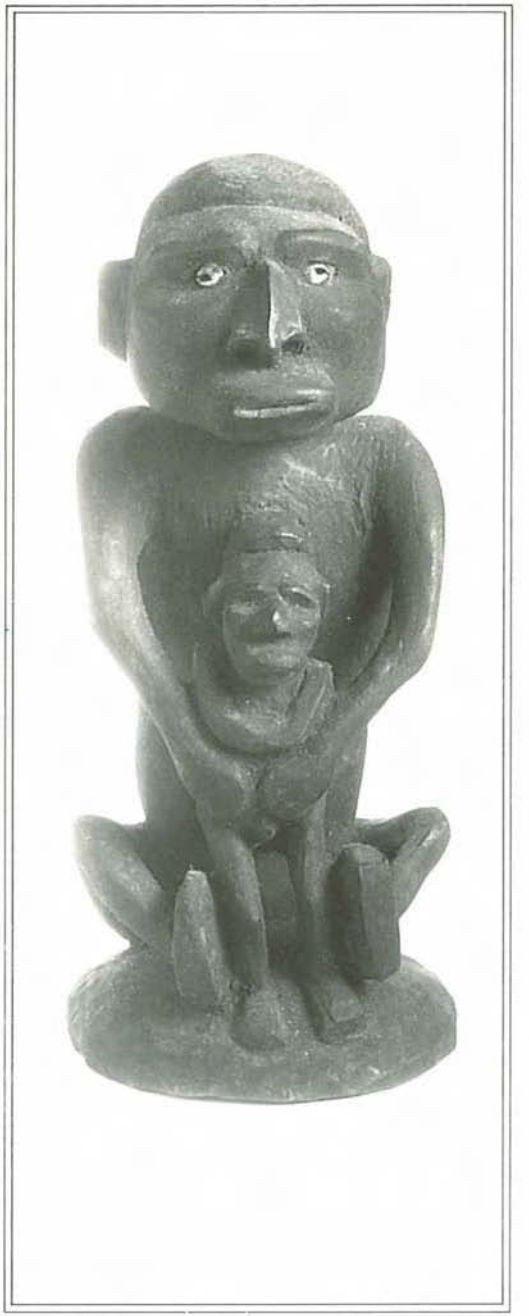
5
Food Hook
Artist Unknown
Kanganaman Village
Iatmul Area
79cm×31cm



6
Figure
Artist Unknown
Murik Lakes Area
East Sepik Province
50cm×10cm

7
Figure
Ignas Keram
Kambot Village
Keram River Area
21cm×11cm

8
Figure
Yaman
Kamanambit Village
Iatmul Area
East Sepik Province
30cm×10cm



9
Figure
Artist Unknown
Maramba Village
Iatmul Area
East Sepik Province
25cm×11cm

10
Flute Stopper (Male Figure)
Artist Unknown
Wombun Village
Chambri Lakes Area
East Sepik Province
47cm×12cm

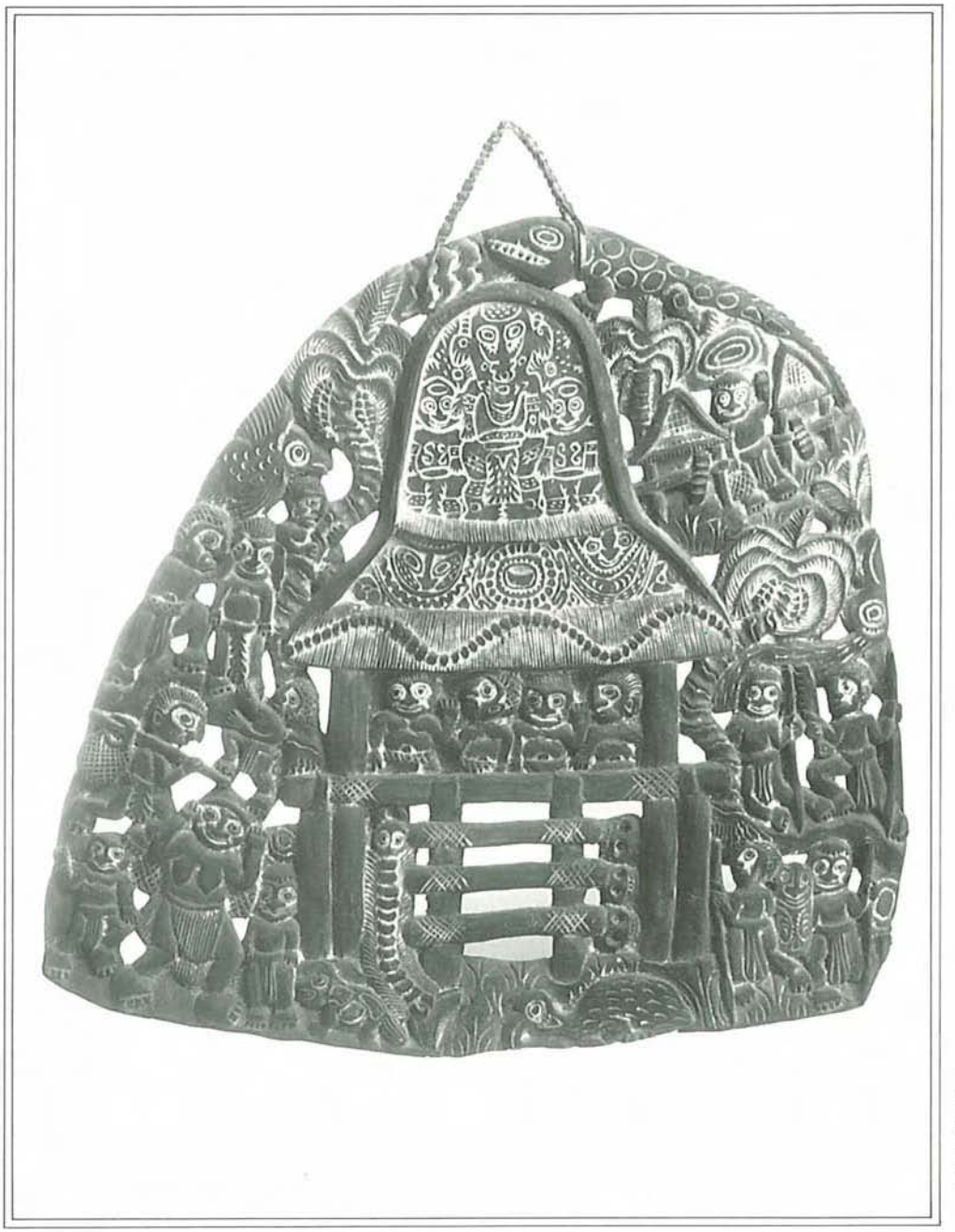
11
Flute Stopper (Female Figure)
Artist Unknown
Wombun Village
Chambri Lakes Area
East Sepik Province
47cm×12cm

12
Gourd Lime Container and Lime Stick
Artist Unknown
Karawari Area
East Sepik Province
38cm×70cm

13
Bamboo Lime Container
Sigmund Manua
Kambot Village
Keram River Area
East Sepik Province
31cm×11cm

14
Relief Carving
Aklyas Pase
Kambot Village
Keram River Area
East Sepik Province
46cm×61cm

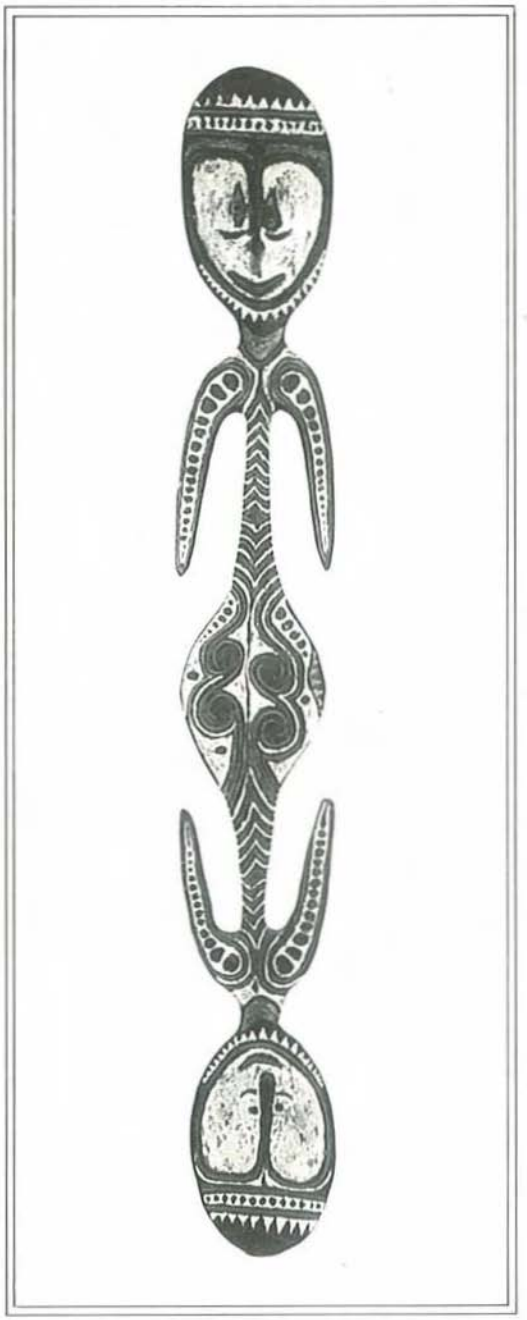
15
Relief Carving
Artist Unknown
Kambot Village
Keram River Area
East Sepik Province
58cm×39cm



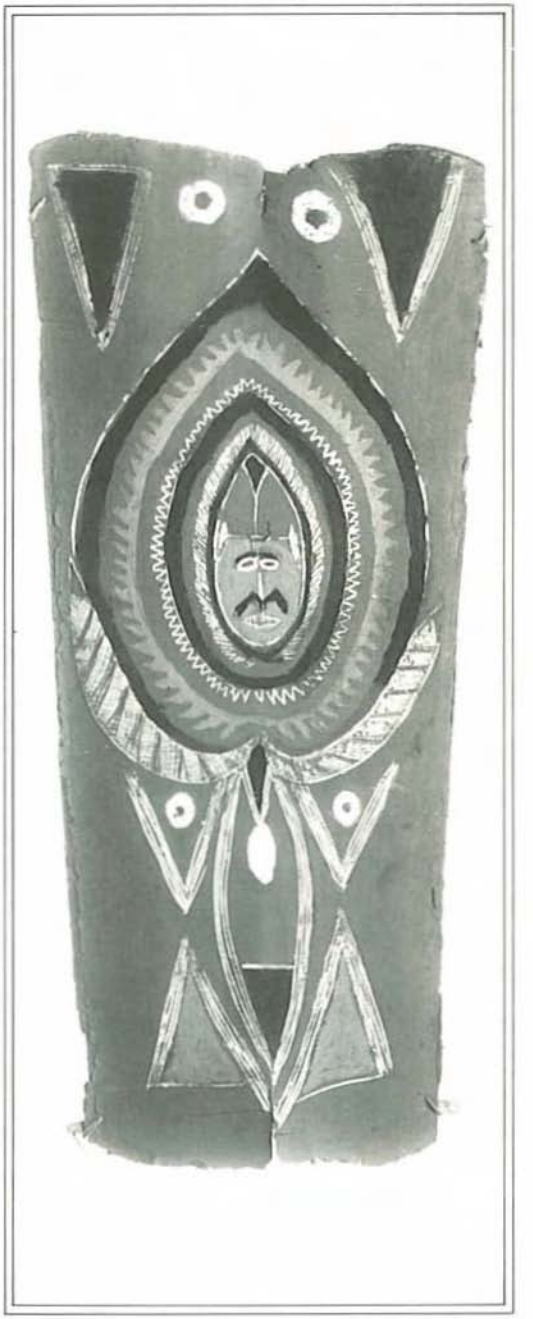
16
Relief Carving
Artist Unknown
Kambot Village
Keram River Area
East Sepik Province
72cm×76cm
Allard-Smith Collection

17
Carvers Mallet
Artist Unknown
Karawari Area
East Sepik Province
44cm×11cm

18
Mask
Parimbei Area
Sepik River
Collected July 1963
45cm×24cm
Canterbury Museum Collection



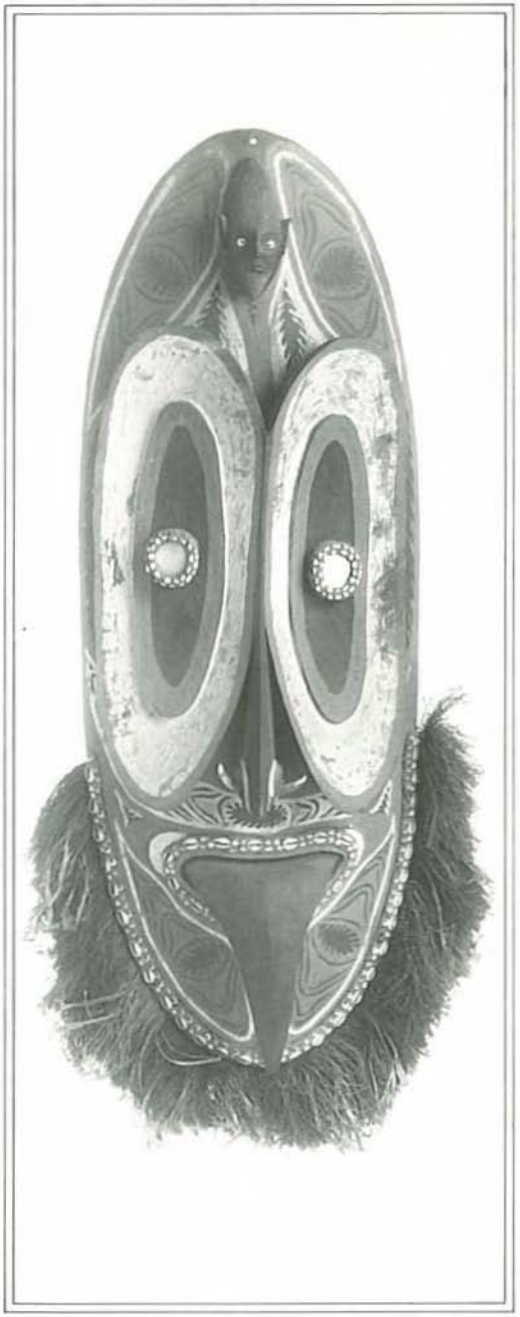
19
Ceremonial Tablet from Haus Tambaran
Artist Unknown
South Wagup Village
Nggala Region
Sepik
Canterbury Museum Collection
1850cm×260cm



20
Ramigen: A Female Ancestor Figure
Bark Painting
Artist: Sipalagomi
Stapikum Village
Wosera Area
Sepik
89cm×37cm

21
Clay Pot
Artist Unknown
Kamengaui Village
Sawos Region
Sepik
Dia 20cm×Depth 13cm

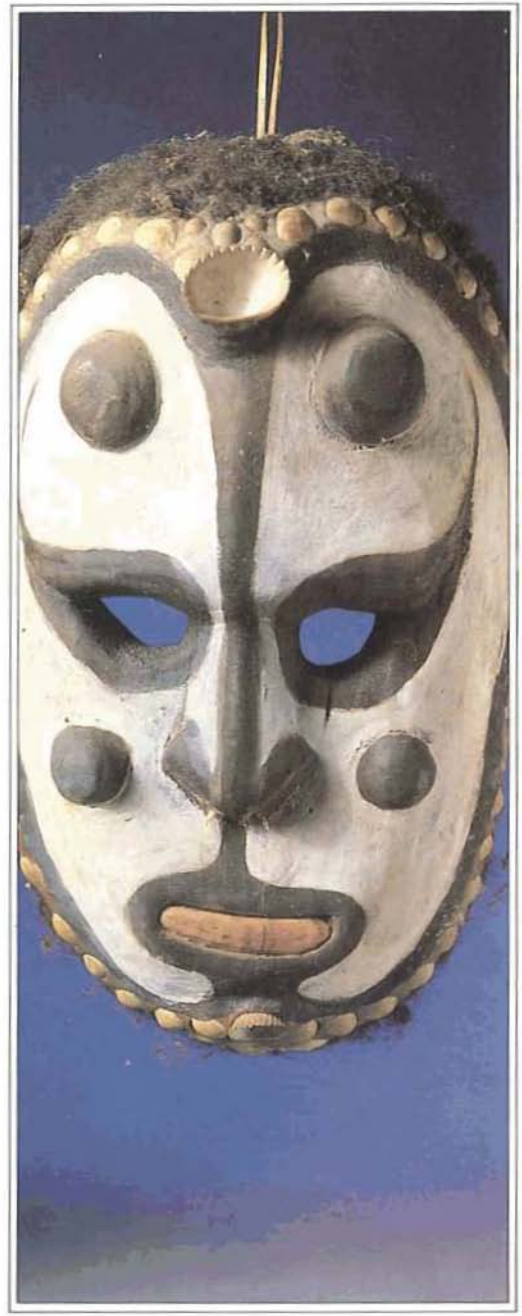
22
Mask
Artist: Paul Wanar
Nindigum Village
Middle Sepik Area
46cm×16cm



23
Mask
Artist: John of Tambanum Village
Sepik
Work produced in Goroka,
Eastern Highlands
Allard-Smith Collection
110cm×43cm

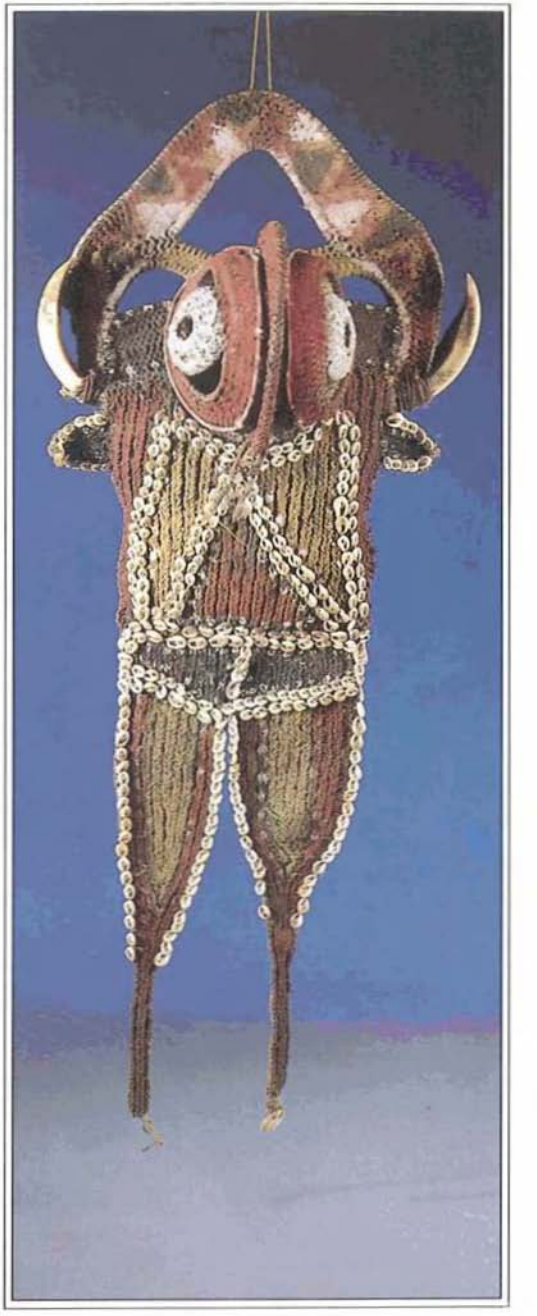
24
Mask
Artist: Bami Kundambuk
Kandingai Village
Middle Sepik
42cm×22cm

25
Hand Drum (Kundu)
Artist Abusi
Wongan Village
Lower Sepik Area
42cm×15cm



26
Mask
Artist Unknown
Kararau Village
Middle Sepik Area
30cm×18cm

27
Figure
Artist: Simbia
Sangriman Village
Karawari Area
Sepik
57cm×10cm



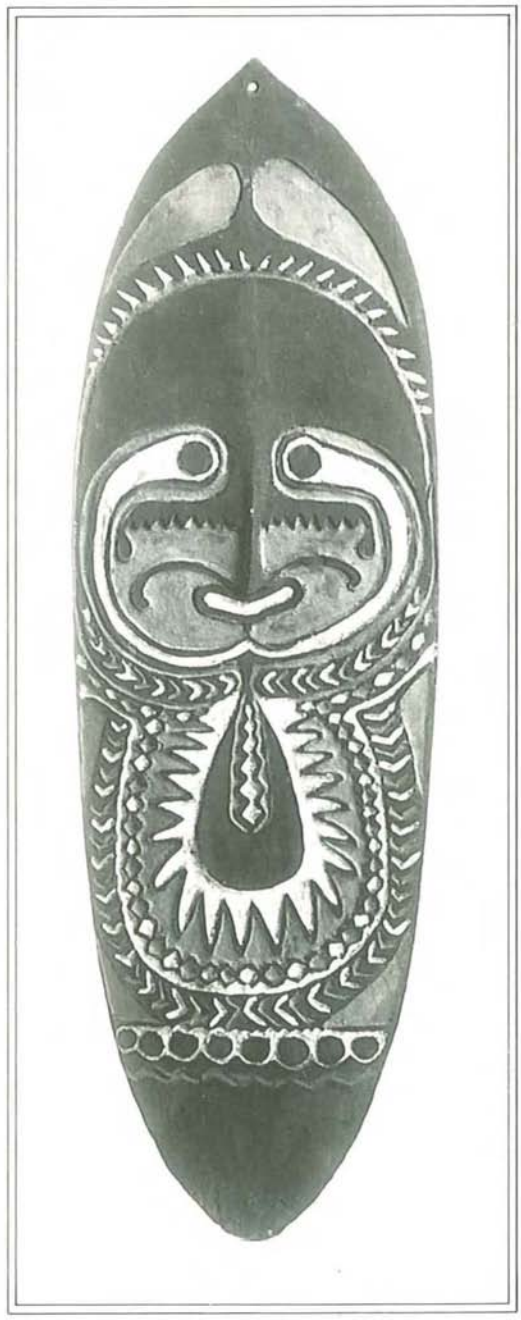
28
Body Ornament
Artist Unknown
Wosera Area
Sepik
60cm×26cm

29
Mask
Artist: Kaumindja
Tongwinjamb Village
Kwoma Area
East Sepik Province
22cm×18cm

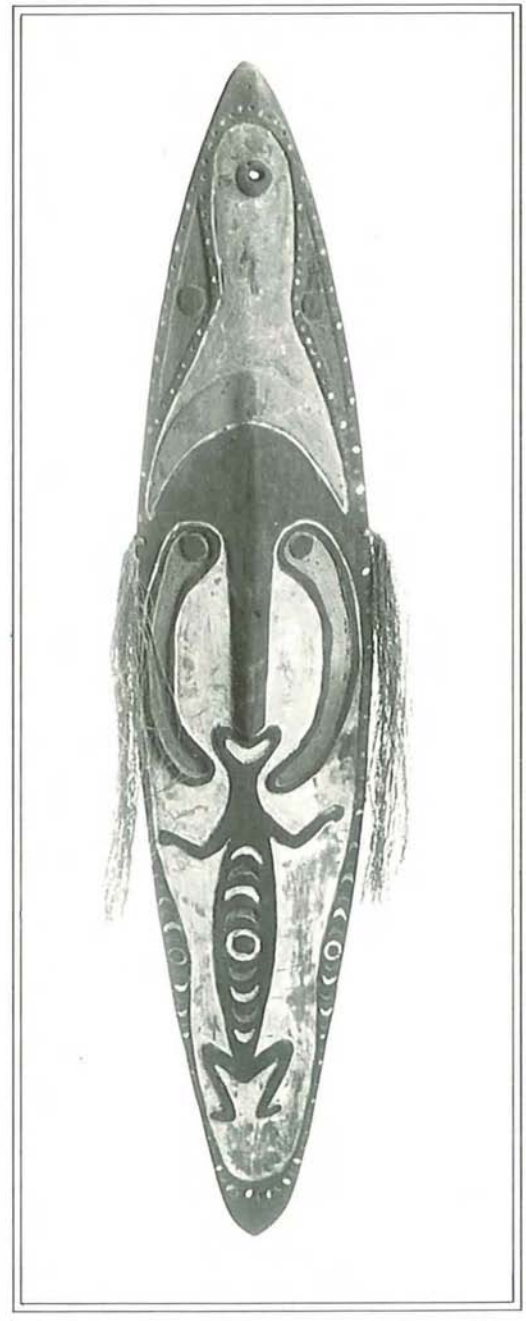
30
Skull Rack (Agibe)
Naope
Aidio Village
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
75cm×31cm

31
Skull Rack (Agibe)
Naope
Aidio Village
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
93cm×35cm

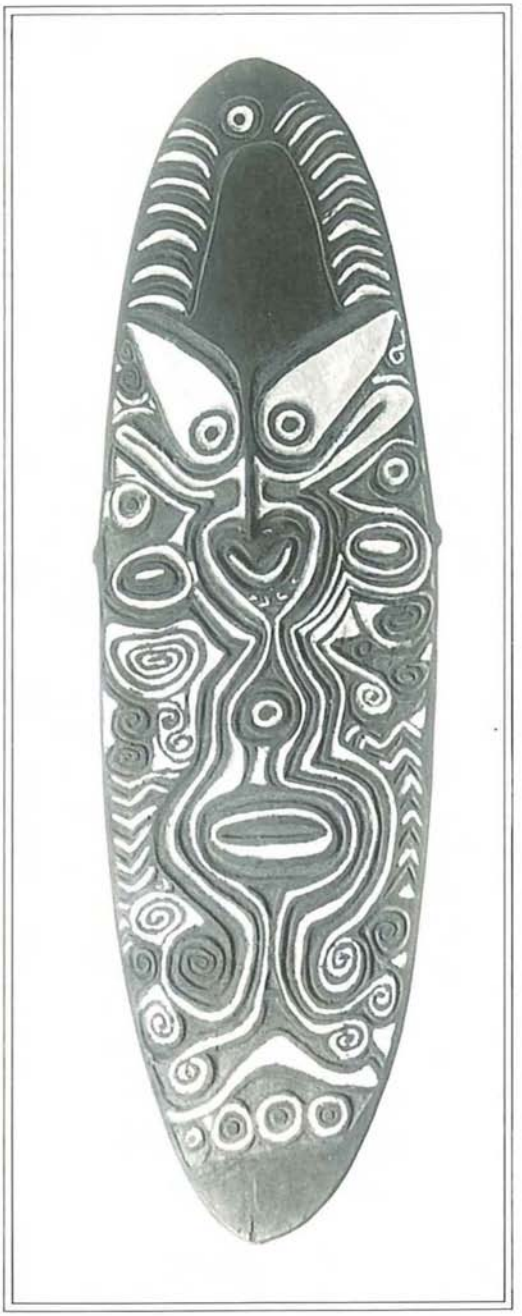
32
Ancestral Board (Gope)
Ke'Voi
Kivaumai Village
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
92cm×20cm



33
Gope
Aubai
Goari Village
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
76cm×23cm



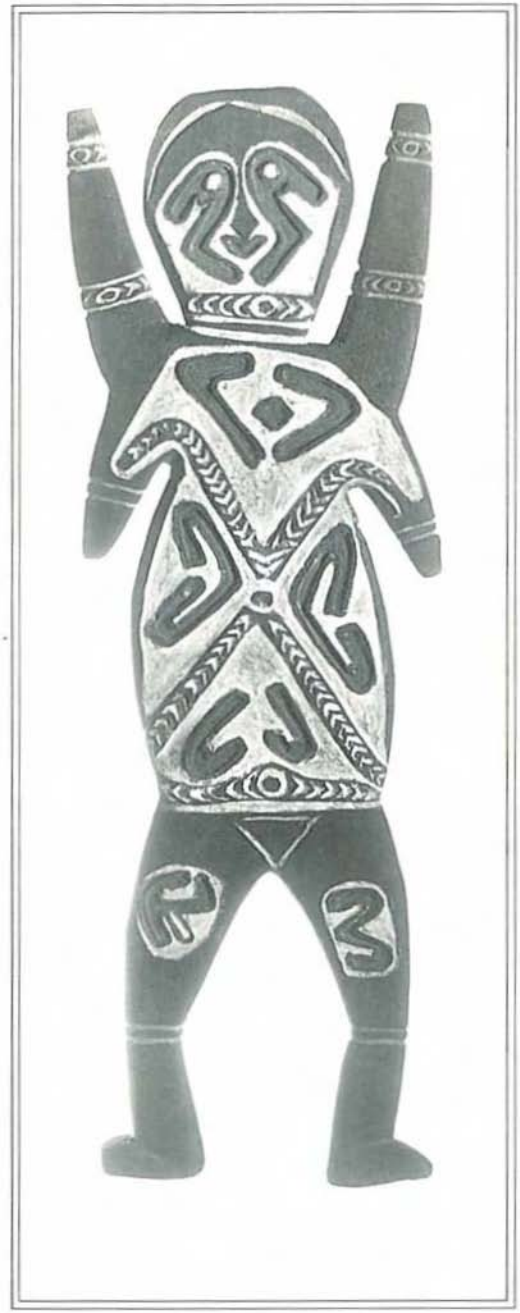
34
Gope
Naope
Aidio Village
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
103cm×22cm



35
Gope
Sioka
Babaguina Village
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
116cm×33cm

36
Gope
Hinimo
Kivaumai Village
Kerewa Area
138cm×52cm

37
'Gope'
Kairi Amanie
Ravipaka Village
Koriki Area
Gulf Province
76cm×15cm

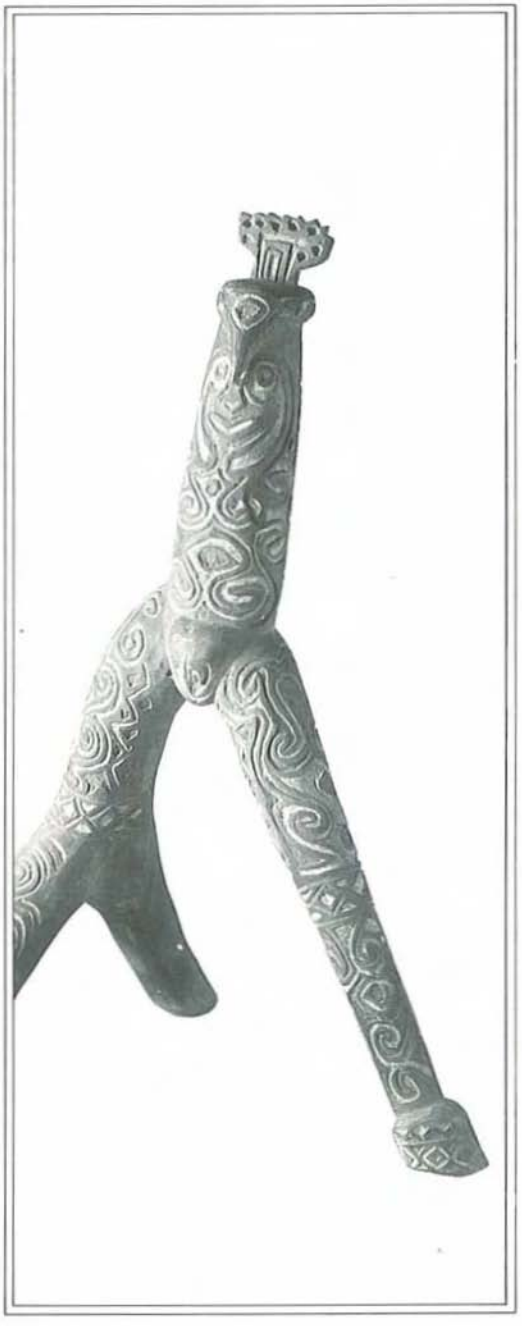


38
Figure (Kakame)
Ke'Voi
Kivaumai Village
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
62cm×21cm

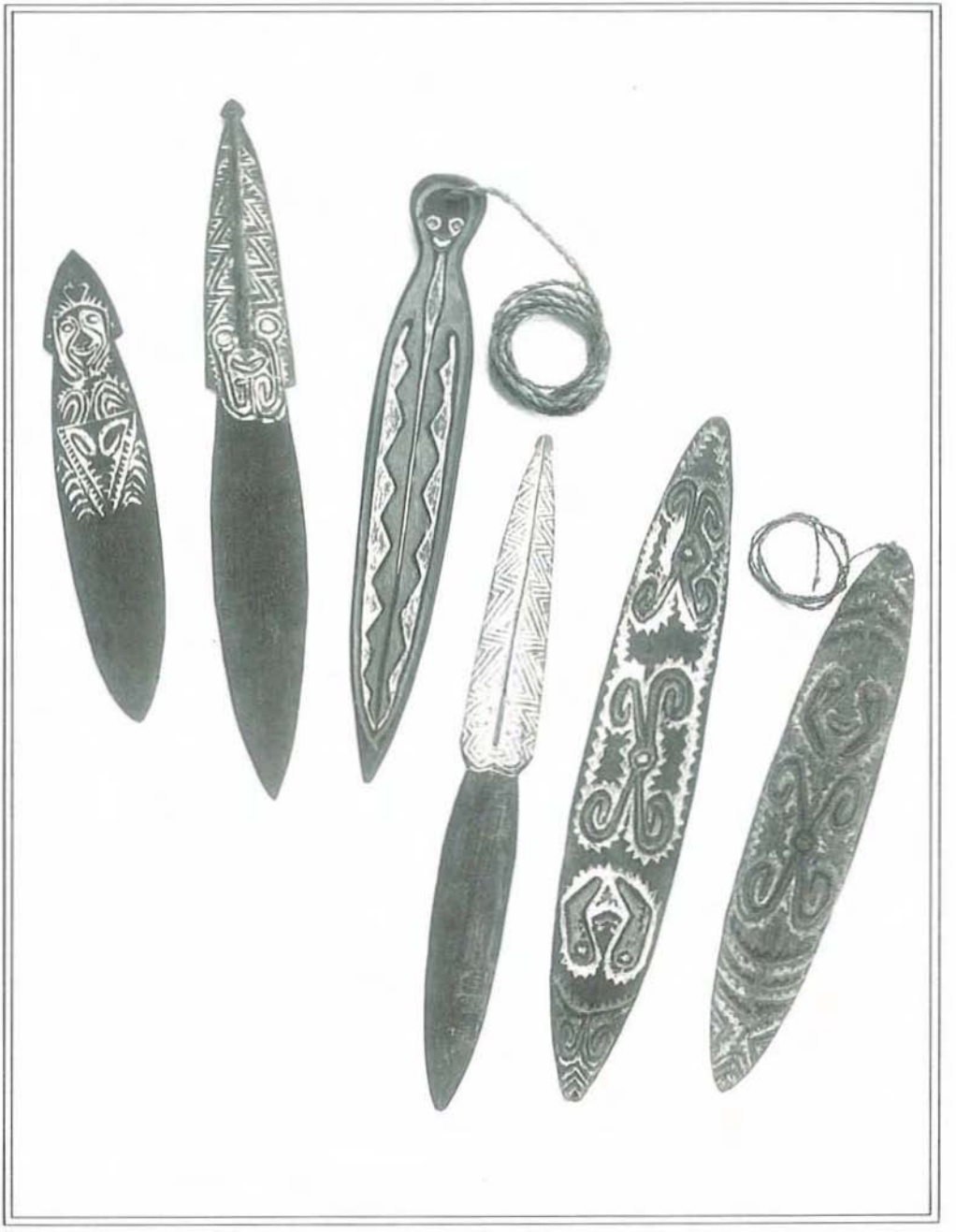
39
Figure (Bioma)
Kairiamoko
Ravipaka Village
Koriki Area
Gulf Province
76cm×25cm

40
Kakame
Pirika
Kararua Village
Koriki Area
Gulf Province
96cm×24cm

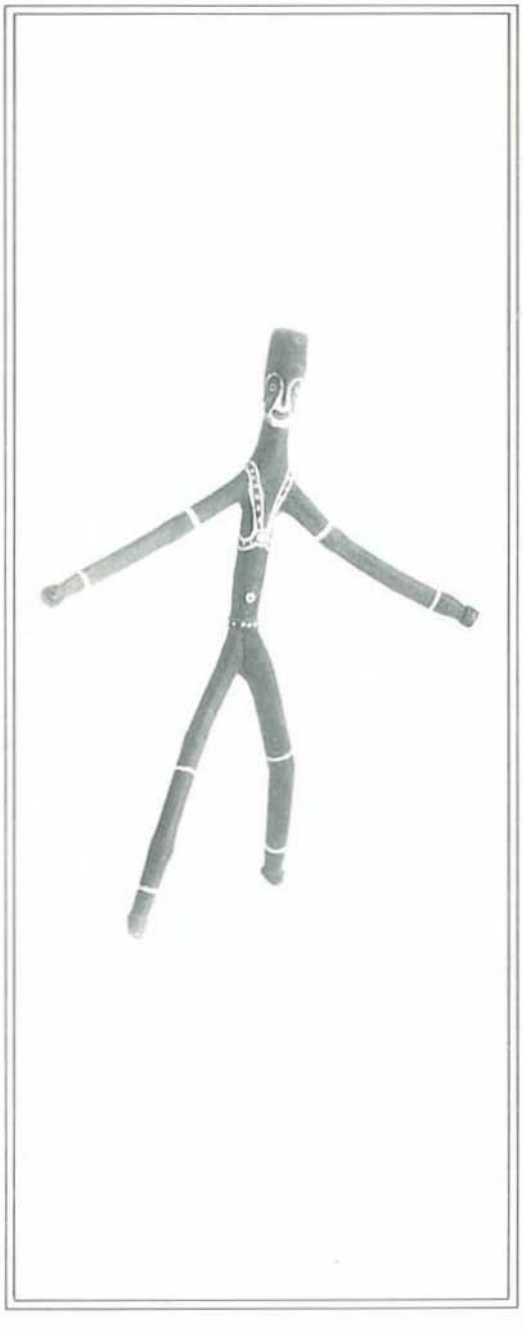
41
Figure (Bioma)
Bobo O Hapea
Kivaumai Village
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
90cm×24cm



42
Figure (Kakame)
Artist Unknown
Ravipaka Village
Koriki Area
Gulf Province
68cm×44cm

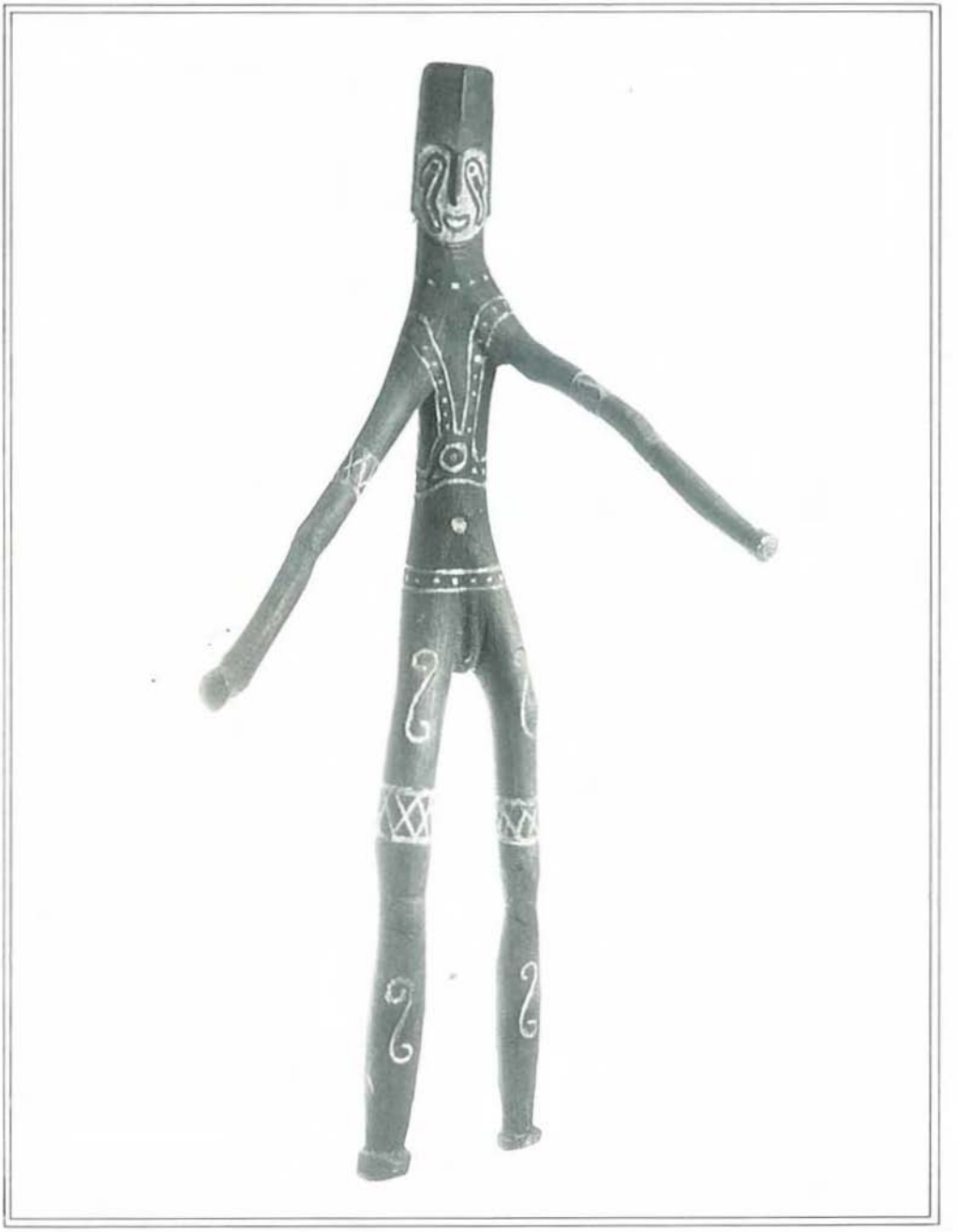


43
Bullroarers (Upura)
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
35cm×7cm (Average)



44
Figure (Kakame)
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
54cm×41cm

45
Figure (Kakame)
Kerewa Area
Gulf Province
62cm×37cm



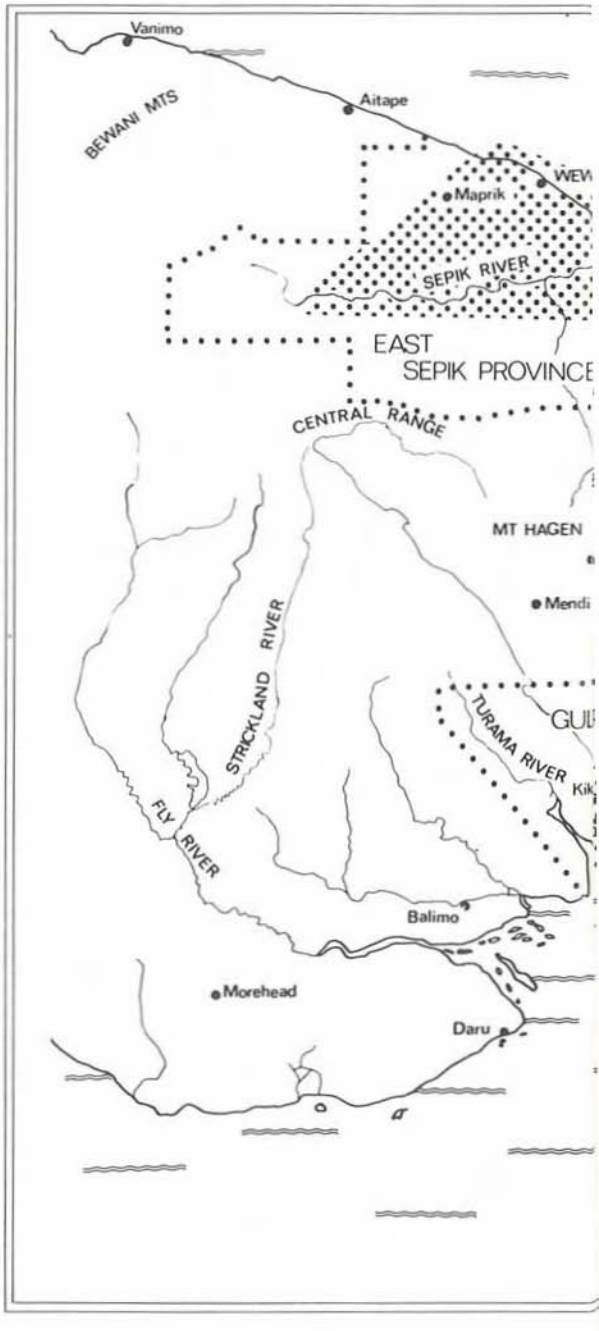
46
Figure (Kakame)
Bogera
Kivaumai
Kerewa
Gulf Province
52cm×26cm

47
Barkbelt
Gulf Province
10cm×26cm
Canterbury Museum Collection

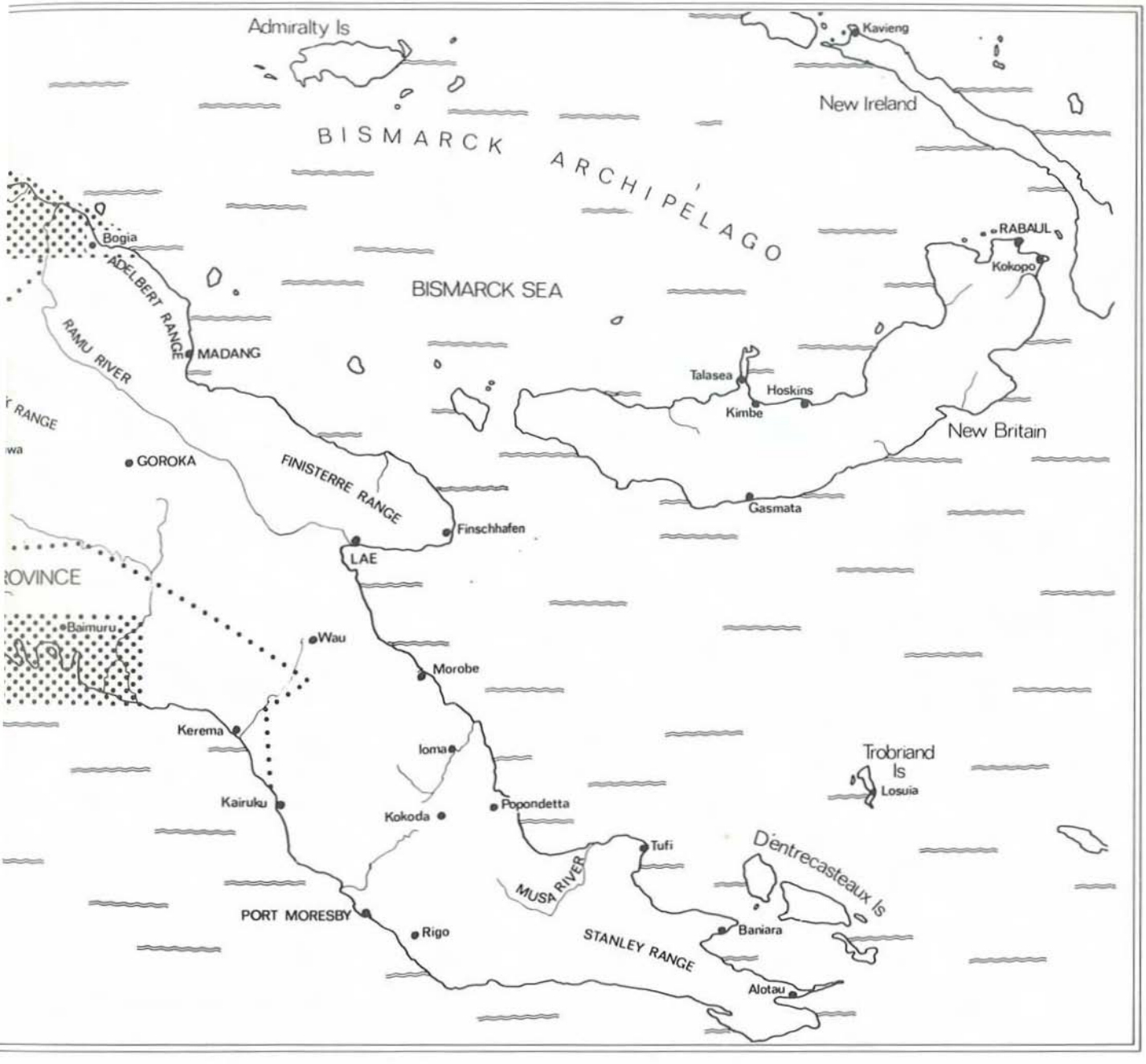
48
Barkbelt
Gulf Province
13cm×20cm
Canterbury Museum Collection

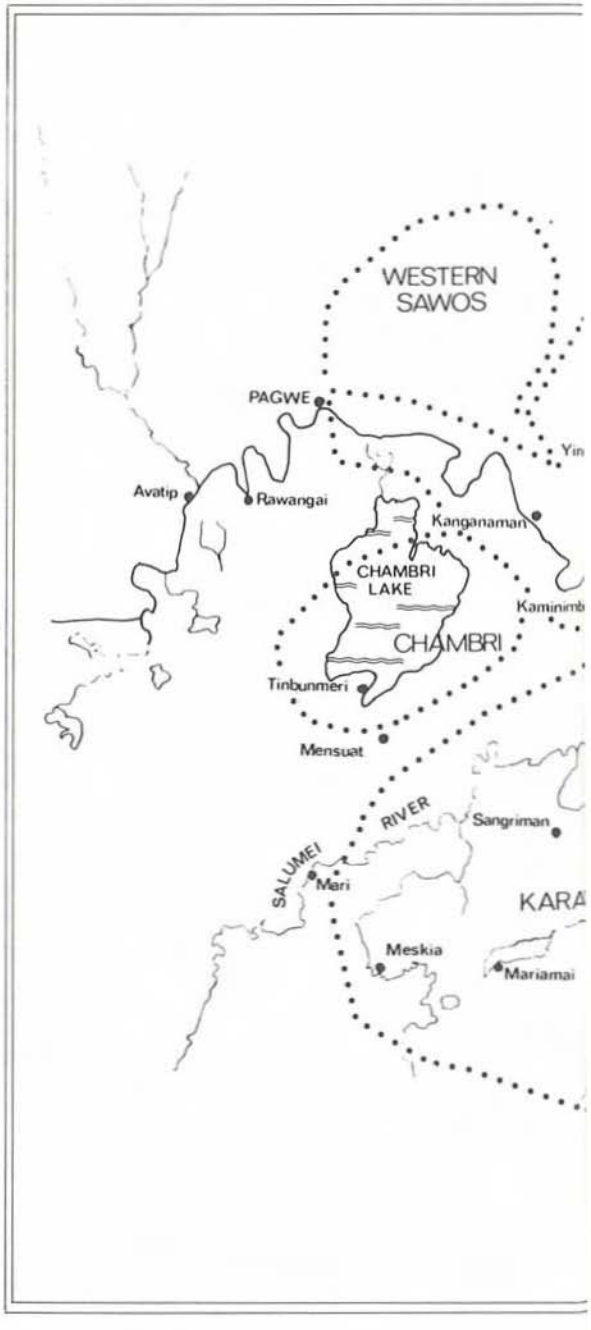
49
Bioma Figure
Artist: Avae Mauia
Kararua Village
Koriki Area
Gulf Province
61cm×24cm

50
Gope
Artist: Pirika
Kararua Village
Koriki Region
Gulf Province
58cm×10cm

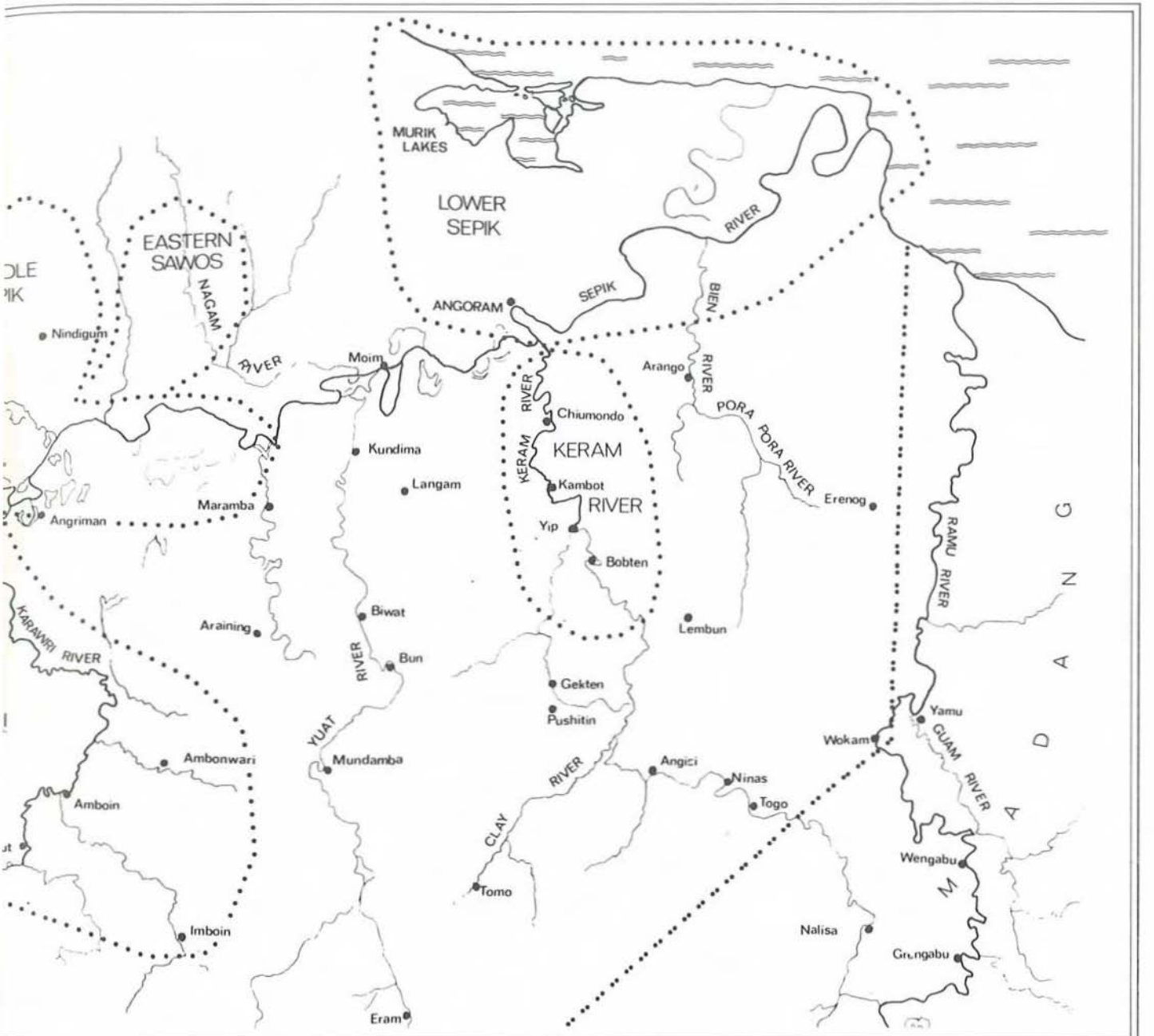

Vanimo
BEWANI MTS
Aitape
WEW
Maprik
SEPIK RIVER
EAST
SEPIK PROVINCE
CENTRAL RANGE
MT HAGEN
Mendi
STRICKLAND RIVER
TURAMA RIVER
GUL
Kik
FLY RIVER
Balimo
Morehead
Daru

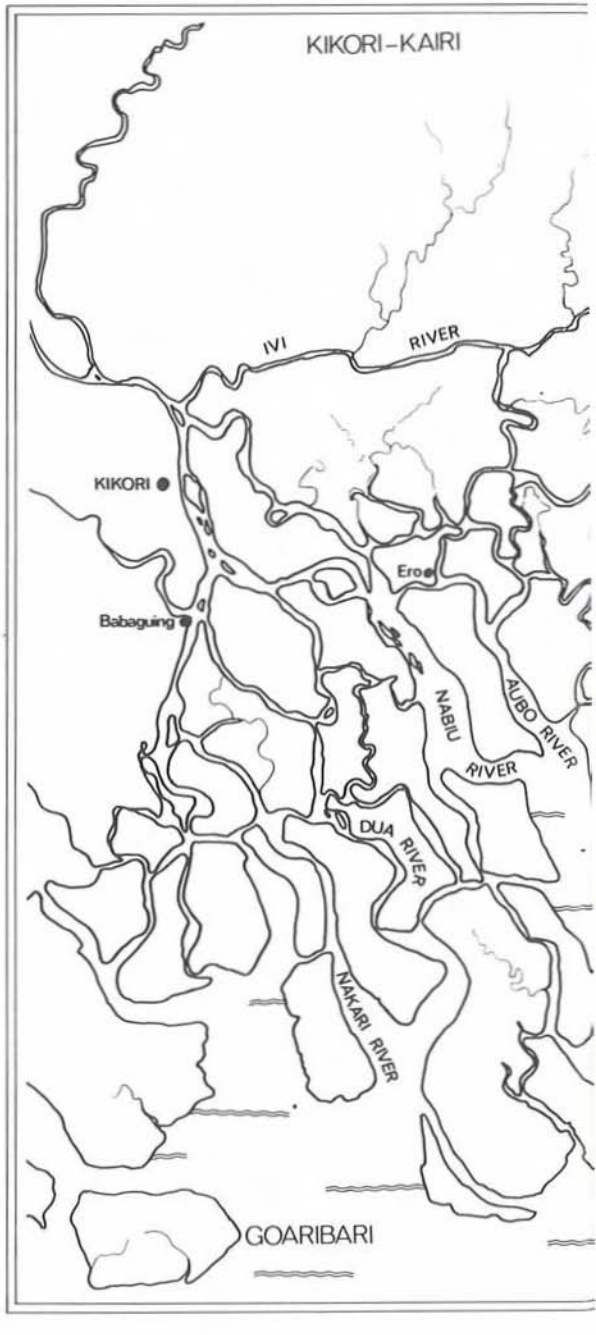
PAPUA NEW GUINEA



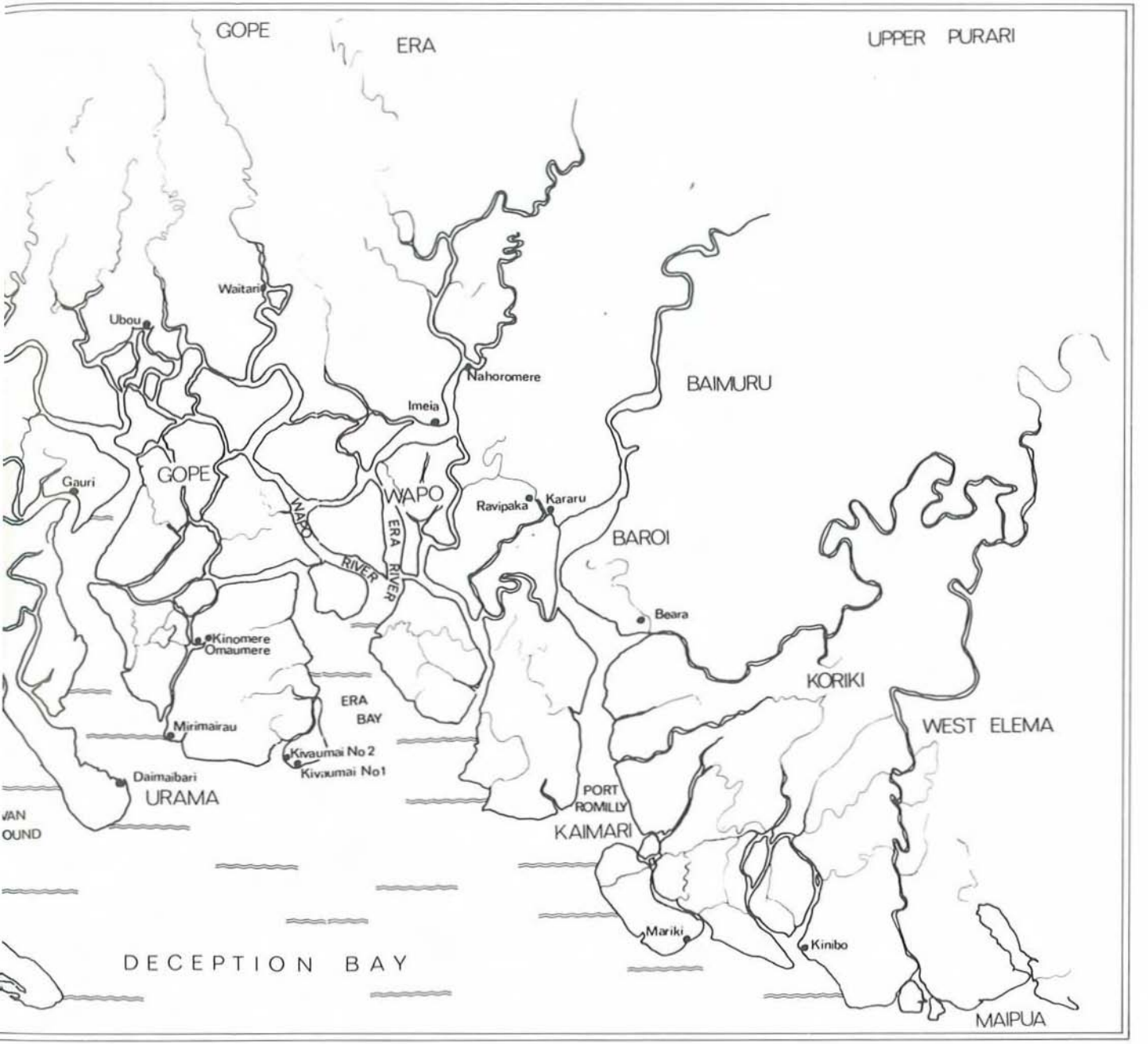

WESTERN
SAWOS
PAGWE
Yin
Avatip
Rawangai
Kanganaman
CHAMBRI
LAKE
Kaminimb
CHAMBRI
Tinbunmeri
Mensuat
RIVER
Sangriman
SALUMEI
Mari
KARA
Meskia
Mariamai

SEPIK RIVER REGION




KIKORI-KAIRI
IVI
RIVER
KIKORI
Ero
Babaguing
NABIU
RIVER
AUBO RIVER
DUA RIVER
NAKARI RIVER
GOARIBARI

GULF DELTA REGION



ERRATA

GOPE Nos 32 33 34 35 36 37 50
not 20 21 22 23 24 25

BIOMA Nos 39 41 49
not 27 29

AGIBA Nos 30 31
not 18 19

KAKAME Nos 38 40 42 44 45 46
not 26 30 32 33 34

UPURA (Bullroarers) No 43
not 31

BARKBELTS Nos 47 48
not 35 36