People, Power & Politics:

the first generation of anthropologists at the University of Sydney

an exhibition at the
Macleay Museum

The University of Sydney

The University of Sydney

People, Power, Politics: the first generation of anthropologists at the University of Sydney
1 February–20 July 2008, Macleay Museum.

Curated by Rebecca Conway. Text by Rebecca Conway and Jude Philp. © Macleay Museum 2008.

Catalogue designed by the Digital and Print Media Office, the University of Sydney.

Based on original exhibition design by The National Grid www.thenationalgrid.com.au

ISBN: 978-1-74210-060-9

Foreword

This document is a record of the exhibition, *People, Power, Politics: the first generation of anthropologists at the University of Sydney.* All biographical and contextual text panels are reproduced in full and a complete catalogue of material displayed in the exhibition is included. Examples of the extended label text form part of the document only where related items have been represented visually. Captions for photographic images come directly from the original Anthropology Department catalogue and were largely unmodified for exhibition purposes.

Special thanks to the University of Sydney Anthropology Department, University of Sydney Archives, and our loan partners, The Australian Museum and The National Museum of Australia for their support and encouragement in the production of the exhibition.

WARNING

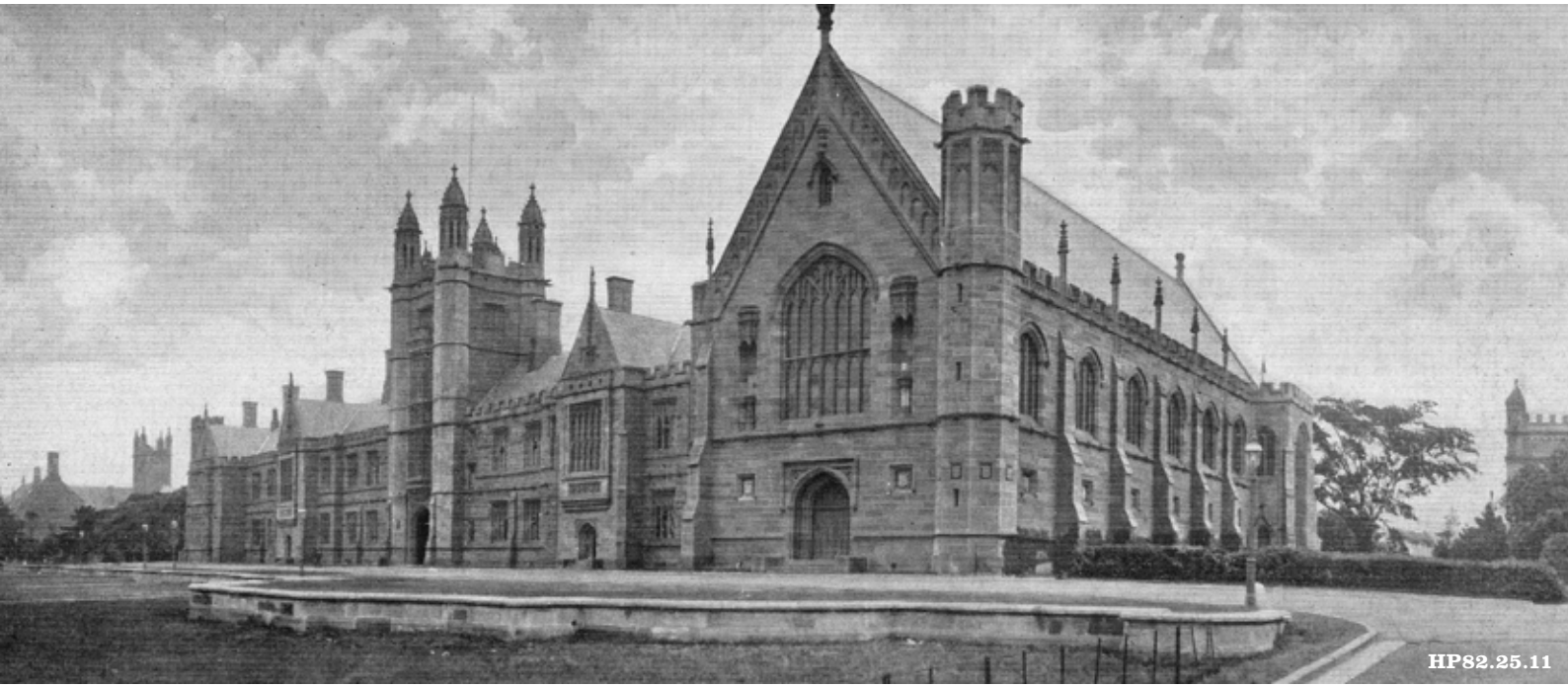
We wish to advise that the exhibition included images of deceased individuals and other subject matter which may offend some viewers.

The exhibition included images of Indigenous communities and individuals from the following areas of Australia:

- Cape York Peninsula, Queensland
- Bathurst & Melville Islands, Northern Territory
- Daly River & Wadeye, Northern Territory
- Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
- Kimberley Region, Western Australia
- New South Wales

Some of these images are reproduced in this catalogue. Please contact curatorial staff at the Macleay Museum if you wish to discuss any specific concerns regarding images that form part of this catalogue.

Introduction



HP82.25.11

This exhibition delves into the history of Australia's anthropologists in action between 1923 and 1947 – through the people who used anthropology to study others, the politics of their encounters, and governmental and bureaucratic power.

Anthropology is the study of humankind – what people do, think and make, and how they organise their societies. Australia's first Department of Anthropology was established at the University of Sydney in 1925. From its inception it was dominated by British social anthropology and in particular the method of participant-observation or fieldwork which propelled its work. While the ideal of social anthropology is objectivity, the experience of fieldwork by its very nature is subjective, based on personal relationships and experiences.

In this period Australia's only Anthropology Department was headed by three men: A. R. Radcliffe Brown (1926–1930), Raymond Firth (1930–1932), and A. P. Elkin (1933–1956). It was a position of great power, for Sydney's Anthropology Professors controlled not only who studied the subject, but also where they studied, and how the results of their studies would be disseminated.

Today, Anthropology continues but its focus is wider, no longer solely concerned with small-scale tightly bound societies. Nonetheless the description of peoples actions based on fieldwork remains its central method, now informed by the history of the discipline and the experience of its early practitioners.



Australia Welcomes the Pan-Pacific Congress, 1923.

W. E. Davidson
Margaret Dawson

D. Orme Masson.
T. W. Edgeworth David

Introduction

Pan-Pacific Congress

The 1923 Pan-Pacific Congress was held in Melbourne (13 – 22 August) and Sydney (23 August – 3 September). The aim of the Congress was to advance science across the Pacific region, including the development of institutions and organisations to encourage and support scientific research. A multidisciplinary gathering, the attendance of many international and prominent Australian scientists generated a real interest in the development and importance of Australian science. Established in 1920, the Congress continues to this day, meeting every four years to advance scientific research in the region.

It was at the 1923 meeting that the government of Australia was urged to establish a Department of Anthropology, and to fund anthropological research of the regions' people to counter the devastating effects of colonisation across the region. The idea was taken up and plans put in place to fund a Department at the University of Sydney.

Recognising the necessity for the immediate prosecution of anthropological research in Australia and Oceania, this Congress calls the attention of governments, universities, patrons of research, and research foundations to the pressing and important need for this investigation.

Resolution of the Pan-Pacific Science Congress, Sydney 1923



OBJECTS

Photograph: Historic Record. Pan-Pacific Congress 1923

Photographer: Signed on the reverse ?. J. Thomas, Woolloomooloo

Transfer from the Geology Department

Macleay Museum (HP2008.2)

Cartoon: Australia Welcomes the Pan-Pacific Congress 1923

Artist: Hal Eyre

University Art Gallery collection (UA1921.5)

This original ink drawing by the Sydney Daily Telegraph's political cartoonist, Hal Eyre, caricatures prominent Australian scientists greeting international guests. It bears signatures of Congress delegates Sir David Orme Masson, Sir T. W. Edgeworth David, Sir Walter Edward Davidson and his wife Margaret.

The Davidsons represented the State, as Sir Edward was the Governor of New South Wales. Representing the University was Antarctic explorer and geologist Edgeworth David, Head of Sydney University's Professorial Board. Orme Masson was the President of the Pan-Pacific Congress, Emeritus Professor, University of Melbourne and President of the Australian National Research Council, the body that would go on to fund the majority of the anthropological early field work of the Sydney Department.

Incidentally, he was also the father-in-law of Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the most prominent anthropologists of the period. Malinowski was a pioneer of fieldwork methods and the British Functionalist theories that would dominate Sydney's Anthropology Department.

Introduction

Professorial Chair

The British Anthropologist, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown was appointed as the first Professor and Chair of the University of Sydney Anthropology Department in 1925. Radcliffe-Brown was considered uniquely placed to take up this role as he was one of the major emerging figures in the discipline at the time. In addition, he had conducted research in Australia (1910-1912), studying the social organisation and kinship structures of the Aboriginal peoples of the Kimberley region, and had already successfully established a new department of Anthropology in Cape Town, South Africa. Today he is renowned for having been an inspiring and charismatic teacher and passionate proponent of Anthropology as a rigorous science.

I conceive of social anthropology as the natural science of human society, that is, the investigation of social phenomena by methods essentially similar to those used in the physical and biological sciences

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1940

OBJECTS

Desk chair used by Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown

Anthropology Department, University of Sydney

Life in the Department

The first two decades in the life of the newly formed Sydney University Anthropology Department were a time of great productive energy. Courses were designed, lectures and tutorials given, and student numbers steadily increased. Research agendas were defined and implemented and the information this fieldwork generated was fed back into the teaching program. The new generation of anthropologists taught through this Department played a vital role in pioneering anthropological research and teaching, both in the region and beyond, and in shaping the discipline as it is known today.

Fieldwork

Into the field

In the 1920s an anthropologist wanting to learn and study from Aboriginal people in Australia needed to find accommodation on remote pastoral stations and missions where Aboriginal people were living; or make camp with Aboriginal people across their lands and seasonal settlements. Many anthropologists did both.

In the Pacific, anthropologists were often deposited at an island or village with an understanding they would be picked up again at the end of their year of fieldwork. Neither in the Pacific nor in Australia could the fieldworker expect that food, drinking water or other personal supplies would be available. Anthropological fieldwork kits were therefore designed with self-sufficiency in mind.



OBJECTS

Wooden trunk designed by Ian Hogbin for fieldwork

Manufactured in Australia
Owned by Ian Hogbin
Macleay Museum (1995.11.1)

A.P. Elkin's Edison phonograph

Wax cylinder recorder
Standard combination type model F
Manufactured c1906
National Museum of Australia (1995.11.2.1)

Trade Goods

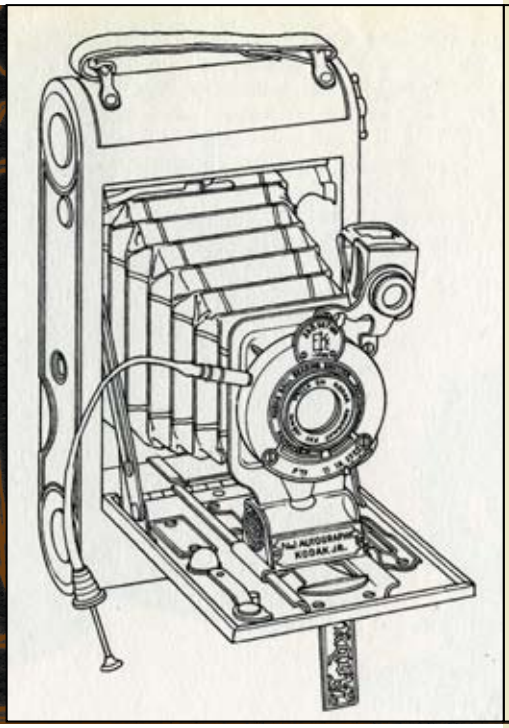
Few of the communities visited by anthropologists had substantial cash economies. Anthropologists therefore relied on established trade goods to 'pay' for food, assistance, transport and other services during fieldwork. They were also given as gifts. Common trade goods included tobacco, pipes, metal tools, cloth, sewing equipment, beads, fishing line and metal fish hooks.

OBJECTS (continued)

Trade Goods (representative examples)

Glass beads, Cotton Reels, Thimble, Metal Adze Head, Tobacco Tin, Metal nails

Macleay Museum (IRN56268; ET84.172.4; ET84.172.7, ET84.172.36; ET87.24.21; ET89.12.1)



A.P. Elkin's Autographic Camera, Eastman Kodak 1A

Manufactured 1917 – 1924

Donated by P. Elkin

Macleay Museum (HP88.30)

The Eastman Kodak was ideal for fieldwork as the autographic feature enabled the photographer to immediately and directly label the negative by opening a hinged door at the back. All the equipment used by anthropologists funded by their Australian National Research Council grants remained the property of the ANRC, as did the photographs themselves. Many of the anthropologists' photographs were made into glass lantern slides which were used to teach anthropology at Sydney University into the 1960s.

Bukim-up

The research carried out by Australia's first generation of professionally trained anthropologists and students was funded by Australian National Research Grants. Before applying for a grant anthropologists needed to select a place to go to. A suitable location was often chosen for them by the Department's Professor, who also organised the necessary permissions and paved the way through their contacts with local government officials, missionaries and foreign settlers.

Once in the field the anthropologist was obliged to send back reports, take daily notes on peoples actions and the days work, and record details of photographs taken and objects collected. Indigenous peoples across Australia and the Pacific commented on the obsessive writing, terming it in creole and pigeon English bukim-up.

ARCHIVES

The kit: lists of supplies for fieldwork

Including equipment, stores, and medical supplies

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/40/49, 86-87)

Letter from A. O. Neville, Chief Protector Western Australia to A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 12 November 1927

Concerning A.P. Elkin's Kimberly fieldwork

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/40/25)

Australian National Research Council agreement to fund Ian Hogbin's fieldwork 5 July 1927

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/40/49)

ARCHIVES (continued)

Letter from Bronislaw Malinowski to Camilla Wedgwood, 8 May 1933

Regarding progression of her fieldwork

C. Wedgwood Personal Archive

University of Sydney Archive (P112/1/1)

Ian Hogbin's notes from A.R. Radcliffe-Brown's Anthropology 1 lectures, which Hogbin took with him on fieldwork

H. I. Hogbin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P015/8/1)

Telegrams (2) between fieldworkers and the Anthropology Department

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/40/49 & 71)

Field notebooks and diaries (4) from 1927 - 1930

A.P. Elkin Personal Archives & H. I. Hogbin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/1/4 & P015/1/3)

IMAGES

Camilla Wedgwood and Motu children examining her field notebooks

Papua New Guinea

National Library (AN10891892)

Adelaide River railway station

80 miles NE from Daly River, Northern Territory

Photographer: W. E. H. Stanner c1932

Macleay Museum
(HP99.1 Plate No.1038)

Fieldwork travel, typical vehicle in front of homestead

Australia

Photographer: Unknown
c1927 - 1937

Macleay Museum (HP2008.1 series)

Fieldwork travel, typical vehicle

Australia

Photographer: Unknown c1927 - 1937

Macleay Museum (HP2008.1 series)

SS Mataram

Burns Philp Pacific Trading Co. vessel

Malaita Province, Solomon Islands

Barclay Family Photographs c1930

Australian Museum (AMS414)

Ursula McConnel with Aboriginal people and her fieldwork equipment

Aurukun, Cape York, Queensland

AIATSIS (W1/N2951.21)







Raymond Firth



Raymond Firth (1901 – 2002)

Fieldwork region: Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands

New Zealand born Raymond Firth was renowned for his theoretical work, research and prolific publication record. His greatest contributions were in the study of Pacific peoples and the anthropological application of economic theory. In 1973 he was given a knighthood in recognition of his work.

Raymond Firth followed the British tradition of social anthropology from his earliest study of economics at Auckland University. On completing his PhD at the London School of Economics, Firth undertook fieldwork in the Pacific on an Australian National Research Council grant. He travelled with the Department's Ian Hogbin into the British Solomon Islands and, like Hogbin, went to an island dominated by elements common to Polynesian social systems within the predominantly Melanesian region.

Firth's 1928 – 1929 fieldwork on Tikopia produced one of the best functionalist examinations of a single society, *We the Tikopia* (1936). It was the beginning of a lifetime of work with and writing about the one thousand people who lived on the small island, and Firth recorded and discussed seemingly every aspect of their society.

Firth returned to Sydney in 1930 when the Department was in crisis. The popular Professor Radcliffe-Brown was due to leave just two days later. For two years Firth took on the role of Acting Professor, Acting Head of the ANRC grant Committee, and Acting Editor of the Department's journal *Oceania*.

In 1932 Firth also left for the London School of Economics with the Department still under threat of closure. His role in training Sydney's star students did not finish. Many of the Department's PhD candidates were supervised by him in London from the 1930s to his retirement in 1968. He continued to influence anthropological theory into his hundredth year.

Functionalist theory

A.R. Radcliffe Brown and B. Malinowski are credited as the founders of anthropological functionalism, a theoretical model which explained how individual societies maintained order. They were also the teachers of most of Sydney's first generation of social anthropologists.

Malinowski's focus was on the individual. He saw social forms, like religion, as developments of a human physiological and biological need. Radcliffe-Brown's focus was social structure. He sought to explain how social institutions, like religion, worked structurally enabling society to function. In the broadest terms both were 'functionalists'.

Firth was one of a number of theorists who saw problems with functionalism for understanding social action. One problem was that when an anthropologist described the function and structure of a given social system they tended to produce rigid models of behaviour, the 'best practice'. Humans however rarely conform; Firth argued that understanding how individuals manipulated social systems was vital to realising the society's true functionality.

Another issue was social change. Understanding changes in society meant first describing how society functioned prior to them. Yet, through the method of intensive fieldwork, all information was gathered from living peoples, whose knowledge of their world, their society and its customs was necessarily contemporary. This left it to the anthropologist to determine what was 'change' and what was 'traditional'.

Raymond Firth and Tikopia

OBJECTS

Pa'atu or Pa'tu manga, Bonito fish hook

Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Collected by Raymond Firth c1928
Australian Museum (E059459 2)

Mami or Fakamaru, Bark cloth

Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Collected by Raymond Firth c1928
Macleay Museum (ET86.3.3)

Kasoa, Sacred necklace

Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Presented to Raymond Firth by the Mapusanga patio (clan or house) c1928
Australian Museum (E092060)

Renga, Turmeric oven

Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Collected by Raymond Firth c1928
Australian Museum (E084797)

ARCHIVES

Map depicting fieldwork locations 1927 - 1937

Australia and the Pacific
Map: A. P. Elkin
Oceania Volume 8 (1937)
Fisher Library Rare Book collection



IMAGES

on page 9

Funeral : the Koromata, bark cloth for the spirit of the dead

Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1023)

In his first fieldwork report of 1929 Firth wrote "Scarcely a day passes without baskets of food being carried from one village to another or across the island in payment of some obligation …" This observation became his thesis: the exchange of property was central to Tikopia economic life, and crucial to understanding all aspects of Tikopia society.

Firth documented the great variety of property exchanged by the Tikopia and the contexts in which things were given. Most Tikopia ceremonies included the exchange of gifts of *mami* (barkcloth), *mena* (mats) and *kafa* (rolls of twine). Series of such gifts were presented as part of initiations, marriages, and funeral rites.

Along with property exchanged during ceremonies, presents were also given and received to create and maintain what Firth described as 'bond-friendship' – friendships where a mutual obligation existed between people to assist one another with whatever they may need or request. Of the 600 objects that Firth bought back from the field many were bond-friendship gifts, others were more deliberately acquired through exchange or barter; all are representations of the social relationships Firth maintained.

Pa Fenutapu, decorated for dancing

Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1001)

Repairing thatch of sacred house, Taumako

Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1026)

Girl, Foraurakei

Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1003)



Raymond Firth and Tikopia

IMAGES (continued)

Making pudding
Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1007)

Sprouting coconuts and banana bunch, part of marriage gifts
Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1009)

Funeral: wooden bowls and sinnet cord, given in ceremonial exchange
Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1022)

Pa Torokinga, Elder, decorated for dancing
Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.998)

Ariki Tafua, chief of Faea district
Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.995)

Man with eye shade (taumata) used in fishing
Tikopia, Temotu Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Raymond Firth 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1004)



A. P. Elkin

A. P. Elkin (1891 – 1979)

Fieldwork region: Kimberley Region, Western Australia

For decades the name A. P. Elkin was synonymous with Australian anthropology. The Anglican clergyman turned professional anthropologist was the longest serving head of the University's Anthropology Department (1933 - 1956). Elkin was a conscientious administrator and self-disciplined worker who published prolifically and ran the Department and the research program on a tight rein. His influence extended to government and missionary circles, significantly in the areas of policy making and the administration of Aboriginal people.

In 1927, after four years of extensive anthropological studies in anthropology in both Australia and Britain, Elkin received an Australian National Research Council grant to conduct fieldwork in Western Australia's Kimberley region. He visited various settlements, missions, pastoral and government stations, for periods of a week to two months, principally interviewing Worora, Karadjeri, Nyul Nyul, Bardi, Ungarinyin, and Wunambal Aboriginal peoples.

Elkin employed what was then the latest technique for learning about human social organisation – the detailed study of people's kinship relations and social structure. He recorded some 253 Aboriginal genealogies in the Kimberley, each encoding the rules of social interaction and significant events of Aboriginal life. In the year prior to his fieldwork a punitive police expedition had involved the killing of a large number of Aboriginal people in retaliation for the murder of a white pastoralist. Elkin duly noted the numerous gaps in the relevant genealogies as a result of the massacre.

Elkin was greatly distressed by the conditions under which Aboriginal people were living in many of the places he visited. Forrest River Mission was considered a model Anglican mission station. However, as a churchman and as an anthropologist, the conditions so appalled Elkin that he wrote a thirteen page critical report damning the mission and leading to the removal of its cleric, the Reverend Gribble. It was the beginning of a life of great influence, some say interference, in Aboriginal affairs.

Many anthropologists of Elkin's generation were interested in looking at single societies, staying with one community for up to a year in order to understand how things worked. Elkin, however, had an interest in an earlier theoretical approach of anthropology, diffusionism, which involved mapping similar cultural forms, such as a religious system or marriage customs, across a number of different societies.

The broad survey was a style of fieldwork that Elkin would make his own. He produced large-scale surveys of Aboriginal societies in South and Central Australia, and Papua New Guinea. His 1938 publication, *The Australian Aborigines: How to Understand Them*, was the first synthesis of all existing academic knowledge of Australian Aboriginal life. Elkin strongly believed that through such work, and by educating other Australians about Aboriginal society, anthropologists could change how Aboriginal people were understood and treated.

The Australian National Research Council and the products of anthropology

The ANRC was established in 1919 as an independent scientific body. It was due to the lobbying of the ANRC that the influential international Pan Pacific Science Congress met in Sydney and Melbourne in 1923. It was at this meeting that the Federal government was urged to establish an academic Chair in Anthropology, which would systematically research the Indigenous peoples under control of the Commonwealth, teach anthropology, and train New Guinea's cadets and Administrative officers. In 1925 Australia's first Department of Anthropology was founded at the University of Sydney.

The Department received its funding through the ANRC, in turn funded by the USA based Rockefeller Foundation, the Commonwealth Government and a number of Australian States and Territories. An Anthropology Advisory Committee was established made up of academic and government representatives from across the Commonwealth with Sydney's Professor as its Head. At first monies to fund the position were secured for periods of three to five years.

Britain's talented young theorist A.R. Radcliffe Brown was the first professional appointment but such was the instability of the funding that he and his successor Raymond Firth lasted only a few years. It was only with the appointment of A.P. Elkin that secure funding through the University Senate was achieved.

The ANRC funded research, fieldworkers, lecturers, the department's journal, Oceania, and the collection of objects of ethnographic interest. These would become the property of the ANRC, as would the fieldworkers' photographs, sound and film recordings. All materials were used for teaching in the Department.

A. P. Elkin and The Kimberley

OBJECTS

Pearlshell ornaments (2)

Kimberley region, Western Australia

Collected by A. P. Elkin 1927 - 1928

Macleay Museum (ETA.2014; ETA.2044)

Pearlshell ornament

Kimberley region, Western Australia

Collected by Gerhardt Laves c1930

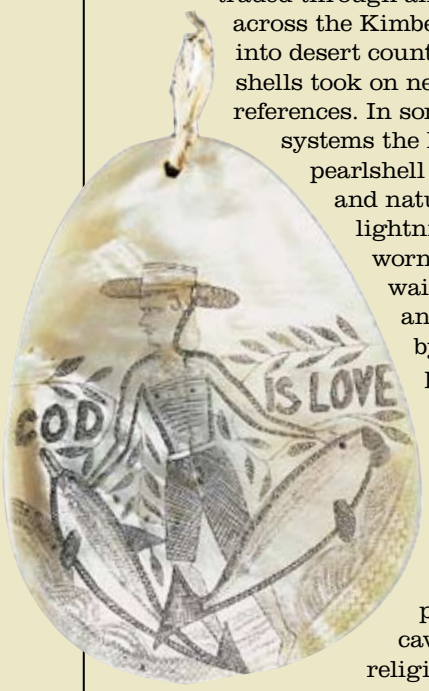
Macleay Museum (ETA.2021)

Pearlshell ornament

Beagle Bay, Kimberley region, Western Australia

Collected by Phyllis Kaberry c1934

Macleay Museum (ETA.2022)



In Aboriginal Australia pearlshells, originating in the seas off far northern Australia, were traded through ancestral trade routes across the Kimberley region and far into desert country. In each area the shells took on new meanings and references. In some Aboriginal belief systems the luminescence of pearlshell recalls spiritual beings and natural phenomena like lightning. They were often worn by men attached to a waistband. Some are plain and some were incised by their owners with personal designs and figurative patterns often highlighted in red ochre. Ochre itself is an important spiritual substance for Aboriginal people and its use on objects, paintings and within cave sites often indicates a religious aspect.

These pearlshells were all collected by Sydney University's Anthropology Department fieldworkers between 1927 and 1937 during a time of great experimentation by Aboriginal people with existing art forms. Anthropologists were often attracted to these portable ornaments, for research, teaching purposes and as mementos, as they physically represented some of the complexities of inter-tribal land areas and relationships.

Wandjina Figure

Collected by H. J. Coate (donated by A. P. Elkin)

North Kimberley region, Western Australia

Macleay Museum (ETC.338)

Bark container

Kimberley region, Western Australia

Collector unknown c1930 (transfer from Anthropology Department)

Macleay Museum (ET83.58)

Kimberley points, hafted (glass & stone)

Northern Kimberley region, Western Australia

Collected by A. P. Elkin c1927

Macleay Museum (ET83.35; ET91.15.13)

ARCHIVES

Dear Professor, greetings from FRM

Children's drawings from Forrest River Mission, undated.

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/1/83)

Kimberley language notes

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/1/45)

Letter from A. P. Elkin to his wife Sally, undated.

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/1/1)

Elkin's notes on East Kimberley people's kinship

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/1/79)

Map showing Elkin's route across the Kimberley during his fieldwork

Noting different modes of travel

Kimberley region, Western Australia

Field Map: A. P. Elkin c1927

Macleay Museum (HP2008.1)

IMAGES

Nyul-Nyul tribe - old man, spinning human hair

Kimberley region, Western Australia

Photographer: A. P. Elkin c1927

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 927)

IMAGES (continued)

Ungarinyin tribe - man holding spear in spear-thrower
Kimberley region, Western Australia
Photographer: A. P. Elkin c1927
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 929)

Forrest River tribe - two women digging arrowroots
Kimberley region, Western Australia
Photographer: A. P. Elkin c1927
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 935)

Bardi tribe - Men at a secret ground where bull-roarers are kept
(men dressed in European wear)
Kimberley region, Western Australia
Photographer: A. P. Elkin c1927
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 943)

Bardi tribe - men in ceremonial dress for initiation ceremony
Sunday Island, Kimberley region, Western Australia
Photographer: A. P. Elkin c1927
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 945)

Worora tribe - group of men going off into the bush the day after a special singing ceremony
Kimberley region, Western Australia
Photographer: A. P. Elkin c1927
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 955)

Ungarinyin tribe - rock shelter painting representing the Wandjina
M. Brockman's Gorge, Kimberley region, Western Australia
Photographer: A. P. Elkin c1927
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 965A)

Anthropologist A. P. Elkin in front of his fieldwork tent
Probably Kimberley region, Western Australia
Photographer: Unknown c1927 (attributed)
Macleay Museum (HP2008.1)

Rock shelter painting representing the Wandjina
Bachsten Creek, northwest Kimberley Region, Western Australia
Photographer: Dr F. M. House, 1901
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 878)

The spiritual beings known as Wandjina are part of the cosmology of the Ngarinyin, Worora, Wunambal and Ungumi cultural areas of the Kimberley region. Wandjina are vital to the land, law and religion of these Aboriginal peoples. They are represented in large cave paintings across the Kimberley region, recognisable by their mouthless round faces with large black eyes. Their radiating hair and headdress is a reference to Wandjina's association with clouds, rain, the wet season and fertility.

Beginning with his initial fieldwork in the Kimberley, and perhaps because of his background as a cleric, A. P. Elkin developed a lifelong interest in Aboriginal religion. He collaborated in particular with H. J. Coate, a missionary working for the United Aborigines Mission. Together they worked on the documentation of Kimberley people's religion including the importance of the many cave paintings featuring Wandjina found throughout the region.





Ian Hogbin



Ian Hogbin (1904 – 1984)

Fieldwork region: Solomon Islands

Ian Hogbin, one of the first students in the University of Sydney's Anthropology Department was one of its longest serving members. He developed and influenced the Department's interest in societies of the western Pacific, inspiring several generations of researchers.

Originally trained in education, Hogbin was inspired by the flamboyant A. R. Radcliffe-Brown to change fields. As an Australian National Research Council recipient Hogbin was to survey cultural features across the western Solomon Islands. He managed to satisfy the ANRC, and his own interest in the focussed fieldwork method advocated by Radcliffe-Brown, with three separate fieldwork periods: in 1927 on Rennell Island, in 1928-29 on the atoll of Ontong Java, and finally in 1933 on Malaita and Guadalcanal.

One of the anthropological attractions of Rennell and Ontong Java was that the islanders shared many features of social organisation with Polynesian societies, although they were geographically situated in Melanesia. They were also useful sites to research culture change and depopulation. In 1928 Hogbin registered a population of 700 for Ontong Java; only twenty years before it had been 6000.

Hogbin worked to two major agendas. On the one hand was the functionalist research agenda, to understand how society worked to maintain law and order; on the other the government derived need for a survey of the people's language, physical features, and cultural changes. Each kind of research was vital to the aims of the fieldtrips and Hogbin excelled at both.

On his return from Ontong Java Hogbin published his PhD as *Law and order in Polynesia* (1934). Hogbin and his long-term boss, A.P. Elkin clashed on many theoretical and practical issues, but both were convinced of the practical value of anthropology in providing solutions to the better governance and administration of Indigenous peoples under the British Commonwealth. Hogbin's ability to conduct research sensitively and to understand the theoretical and practical concerns of colonialism was rewarded by a series of ANRC grants and, later, administrative and teaching posts.

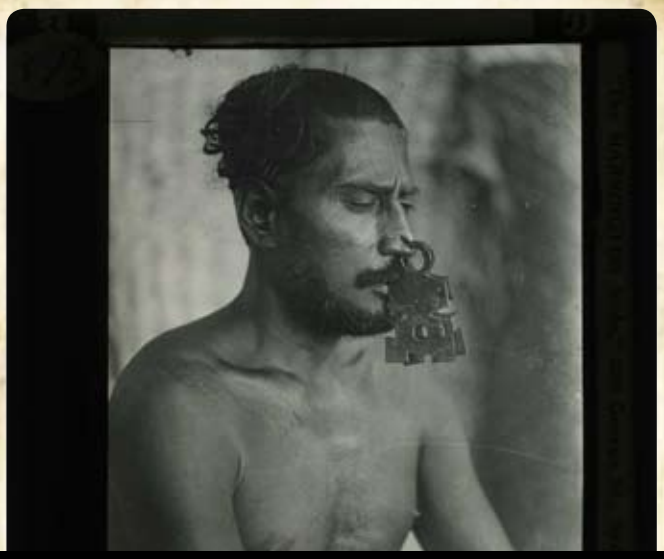
Australia and the Pacific in the 1930s

For many the 1920s was a time of great energy and optimism, of modernity, and expanding horizons. Across the world there was also an increase in racism and xenophobic theories, such as Social Darwinism. Many legal processes in Oceania reflected an increasingly racist international scene. In Australia, the 'White Australia policy' was in effect, and Indigenous peoples had no citizenship rights.

The Governments of Papua and New Guinea, administered by Australia, and the Solomon Islands (a British Protectorate) regulated foreign economic and mission interests. These Administrations also imposed infrastructure, prohibited certain customs, such as warfare, and implemented laws, policing and health checks. But the goals were very different from Australia. In the colonial Pacific the Administrators worked towards the goal of eventual Indigenous control. In settler-dominated Australia, the goal varied between some accommodation of Indigenous interests to complete assimilation.

Across Oceania, Administrations employed anthropologists to work with government in understanding and controlling their Indigenous populations.





Ian Hogbin and Ontong Java

OBJECTS

Model of the goddess Ke Luahinge

Ontong Java, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands
Collected by Ian Hogbin c1928
Australian Museum (E091751)

Kauku, Waistbands (2)

Ontong Java, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands
Collected by Ian Hogbin c1928
Australian Museum (E084209 & E084210)

ARCHIVES

Field notebook

Ontong Java, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands
H. I. Hogbin Personal Archives
University of Sydney Archives (P015/1/1)

W.H.R. Rivers medal

awarded to Ian Hogbin in 1946 for his 1928 fieldwork in Ontong Java
H. I. Hogbin Personal Archives
University of Sydney Archives (P015/1/3)

IMAGES

on page 15

Sanga (the annual festival) a man in dancing skirt

Ontong Java, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Ian Hogbin 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.861)

Luanuia - a village street

Ontong Java, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Ian Hogbin 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.820)

Occupations of men - community fishing - surrounding the shoal

Ontong Java, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer: Ian Hogbin 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.852)

Occupations of women - rolling up prepared pandanus leaf to be used for making mats

Ontong Java, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer Ian Hogbin 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.846)

Man with turtleshell ornaments in nose

Ontong Java, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands
Photographer Ian Hogbin 1928 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.873)

Ian Hogbin dressed in dancing skirt

Probably during the Sanga (annual festival)
Photographer: Unknown 1928 – 1929
Australian Museum (AMS339 D86)

Ian Hogbin and Ontong Java

Ha momoe aiku prayer

Ha kuo, ha kulo, hangamai – Hail, hail, glowing one,
kou ali'i, Ke Luahinge! ...– Our sacred, Ke Luahinge! ...
kau sulu manga ke la ... – The sun goes down ...
Hinge, hangamai! – Shining Ahinge!
ko kinga kapu malu ...– The shadow of your body is sacred ...
Ahinge, hulihuli – Ahinge hasten
sulu manga ke la – The sun goes down
ha pili pili kpu hau kamole – Your coronet of fragrant leaves has been placed on your head
kikilo meaku ke maka-angipu – Go, look and see the taro shoots,
kai ke ouaha, ke mua kalo – The young taro, the taro shoots,
kai visi somo – In the garden, see to it that they grow

Excerpt from a prayer to Ke Luahinge, spoken each evening by the people of Ontong Java, with a literal translation from Hogbin's *Law & Order in Polynesia* (1934).



Images of the Gods, standing outside the Hale-aiku during the Sanga festival

Ontong Java, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands

Photographer: H. A, Markham 1910

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.862)

By the time Hogbin visited Ontong Java, large-scale representations of deities, such as those featured in this 1910 image, had ceased to be made. He was however, still able to acquire a miniature model of Ke Luahinge, one of the gods who spiritually created Ontong Java, during his 1928 – 29 fieldwork.

Ke Luahinge was associated with cultivation, and was understood to make food abundant. She was also responsible for the religious structure; when Ke Luahinge died she asked her children to ensure that particular observances be made and behaviours followed, in return she would protect the livelihood of the people; if not she would send plague and famine.

Hogbin recorded that many of Ontong Java's people attributed the chronic depopulation of their island to the anger of the gods and the spirits of religious leaders, the Maakua, because people had forsaken many of their formal religious duties. Social aspects of religious life, however, were maintained, such as prayers (above) and the month-long Sanga festival. Hogbin documented many of the Sanga's daily ceremonies, processions, presentations, food exchanges, ritual dances and observances to the gods.

Ursula McConnel



Ursula McConnel (1888 - 1957)

Fieldwork region: Cape York Peninsula, Queensland

Ursula McConnel spent nearly 30 years researching and writing on the religious life of Wik-munkan peoples on Cape York Peninsula. Today, her substantial body of work on the Wik-munkan is considered an important and significant contribution to the anthropological knowledge of Queenslands' Aboriginal people.

McConnel was one of the few early fieldworkers with prior experience of Aboriginal people, albeit in the colonial context of her family's Brisbane valley property, where Aboriginal women worked as domestics and men as station hands. In 1926 she abandoned her PhD, which she was undertaking at University College London, and took up an Australian National Research Council grant to study the Wik-munkan peoples of Cape York in North Queensland. She was one of the first anthropologists to attempt an intensive study of a single Australian Aboriginal group, and one of the first academically-trained women to do so.

The ANRC grant dictated research into 'the customs and beliefs of Australian aborigines and more particularly their mythology'. McConnel began work with Wik-munkan people living on or near missions at Aurukun, Weipa and Mapoon. At the time, religion and power were generally seen as a domain of male authority, and women were seen as playing support roles, principally in domestic matters. McConnel's research, which included women's knowledge, revealed a more balanced view of Wik-munkan belief systems. She published these results in 1957 with *Myths of the Munkan*.

McConnel's placement in Cape York was achieved through the goodwill of the Mission authorities, but at Aurukun Mission she was shocked by the unbridled control that missionaries exerted over the lives of Aboriginal people, and was particularly outraged by the forced separation of families. She wrote in complaint to the Mission authorities about the conditions and bullying endured by the Wik-munkan peoples. The Mission authorities responded by expelling her from the mission site and furthermore barring the Department from sending any further anthropologists to the region. McConnel resigned from her academic studies and turned instead to the popular press to continue her advocacy and encourage a better public understanding of Aboriginal people.

Missions, reserves and the control of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders

Even after Federation in 1901 there was no national policy on the needs of Indigenous peoples in the wake of colonisation. Each State and Territory had a position of Protector who was responsible for the welfare of Indigenous peoples. Protectors often held the position for decades, and wielded absolute power over the lives of individual people.

Aboriginal and Islander people had to apply to the Protector for permission to work, move location, marry, and to be educated. The wages they earned were often paid in-kind or were held by the office of the Protector and other employers, as Indigenous people were considered unable to manage their own money. Some States set aside land for Government reserves and Christian missions and Aboriginal people were relocated to them. The mission stations and reserves effectively destroyed Indigenous social systems by bringing disparate groups together in one place, suppressing custom and lore and enforcing the use of English.

Ursula McConnel and Cape York

OBJECTS

Yinto r gidyar, Cross boomerang

Yarrabah Mission,
Cape York, Queensland

Collected by Ursula McConnel c1930

National Museum of Australia (1985.74.71)

Cross boomerangs are unique to the Aboriginal peoples of the rainforest region of far North Queensland. This boomerang, with its fish-bone pattern, was used by the Yidinjidji people of Cape York in the context of ceremonial dances. One of McConnel's research purposes was to document the surviving knowledge of Aboriginal people's of Cape York whose lives had been disrupted through mining, farming and logging industries. Many Aboriginal peoples had moved to Yarrabah Mission as a consequence and McConnel investigated the possibility of building up an industry in artefact manufacture to provide a livelihood for those who had been displaced.

Wata, String skirt

Archer River, Cape York, Queensland

Collected by Ursula McConnel c1927

National Museum of Australia (1985.74.65)

Basket

Mossman River Camp, North Queensland

Collected by Ursula McConnel c1930

National Museum of Australia (1985.74.51)



ARCHIVES

Map showing cultural regions of Cape York Mission sites and major towns also noted

Cape York Peninsula, QLD

Field Map: Ursula McConnel

Oceania 1938-39 (10:54)

IMAGES

on page 18

Wikmunkan women painted for ceremony

Cape York, Queensland

Photographer: Ursula McConnel c1927

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 750)

Wikmunkan family group

Archer River, Cape York, Queensland

Photographer: Ursula McConnel c1927

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 709)

Wikmunkan man and promised wife

(girl holds fan of jabiru feathers)

Archer River, Cape York, Queensland

Photographer: Ursula McConnel c1927

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 711)

Wikmunkan man preparing spear point

on wooden palate after heating gum in fire

Cape York, Queensland

Photographer: Ursula McConnel c1927

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 717)

Man looking for prawns at night time by the light of a torch of tea-tree bark

Holroyd River, Cape York, Queensland

Photographer: Ursula McConnel c1927

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 783)

Wikmunkan girl wearing typical string skirt

Cape York, Queensland

Photographer: Ursula McConnel c1927

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 715)

Wikmunkan woman making dilly bag

Cape York, Queensland

Photographer: Ursula McConnel c1927

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 790)

Charles Hart

Charles Hart (1905 - 1976)

Fieldwork region: Bathurst & Melville Islands, Northern Territory

The professional career of Australian born Charles Hart started with field research amongst the Tiwi people of Bathurst & Melville Islands in the Northern Territory. This work would eventually take him to teaching posts in Canada, USA and Turkey.

Hart initially studied law at Sydney University before converting to Anthropology through the charismatic teaching of A.R Radcliffe-Brown, Professor of the newly formed Anthropology Department. Hart was amongst the first group of graduate researchers funded through the Australian National Research Council. His placement with the peoples of Bathurst and Melville Island in 1928 was intended to fill gaps in the anthropological data of this area where little was known save that recorded ten years previously by Baldwin Spencer, Government Special Commissioner and Chief Protector of Aborigines.

Hart worked among the Tiwi for two years. He found that they considered themselves different from the Aboriginal people of the mainland. They preferred to be called 'Tiwi', the plural form of their names for man and woman. Understanding the complexities of names that the Tiwi used to identify each other within and between their territorial groups came to dominate his research.

Basing himself at Bathurst Island's Mission, Hart studied the organisation of Tiwi territories, mapping the relationships between groups and tracing changes through time. Hart theorised that the polygamous marriage system regulated all aspects of Tiwi society, with territories maintained through older men. Women brought sons into a particular group; through women children obtained their spiritual identity.

Kinship and genealogies

Genealogy is the notation of an individual's relationships, their family tree. By studying peoples genealogies anthropologists theorised about culture loss (where little of a genealogy is known) and historical relationships between people. These relationships are also termed kinship. Genealogies allowed anthropologists to see how kinship relations worked for each individual.

Kinship study involves understanding the general principals of social relationships. Who is called sister, brother, mother, etc. is not the same for all societies. Why one person is given the title of aunt, shows not just a personal relationship but also indicates a set of responsibilities. For English people a woman is called 'aunt' if she is the sister of a person's biological mother or father. She has no particular role within the family unit, but she may be expected to become a surrogate parent if her sibling died. In other places a woman called 'aunt' may be any number of a generation of women who are all equally responsible for children in a particular way. In other kinship systems 'aunt' may only refer to a biological father's sister, the mother's sister may not be recognised as kin at all.

Children are taught to act and speak in certain ways towards their kin, for example they will speak differently to an uncle than to a sibling. This kind of behavioural expectation is common to all kinship systems.

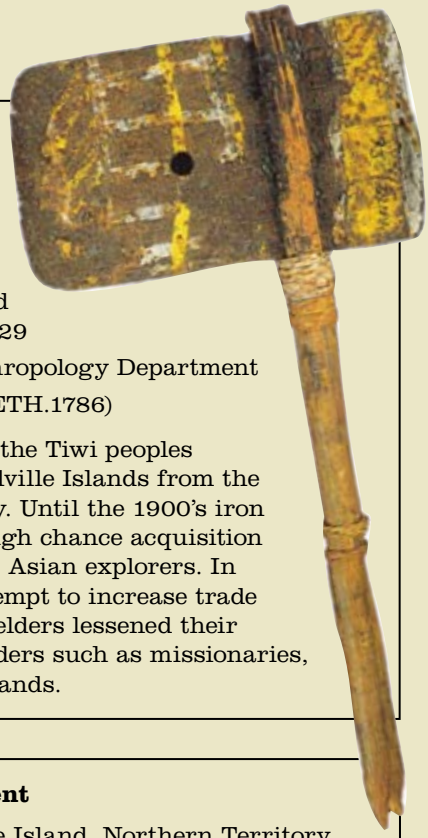
One of the goals of modern anthropology was the understanding of how society was structured and how it managed to function and maintain order. If there was no formal court system how was law and order maintained? Anthropologists realised that the laws of kinship set out quite strict responsibilities which served to maintain order and regulate every aspect of society.





Charles Hart and the Tiwi Islands

OBJECTS



Axe

Bathurst or Melville Island, Northern Territory

Collection attributed to Charles Hart c1929

Transfer from Anthropology Department

Macleay Museum (ETH.1786)

Iron was known to the Tiwi peoples of Bathurst and Melville Islands from the seventeenth century. Until the 1900's iron was acquired through chance acquisition from European and Asian explorers. In the 1920s in an attempt to increase trade opportunities Tiwi elders lessened their restriction on outsiders such as missionaries, settling on their islands.

Mourning ornament

Bathurst or Melville Island, Northern Territory

Collected by Charles Hart c1929

National Museum of Australia (1985.75.338)

This mourning ornament painted in the distinctive Tiwi style is strung with human hair twine. Much of Hart's research related to the elaborate rituals and beliefs the Tiwi held about death and mourning known as *pukamani*. This word was used by Tiwi for a large number of related objects, physical actions and personal responsibilities associated with the period of mourning.

Armbands

Bathurst or Melville Island, Northern Territory

Collected by Charles Hart c1929

National Museum of Australia (1985.75.313)

Ceremonial spears

Bathurst or Melville Island, Northern Territory

Collected by Delbridge between 1923 - 1925

Macleay Museum (ET87.13.40; 42; 43)

ARCHIVES

Map showing distribution of the Tiwi hordes

Bathurst & Melville Islands, Northern Territory

Field Map: C. W. M. Hart

Oceania Volume 1 (1930)

Fisher Library Rare Book Collection

IMAGES

Timalarua, the canoe maker (2)

Bathurst & Melville Islands, Northern Territory

Photographer: C. W. Hart 1928 - 1930

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 1490; 1491)

Pukamani Ceremony (4)

Bathurst & Melville Islands, Northern Territory

Photographer: C. W. Hart 1928 - 1930

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 1494; 1497; 1499; 1500)

Man with spear

Bathurst & Melville Islands, Northern Territory

Photographer: C. W. Hart 1928 - 1930

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 1506)

Camilla Wedgwood

Camilla Wedgwood (1901 – 1955)

Fieldwork region:
Manam Island, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea
Nauru

Born into a privileged family, Camilla Wedgwood trained at Cambridge in the early 1920s where she majored in English and Anthropology, training with A.C. Haddon. Haddon was instrumental in gaining her a post in Australia where she would ultimately spend most of her academic life as Principal of the University of Sydney Women's College and lecturer at the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Mosman.

In 1928 Professor A.R. Radcliffe-Brown appointed Wedgwood as temporary Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology. Her role was to teach administrative cadets, the Diploma course and Anthropology I to prospective academic students. In 1930 she returned to England and a lectureship at the prestigious London School of Economics. Then, in 1932, she was offered an Australian National Research Council grant to work on Manam Island.

With some trepidation Camilla Wedgwood embarked to the small volcanic island of Manam off the northwest coast of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea. Her research focussed on the lives of women and children and the effects of European expansion generally. At the time a number of regulations governing the conduct of New Guinea's indigenous population had been passed which served to make her position initially difficult as many thought her a government spy. However her role as part-time medical supplier and nurse gave her the opportunity to gain peoples trust.

In 1935 the government Administrator responsible for the small island of Nauru required a fieldworker to look into the impact of the island's phosphate industry on the local population. Elkin appointed Wedgwood to the ANRC funded fieldwork. It was the beginning of her life as an applied anthropologist; using her understanding of indigenous social systems to advise government on policy and to teach those in government about understanding the people in their care.

WWII

The escalation of the European war into a world conflict led many anthropologists into active and administrative service positions. Areas once considered remote backwaters were now Australia's front line and the knowledge gleaned through the Anthropology Department's work on culture contact was now seen as essential to Australian defence. In Australia and New Guinea the conditions that Indigenous peoples had tolerated were now thought a potential threat – would the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples lead them to help the Japanese?

Some three thousand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders served in WWII. Some hid their Indigenous ancestry to gain entry to the general forces, others were put into special units with less pay and benefits, such as the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit made up of fifty Yolgnu men from northeast Arnhem Land. In occupied Papua New Guinea tens of thousands were officially employed by the allied army on pre-war rates. Over 7000 men enlisted in the Pacific Islands Regiment and 'M' Special Unit, or were members of police units involved in military operations. Another 1000 worked as medical orderlies.

In all areas of Japanese occupation across the Pacific the effects of the hundreds of thousands of allied and Japanese troops for Indigenous peoples included malnutrition, bombing, land clearing, rape, kidnapping and hanging for treason.

Sydney University trained anthropologists worked in various roles. Younger anthropologists took active service. Those not considered suitable for active duties, took advisory positions working on issues of strategy, labour, stability and health. For many the war led to increased work in applied anthropology where they used their skills to assist in the post-war rebuilding. To the indigenous peoples of Oceania the war brought a greater push for equality and self determination.

Camilla Wedgwood and Manam Island

OBJECTS

'Alu'a, Headrests (2)

Manam Island, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea

Collected by Camilla Wedgwood c1933

Macleay Museum (ET84.156.6; ET84.156.7))

Auta, Man's hair ornament

Manam Island, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea

Collected by Camilla Wedgwood c1933

Macleay Museum (ET84.156.4)

Spear thrower

Sepik region, East Sepik Province,
Papua New Guinea

Collected by Camilla Wedgwood c1933

Macleay Museum (ET84.156.5)

ARCHIVES

Specimen book, Manam Island, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea

C. Wedgwood Personal Archive

University of Sydney Archive (P112/1)

Map of Manam Island and the adjacent mainland

Showing the principal villages with which the people of Manam trade

Madang Province, Papua New Guinea

Field Map: Camilla Wedgwood

Oceania 1937 (4:373)

IMAGES



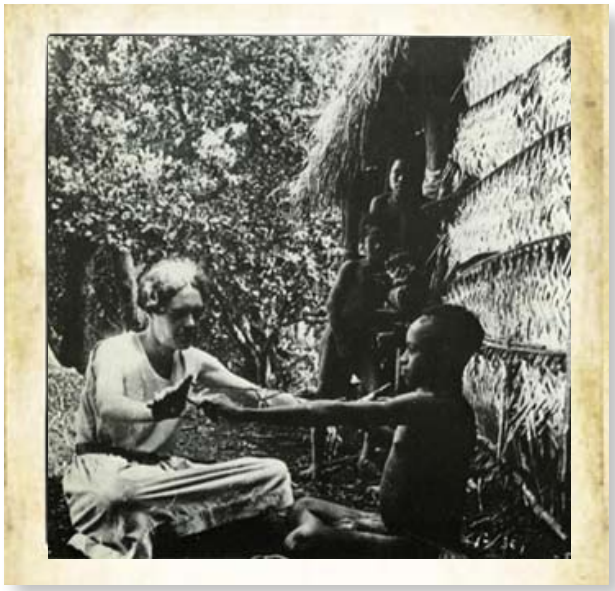
Canoe building - dancing with the mast before fixing it in place

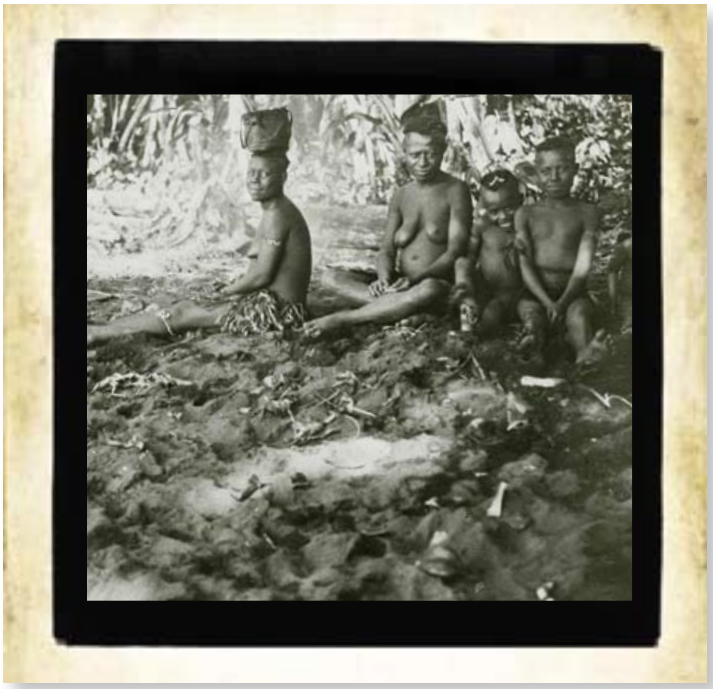
Manam Island, Madang Province,
Papua New Guinea

Photographer: Camilla Wedgwood 1933 - 1934

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1102)

During her time on Manam Island Wedgwood documented the production and launching of a new overseas canoe. She observed that every man on the island had a trading partner, or tawa, in a village on the mainland coast. Through these partnerships the Islanders acquired foods like sago, domestic pots and containers, and materials such as hard woods and the large bamboos which were used for the mbe'i, sacred flutes central to men's religious performances. In exchange the mainland partners sought canarium and areca nuts, the native tobacco (for which certain Manam districts were famous), pigs, and socially important curved pigs tusks and dogs teeth breastplates. A number of 'Manam' objects are the result of these exchange relationships, made on the mainland and integrated into Manam Islander social and cultural life.





Camilla Wedgwood and Manam Island

IMAGES (continued)

Camilla Wedgwood and Oaruaru playing cats cradle
Manam Island, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea
Photographer: Joseph, Camilla Wedgwood's New Guinean assistant 1933 - 1934
National Library (AN10891892)

Canoes - small boys playing with model canoes which they have made
One boy is holding a toy used in the manner of a sling
Manam Island, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea
Photographer: Camilla Wedgwood 1933 - 1934
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1113)

Canoe Making - Carving the hull of a new overseas canoe
Manam Island, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea
Photographer: Camilla Wedgwood 1933 - 1934
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1083)

A group of women cooking at a feast - one woman is ladling pigs' blood from a wooden plate lined with banana leaf into the pots of boiling stew
Manam Island, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea
Photographer: Camilla Wedgwood 1933 - 1934
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1103)

A group of women and children taking their ease on the beach
Manam Island, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea
Photographer: Camilla Wedgwood 1933 - 1934
Macleay Museum HP99.1 Plate No.1097

William Stanner

William Stanner (1905-1981)

Fieldwork region: Daly River and Wadeye (Port Keats), Northern Territory

Originally a journalist, William Stanner took up anthropology at Sydney University in the late 1920s. In 1932 he investigated the lives of Aboriginal people living in the vicinity of the Daly River. His experience there would underpin his growing interest and lifelong concern for the people of this region and for Aboriginal welfare generally.

In 1926 Stanner heard anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown speak at a meeting of the Sydney Arts Society and became inspired to change his career to anthropology. After four years of work and study Stanner achieved his goal. In 1932, he received an Australian National Research Council grant to conduct research on culture change and a general sociological study of the Daly River region.

Stanner found that the Mulluk Mulluk, Madngella, Marithiel and Nangiomeri peoples had moved off their lands and were thrust together to take up seasonal employment on local peanut farms in the Daly River township. This produced a situation of conflict, strain, distrust and fear. Initially staying with Daly River's resident Protector and police constable, Stanner soon disassociated himself from the white community. His subsequent MA thesis documented what he called the 'long and blighting contact' with Europeans and subsequent disruption and reorientation of the kinship systems of the local Aboriginal peoples.

In 1934 Stanner received another ANRC fieldwork grant for work on culture change. He travelled to Wadeye to assess the new Catholic Mission for the Murinbata people, and conducted broad surveys across the region. He also followed the trials of the Warramunga people as they were resettled from their reserve lands to make way for a gold mine on one of their ceremonial sites.

Anthropology, Government and Nation

It is difficult to appreciate the sense of urgency that propelled anthropological investigation internationally in the 1920s. It was generally understood that small-scale societies and their way of life were fast disappearing in the wake of European expansion. Theoretical breakthroughs changed the focus of anthropological work from the gathering of isolated 'facts' to the understanding of whole societies. Now, the theorists argued, it was time for governments to work with anthropologists in planning programs that would support, and advance, the cause of state-less peoples.

From 1926 until 1946 Sydney was the only Anthropology department in Australia. The professor wielded some power to implement change in administration, economic and missionary activity relating to Indigenous peoples. Stanner and his generation of anthropologists believed they could effectively do little more than write reports for consideration by those in power.

Up until WWII Professor and students alike were entirely dependent on ANRC and Government funding for their work, which many thought led to compromise rather than real change. After the war this would change dramatically. The Department's administrative focus was largely removed with training for service in Papua New Guinea taught at the Australian School of Pacific Administration based in Mosman, Sydney, and the development of the Aboriginal Institute (later AIATSIS) federally based in Canberra. Many of the first generation of Sydney's anthropologists taught in these new centres, training a new generation of students about the resilience of cultural forms.

The material he recorded in 1934 formed the basis of his doctoral studies at the London School of Economics under Malinowski. The plight of the Warramunga and others inspired him to focus on the 'great Australian silence' a term he used to describe the apparent acceptance of the destruction of Aboriginal lands and social order. He advocated for Aboriginal rights throughout his career.





Stanner, Daly River and Wadeye

OBJECTS



Painting: (untitled) Serpent and hooked spear

Artist: Nym Bunduk (1900 – 1974)

Wadeye, Northern Territory

Collected by D. Bennett 1964

Transfer from Anthropology Department

Macleay Museum (ETP.2139)

In this painting Nym Bunduk has shown a serpent, surrounded by Ku-Kupi, the distinctive single sided hooked spears of the region associated with dance ceremonies. By 1935, with the establishment of a Roman Catholic Mission at Wadeye, such ceremonies became known as 'Sunday business'. Stanner travelled with the first Missionaries to Wadeye in 1935 and returned there on a number of occasions. The artist Nym Bunduk was one of the key individuals with whom he worked.

Necklace or head-band, ochred

Daly River, Northern Territory

Collected by William Stanner c1932

National Museum of Australia (1985.78.65)

String bag

Northern Territory

Collected by William Stanner c1932

National Museum of Australia (1985.78.60)

ARCHIVES

Map showing settled and unsettled areas

Numbers indicate approximate original positions of tribes including 6. Mulluk Mulluk, 7. Madngella, 10. Marithiel and 12. Nangiomeri

Daly River Region, Northern Territory

Field Map: W. E. Stanner

Oceania 1933 (3:377)

IMAGES

Intertribal fight over abduction of women

Daly River region, Northern Territory

Photographer: W. E. H. Stanner c1932

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 1472)

Type of Tin-hut erected for natives at white settlement of Daly River

Daly River, Northern Territory

Photographer: W. E. H. Stanner c1932

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 1039)

Native woman working in Daly River peanut fields, head is covered from the sun

Daly River region, Northern Territory

Photographer: W. E. H. Stanner c1932

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 1479)



A. P. Elkin (1891 – 1979)

Fieldwork region: New South Wales

A. P. Elkin spent nearly 50 years concerned with the lives of Aboriginal people in New South Wales. In his role as Head of the only Anthropology Department in Australia he was particularly influential in offering advice to missionaries and in directing research and government policy.

In 1933 Elkin became President of the Association for the Protection of Native Races (APNR), a position he held for nearly thirty years, working to promote a better general social understanding and living standard for Aboriginal people. By the 1940s Elkin extended his influence acting as Anthropological Advisor to the influential Government body, the Aborigines Welfare Board of NSW. His paternalistic agenda however, put him in opposition to many, not least the emergent Aboriginal activists of the 1930s.

Aboriginal peoples of NSW were among the first whose social groups had largely been wrenched apart through settler incursion and government policy. Elkin believed the future for these people lay in their embracing settler life. He thus argued that government policy provide for the education and training of Aboriginal people to improve their economic status. He structured a number of Australian National Research Council grants for young anthropologists to investigate issues relevant to the assimilation agenda.

By the late 1930s a number of Aboriginal political activist groups established themselves within the political arena. They demanded involvement in policy decisions affecting their welfare, membership on the Aborigines Welfare Board and full citizen rights. William Ferguson, William Cooper, Bruce McGuiness, Doug Nicholls, Bill Onus, Jack Patten, Margaret Tucker and Pearl Gibbs were just some of the key figures in the establishment of the two leading organizations: the Aborigines Progressive Association of NSW and the Australian Aborigines League of Victoria. Together they organised the first national Aboriginal 'Day of Mourning' conference and protest on the 150th anniversary of white settlement on Australia Day 1938.

Elkin's assimilationist campaign was obstructed by the often racist views of Australian society and the opposition of the Aboriginal community itself. He supported full citizenship rights for Aboriginal people, but his proposal was for a steady phasing in of these rights on the basis of economic and social developments.

From the late 1940s Elkin's approach to Aboriginal issues began to be superseded. He had always encouraged Aboriginal cultural pride, and his work contributed to the Aboriginal activism that blossomed in subsequent decades. He supported the next generation of anthropology students who would work more inclusively with Aboriginal people.

A.P. Elkin and New South Wales

OBJECTS

Boomerang (returning type)

Incised, Goodluck 1939
Artist: Albert Woodland
Kempsey, New South Wales
Donated by A.P. Elkin
Macleay Museum (ETH.2039)

ARCHIVES

Glad to hear you support cause

Letters between William Ferguson of the Aborigines Progressive Association and A. P. Elkin. August 1944
A. P. Elkin Personal Archives
University of Sydney Archives (P130/41/93)

NSW Aborigines Protection Act

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives
University of Sydney Archives (P130/12/23)

NSW Aborigines Welfare Board Annual Report 1940

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives
University of Sydney Archives (P130/12/25)

IMAGES

Studio portrait of an Aboriginal man

New South Wales
Photographer: Henry King c1885
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 25b)

Studio portrait of an Aboriginal woman

Shoalhaven District, New South Wales
Photographer: Henry King c1885
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 54)

Studio portrait of an Aboriginal woman

New South Wales
Photographer: Henry King c1885
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 59)

Aboriginal stone fisheries

Brewarrina, New South Wales
Photographer possibly H. King c1880
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate 79)

Shield, incised with flora and fauna

Artist: Albert Woodland
Kempsey, New South Wales
Donated by A.P. Elkin
Macleay Museum (ETH2045)

This shield together with a boomerang, incised "Goodluck. 1939" were given to A.P. Elkin by the artist, Albert Woodland in the 1930s. Woodland assisted Elkin with aspects of his NSW research. Woodland periodically came to Sydney, staying with relatives at La Perouse. His poker-work designs are typical of the artistic style developed by the Aboriginal community at La Perouse.



From the 1870s La Perouse had been a refuge to Aboriginal people from a number of cultural areas as Sydney city's population grew and settler acceptance of Indigenous peoples and culture waned. From the 1900s a number of Aboriginal families established businesses selling artefacts to visitors and tourists to the area, performing demonstrations of boomerang throwing, animal handling, shell work, woodwork and engraving.



Day of Mourning, Protest and Conference

Australia Hall, Sydney, NSW

Photographer: Phil Ward, Australia Day 1938

Reproduced from Man, March 1938

Mitchell, State Library (ML REF Q059/9)

In 1938 the Aborigines Progressive Union met to pass the following resolution:

"We, representing the Aborigines of Australia, assembled in Conference at the Australian Hall, Sydney, on the 26th day of January, 1938, this being the 150th Anniversary of the whitemen's seizure of our country, hereby make protest against the callous treatment of our people by the whitemen during the past 150 years, and we appeal to the Australian Nation of today to make new laws for the education and care of Aborigines, and we ask for a new policy which will raise our people to full citizenship rights and equality within the community"

The resolution was written by J.T Patten, President (seen on the far right of the photograph) and W. Ferguson, Organising Secretary (on the far left).

Studio portrait of an Aboriginal man

New South Wales

Photographer: Henry King c1885

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 26)

The Sydney based photographer Henry King worked throughout NSW photographing townships, scenes, and people from the 1880s. This image of an Aboriginal man is typical of the photographs he took for the 'ethnographic' market. From the 1850s the rise of International Exhibitions, public museums and colonial enterprise fed into this market for images which depicted people posed and dressed to represent their cultural origins. Curiously, King's staged images of NSW Aboriginal people were later used in lectures by Sydney University's anthropologists as historical documents to show what people looked like.



Phyllis Kaberry

Phyllis Kaberry (1910 - 1977)

Fieldwork region: Kimberly region, Western Australia
East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Phyllis Kaberry was among the first masters students in Sydney University's Anthropology Department. She produced the first detailed description of the life of Aboriginal women, based on her fieldwork in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, published as *Aboriginal Woman: Sacred and Profane* (1939). Her second fieldwork area was with the Mamu-Kundi or Abelam peoples of Papua New Guinea.

Kaberry's initial interest lay in Melanesia but in 1934 Elkin was keen that she record Aboriginal women's practices to fill in gaps in his Kimberley research. The previous year the Department's work in the region had been put at risk by an Australian National Research Council fieldworker's public complaints over conditions for Aboriginal people in the State. Elkin applied to A.O. Neville, the State's Protector of Aborigines in order to placate antagonistic missionaries and unhelpful station owners and to find suitable accommodations for Kaberry. She proved diplomatic towards the settlers and insightful and diligent in her work with Aboriginal women.

Back in Sydney in 1939, Kaberry received a second ANRC grant for fieldwork at Kalabu village in the Abelam cultural area of the Sepik River, New Guinea. ANRC recipients Margaret Mead and Geoffrey Bateson had previously worked on neighbouring social groups and Kaberry's work would fill the gap in understanding the relationships and differences between all three. While continuing with her work on the roles of women, Kaberry looked more broadly at social and political organisation of the Abelam.

Kaberry occupied a house in the middle of Kalabu, becoming a member of the landowners' clan. Although the village was selected for the relative absence of Government control, wage labour and taxes had been introduced; and one medical orderly had worked as an anthropological assistant in New Ireland. Kaberry's work was dominated by her earlier experiences of Aboriginal suffering, and her published papers are peppered not only with comparisons of social forms but also with advisory warnings for future Administrators and missionaries.

Regardless of her abilities and insight there were few professional opportunities in Sydney. Kaberry took the opportunity of a Yale Stirling Fellowship to work with her PhD supervisor, Malinowski, on culture contact. She would never return to either the Australian or Melanesian field.







Phyllis Kaberry and Kalabu Village

OBJECTS

Kabaibos, Hand-held mask

Middle Sepik River Valley, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Collected by Gregory Bateson c1930

Australian Museum (E091504)

Wut, Woman's Bag

Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Collected by Phyllis Kaberry 1939

Australian Museum (E091444)

Cassowary bone knife

Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Collected by Phyllis Kaberry 1939

Australian Museum (E091445)

ARCHIVES

Map showing location of the Abelam, Arapesh and Iatmul cultural regions

and broader placement within the region

Papua New Guinea

Field Map: Phyllis Kaberry

Oceania 1940 - 1941 (11:233)

IMAGES

Kalabu men carrying the yams lashed to poles for display in Wabinda Hamlet

Wabinda Hamlet, Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Photographer: Phyllis Kaberry c1939

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1773)

Kalabu yam owner chanting yam song at lining of yams in Wabinda hamlet

Wabinda Hamlet, Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Photographer: Phyllis Kaberry c1939

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1770)

Arapesh women attending ceremony for completion of new House-Tamberan with wooden carvings

Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Photographer: Phyllis Kaberry c1939

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1755)

Wa:bi yams prepared for planting

Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Photographer: Phyllis Kaberry c1939

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1761)

Phyllis Kaberry and Kalabu Village

on page 31

Upper portion of facade of House-Tamberan, being hoisted into position

Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Photographer: Phyllis Kaberry c1939

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1753)

Lashing sago palms to new House-Tamberan

Numbungen Hamlet, Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Photographer: Phyllis Kaberry c1939

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1751)

Woman shaving her mother's hair

Women keep hair cropped short, as distinct from the married men, with their elaborate coiffure.

Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Photographer: Phyllis Kaberry c1939

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1743)



Mask, end of yam decorated for harvest

The yam is attached to the underside of the pole, new shoots bound into the form of a coronet.

Kalabu Village, East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea

Photographer: Phyllis Kaberry c1939

Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No.1767)

Central to male prestige, power and spiritual life for the Mamu-Kundi peoples of Kalabu village and elsewhere in the Eastern Sepik is the production of yams (Diocorea alata). The tubers of yam vines, called wa'bi, can grow up to 3 metres. For the Mamu-Kundi peoples wa'bi embody ngwalndu (ancestral spirits), and their growth, nuture and quality is a reflection of men's relationship to these spirits.

A great variety of magical incantations and acts are associated with yam production, and a number of prohibitions on food and conduct are followed. Harvesting of the wa'bi is a time of tension and festivity. The best and largest yams, decorated with wooden and woven masks, shells, feathers, leaves and scented flowers are paraded through the village, and deposited to the thunder of drumming in front of the House Tamberan, (men's ritual place). From here they were given away to the gardeners' exchange partner, tfambera, only a small portion kept aside to grow yams for the next harvest.

Kaberry noted that much of the village conversation centred around gardens and food, and the growth and comparison of crops. Not being regarded culturally as 'female' by the Kalabu villagers allowed Kaberry access to the otherwise exclusively male areas of the yam gardens to observe magical rites associated with their planting, tendering and harvest.

The Berndts



Ronald Berndt (1916 - 1990)

Catherine Berndt (1918 - 1994)

Fieldwork region: Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Ronald and Catherine Berndt née Webb met and married while studying anthropology at the University of Sydney in the early 1940s. They conducted field research throughout Australia from this time, and the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea in the 1950s. Their great legacy was their work on Aboriginal artistic practice, and their contribution towards the establishment of specialised centres of Indigenous-focussed research.

At Sydney University Ronald and Catherine studied under A. P. Elkin, who became their strong supporter and mentor. Elkin recognised that the couple would make a well-rounded and formidable team and secured Australian National Research Council field research grants for them during their graduate studies.

Like many fieldworkers the Berndts felt compromised by the funding of their research. The ANRC grants often put fieldworkers in places where tensions between Indigenous peoples and outsiders were strongest. Elkin, a tireless fund raiser, appeared more concerned with getting good anthropologists into funded fieldwork than with their sensibilities. In the mid-1940s the Berndts were sent to research labour conditions at Birrundudu in the Northern Territory. Elkin raised the necessary funds from Vesteys, the company responsible for the very conditions under study. Such was the sensitivity of the Berndts' eventual findings that their report on the atrocious working conditions languished.



Throughout the 1940s the Berndts worked on a number of ANRC funded fieldwork projects and research positions created specifically for them by Elkin. Their 1946 - 1947 fieldwork in Arnhem Land centred principally on the Yolngu peoples settled at the Methodist Overseas Mission at Yirrkala. The ANRC grant directed their investigations into labour conditions, diet and education, and the occupational training provided by the missions. Their attention however, was drawn to Yolngu aesthetic and artistic expression within ceremonial and religious life. Their subsequent publications emphasised the ways that art expressed vital knowledge which was passed through ceremony and oral tradition under the guidance of community leaders.

Elkin's faith in the Berndts' academic and administrative abilities was well placed. Together they assisted in establishing a Centre for Anthropology at the University of Western Australia. In their later work the Berndts promoted an anthropology that was much more supportive and inclusive of Aboriginal Australian's own research interests.

The Berndts and Arnhem Land

OBJECTS

Ochre sample

Northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Collected by W. Lloyd Warner c1928

Macleay Museum (ETP.1801)

Spirit bag

Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Collector not known (transfer from Anthropology Department)

Macleay Museum (ET81.8)

Necklace

Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Collected by Delbridge c1924

Macleay Museum (ET87.13.31)

Percussion sticks

Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Collected by A. P. Elkin between 1949 - 1956

Macleay Museum (ETH.2043)

Painting: (untitled) Macassan scene

Artist: Wonggu (c1884 – 1959)

Yirrkala, Northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Collected by Ronald Berndt 1946 1947

Macleay Museum (ETP.2051)

Bark Painting: (untitled) Barru the Ancestral Crocodile

Artist: unnamed Djauan Aboriginal stockman

King River, Central Northern Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Collected by A. P. Elkin 1952

Macleay Museum (ETP.2022)

ARCHIVES

...I would be very pleased if you would give them permission to visit your mission...

Anthropology Department to Methodist Mission, 21 May 1946

A. P. Elkin Personal Archives

University of Sydney Archives (P130/40/35)



Painting: (untitled) Djang'kawu Sisters' sacred dilly bags

Artist: Narritjin Maymuru (c1914 – 1981)

Yirrkala, Northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Collected by Ronald Berndt 1946 1947

Macleay Museum (ETP.2048)

The internationally renowned artist and ritual leader of the Mangalili clan, Narritjin Maymuru, painted this in the 1940s to show the Berndts aspects of the Djang'kawu Sisters story. These creation ancestors of Arnhem Land peoples created many of the natural features of the regions' landscape, and are reputed to have named places, created ritual, song and sacred objects. In this painting the sacred dilly bags of the Djang'kawu are seen and the Iindirritj, rainbow lorikeets sit in watch over them.

Many of the early anthropologists associated with the Sydney University Department collected paintings on bark, masonite and paper because of the meanings that they encapsulated. The Berndts, who collected over 100 works between 1946 and 1947, recognised that paintings were a highly appropriate media to discuss ritual and social relationships with significant elders such as Narritjin Maymuru and others including Birrikitji Gumana, Mawalan Marika, Wonggu and Munggurrawuy Yunupingu.



The Berndts and Arnhem Land

IMAGES

Munggurrawuy Yunupingu, Ronald Berndt and Wandjuk Marika
on page 33
Yirrkala, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
Photographer: attributed to C. Berndt 1946 – 1947
Berndt Museum, University of Western Australia (WU/P21582)

Painting "brush turkey" dancers
on page 33
Loodjiriki Island (Crocodile Is. Group), Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
Photographer: W. L. Warner 1927 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 661)

Characteristic method carrying child
Northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
Photographer: W. L. Warner 1927 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 703)

Stage in boys initiation ceremonies (public)
Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
Photographer: attributed to A. P. Elkin 1949 - 1956
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 1967)

Narra "shark" dance
Northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
Photographer: W. L. Warner 1927 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 675)

Peace making ceremony - warriors waiting for opposing force to arrive
Northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
Photographer: W. L. Warner 1927 - 1929
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 682)

Stage in boys initiation ceremonies (public)
A.P Elkin, recording (centre)
Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
Photographer: not known, 1949 - 1956 (attributed)
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 1975)

Rock art
Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
Photographer: attributed to A. P. Elkin 1949 - 1956
Macleay Museum (HP99.1 Plate No. 1984)

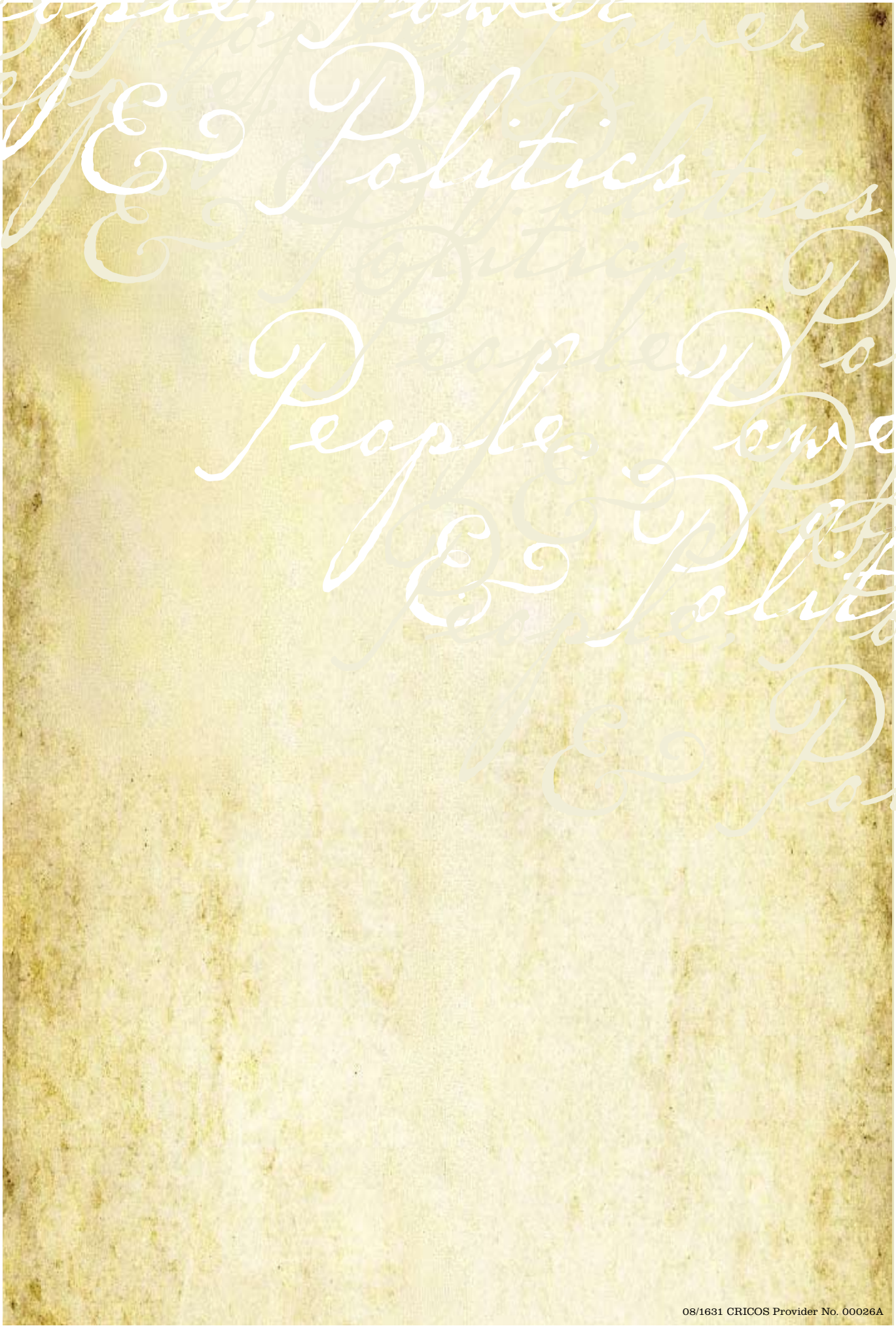


People Power & Politics









08/1631 CRICOS Provider No. 00026A