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74. More Rock Paintings From Papua

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## ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

With Plate G.

Papua : Art.

Strong.

**More Rock Paintings from Papua.** By *W. Mersh Strong, M.A., M.D.*,  
*Government Anthropologist, Papua.*

74

In MAN, 1923, 119, I published some notes on Rock Paintings from New Guinea. In the following, I have described further examples which were discovered during the month of September, 1922. These were found in the Sogeri district inland from Port Moresby and near the village of Nahatana, some twenty miles further inland than the previous finds. Three distinct stations were visited, and almost obliterated signs of paintings were seen in one other place. All the stations occurred in country consisting of dark-coloured basaltic conglomerate, with white rocks of an andesitic type interbedded at places.

*Station I.*—This station consists of a cleft or grotto in the rock which has evidently allowed the passage of water through it. The cleft is roofed over by a layer of black basaltic rock still *in situ*. Beneath this is a layer of whiter rock identified by E. R. Stanley, Esq., Government Geologist, Papua, as being of an andesitic nature.

The paintings were in red and yellow, with a little white. There appear to be two distinct series, one in red and yellow over a fainter series of designs with much white in them. A few very crude chevrons are also incised on rocks near the entrance.

Pl. G., Figs. 1 and 4, give the designs in detail. Fig. 1 was obtained by making tracings, colouring them in, and afterwards photographing them.

In the village of Nahatana a stone was found incised with a series of lines crossing at right angles. (*See Pl. G., Fig. 3.*)

The natives of the surrounding villages know nothing as to the origin of these paintings. The only definite information I could get was that the father of an elderly native had told him that at one time he used to go hunting and sleep at the rock shelter, and that the paintings were there then. The natives showed no sign of fear or reverence for the paintings. Their attitude was rather that of quite mild and restrained curiosity. The village policeman told me that the incised rock I saw in the village of Nahatana had been found in the Laloki river, and had been brought up into the village apparently as a curiosity.

*Station II.*—This station was some four or five miles away from the first station in a westerly direction. It was down by, and practically on a level with, the river. Fig. 2, Pl. G., upper row, were obtained from it by photographing coloured-in tracings of the individual designs. Unlike station I, many of the paintings had been first deeply incised and then painted red.

The incised paintings were quite different from the crude incised chevrons at station I, or the incised stone in Nahatana village. Those were quite crude, and appeared as if they could have been made with any chance angulated piece of stone; those at station II were deeply and regularly incised, and would appear to be beyond the power of anyone except a skilful stone-worker.

Incised stones have been found in Papua, but two or three hundred miles away, and, as far as I know, only in the form of crude rings.

The natives knew nothing about the origin of the paintings; but the shelter showed marks of fire on the rocks, apparently of recent origin. The designs at times almost suggest early and crude attempts at writing, and recall the Azilian designs of Europe.

*Station III.*—This station is about midway between stations I and II on the steep side of the river bank, high up and overlooking the river. It was, perhaps,

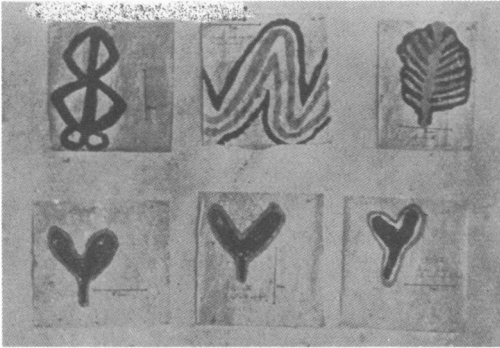


FIG. 1.

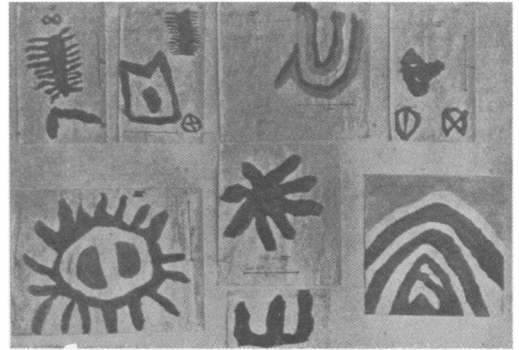


FIG. 2.

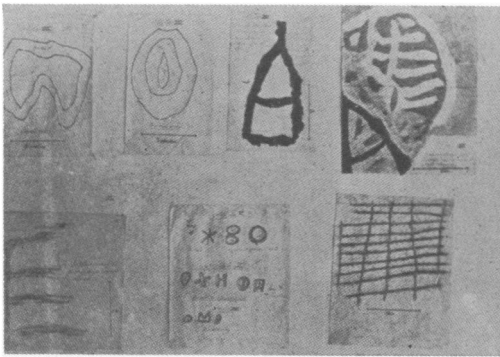


FIG. 3.

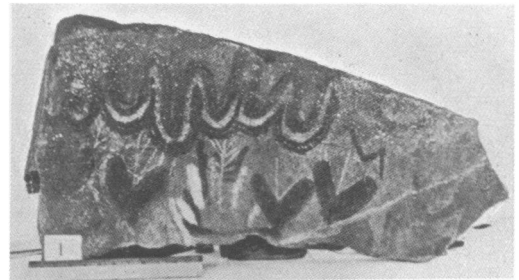


FIG. 4.



FIG. 5.

**ROCK PAINTINGS FROM PAPUA.**

the most impressive of the three stations. Pl. G, Fig. 5, gives a general idea of the paintings. These were more or less similar in style to those found at station I; and there were also unpainted incised designs quite similar to the painted incised designs found at station II, but in this case not painted. White entered more definitely into the paintings than it did at station I. Pl. G, Fig. 2, lower row, and Pl. G, Fig. 3, upper row, show some of the designs in more detail. The first two designs in photograph Pl. G., Fig. 3, are incised only.

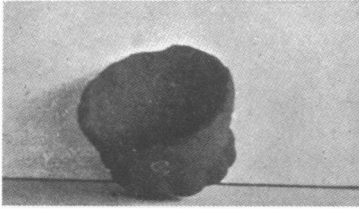


FIG. 1.

In two or three cases, paintings were superimposed. In such cases the later paintings were much fresher-looking than those below. This may indicate a wide difference in age, or it may merely

indicate that the later artist partly obliterated the work of his predecessor before covering it up.

The top right-hand design of Pl. G, Fig. 3, shows the best example of this superposition. Here a figure resembling a capital "A" is superimposed on an older red and white design of a different character.

Indistinct black painted lines were also seen on the rock in the form of two intersecting series of lines at right angles, and reminded one of the incised design on the stone in Nahatana village.

*Stone Mortars and Pestles.*—In connection with these prehistoric paintings, it is interesting to recall the fact that stone mortars and pestles are, from time to time, dug up in the country of a character quite different from any stone or other implements made or used by the present-day natives of Papua on the arrival of Europeans in the country. Further, there are accounts, apparently quite authentic, of these implements having been found fourteen feet under

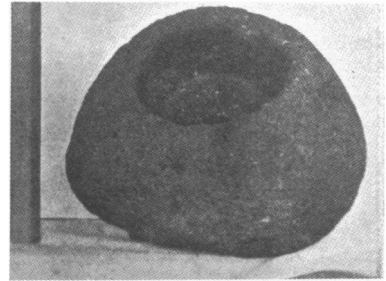


FIG. 2.

river deposits, which does not, perhaps, indicate necessarily any great age. There are somewhat similar accounts of mortars and pestles having been found in a similar situation on the west coast of North America.\* Figs. 1, 2, 3, all on the same scale, are examples of such stone mortars and a pestle, which are found over a wide area of country from the Mambare in the north to the Lakekamu in the west, and Woodlark Island in the east. Until the intro-



FIG. 3.

duction of metal implements, the modern natives of Papua used stone tomahawks, elaborate stone clubs, and a stone tapa cloth beater; but I have never seen or heard of their making or using stone mortars or other implements of stone.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PLATE G.

FIG. 1.—All six of these designs are from station I, and are done in red and yellow. One suggests the figure of a man, one is a wave-like design, and four suggest leaves.

FIG. 2.—The upper row are all from station II. The third from the left-hand side recalls the style of station I, and is done in red and yellow. The others are all done in red, and

\* Keith, "The Antiquity of Man," page 285. Williams and Norgate, London, 1920.

include two insect-like designs suggesting a centipede and several geometrical designs recalling the Azilian of Europe.

The lower row are all from station III, and were all painted in red only, except the one on the right which was done in red and white. On the left-hand part of the design shown on the extreme left of the lower row, there was a faint deposit, probably of calcium carbonate.

FIG. 3.—The designs in the upper row and the first in the lower row are also from station II. The first two of the upper row are deeply incised in the rock, and were found on the curved surface of the rock below the paintings seen in Fig. 5, behind where the natives are sitting. Although more exposed to the weather than the paintings above, I hardly think they can have ever been painted. The third design in the upper row is interesting, because it is clearly more recent than many of the older black and white designs. The fourth design in the upper row shows a similar design in superposition on an older red and white design. The first design in the lower row was done very faintly in black.

The second photograph in the lower row are free-hand sketches\* and not tracings. The upper series are from station I, done in red. In the case of the two on the right, there are yellow spots in the centre of the circles. The middle series are all from station II; the five larger ones to the left are both deeply incised and painted in red; while the two smaller ones to the right resembling a capital "L" and a capital "X," are painted only. The pear-shaped design on the extreme right measured, approximately, 6 inches by 4 inches.

The three in the lower row are from station III; they are incised and unpainted.

The last design at the right-hand side of the lower row represents the incised design on the stone found in the creek by the natives and taken to their village. The photograph was obtained by squeezing a piece of wet paper over the stone, and when dry painting in the incised lines crossing at right angles.

FIG. 4.—This is a photograph of a portion of the rock shown *in situ* in Fig. 5. The parts painted white show up more prominently in the photograph than they do in the specimen itself, and suggest that here we have a series of red and yellow designs painted over an earlier series of branched white designs.

W MERSH STRONG.

## Scandinavia : Archæology.

Moscheles.

**On the late-Quaternary History of Scandinavia.** *By Dr. Julia*

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*Moscheles.*

Some ten years ago I tried to find out whether the late-Quaternary chronology established by Penck and Brückner for the Alps applied also to the North European glaciation. As De Geer has pointed out, the recession of the ice-sheet went on almost uninterruptedly in Sweden, though at a varying rate. Over the lowlands of Sweden the thickness of the ice appears to have been so great that the minor oscillations of climate during late-Quaternary times affected only the rate of recession, without producing a prolonged pause or a marked advance of the margin of the ice-sheet, the glaciation being always larger than warranted by even the most severe climatic condition during late-Quaternary times.

In the case of the mountain glaciation of south-western Norway with its valley-glaciers it seemed more likely that it would be possible to find oscillations of the glaciers in correspondence with climatic changes, as there, in the late-Quaternary period, harmony seems to have existed between glaciation and climatic conditions. Between the Kristiania-fjord and the Nordfjord glaciers still reached sea-level during at least considerable portions of late-Quaternary times. Their terminal moraines are connected with marine terraces, and the oscillation of the shore-line, raised beaches and shell-banks, proves most important in the study of late-Quaternary chronology.

For long only two subsidences of the land during late-Quaternary times were recognised in Scandinavia, the arctic Yoldia-subsidence, or epiglacial subsidence in the terminology of De Geer, and the almost recent, warm-dry Litorina-Tapes-

\* With this exception, all the other designs shown in Figs. 1-3 are from tracings, and the 3-inch lines seen near each design indicate the true scale.