



119. Rock Paintings from the Central District, Papua (British New Guinea)

Author(s): W. Mersh Strong

Source: *Man*, Vol. 23 (Dec., 1923), pp. 185-186

Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2788567>

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

With Plates N-O.

Papua: Art.

Strong.

Rock Paintings from the Central District, Papua (British New Guinea). *By W. Merse Strong, M.D.***119**

The rock paintings, the subject of this communication, were discovered near Bomana in the neighbourhood of Port Moresby, Central District of Papua (British New Guinea).

The main road was left about 11½ miles from Port Moresby on the Sapphire creek and Sogeri road just before the Eriama scrub begins. We followed a track leaving the right hand side of the road and skirted the Eriama scrub and creek for about a mile, travelling in an easterly direction. Under the guidance of my shooting boy, Waiboa, we turned off in a southerly direction and, after travelling for about a mile over a lightly timbered grassy plain, we reached a steep range of low hills. The paintings were found on a prominent whitish rock (Fig. 1) in a short valley running up into the hills on our right hand side (*i.e.* the true left side of the valley). The rock was clearly not *in situ*, but appeared to have fallen from the hill above. It was estimated to be about 25 feet high and about 18 feet broad. The surface facing across the valley, on which the paintings were, was protected by an overhanging projection of the rock. The rock itself appeared to consist mainly of limestone of a whitish colour. The rocks in the immediate neighbourhood also consisted of limestone, but of a black colour, probably caused by bush fires. A fragment of volcanic rock seems to have been included in the large limestone block on which the paintings were. The whole district is very much contorted, faulty and metamorphosed, but the limestone was surprisingly little altered. The low range of hills has every appearance of a fault face and the rock on which the paintings were found appeared to be a fragment broken off the fault face.

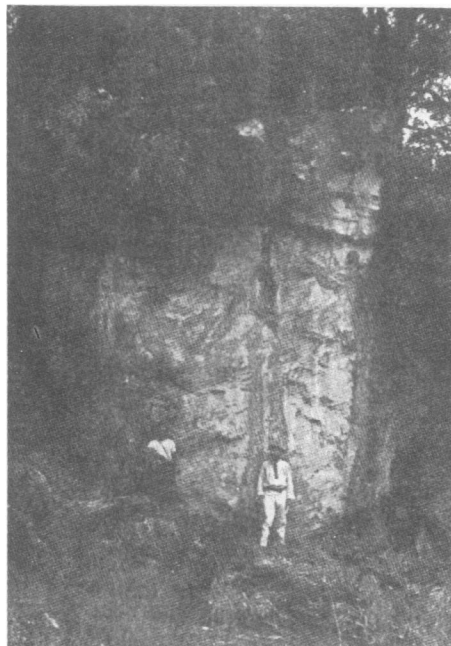


FIG. 1.—LIMESTONE BLOCK WITH PAINTINGS.

The paintings (Plates N-O) were photographed by Mr. C. R. Pinney, draughtsman, Lands Department, whilst I made rough tracings of those in reach. The paintings were in a single monochrome red, apparently some preparation of the red oxide of iron found in the district. The figures were all done exceedingly roughly. Of those on the lower part of the rock there was a cassowary, figures of a man and of various designs, including a scroll pattern, and a figure which might represent a tortoise. Just above was a representation of what appeared to be a star (Pl. N, Figs. 1-4). Higher up, well out of reach, and extending some 20 feet up the rock surface, were numerous paintings of a design which can be described as a double chevron with pendant lines. There was also the figure of a man's face, and a crescent, and the figure of a man's hand.



FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.

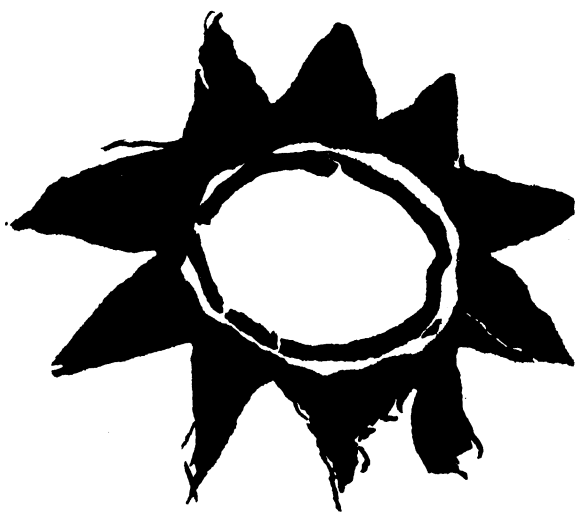


FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.

ROCK PAINTINGS FROM THE CENTRAL DISTRICT, PAPUA.



FIG. 1



FIG. 2.



FIG. 3



FIG. 4.

ROCK PAINTINGS FROM THE CENTRAL DISTRICT, PAPUA.

The question of the age of the paintings and their origin is an important one. The present day natives have no knowledge as to who did them. The natives—or at least the native who guided me to them—have no superstitious fear or reverence for the paintings. There is a place near, where human bones have been deposited under the rocks; but these are clearly quite recent. The paintings, especially those on the upper parts of the rock, where they would be best protected from the weather, are exceedingly well preserved. In places water has dribbled at times over the face of the rock and has left a slight deposit over the rock and over the paintings. This deposit is, I suppose, a film of calcium carbonate, derived from the limestone, and I think we may take it that such indicates a certain antiquity. On a rock not far away were clear signs of calcium carbonate having been deposited by water on the face of the rock on a larger scale.

The face design faintly suggest the face *motif* of the Papuan Gulf; but the Gulf culture, or at least the face *motif*, clearly has its centre two or three hundred miles to the west of Port Moresby and traces of it hardly come within a hundred miles of Port Moresby.

These are the only rock paintings I have myself seen in New Guinea; but I have heard that occasional paintings of the same character are to be found over a wide area running inland from Port Moresby for forty or fifty miles. The only other rock paintings I have heard of in New Guinea (the territory of Papua) are those in black and white figured by Jenness and Ballantyne*; these paintings were very rough representations in red monochrome of canoes and perhaps men, seen by Dr. Seligman in the Marshall-Bennet Islands.

W. MERSH STRONG.

Psychology: Dreams.

Seligman.

Note on Dreams.† *By Prof. C. G. Seligman, M.D., F.R.S.*

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Recent advances in Psychology indicate the value of records of dreams as they occur among non-European and especially the more primitive races; indeed it seems certain that investigations into the dreams of natives will throw much light on both ethnological and psychological problems.

Experience among white civilised races has shown that a number of factors contribute to the form which a dream takes and certain principles underlying the series of changes which memories undergo before appearing in the dream have been formulated.

Dreams in themselves are the expression of an emotion (or clash of emotions = conflict) and frequently constitute wish-fulfilments, *i.e.*, the fulfilment of desires which are often entirely unconscious and which sometimes have never been conscious.

For convenience of collection dreams may be divided into three categories—first suggested, I believe, by Dr. Ernest Jones:—

(1) Those that are both sensible and intelligible, telling a connected story of the everyday world, the meaning of which is obvious. Such are (in the white races) many dreams of children and such adult dreams as that in which the subject, short of cash for cigarettes, dreams that he has received a letter full of £5 notes. In these dreams the mental processes resemble those of waking life. Such dreams are often obvious and simple wish fulfilments.

(2) Dreams which tell or enact a connected story and have an evident meaning, but their contents, in whole or in part, strike us as unnatural, and we cannot fit them into the fabric of our waking life, as when a man dreams that his brother is mauled by a lion or gored by a bull.

* "The Northern d'Entrecasteaux." Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1920.

† Reprinted with modifications, suggested by experience from *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. IV, Pt. 3, 1921, by permission of the editor, Mr. J. W. Crowfoot, C.B.E., whom I take this opportunity of thanking for much kindly assistance.