KORWAR

In memory of
Jac Hoogerbrugge *(1924-2014)*,
private scholar and collector
of West New Guinea art

KORWAR

Northwest New Guinea ritual art
according to missionary sources

Raymond Corbey

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Preface

The present project issued from a longstanding interest in interactions between western and local cosmologies on the Christian frontier, in particular in the Netherlands East Indies. It is a continuation of the author's 2017 monograph on the ritual art of the Raja Ampat archipelago, a major emigration area of the Geelvink Bay Biak people. Much stimulus was provided by regular conversations spanning some 20 years with Jac Hoogerbrugge (1924-2014), a Dutch collector and private scholar who lived and worked in West New Guinea for many years (see Corbey 2000; Corbey & Stanley 2011).

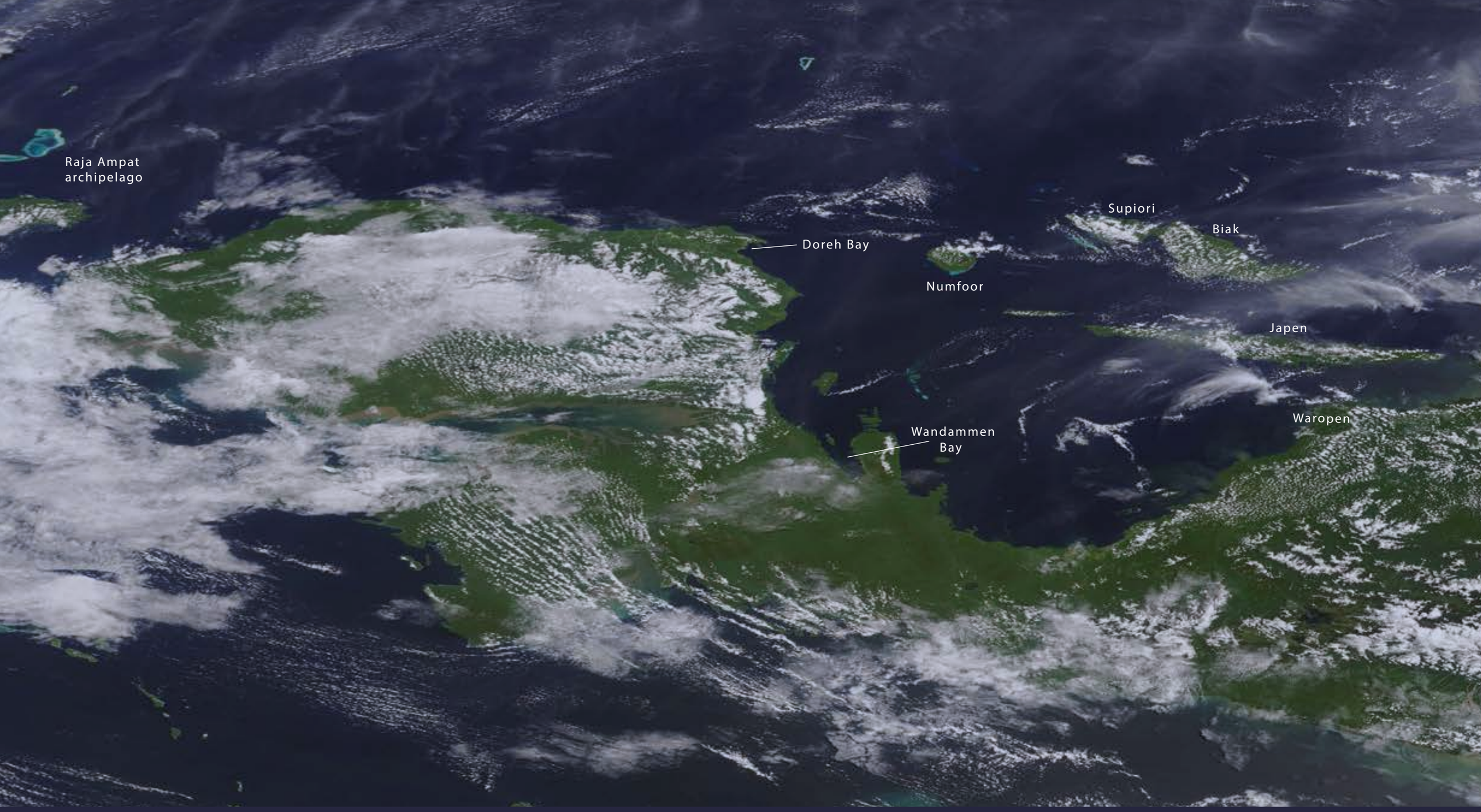
Why, in a book on indigenous ritual art, place so much emphasis on missionary records (correspondence, annual reports, personal diaries, photographs, etc.) and periodicals? In spite of their ethnocentric ideological agenda these writings constitute invaluable sources regarding the ritual practices and art of the region. They have remained largely unexplored, in particular in Th. van Baaren's *Korwars and korwar style* (1968; cf. Fig. 222 on p. 267), a solid survey of early korwar scholarship. Another outstanding resource is the 1893 monograph by F.S.A. de Clercq - *Resident* of Ternate (Moluccas/Maluku), private scholar and collector - and museum curator J.D.E. Schmeltz on northwest New Guinea art. This publication came about too early to profit from missionary records, although de Clercq learned much from his interactions with various missionaries while travelling.

The writings of Freerk C. Kamma (1906-1987), a grassroots missionary who in his later life took a PhD in ethnology, are a notable exception. His sizeable ethnography-*cum*-missionary history of the wider Geelvink Bay region (Kamma 1976, cf. Kamma 1955 and 1972, Kooijman 1988) is a refreshing, if not a partial and ambivalent departure from the self-righteous missionary narrative of progress, heroic donors and destitute receivers that frames the writings of most missionaries. Kamma's published and unpublished writings are all the more thought-provoking as they reveal the tensions between his roles as a firmly believing Protestant missionary on the one hand and an academically trained ethnologist on the other hand. This very combination has also resulted in an incredible ethnographic density and richness in his writings.

Next to Kamma's work, Jac Hoogerbrugge's research notes, to which the present author was kindly provided access by his family, afforded a first orientation as to several thousand pages of missionary sources housed at Het Utrechts Archief (the Netherlands), by and large either handwritten or type scripted. The entries regarding the thousands of Geelvink Bay items - including a few hundred korwars - in the on-line catalogue of the (Dutch) Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen deserve a special mention too. These entries constitute a rich sedimentation of several generations of curatorial expertise. Three major public collections of Geelvink Bay art are united in this national museum, curated at the Museum Volkenkunde (Leiden), the Tropenmuseum (Amsterdam) and the Wereldmuseum (Rotterdam).

The past tense is preferred in the present publication because it addresses the situation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For recent decades, see Danilyn Rutherford's (1997, 2003) ethnography of the Biak, based on fieldwork during the early 1990s, which shows remarkable continuity with the traditional culture in many respects, despite 30 years of Indonesian rule and the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Biak were Protestant by then. This is confirmed by Koos Knol, who grew up on Yapen during the 1950s as the son of a Dutch schoolmaster and has kept visiting the Geelvink Bay ever since: "Underneath the Protestantism there is a second, deeper and thicker skin, that of the old Biak ways, many of which are very much alive" (pers. comm., April 2019; for a similar view regarding the Raja Ampat archipelago, where many Biak live, see Bubandt 2019).

The present publication focuses on the period between the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries in 1855 and the Japanese invasion of the Netherlands East Indies in 1942. It is not a missionary history per se (which Kamma's body of writings is) but with the help of missionary sources features the traditional ritual art of the area and the how and why of its demise during an era of ever-stronger missionary and colonial presence.



A satellite view showing West New Guinea with the Geelvink Bay (Teluk Cenderawasih) in the upper right corner. Source: TERRA satellite, 11.9.2018. Worldview/NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center Earth Science Data and Information System (ESDIS), public domain; ed. by Marco Langbroek.

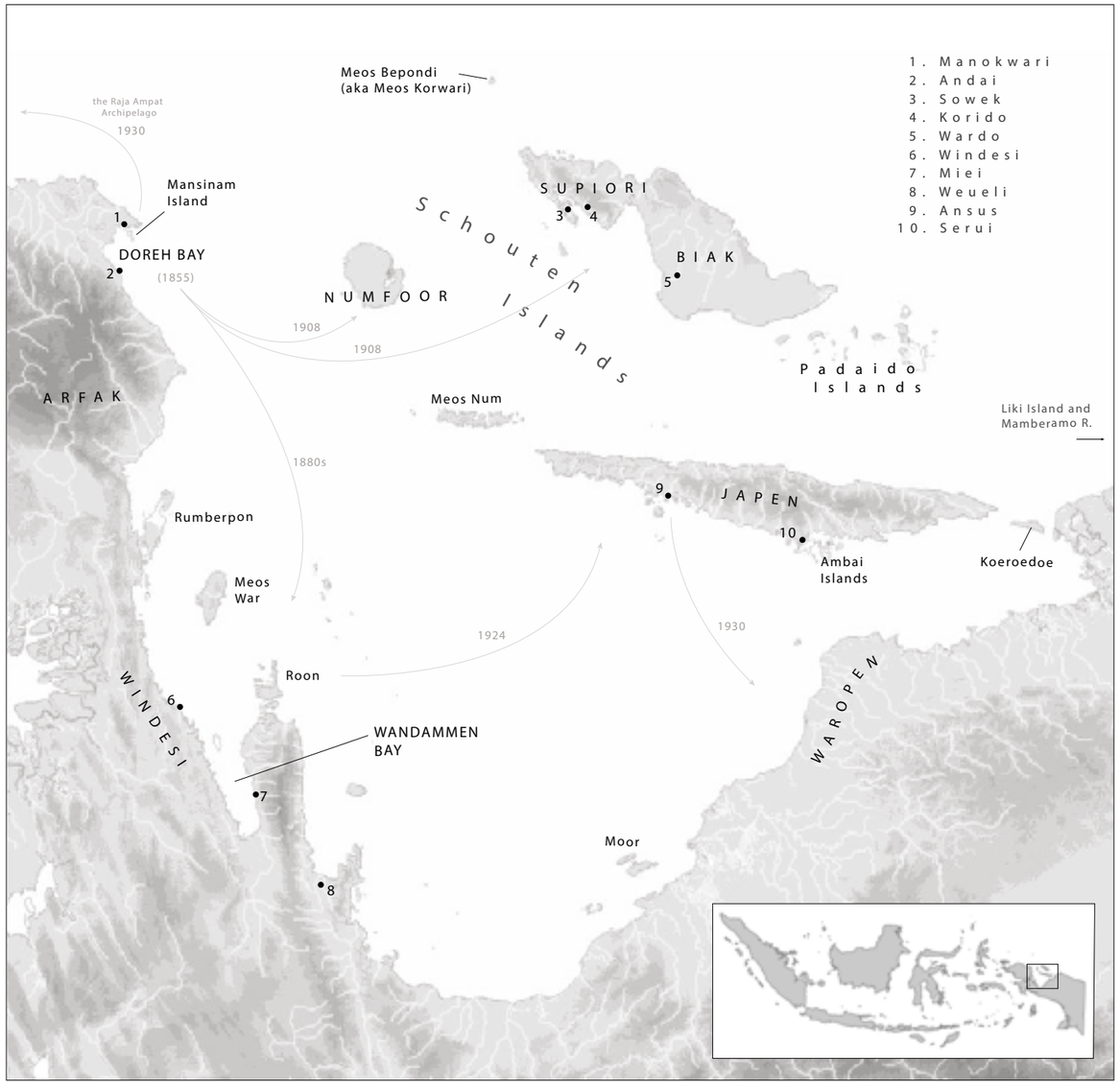


Fig. 1. Map of the Geelvink Bay (Teluk Cenderawasih). The arrows and dates in grey indicate the first substantial missionary incursion into a region, usually comprising the arrival of a residential missionary or an indigenous assistant missionary-cum-*teacher* (guru). *In the course of some 85 years Christianity spread, departing from Doreh Bay in the northwest, where the first missionaries arrived in 1855. In the present publication, geographic names are mostly used as encountered in the sources. Generally speaking, they correspond reasonably well to the current official orthography. For a map of the Raja Ampat archipelago, an emigration area of several Geelvink Bay ethnolinguistic groups and one of the last parts of the wider Geelvink Bay area to be Christianized (from* c.*1930 on), see p. 200.*

Collecting and converting

In 1885 the first missionaries arrived at the Geelvink Bay (now called Teluk Cenderawasih, lit.: Bird of Paradise Bay).* They established themselves on Mansinam, a tiny island in Doreh Bay, among the largest ethnic group in this region, the Biak. The latter were mainly home to the Schouten Islands, comprising Biak, Supiori, Numfoor and the Padaido Atoll. Biak settlements had been founded in various other parts of the Geelvink Bay, too, for example: Doreh Bay, Meos War Island, Yapen Island and Koeroedoe Island. A significant number of Biak migrated many moons ago to the Raja Ampat archipelago, located *c.*400 km away in the far west of New Guinea.

The Geelvink Bay measures *c.*250 km both from the west to the east and from the north to the south. The population numbers during the late 19th century are not exactly known. However, certain sources suggest, at a very rough estimate, that at least *c.*25,000-30,000 souls inhabited the islands and the shores of the bay in its entirety.** The subsistence economy mainly revolved around men hunting and fishing and women gardening. In terms of social structure, ritual life and cosmology, "the peoples of the Geelvink Bay coasts [were] homogeneous enough to consider this entire region as one culture area" (Held 1947: 240). This in spite of the fact that this multi-ethnic and multi-lingual region presented a mixture of Austronesian and Papuan languages as well as culture elements.

In his sketch of traditional Biak sociality F.C Kamma (1972: 11 ff.; cf. Rutherford 1997, 2003) stresses exchanges of marriage partners and marriage gifts between clans (*keret****) and sub-clans. These and other social relations were characterized by a mixture of loyalty and hostility, cooperation and conflict. On one side we see the individual's father and the latter's clan members, on the other side there was the mother's clan with the individual's maternal uncle, who had officiated as bride-giver. Together, clan heads constituted a council of elders (*kankein kakara*). They often carried titles (e.g., *sengadji*, *capitan, major*) bestowed on them by the *sultan* of Tidore (Moluccas), who loosely controlled this region until the consolidation of Dutch colonial rule towards the end of the 19th century.

Among the various Papuan peoples of Northwest New Guinea, the Biak were the most strongly oriented towards the sea. As voyaging entrepreneurs, they spent much time on ships, undertaking lengthy sea journeys in order to maintain family relations, to trade, and to carry out raids aimed at seizing slaves and human

* The time-honoured name, Geelvink Bay, is retained in the present publication as it is found in all the cited sources. Asterisks in the main text mark footnotes on the same page, superscript numbers refer to endnotes (see pp. 380-1). The footnotes contain side remarks, the endnotes specify cited sources.

** Estimates of population numbers mentioned in various sources vary. Administrative reports dating from the early decades of the 20th century avoid estimates. A rough assessment of the situation in *c.*1900 as to the four most densely populated islands or regions would amount at least *c.*8000 souls for Yapen Island, and at least *c.*6000 each for (a) the Schouten Islands, (b) the Waropen Coast and (c) the Wandammen Bay area. Certain early estimates for Yapen are much higher (e.g., Rosenberg 1875); a certain diachronic variation may have occurred here.

*** Words from local languages in the present publication, rendered in italics, originate from the Biak (aka Biak-Numforese) language (van Hasselt & van Hasselt 1947) unless otherwise noted.

Fig. 2. A multi-family dwelling built on poles in Mansinam, a village located on the tiny eponymous isle in Doreh Bay, photographed during the late 19th century. Source: Beccari 1924.

heads. Trade products that, next to enslaved humans, moved westward during the late 19th century, through the hands of Papuan, Chinese, Malay and European traders, included *massoi* bark, resins, wild nutmeg, coconuts, amber, sea cucumbers, tortoiseshell, shark fins, mother-of-pearl, various birds, birds' nest, and bird plumes. Cloth, iron tools and weapons, rifles, trade beads, rice, salt, tobacco, Chinese ceramics, pigments and silver ornaments, among other products, moved eastward.

The busy trade network connected the Moluccas, the Raja Ampat archipelago, the Geelvink Bay and the northern New Guinea coast further east (Tiesler 1969-70; Ellen 2003; Warnk 2010). The trade in feathers and plumes of birds of paradise in particular, catering to markets in Europe and North America, loomed large in the Geelvink Bay area and peaked during the early 20th century, when at least ten thousand birds of paradise were killed here every year (Swadling 1996), mostly by Malay-speaking Muslims.

Biak men also acted as travelling blacksmiths, operating out of their boats and applying a technology which a few centuries ago had spread eastwards from the Moluccas (Kamma & Kooijman 1973; see below, pp. 344 ff.). Annual sea voyages to the Moluccas in the west were carried out in order to present the *sultan* of Tidore (west of Halmahera) with a tribute. Specific tattoos illustrated a Biak man's travels and added to his prestige (*Etna Rapport* 1862: 47). The Biak of the Raja Ampat archipelago (see the satelite view on p. 8-9) not only acted as intermediaries in the intensive trade relations between the East and West, they also kept in close contact with their kin and in-laws on the Schouten Islands in the Geelvink Bay, from which they originally hailed.

In this highly dynamic social setting so-called *korwar*s, woodcarvings embodying the souls of certain departed family members, were traditionally carved, kept in family dwellings, and interacted with often. Other intensively utilised ritual items discussed in the present publication include large spirit figures, amulets, headrests, and drums. The majority of the thousands of Geelvink Bay items kept in Dutch public collections were acquired through missionaries, expeditions and colonial officials. Countless objects from this region were sold at temporary missionary exhibitions held across the Netherlands, mainly during the first half of the 20th century. These items have travelled through, and still occasionally surface in, flea markets, antique shops and auctions. Nowadays they are mainly encountered in museum depots (Fig. 39) or in private collections (Figs. 48, 49).

On the other hand, countless Geelvink Bay artefacts have either (a) been destroyed in missionary settings, or (b) no longer exist because they were discarded once their ritual significance had expired, or (c) were left to rot away on grave sites (Fig. 9). In *c.*1885, in a cave located on Roon Island, missionary J. van Balen (1886: 562), for example, came across "many bones around both intact and derelict skulls as well as rotten korwars, and a skull korwar too."

Feuding and raiding

Prior to the Dutch establishing a government post* (Fig. 53) at Doreh Bay in 1898 the relations between ethnic groups residing in the Geelvink Bay were characterized by continuous violence, which mainly arose along two axes: north-south and coast-inland. It is not a complete coincidence that the magnificent Doreh Bay village scene depicted in Dumont d'Urville's (1835b) expedition report (Fig. 3) portrays a large group of armed males "preparing for battle", as the caption states.

Some 50 years later, when in 1876 missionary G. Bink commissioned his house to be built at Doreh Bay, a villager offered to temporarily lend him four korwars in order to protect the building from being set on fire by arrows fired by Arfak raiders (Fig. 302b) from the inland.[1] During the tumultuous early decades all missionaries kept pistols or rifles within reach, both at mission posts and when travelling.

The relations between the inhabitants of Numfoor Island and Doreh Bay in the north and Roon Island in the south were particularly tense:

> The various tribes are in conflict continuously, often driven by a lust for killing and raiding, sometimes by blood revenge, which cannot be abolished and passes from one generation to the next. When someone has been killed his kinsmen will not just target the murderer, who is almost impossible to find anyway, but his entire tribe – if only they can kill someone from the same tribe, guilty or not, man, woman or child (J. van Hasselt 1876: 193).

"The Windesi people deserve a severe punishment," two missionaries (Ottow & Geissler 1857a, n.p.) wrote,

> as long as we have been here, they have already raided and murdered around here [in Doreh Bay] five times. Once they beat three people from Arfak [inland, west of Doreh Bay] to death and captured another individual; later they murdered another two; the third time they took one man away here by force; the fourth time they murdered a man on Rumberpon Island; and finally, the fifth time, they seriously wounded three Arfu [Arfak] people and took them away as slaves. All of this in addition to similar deeds committed to the south of here. They make their living almost exclusively from raids.

Heads were taken as trophies and individuals captured in order to keep them as slaves or trade them westward. "We used to kill the men and take the women," a Biak man from the Raja Ampat archipelago boasted to a missionary during the 1930s (Kamma 1976: 617).

In their writings the missionaries stress the fierceness of the Roon Islanders in particular. This was a matter of survival, surrounded and outnumbered as the latter were by both the Papuans from Wandammen Bay to the south and those from the Windesi Coast to the west. In 1867 three Doreh Bay missionaries witnessed how a callous raid (*raak*) on Meos War Island** carried out by Wandammen Bay Papuans resulted in several casualties.[2]

The conviction that each and every fatality had to be revenged by taking a head caused longstanding feuds.[3] For decades on end, frequent mutual assaults and numerous atrocities occurred under the eyes of powerless missionaries, continuing even after Dutch colonial rule had been established in 1898.

In 1881 J. van Hasselt managed to organize a peace-making ceremony on open sea between the Doreh Bay and Roon Island Papuans, after 10-year-long feuds. However, hostilities were resumed a few years later. When missionary J. van Balen arrived in Windesi village in 1889 in order to establish a mission he observed "several bundles of [captured] skulls in each of the 17 family dwellings."[4] Van Balen complains that the Windesi men had resumed their raids, preceded as well as followed by wild rituals which during the 1890s regularly prevented him and his wife from falling asleep for nights on end.

Another missionary witnessed four severed heads in Doreh village in 1898, the very year a government post was opened in nearby Manokwari.[5] A missionary stationed on Roon Island observed "a series of 20 heads hung in one of the houses, their jawbones tethered to each other with rattan"[6] on a Sunday in 1900. Such observations abound in the missionary sources.

During a tour of duty in June 1888, F.S.A. de Clercq, a high-ranking administrator stationed in the Moluccas, also tried to put an end to the sustained feuding between Doreh village in Doreh Bay and Roon Island to the south: "At some point along the way I came across the *raak* [raiding party] from Roon and thus learned about a number of details [as to how weapons like spear, machete and bow and arrow were used]." Thanks to this intervention de

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* See Pouwer 1999 for a survey of the establishment of Dutch rule in West New Guinea.

** "Meos War Island" is strictly speaking a pleonasm; *meos* means "island".

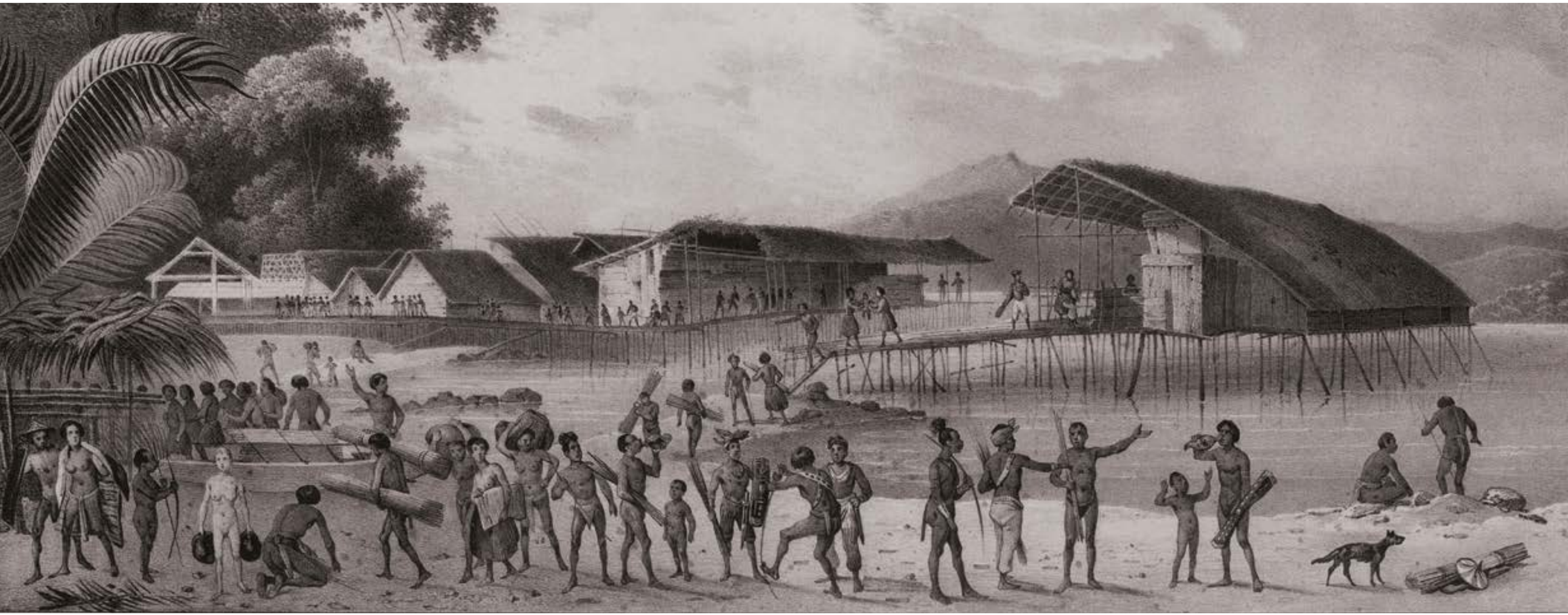

Fig. 3. "Dorey village with its inhabitants, preparing for battle," as witnessed by the crew of the French expedition vessel Astrolabe *between 26 August and 5 September 1817 in Doreh Bay. It remains unclear if this is the same village which later, under Dutch colonial rule, was known as Doreh. Armed conflicts and raids were endemic across the Geelvink Bay until the beginning of the 20th century. Various men carry bows or bundles of arrows. We also see swords and shields of the Moluccan type. Two men are sounding triton shell horns. Others - perhaps war/raid leaders* (mambri) *or representatives of the* sultan *of Tidore - don trousers. An albino girl carrying two pots is depicted in the foreground. What is happening in the back, on the scaffold built on poles in the water, is not entirely clear. Do we see European sailors, or perhaps Moluccan soldiers, handling (enslaved?) individuals tethered to a rope? Source: Dumont d'Urville 1835.*

Clercq, a passionate collector, was able to acquire a skull korwar on Roon from grateful islanders, but only "after considerable efforts; … wrapped in many leaves it was brought aboard in the midst of night, under the utmost secrecy" (de Clercq & Schmeltz 1893: 185; cf. de Clercq 1891: 137, 140).

While there was a great deal of violence between ethnic groups and villages, social life within the villages was marked by non-violent but nevertheless strong rivalry. Especially the *mambri* - prominent males who had proved themselves in battle and taken at least one head - pursued honour and prestige by trying to outwit their competitors in the village, even during religious performances. *Mambri* took the lead in armed conflicts, whereas ritual practitioners and healers did so in religious and magical affairs.

Head-hunting

Hunting human heads was a particularly gruesome act in the eyes of the first missionaries, all the more vexing because they were not able to put an end to this practice. Only after the Dutch government post was opened in Doreh Bay in 1898 offenders were actively prosecuted. In more remote areas head-hunting raids took place well into the 20th century. Numerous missionary sources describe these events in gory details. In an early report (Ottow & Geissler 1857a, n.p.), for example, we read:

> [The] band of heroes [*mambri*] travel by boat and hide themselves near the houses of the enemies. From their ambush they lie in wait for any enemy. When people from the enemy village appear, either to go on a trip or to do some other work, their way back is cut off and the fight begins. The victory more often than not is on the side of the attackers, because they usually are superior in numbers, up to ten or twenty times. On such occasions the Papuan is cruel to the highest degree: they know no mercy, and only children are spared by the seafarers, because they are used or sold as slaves.

It is amazing, another missionary comments in 1879, how during raids

> one gets excited or rather: how one seeks to expel each voice of human emotion, only keeping an eye on the head one sets off to hunt. The eyes, now seemingly afloat in blood, with the white of the eyes turned red, are persistently aimed at the razor-sharp machete, as if to say: you must do it! Yes, indeed the chopping knife has been observed being kissed and sniffed … one loves the blood, which in one's imagination is already seen as flowing. The women and children become the overall victims. The former usually are slain and their heads are carried off triumphantly. The children, if their arms or legs are not broken, are either later sold to the highest bidder or, if mutilated and therefore too difficult to carry, beheaded, as are as their mothers.[7]

One of the main goals of a head-hunting raid (*raak*)

> was the acquisition of a skull. In certain kampongs, when a successful *raak* returned with a skull, the fresh head was dried out over a small low fire during a slave feast, whereby the soft tissue was removed. Next the skull was tied to the central pole in the front part of the house. Elsewhere, the skull was simply placed in the tidal forest until the fleshy parts had decomposed. In Nubuai the skulls were hung in the trees located above the kampong … probably because they could not be stolen as easily as down in the village. The skull … was then exhibited on the central pole. To this very day, the flaunting suspension of skulls of crocodiles, manatees, turtle skin and heads or tails of very large fish, etc. from the same pole remains a tradition (Held 1947: 208).

The main reasons to head-hunt were: to seek revenge for a person killed by means of violence or black magic, under the pressure of the deceased's spirit; to rage over a fatal casualty; to seek revenge for a serious insult; to enhance one's prestige by acquiring skulls; to realize a threat in order to prevent loss of prestige; and to increase one's personal spiritual force (Kamma 1976: 466).

Missionary J. van der Roest complained in 1895 that men from the Windesi Coast had killed ten people during a raid, among them pregnant women. He also mentions that a number of his pupils participated, one of whom wore a korwar attached to a rope around his neck.[8] This was not even the first head-hunting incident that year.

Around the turn of the 20th century, too, missionary J. Metz, stationed at Andai village (south of Doreh Bay), witnessed one such event after the other for years on end, as all casualties had to be revenged. In particular he mentions the activities of a notorious raider named Kuri, whom he used to call "the bloodhound". Through the years this *mambri* (cf. Fig. 4) returned from inland raids with many severed heads, which were handled in a ritual manner:

> All flesh was removed from the head after which brown paint was applied to it, which was again covered with white stripes. If it concerned the chief of an enemy tribe these enemies were ridiculed and cursed through the head. If it concerned a person whose head had been taken by coincidence, under unforeseen favourable circumstances, the spirit of that person received an offering of rice and other food during the feast.[9]

Fig. 4 Two Doreh Bay mambri*: men of prowess who had proved themselves in battle and during raids. By means of feathers attached to their hair they used to proudly display the number of heads they had taken. Source:* Etna Rapport *1862.*

Fig. 5. Seven men armed with bow and arrow and a woman holding a paddle. This photograph was taken in Andai village, slightly south of Doreh Bay, probably during the late 19th century. Source: Beccari 1924.

Ritual life

Ritual life was intense and centred on communicating with spirits, including distant ancestors and relatively recently deceased family members. Kamma (1982) describes no less than 66 Biak rituals, individual ritual activities not included. All featured communal singing and dancing (*wor*; see Figs. 8, 251-2). Some examples: (a) birth, initiation, marriage, and funerary rites; (b) ceremonies held to effectuate the unharmed return from a raid; (c) gatherings for consulting ancestors and other spirits; (d) rituals accompanying the first use of a dug-out; (e) the anointing of a bride and bridegroom with oil.

There were also rituals pertaining to peace-making, to making slaves wear foot cuffs (cf. p. 332 ff.), to trying out a new house, and for protection during sea voyages. The *wor fayakik robenei* comprised "showing a new-born baby to valuables, i.e., bringing the new-born into contact or within sight of solid or shining valuables," in particular heirlooms such as Chinese or European platters and brass gongs (*ibid.*).

The ethnologist G.J. Held (1947: 138-9), active in the Geelvink Bay region during the 1930s, observes:

> Travellers who are getting acquainted with the Papuan festivities soon become weary of the boring songs and the monotonous drumming … The religious dancing feasts don't enchant by well taken movements full of expression. Most myths are not performed as drama, but simply sung, while the row of dancers advances at a quick pace, without ever ending … [Yet] when they are quiet the Papuan villages can also charm, for example when plumes of smoke arise to the red evening sky from the dark houses underneath, wind and water are mute and the trees stand motionless. How enjoyable are, at such moments, the melodies of the prahus which are rowed into safety. How pleasant the light of fires and torches can make the oiled bodies shine when one is drawn to a dancing feast by the roaring of drums and gongs!

A key ceremony called *fan Nanggi* was performed by indigenous ritualists. While looking upwards with widespread arms or arms stretched forwards, the palms in both cases held upwards,* they addressed *manseren*

* The same gestures are made by large spirit effigies (see Figs. 194 ff.) and some korwars (e.g., Fig. 170).

Fig. 6. Biak from Numfoor Island in ritual attire going ashore near the village of Manokwari (Doreh Bay) in 1948. The photographer is presumed to be the Dutch ethnologist K.W. Galis. Source: J. Hoogerbrugge Archive.

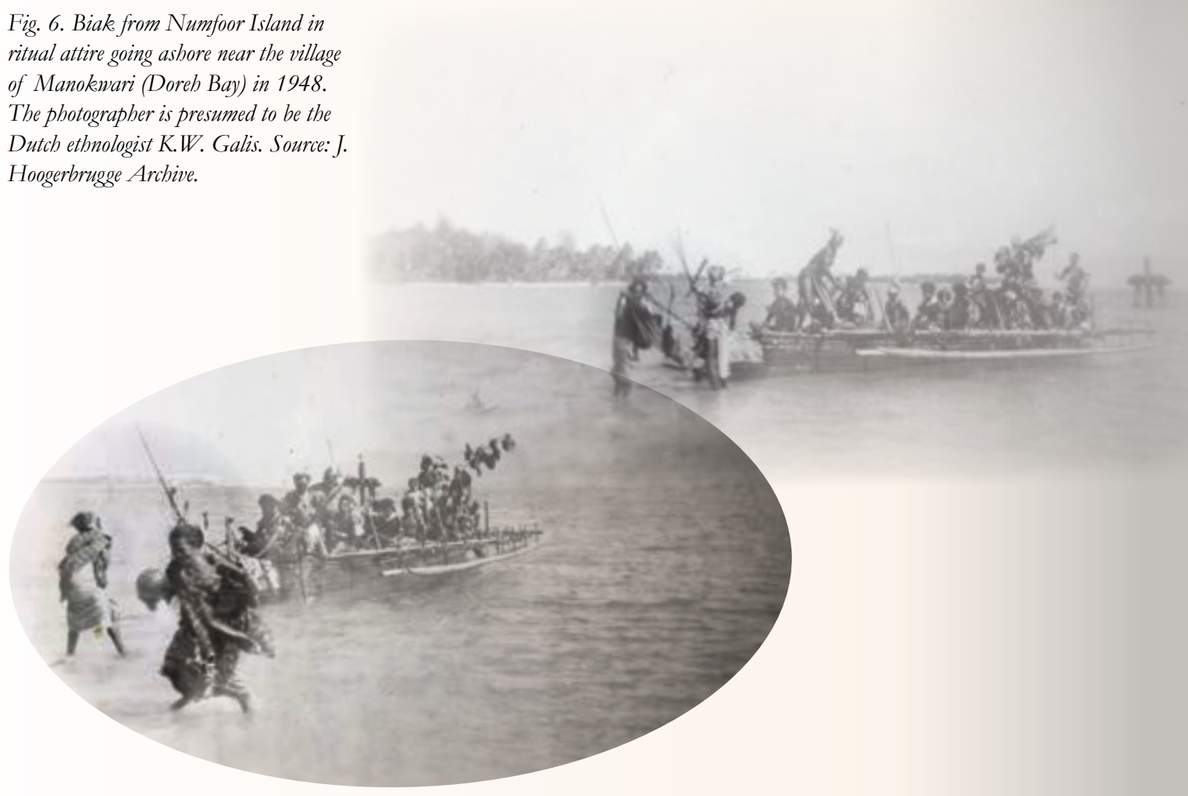

Fig. 7. The mission vessel Utrecht*, stationed in Doreh Bay; photograph taken on the shores of Numfoor Island in 1914. Source: J. Hoogerbrugge Archive.*

*Fig. 8. Papuans from Serui, a large settlement located on the southwest coast of Yapen, perform a communal ritual dance (*wor*) during the late 1930s. Source: Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Inv. nr. TM-10006141.*

("Lord") Nanggi, the paramount deity. "The central power in the universe is Nanggi (the firmament, the starry sky)," Kamma (1972: 14-5) comments,

> some *keret* [clans] identify it with the sun. The only total ritual is the *fan Nanggi* (feeding of the Sky) conducted in times of scarcity and uncertainty. The [priest], who conducts the ritual standing on a scaffolding beside the sacrifices, senses by means of the vibration of his arms that the sacrifice has been accepted. In a state of trance, possessed by Nanggi, he officiates as an oracle, prophesying coming events, removing uncertainties concerning the fate of absent individuals, and delivering good as well as bad tidings. Hunting and fishing tools are laid at the foot of the scaffolding to be "blessed" by the descending Nanggi.

Manseren Nanggi was associated with the Sun and the eagle (cf. Fig. 181):

> Certain Biak groups still follow a sun cult which the majority has confused with the cult of Nanggi, the firmament. The still existing cult of the eagle, which is associated with the Sun, bears witness to this. The name Boryasdi ("the one from above") is neutral; it may mean the sun, but also Nanggi. Among most Biak and Numfoor people it has come to mean the latter, but the Numfoor people tend to replace Nanggi with the divine ancestors, whom they also call Mon Beba. Among the Biak people there has probably been a historical development from Sun worship to the worship of Nanggi, while the mythical ancestors in their turn may take the place of the latter (Kamma 1972: 90).

Funerary rituals

Korwars were created in order to lodge one of the two "souls"* of a deceased family member. It is therefore useful to briefly look into the lengthy and complex funerary rituals performed in the Geelvink Bay. Kamma (1976: 228-33) discusses 11 episodes of the Biak funerary ritual in detail, the 10th of which comprised carving the korwar, in five sub-steps. All along, mourning songs extensively praised the virtues and deeds of the beloved deceased.

In the northern and the southern parts of the Geelvink Bay corpses were treated in quite a dissimilar way. Across the northern part most corpses were either wrapped in plaited mats and buried, to then be exhumed once they had decayed, or, alternatively, were left to decompose in the woods on a small platform (*para para*; cf. J. van Hasselt 1876: 189). In both cases the bones were next placed in a cave or crevice (Fig. 9), or scattered on the isle of Meos Bepondi, near Supiori Island, where they were "deposed without any system, here and there mixed with weathered korwars which are rotting away" (Meyer 1875b: 26-7). The local population had no clear conception of what happened to the ancestral spirit housed in the korwar ancestor figure when it was no longer venerated and had been discarded along with the scattered bones of the deceased (*ibid.*).*

Meos Bepondi (aka Meos Karwari), the Island of the Dead, served as sacred burial grounds for many Biak groups. This *c.*2.5 km long island, located northwest of Supiori, was "the place where souls go immediately after dying because this is where they have to set off to the Land of the Souls" (Feuilletau de Bruyn 1920: 88 ff.; see Fig. 35 and the map on p. 10). In 1952, missionary F.C. Kamma came across a huge pile of bones measuring 12 x 15 m and 2 m high, situated on the high eastern shore of Meos Bepondi. The Biak

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* "Soul" is a notion from western theology and religion which here serves as a pragmatic approximation of an indigenous view. It is also not entirely clear to what extent "*two* souls" is a correct rendering. Perhaps there were two ways in which a deceased individual could appear or contacted, or two places - in the korwar and on the bottom of the sea - were a deceased individual continued to exist?

* This observation is important methodologically. There was so much variation, ambiguity, creative *ad hoc* invention and historical change in, e.g., Biak cosmological discourse, next to more consistent recurring elements, that one sometimes wonders if the major Biak ethnographer, F.C. Kamma, may not have overinterpreted to some degree. "The ideas they have of the spirit world," J. van Hasselt writes (1888: 29), concurring with Meyer, "are very vague. Questions they usually answer saying they don't know."

Fig. 9. A ridge in a chalk cliff with skeletal remains, including human skulls, located near Wardo on the south coast of Biak Island; mid-20th century. Source: Photographic archive of the Zendingshuis (Protestant missionary headquarters) Oegstgeest, now kept at Het Utrechts Archief.

of Kiamdori village (located on the northern coast of Supiori) referred to themselves as immigrants from Meos Bepondi, "where their moons [*mon*s, cf. pp. 213 ff.] once stood, wooden, ithyphallic effigies connected to ancestor worship" (Feuilletau de Bruyn 1920: 89). Sailing the rough waters between Supiori Island and Meos Bepondi was considered dangerous due to the presence of evil spirits (*faknik*), who had to be addressed by means of appropriate rituals and boating songs.* Whenever ships ran aground "[the] usual routine applied to those aboard was to kill the men and to take the women as additional wife or slave" (*ibid.*).

The Biak dealt differently with the corpses of prominent individuals: wrapped in cloth and plaited mats, they were put either in a prahu on poles or in a boat-shaped wooden coffin. In due course, once all the soft tissues had decomposed, the coffin would be replaced by a smaller box containing the bones. In some cases the skull received special treatment and was placed in a korwar. The wooden ossuary (*aba*; Fig. 10) was usually shaped as a miniature vessel or as a miniature house, the latter with a roof and, often, two sculpted korwars depicted at its far ends. The ritual accompanying the construction of an *aba* was referred to as *bafafos aba kor* (de Clercq 1891: 140; Kamma 1976: 232-3). The remains of enslaved individuals, on the other hand, were either thrown into the sea unceremoniously, with a stone tied to the neck, or left in a shallow grave for dogs to devour (J. van Hasselt 1876: 191).

Across the southern Geelvink Bay as opposed to the north, a corpse was usually drained from bodily fluids by means of several incisions. Next, it was

* See the front flap of the dust jacket of the present publication for two examples.

Fig. 10. Mourning widow squatting next to an ossuary (aba) *in the shape of a ship on which the soul travelled after death. Wari village, located on the north coast of Biak. Source: van der Sande 1907.*

> fried above a fire until [its flesh] is entirely consumed. The skin, which loosens by the heat of the fire, is kept carefully and finally wrapped in blue cotton together with the consumed body. The corpse is hung from the ceiling inside the house until it has rotten away by the moisture which reaches it and the cotton has fallen apart too. Only then it is removed from the house, but not buried. A small hut is built in the forest to which the body is carried in a ceremonial way. From then onwards it is not looked after anymore, and forgotten (Ottow & Geissler 1857b: n.p.).

Missionary J. van Balen describes what transpired on the Windesi Coast when, during the 1880s, a young girl had fallen from a coconut tree to her instant death:

> Hardly ever I saw more passionate mourning among Papuans than in this particular case … Singing the mourning complaint the mother kept walking to and fro, the little corpse tied to her back, while the father chopped up everything: a boat, fruit trees, pots, wooden cups, etc. During twelve days they carried the little body about. Subsequently they positioned it in the little 'house for the dead' and started to make the korwar. The wood was carved and by the light of torches the skull of the child was brought and placed in the korwar.[10]

At the same time their relatives donned mourning caps made of plaited bark, as depicted in Fig. 11 and encountered in other parts of the Geelvink Bay too.

One very hot day during the 1880s, when van Balen still was stationed on Roon Island, a loud bang from behind the mission post startled him. A decaying body had been placed on a small outcrop, only 20 m away, not shielded from the Sun to then explode because of gases produced by the breakdown of soft tissue. The remainder was scavenged on by birds. However, the old man's skull ended up in a korwar.[11]

a

b

c

d

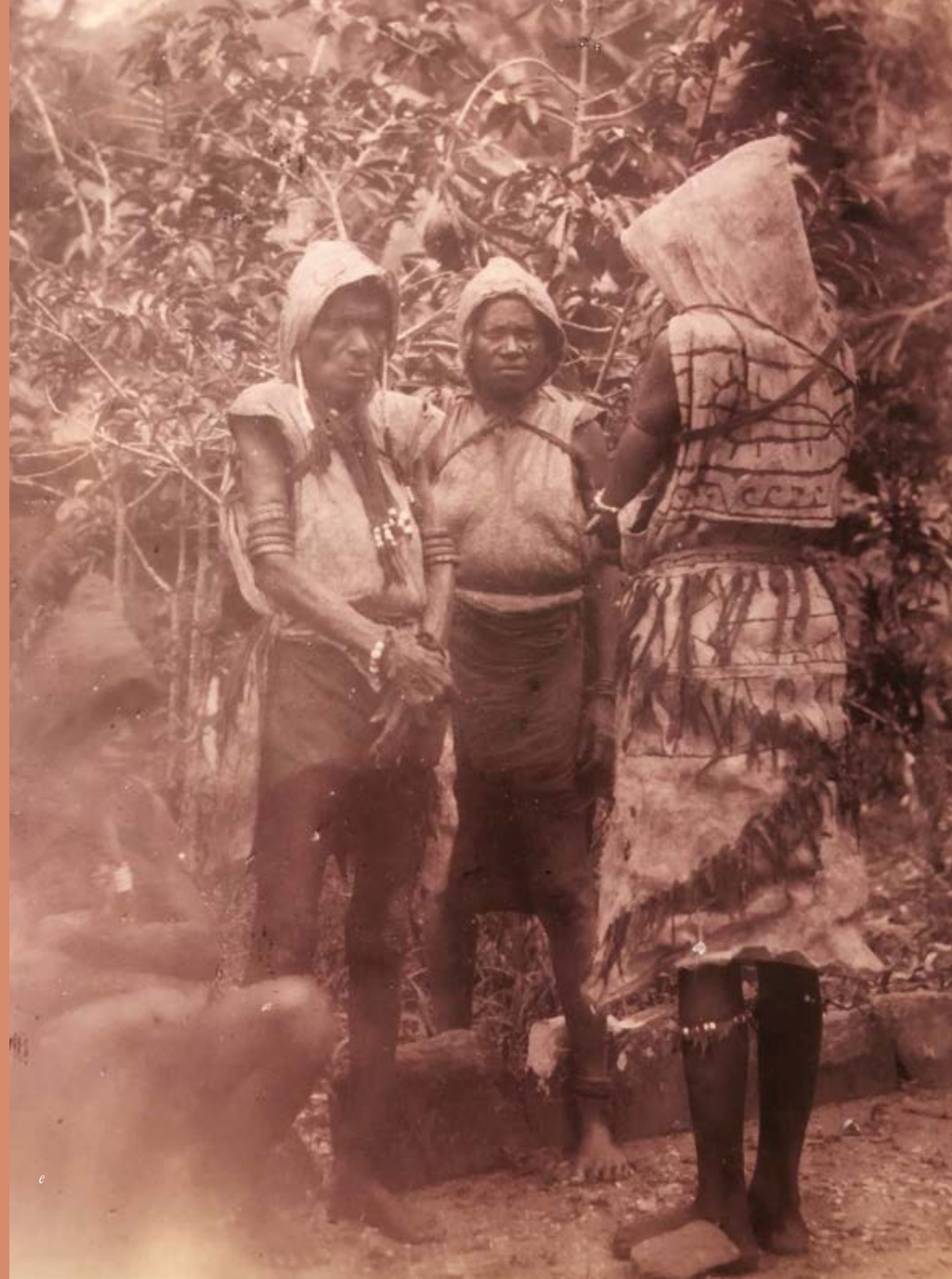
Fig. 11. Four photographs (a-d) taken by missionary J. van Balen, probably during the 1890s, show scenes related to the same funeral ceremony performed in Windesi village on the Windesi Coast.

We see: (a) the corpse, wrapped in cotton, being transported by boat; (b) the corpse lying on a bier next to the grave; (c) the deceased's mother, sister and an enslaved female wearing and fabricating plaited mourning coats; and (d) the deceased male's personal possessions placed on his grave in order to to serve him after his death. These items include kitchen gear related to the preparation of sago (the box with eight pigeon holes); wooden and plait work boxes in which the deceased kept his personal properties, among other items amulets, fishing gear, and a large triton shell cut out for blowing.

The wrapped corpse, knees pointing upwards, lacks the skull, which was positioned in a wooden korwar shortly before this burial, after the soft body tissues had been left to decay in the forest. The white armbands (samfar) *worn by the mourning woman in the middle (c) are made of conus shell.*

The fifth photograph (e) shows widows wearing mourning caps on Roon Island. It was made much later, during the late 1940s, probably by the Dutch ethnologist K.W. Galis. A hand written caption mentions that "this has never been photographed and it was not easy to obtain their permission. They almost never show themselves." Mourning caps are rare in present-day collections because they would be burned when the mourning period ended.

Source of photographs a-d: Snelleman 1906a, with information based on personal communication with J. van Balen. The fifth photograph (e) is from the J. Hoogerbrugge Archive.



e

What is a *korwar*

The two main kinds of ritual effigies encountered in the Geelvink Bay region, and linked to a two-tiered ritual practice, were: (a) *korwar*s i.e., relatively small wooden figures kept indoors portraying family members who had recently deceased and (b) *mon*s, mostly much larger figures depicting deities or primeval clan ancestors, and mainly kept in clan shrines. Both types of effigies acted as intermediaries between humans and the spirit world.*

Detailed information on the meaning and functions of korwars abounds in missionary records. One of the earliest commentaries was provided by two missionaries in *c.*1865 (Ottow & Geissler 1857b: 99-100). The korwar

> is usually made in human form, is about a foot to a foot and a half high, and is always manufactured on the occasion of the dying of a member of the family. … [Its goal] seems to be to prepare a new dwelling-place for the soul of the departed. [It] is highly honoured, and offerings are made to it to propitiate the good-will of the departed, that they may be preserved from evil spirits. At the death of a male, a male Karowar, and at the death of a female, a female figure or Karowar is fabricated. … The head is generally very large and the legs are very small in proportion; the mouth, which is half open, is as wide as the whole face. The eyes are made of colored beads.

Creating a korwar, the missionaries continue,

> is itself a religious act, and always combined with religious feasts. When made it is either left in the house or put on the grave, and the offerings made to it consist of pieces of cloth, tobacco, or beads, especially when there is some important undertaking, for the success of which supernatural help is sought. It is not deemed a favorable omen if the person making the offering whilst sitting before the Karowar sneezes or trembles. If a storm arises … the Papuan prays to his Karowar, and to secure a safe journey it is adorned with new pieces of cloth.

J. van Hasselt's son, Frans J.F. van Hasselt, who as a missionary joined his father in 1894, reports:

> *Korwar*, also *karwar*, has several meanings. The original meaning is "deceased", i.e. passed away, not murdered. … The second meaning … is the soul effigy [in Dutch: *zielebeeldje*] which represents the deceased person. In regions where the Numfoor or [very similar] Biak language is spoken the word *korwar* refers to the dead person, not to the soul effigy. The latter is called *airoò* in Sor; *arbu* and *amfianir* in Urembo; *bekekba* in Sambeer; and *roifarbu* on Meos War [Island].[12]

* The *mon*s will dealt with separately on pp. 213 ff.

Completing a korwar comprised an elaborate ritual cycle which usually lasted several days and involved communication with numerous ancestral and non-ancestral spirits. For those born first, even if they had passed away at a very young age, korwars were carved from the hardest wood available, for all those not born first softer wood was applied, F. van Hasselt writes (*ibid.*); here he may primarily refer to Biak practices. The condition of korwars made of softer wood deteriorated more rapidly.

Korwars carried individual names often reflecting the characteristics of the deceased individual they embodied (Beck 1999-2000: 76). They could be consulted directly by family members of the deceased or by intervention of an indigenous ritualist, as was apparently a tradition on Roon Island.[13] Korwars were believed to be able to avert real life and spiritual dangers and to assist supplicants with all kinds of problems, even if pertaining to taking someone's life (Kamma 1972: 135).

Missionary Albert de Neef (n.d.: 20 ff.) describes an encounter on Numfoor Island with a spirit priest called Kemon during the 1930s. While chanting to certain spirits, this religious practioner was in the process of completing a korwar for the soul of a recently deceased boy. Not much later Kemon addressed the boy through the korwar, requesting him to travel to Meos Bependi, the Island of the Dead (see above, pp. 21-2). He also asked the boy to send to him his (Kemon's) helper spirit, called Rumanbraundi, who then entered Kemon's body and spoke through him.

F. van Hasselt mentions that, generally speaking, spirit priests (*tooverpriesters*)

> receive this title because they are possessed by some Mon [spirit, deity]; … they claim to act under the influence of their Mon. This Mon is summoned by producing specific noises. Among the Numforese it is usual to tick on old porcelain dishes, or to sound drums. The priest then enters into trance and speaks under the influence of his Mon. In everyday life the spirit priests are common villagers who make a living by fishing, foraging and the like.[14]

It has been suggested that a korwar's sitting position may be related to the tradition of burying the corpse in a seated position with the knees held against the breast, in a plaited mat. According to villagers home to Meos Bependi, the deceased sit down on the beach of the Underworld (*jenaibu*) to gaze at the land of the living (*in casu* Supiori Island; Kamma 1976: 195).

Fig. 12. Four korwars (cf. Fig. 144) and a korwar amulet (cf. Fig. 205) kept at a Protestant lower secondary school (Primaire Middelbare School) *at Kota Radja near Hollandia (present-day Jayapura), 1950s. During the mid-20th century korwars and other items regularly changed hands in the Netherlands New Guinea at small-scale fairs* (bazaars)*, organized by the Protestant mission in order to raise funds. Source: J. Hoogerbrugge Archive.*

Sources dating from the early decades of the Doreh Bay mission also mention that, especially among well-to-do families, small wooden house models were positioned in the woods in order to temporarily house the souls of the recently deceased, before they moved into the korwar. Women once danced with such multicolour miniature dwellings, which were cut from a single block of wood.*

* These miniature soul houses are not to be confused with the ossuaries (*aba*s) discussed on pp. 22-3. Notably, not even a single example of such a soul house was encountered during the research conducted in preparation of the present publication.

Korwar "style areas"

Typologies of korwars in terms of regions sharing similar body postures, styles and iconographic traits have been presented by Serrurier (1898), Nuoffer (1908), Gerbrands (1951) and van Baaren (1968).** The maps of style areas they come up with overlap considerably. The majority of the dissimilarities between their proposals can be attributed to ambiguous, slight and/or gradual differences between style areas as well as the varied criteria applied when categorizing.

Five different korwar styles will be distinguished here, more or less in accordance with this scholarly tradition. A quick check of some major dictionaries

** See also Uhle 1886, de Clercq & Schmeltz 1893, Kooijman n.d.

yields a straightforward definition of the notion of "style", in particular as used in art history, ethnology and archaeology. "Style" refers to a specific way of fabricating or constructing something - sculpture, a building, a painting, etc. - which is characteristic of a particular period, region, individual or movement, and results in a distinctive appearance, reflecting the principles according to which something is designed or done. This distinctive appearance permits the grouping of works into various categories - here korwar style regions. Stylistically, a korwar can, for example, be executed naturalistically or more abstractly; in smooth shapes or with sharp angles.

Allocating korwars without a known origin to specific areas can be complicated due to factors such as migrations,* historical change, and the fact that the location where Europeans acquired an item was not necessarily its place of origin. An example of the latter phenomenon is Doreh Bay, the first port of call for European ships and thus a major acquisition point for korwars, often through missionaries here. When trading, inhabitants of Ansus (SW Yapen), another major port in the Geelvink Bay, are known to have offered korwars for sale in Doreh Bay and on Meos War Island during the early days of the mission. Korwars the Biak took with them on sea voyages did not always return to their places of origin (e.g., the korwar in Fig. 171). The missionary sources also mention korwars being sold as (spirit-)slaves.

Fig. 13 displays various types of korwars characteristic of four of the five regions the majority of aforementioned authors discern. The choice of korwars depicted here has been slightly biased, stressing similarities within and differences between these regions. The map nevertheless suggests that the concepts "core style" and "core style area" make sense and apparently work, at least roughly and intuitively. An attempt to account for each and every korwar encountered in each of these regions, on the other hand, has resulted in classificatory schemes on occasion so convoluted they are no longer of any help.

* The village of Dusner, in the eastern Wandammen Bay, for example, was originally a Biak settlement, whereas a Waropen enclave had been founded on the southern coast of Wandammen Bay. Salawati Island (in the Raja Ampat archipelago) was partly inhabited by people hailing from Meos War Island who had left the Geelvink Bay because of continuous raids.

In the present publication the following five style areas are differentiated:

(1) the **Doreh Bay** region, including a stretch of the New Guinea coast to its north and northwest;

(2) the **Wandammen Bay** region and the Windesi Coast, including the multi-ethnic island Roon and part of the southern shores of the Geelvink Bay further to the east (including the Yaur region);

(3) the **Schouten Islands** (comprising Numfoor, Supiori, Biak and the Padaido Atoll) as well as several places the Biak people had migrated to e.g., the northern coast of Yapen and the Amberbaken Coast located to the northwest of Doreh Bay;**

(4) **Yapen Island**, including the Waropen Coast to its south, but excluding most of Yapen's northern coast, populated by many Biak people (several parts of Yapen, including Ansus and Ambai, seem to have had a specific sub-style***);

(5) the **Raja Ampat archipelago**, a major Biak emigration region.

By and large, it is not that difficult to allocate a korwar to one of these distinctive styles, with the exception of the Schouten Islands (#3) and Yapen (#4) styles, which the untrained eye cannot easily discern. However, several rather consistent differences between the two areas can be observed, as will be argued below (pp. 102 ff. and pp. 158 ff.).

Along the northeast coast of the eastern half of New Guinea, the material culture was much more specific geographically rather than linguistically (Tiesler 1969-1970; Welsch, Terrell & Nadolsky 1992). What mattered, in other words, was not so much the language the people spoke but the area where they lived. The art produced in a certain region created tended to be homogeneous in spite of

** The American ethnologist Wilhelm G. Solheim (1985) studied funerary practices on the northern coast of Biak during the mid-1970s. Near Padwa village he recovered 28 korwars, affected by the test of time, from a ledge of a 200 m-long chalk cliff which contained two cemeteries. This find struck him as so variegated he expresses skepticism as to the possibility of unambiguous geographical attribution in general. However, upon inspection all korwars he depicts (see his Figs. 185-90) fit the Schouten Islands spectrum discussed in the present publication.

*** In his later work, van Baaren (1992) found it difficult to understand the ritual art of Yapen on the basis of data available at that time, and thus does not consider it a separate style area.

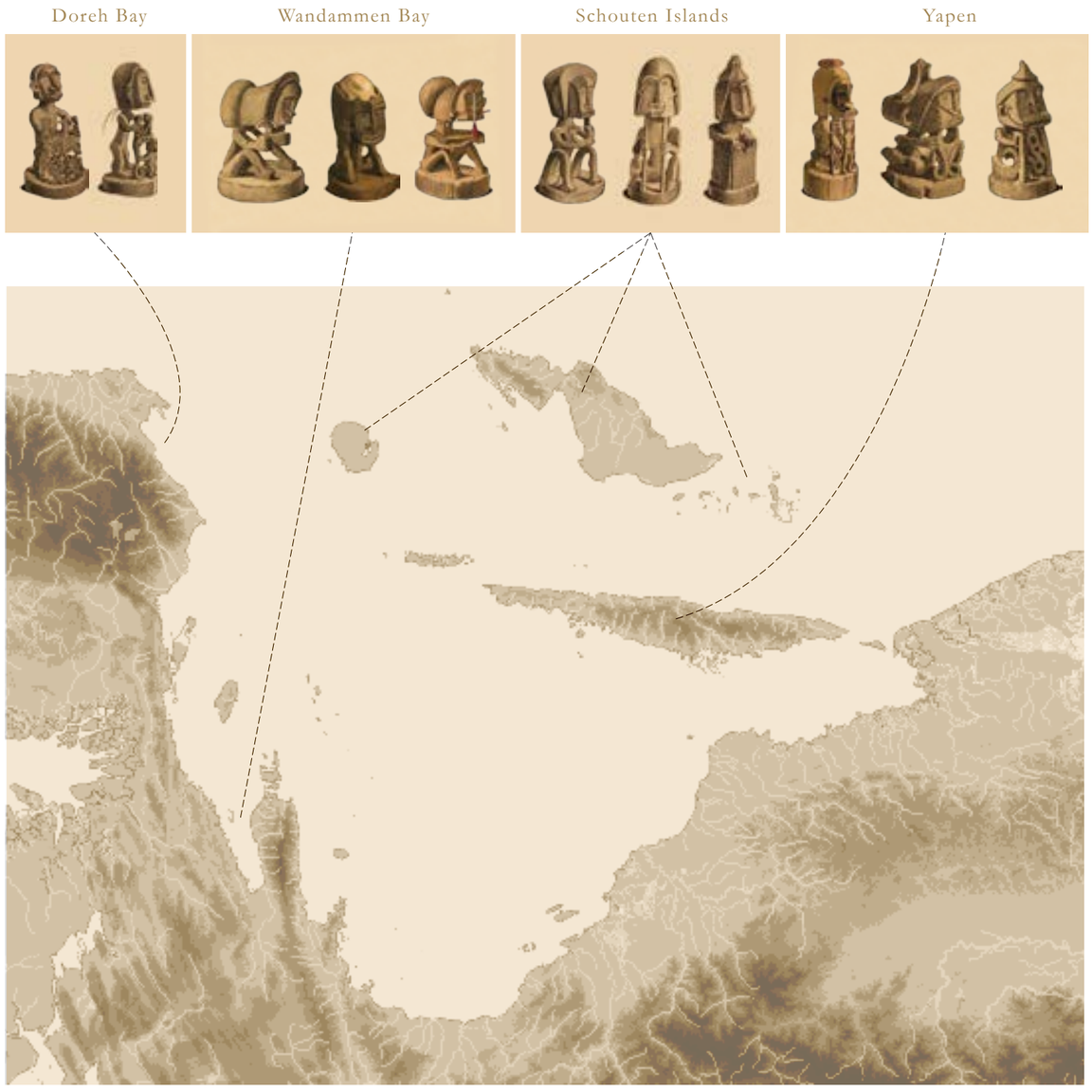


Fig. 13. Map showing four of the five korwar style areas distinguished in the present publication, with a few characteristic examples for each region. For the fifth style area, see Fig. 167. Source of the korwar drawings: de Clercq & Schmeltz 1893, Plates XXXIV and XXXV.

linguistic and ethnic heterogeneity. This assessment apparently also applied to the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic Geelvink Bay, as observations by G.J. Held and F.C. Kamma suggest. For example, Biak residing on shores outside the Schouten Islands adopted or were influenced by local styles. As with the northeast coast of New Guinea, the Geelvink Bay comprised "a community of culture within which people shared a more or less homogeneous material-culture complex but not a common language. Lack of a lingua franca did not prevent them from interacting with one another and sharing in a common pool of material products and cultural practices" (Welsch, Terrell & Nadolsky 1992: 591).

The characteristics and variability of korwars from the abovementioned five regions are discussed in separate sections. A sixth stylistic area, not included here, would arguably be the MacCluer Gulf (Röder 1959; Kooijman 1962). It comprises a small number of rather crudely carved ancestor figurines somewhat resembling Geelvink Bay korwars, mostly not actively venerated.

The difficulty of geographic attribution is compounded by the fact that, as mentioned, two of the five core stylistic areas, to wit the Schouten Islands and the Yapen region, are far from homogeneous. They include certain sub-styles specific to clans, villages, isles or geographically isolated nooks and crannies. "My father and [F.J.] Jens [at the time of writing both residing in the Netherlands] can effortlessly spot the difference between korwars from Numfoor Island and Biak", Frans van Hasselt wrote in 1909 in a letter referring to one of his shipments of confiscated ritual art.[15]

An in-depth discussion of each and every sub-style, however, lies beyond the remit of the present publication. This is perhaps, indeed, a rather impossible undertaking in view of the gradual or mosaiced style transitions now and again observed between areas, as well as the fact that korwars tended to travel. Nevertheless the below survey of korwar styles (pp. 81 ff.) offers occasional observations on sub-styles. The survey can also serve whenever attributing korwar amulets - often similar in style - to specific regions (pp. 249 ff.).

How many korwars are there?

At a rough estimate, how many "genuine" korwars (i.e., created within a ritual context, when someone passed away) have been preserved, in private and public collections, attics, galleries, and the like? Let us venture an educated guess in order to establish a ballpark figure. Two approaches are possible (to wit, 1 and 2, see below). Will the outcome of these two estimates be more or less the same?

(1) Around **300** korwars are curated in Dutch museums, the majority hereof in the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Research executed in preparation of the present publication suggests that, in addition to these 300, perhaps ***c.*200** are housed at non-Dutch institutional collections worldwide, dispersed in modest quantities across museums located in Indonesia, Germany, Denmark, France, Italy, the United States, etc.

Moreover, the present author has direct or indirect knowledge of the existence of ***c.*100** korwars in private collections and/or private ownership (including gallery stocks). Let's assume another **200** korwars are to be found within similar contexts the author is unaware of. All in all this adds up to an estimated ***c.*800** preserved korwars.

This number requires a correction, as it is obvious that certain korwars are indeed not *korwar kaku* (lit.: genuine, authentic korwars), created within a ritual context to play a role in a case of a death, but *korwar wawerik*: freshly cut woodcarvings manufactured to be sold (see pp. 34-5). The latter objects lack such characteristics as signs of wear, proof of a prolonged stay in a damp interior, a somewhat substantial patina, and/or surface modifications due to rubbing with oil or food offerings.

The outcome of a quick on-line assesment of the korwars in the Dutch national holdings - probably a representative sample - yields items that are clearly either *kaku* (i.e., the real thing), or *wawerik* (i.e., "nonsense", as serious aficionados prefer to phrase it), or difficult to categorize. Factors such as the event that certain authentic korwars may have had a limited (ritual) use life, may have been kept very carefully (e.g., wrapped in cloth), may have been made from a species of wood that does not patinate quickly, etc. compound matters. Let us now, based on an inspection of the Dutch national collection, subtract one in four items, that is 200 korwars, from the abovementioned ballpark figure of 800.

Hence, all in all, the estimate of **600 preserved korwars**, currently present in private as well as public collections, attics, galleries, and the like.

(2) Demography (i.e., the study of the dynamics of a living population) provides an alternative possibility of arriving at an approximation of the number of preserved korwars. Here again, although numerous uncertainties are encountered, a rough estimate may be feasable.

Let us look into the time span 1870-1930 and focus on the major korwar producing regions of the Geelvink Bay, to wit, the Schouten Islands and Yapen Island. In these 60 years, these two regions combined were inhabited by at least *c.*14.000 souls, on average. For this population, let us assume a death rate of 30 per 1000 people every year, which is approximately twice as much as is witnessed in western countries nowadays, and roughly in line with statistical data pertaining to foraging and horticulturalist societies in historical times.

Processing the above data yields 420 deaths yearly for the area now under consideration, and *c.*25.000 deaths on the whole for the entire time span 1870-1930. However, the sources clearly indicate that a mere fraction of these deaths involved the ritual carving of korwars. They were mostly only created for individuals of a certain standing, the first-born, and the like. Here, once again, we are dealing with uncertainties. Nevertheless, the missionary sources suggest that a korwar was carved for approx. one in eight deaths. Rounded, the outcome is that **slightly over 3000 korwars** were created between 1870 and 1930.

Needless to say, not all of these *c.*3000 korwars survived. Many rotted away on graves or elsewhere. Thus, once again, a degree of uncertainty slips into our statistical exercise. Let us assume that **one in five survived** to the present day - i.e., did not rot away, was not set alight or thrown into the sea within a missionary context, did not end up as waste in the West. Of the 19th-century korwars presumably a smaller number survived and found their way into a setting in the West. Of those dating to the times of intensive acquisitioning (for the Schouten Islands: *c.*1908-1925 and for Yapen Island: *c.*1925-1940) we probably encounter proportionally more (than one in five), which compensates for the lower numbers observed in the 19th century.

Based on these these assumptions we could be looking at ***c.*600 korwars that still exist at present.** This outcome meets with the above approximation of the number of preserved korwars, to wit *c.*600. It is also roughly in line with the intuitive estimates of several gallerists and art dealers familiar with korwars. Numerous ifs and buts, and perhaps an estimation of 500 is more correct, or rather 700. Nonetheless, both approaches to the question as to how many korwars still exist presently result in roughly the same ballpark.

This estimate can be slightly refined. By and large the preserved korwars, as is argued in the present publication, originate from either the Schouten Islands or Yapen Island. Based on the history of the acquisition of korwars in the Geelvink Bay it is clear that the majority of the Schouten Island korwars have been acquired between *c.*1908 and *c.*1925, mainly by missionary F. van Hasselt; the larger part of the Yapen Island korwars were mostly obtained by missionary A. de Neef between 1925 and 1940. Numbers for other episodes of acquisition in the Geelvink Bay are much less substantial: e.g., de Clercq (late 1880s), *c.*50 korwars; Rev. Kamma in the Raja Ampat archipelago (1930s), an estimated 40 korwars; the Military Explorations *c.*1905-15 (in particular, Captain A.J. Gooszen in 1907-8 and 1913) have also yielded a similar number.*

The korwar "snake shield"

Most korwar figures carry a kind of shield or "balustrade",** usually comprising an openwork arrangement of intertwined, circular or spiral garlands, which may be flanked by two more or less explicitly sculpted serpents. On occasion there are only two snakes, with minimal or no garlands (e.g., Fig. 56), and in rare cases there is only one (Fig. 188). Occasionally the shield contains a second, smaller anthropomorphic figure, held by the korwar figure itself (e.g., Figs. 66 ff.). This smaller figure may be flanked by snakes, or by sticks portraying snakes in a very abstract manner. Other korwars have no smaller figure or openwork garlands at all, only a plank with or without small holes (Figs. 17, 103). In rare cases small secondary anthropomorphic figures (Fig. 177) or snakes (Fig. 84) are positioned on either side of the head.***

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* I am indebted to Herbert Prins, Harald Prins, Koos Knol, Anthony Meyer, Arnold Wentholt, Hans van Houwelingen and Robert van der Heijden for their contributions to these estimations.

** Uhle 1886 (pp. 17 ff.) coined the term "balustrade".

*** The mythical meanings and contexts of snake and dragon-like spirits will be discussed in some detail below (see pp. 220 ff.).

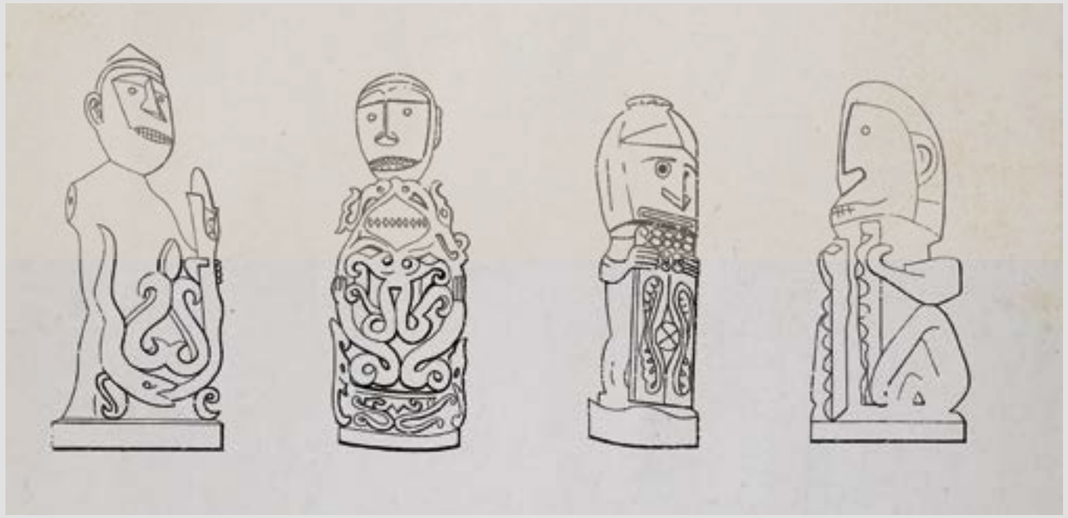

Fig. 14. Line drawings of four korwars from the Museum van het Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen (the later Museum Nasional of Indonesia, Jakarta), acquired pre-1898. With these drawings L. Serrurier illustrates his interpretation of the korwar "shield" in terms of either more or less abstractly rendered snake/dragon-like spirits. In most cases two snakes mirror one another, depicted face to face, their open mouths filled with teeth, and tails touching. The degree of abstraction increases from left to right. The korwar on the right hails from Serui on Yapen Island, the other three hail from Doreh Bay. Source: Serrurier 1898.

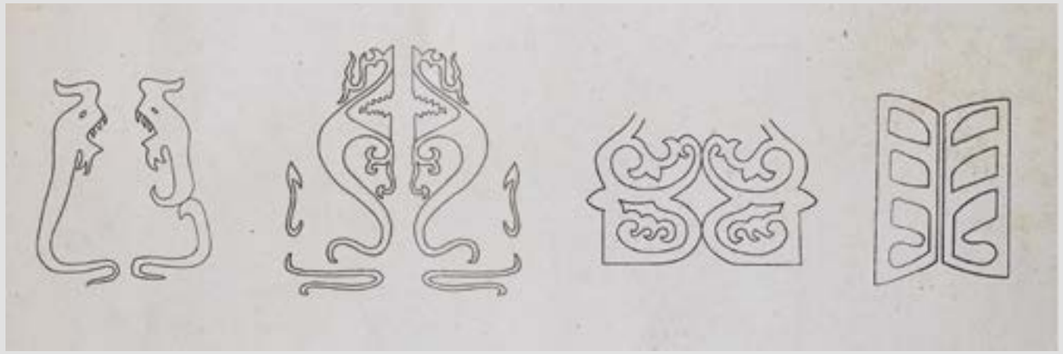

Fig. 15. Two rather naturalistically (left) and two more abstractly (right) rendered snake/dragon-like spirits constituting the openwork arabesques in korwar shields. The former category seems to have been confined to the Doreh Bay region. Source: Serrurier 1898.

Fig. 16. Lindor Serrurier (1846-1901) was director of the 'sRijks Ethnographisch Museum (Leiden, the Netherlands) between 1880 to 1896. His interest in korwars grew when in c.*1890 this museum received a gift comprising numerous korwars from the colonial official-*cum*-private collector F.S.A. de Clercq (see p. 65). Frustrated by the lack of support from the Dutch government in finding a more adequate housing for the Leiden museum, Serrurier resigned in 1896 and accepted a position as a high school teacher in Batavia, the capital of the Netherlands East Indies. Here, his study on the korwars kept at the then Museum van het Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen resulted in his authoritative 1898 essay on korwar style and iconography. In that year the Dutch established a government post in the Geelvink Bay, whereby, Serrurier ends his article, "the mists will gradually dissolve which still surround the mysterious opacity of this beautiful tropical world. May science profit from this opportunity before European ways will start levelling and suffocating everything original here too." Source: Boerhaave Museum Leiden and Wikimedia Commons.*

The "shield" or some similar structure is by far the most intriguing iconographic feature of korwars. A detailed argument proposed by Uhle (1886) and elaborated on by Serrurier (1898) and Nuoffer (1908) derives this feature from serpent imagery. These authors argue convincingly that, in addition to the occasional small anthropomorphic figure, the shield essentially consists of snakes, usually two, mirroring one another. Often these serpents are clearly recognizable by means of details (e.g., head, beak, tail) as well as, quite frequently, by the vertical, painted or carved stripes of the "sea snake". The venomous yellow-lipped sea krait (*Laticauda colubrina*; Fig. 183) with its distinctive black stripes and yellow snout is presumably referred to here.* This creature is named a *rebo* by the Biak whereas the inhabitants of Numfoor Island (where a Biak dialect was spoken) called it *insamios* or *samfar*.

The two snakes are often abstracted into sticks (now and again still with recognizable heads), or into the characteristic openwork garlands which, at first sight at least, are not recognizable as snakes or as an abstractly rendered small figure holding snakes. Indeed Kemon, the Numfoor spirit priest whom a missionary witnessed carving a korwar (see above, p. 26), referred to its shield as "the snake shield". Mostly there are two snakes, one of which maybe smaller. In the traditional worldview of the Geelvink Bay, snake-like beings are often either two-headed or hermaphroditic, and thus, in a sense, two and one at the same time.

Figs. 14-5 illustrate the variability of korwar "shields": those with clearly recognizable snakes are positioned at the left end of the scale and transmute into very abstract depictions at the right end. The argument chimes well with Held's (1940) observation that a great deal of cultural uniformity could be observed throughout the Geelvink Bay region, where origin myths featuring snake-like beings are prominent almost everywhere.

Another salient aspect of a certain number of korwars, in addition to the snake imagery, is a small secondary figure held by the korwar figure itself. In the sources hardly any clues as to this secondary

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* It has also been suggested that these transverse stripes, painted or carved, can be linked to a primeval snake which, according to several Geelvink Bay myths, was cut to pieces by clan ancestors (cf. pp. 220 ff.). It is not unusual that an iconographical feature has several meanings at the same time, or even permits the ad hoc creation of new meanings.

Fig. 17. Six korwars from the then Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde (Rotterdam). Its director, J.F. Snelleman, published these items in 1906 in one of a series of brief articles meant for a wide audience. Source: Snelleman 1906a.

figure's meaning can be found. However, the larger figure is known to embody a recently deceased family member, often a grandparent or parent, who can be asked for protection and help. Because this larger figure holds the smaller figure like an adult holds a child the smaller figure probably depicts either a or "the", generic, living descendant whom the spirit embodied in the korwar protects. Sometimes the smaller figure (e.g., Fig. 67) seems to be making the same gesture of reverence and offering to a spirit as found in many spirit effigies (*mons*; see pp. 213 ff.).

An argument developed below on pp. 220 ff. suggests that the coupled larger and smaller figures may at the same time be linked to adult males performing and male adolescents undergoing rites of passage. This argument also provides a suggestion (*ibid.*) as to why snakes often flank the smaller figure.

An intriguing remark, finally, is made in a source from the 1860s. Here we read that, in the Doreh Bay region, korwars consisting mainly of the skull itself - adorned with new ears, eyes and noses, plastered, and wrapped in cloth - were traditionally kept in a corner of the room, often behind a shield (Goudswaard 1863: 24; cf. Fig. 72).

Carved for sale

Not all korwars now included in public or private collections played a role in rituals. As early as 1873, Adolf Meyer (1875b: 28), a travelling and collecting German naturalist,* observed the following:

> In the harbour of Doreh, which is frequented by quite a few vessels, whalers, warships of various nations, and the like, they love to carve … wooden figurines for sale to foreigners ... Only their fresh working gives away the pious deceit. A used korwar is always dark as a result of grime and dirt, and usually made of hard, darkish or black wood rather than soft and light-colored wood. A korwar resulting from playfulness (*wowerik*) is not a real (*kaku*) one, because it lacks a soul (*rur*).

Similar remarks are made in missionary sources. J. van Hasselt, for example, mentions that old korwars "which are not serving the people anymore have lost their power and may be sold. Models are fabricated for pay" (van Hasselt 1888: 28). Another missionary observes that items the people of Yapen Island sold to travellers during the 1920s included small korwars made for trade.[16] Th. van Baaren (1992: 32) comments that "korwars made for sale in many cases betray the

* See the footnote on Meyer on p. 69.

marks of their hasty and careless production, but the same is also true of a few genuine korwars."

The head of a ritually utilized korwar would often be rubbed with oil, turning the wood dark and glossy. A piece of cloth was often wrapped around its lower part which hereby retained a certain freshness, in stark contrast to its upper part (e.g., Figs. 97, 105; Meyer, *ibid.*).* Korwars would also be fed by smearing a betel chew (cf. Fig. 315) on the surface, which may have left a residue, and presented with tobacco or an alcoholic potion.

In the name of God

Missionaries have been a crucial factor in the colonial history of the Geelvink Bay in general and the movements of Geelvink Bay ritual art in particular. With their local knowledge and command of local languages, often acquired over decades, combined with strict administrative routines, they have also provided the earliest, most extensive and detailed sources regarding the meanings, functions and cultural contexts of the art they combatted and collected.

Commissioned by the Utrecht Missionary Society, the Dutch Protestant missionary Jan L. van Hasselt (1839-1930) reached Doreh Bay in April 1863, accompanied by his wife and two other missionaries. The very first missionaries, German and Lutheran, had arrived at the isle of Mansiman (Doreh Bay) eight years earlier, in February 1855. "In the name of God we set foot in this country", C.W. Ottow (1827-1862) and J.G. Geissler (1830-1870) had reportedly exclaimed when debarking here (Baltin 1878: 30-1).**

The first missionaries were not only clerics but also craftsmen and merchants. Between 1855 and 1885 they were the only Europeans residing in the Geelvink Bay, where from the very beginning they were confronted with spirit cults, head-hunting, consumption of human flesh, endemic violence, effigies with large genitals, slavery, etc.

* Biak korwars would (always?) be unwrapped before an indigenous ritualist consulted them, according to information obtained by Solheim (1985: 150-1).

** Mansinam Island, with 300 inhabitants in *c.*1860, was also known as Manoswari Island. The name of the village of Mansinam was soon applied to the entire isle. In 1861, the missionary post on Mansinam Island was relocated to Kwawi, a hamlet located on the nearby mainland.

In the mid-1860s the first church in the Geelvink Bay was built in Doreh Bay. At that time one indigenous shrine (*rumsram*) had already disappeared there under the influence of the mission. In the following decades many local shrines were to suffer similar fates (see pp. 51 ff.). Acting "in the name of God" the missionaries also bought, confiscated, burned or encouraged the destruction of countless indigenous ritual items, in particular during the first four decades of the 20th century, when conversion to the spirit beliefs the clerics themselves promoted finally gained traction.

The first 50 years were frustrating for the missionaries and their ideological agenda. Their yearly report on 1868 stated:

> Any influence whatsoever of the Holy Scripture cannot be detected. On the contrary, the situation is apparently deteriorating. Pagan feasts are held everywhere, more savage than ever. The singing and dancing annoys and grieves Christ's messenger.[17]

Regular typhus outbreaks resulted in many casualties. Occasional earthquakes sparked frantic ritual activities. In 1880, after 25 years of proselytizing, only 20 souls had been baptized, for which "29 missionaries and missionaries' wives had left their home countries and endured all sorts of hardship" (Kamma 1953a: 99). At one stage the number of graves dug for missionaries, their wives and children exceeded the number of baptisms.

Fig. 18. Missionary J. van Balen's wife teaching in the Protestant primary school of Windesi village (Wandammen Bay), probably c.1910. Source: van Asperen 1936.

Fig. 19. On 31 October 1921, a solemn mass baptism was held at the village of Menawi located on the south coast of Yapen Island. Numerous indigenous ritual items were handed in at such occasions. Source: Photographic archive of the Zendingshuis Oegstgeest at Het Utrechts Archief.

The second 25 years, 1880-1905, were "hardly more prosperous; after 50 years the total number of converts in the bay area [with its more than 26,000 indigenous inhabitants] was 260" (*ibid.).* In May 1884, J. van Hasselt, reports on a voyage southward to Roon Island and the Windesi Coast: "Recently the Papuans here have been behaving like madmen, playing their *tifa*s [drums], singing and dancing endlessly … [they are] not susceptible to reason, and their outfit is horrendous."[18] Even in 1905, after 50 years of proselytizing, first, during a service, "the church is entirely filled with people, and immediately afterwards they go on a *raak* [raid]."[19]

Satan was frequently pointed at in order to explain the lack of success during the early decades of the mission. In a periodical of the Utrecht Missionary Society from the 1860s we read: "As soon as something significant happens in God's Kingdom much resistance can be seen … such demonic counterforces in the dark land of pagans, where Satan has his throne, can be explained by the break of light which is about to disrupt the power of darkness."[20] Missionary A. de Neef (1933: n.p.), to give another example, ascribed a severe conflict evolving in a Koeroedoe Island village which he was able to end to the Devil, who, he claims, is always at work, intent on sparking off serious problems, and thus violating the Kingdom of God.

The early missionaries rewarded those attending church services in a proper manner - i.e., without falling asleep or talking all the time - with tobacco, sago and beads (Kamma 1976: 118, 144). They also provided protection against frequent raids carried out by the inland Arfak people (Figs. 22, 302b), generous help with diseases and other problems, ample trading opportunities, and new, powerful spirits. On top of such benefits the clerics were associated with a mysterious society thriving beyond the horizon, a fascinating new world, a source of an apparently endless supply of superior ships, weapons, trade ware, medicine and other manifestations of wealth.

All in all, material benefits and opportunistic considerations loomed large in the requests villagers frequently expressed for a school with a teacher-preacher (*guru*), or even to be baptized.* However, the missionary sources consistently cast such requests as a sign of interest not in the aforementioned benefits but "in the word of God", and as proof of the latter's workings.**

Missionary D.C.A. Bout (1928: 26) reports that when on Yapen the preaching of the gospel gained terrain "the clan heads agreed to do away with the Moon Feast" - an extensive monthly ritual performed at night during full moon. He adds that "they felt that it could not be reconciled with the Christian tradition," claiming that this outcome "occurred entirely without any efforts by the missionary" (*ibid*., 23). However, Papuans presumably had hardly any inkling about Christian traditions, not even after years of visiting church services. By and large, they mostly assimilated Christian origin stories into their own animistic worldview, including characters encountered in biblical narratives in their own spirit world (cf. Itéanu 2017).

Religious movements in this region, referred to as *koreri*, included numerous syncretistic elements. These hectic temporary cults, which erupted with a certain regularity, celebrated the expected return of an ancestral culture hero named *manseren* (Lord) Manggundi who would bring appealing foreign goods and technology ("cargo") and waken the dead . The cults were led by visionaries called *konoor* who were often former spirit priests.***

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* *Guru*s were Christian teachers who often acted as assistant missionary. They would usually precede the arrival of a full-fledged missionary by several years. Initially, during the first decade of the 20th century, they were recruited from the Moluccas, in particular Amboina. In due course the missionaries strived to replace them with indigenous Papuan personnel. Cf. Figs. 23-4.

** Cf. van Asperen 1936: 52 ff., and conversions described in de Neef 1937, e.g., on pp. 20-1.

***The Manggundi (aka Manarmakeri) myth is very well documented: see Kamma's (1955, 1972) PhD thesis on *koreri* movements in the larger Geelvink Bay area, cf. Bubandt 2019, Otto 2009; see below, pp. 235 ff. According to van Balen (*Diary*, Inv. nr. 2415 in Het Utrechts Archief, p. 28, and cf. pp. 8-9) the term *konoor* also referred to indigenous exorcists dealing with disease spirits (*ziektegeesten-bezweerders*), at least on the Windesi Coast, where the *konoor* was also called *inderi*.

Fig. 20. Four missionaries of the Utrecht Missionary Society stationed in the Geelvink Bay, probably c.*1925. From left to right: A. de Neef, F. van Hasselt, D. Bout and J. Eijgendaal. Source: Photographic archive of the Zendingshuis Oegstgeest at Het Utrechts Archief.*

Fig. 21. The Board of the Utrechtsche Zendingsvereeniging, the majority of whom were clerics. Source: De Hollandsche Revue *14 (1909) nr. 10, 23 Oct., p. 733.*

In 1881, J. van Hasselt confronted Saramdibu, a *konoor* active on Mansinam Island. When the missionary protested in vain against "the racket" and the ritual dances taking place in the "dancing house" (probably a shrine built especially for Manggundi) he was threatened repeatedly and even accused of impeding the return of the dead. "Is it just trickery, or the personal influence of the Prince of Darkness as well?" van Hasselt asked himself in connection with the activities of indigenous ritualists like Saramdibu.[21]

In a preface* to one of the earliest ethnographic texts written by missionaries the translator subscribes to Kamma's assessment that the Geelvink Bay Papuans basically were very afraid of the first missionaries:

> They believed the missionaries to be people raised from death to life; for like their departed ancestors they were white-skinned, they came from the west, the abode of the dead, and they brought with them an incredible amount of wealth. Moreover, they came to stay, alone and without their families; so the question arose as to whether they had been banished. And the work they carried out, by themselves, was considered to be the work of slaves. The people watched intently, but did not help; it was too risky.

Kamma (1976: 478 ff., 731) adds to the above that Papuans linked the Holy Scripture and God to *manseren* Nanggi (lit.: Lord of the Sky, the paramount deity) and considered missionaries to be shamans capable of communicating with Nanggi. The Papuans actively involved the missionaries in reinforcing and protecting their life force (*nanek*), in a magical manner. After their demise missionaries were regularly venerated as a primeval culture hero of sorts by the communities they had served.

A sudden reversal

During the first 50 years, until *c.*1907, the efforts of the missionaries hardly bore any fruit. In 1906, F. van Hasselt complained that at Easter of that year no unchristened villagers had attended church in Doreh Bay because they were "too busy carving puppets which I call 'idols' (*afgoden*), and justly so."[22] Sunday was not observed as a day of rest and prayer. Moreover, it was disrupted time and again by the sound of drums and "desecrated" by "pagan" ritual activities, although the missionaries frequently protested. In 1906 they lodged a formal complaint with the Assistant District Commissioner, who then issued an interdiction, but apparently to no avail.[23]

However, in *c.*1907, after decades of frustration, things started to change. At that time a network of missionary posts and schools** had been established in the northern and south-western part of the Geelvink Bay. Suddenly the missionaries, to their surprise and delight, were confronted with simultaneous conversions of up to many hundreds of souls at the same time.

Roon Island played a leading role. There, in a huge bonfire lit on 31 December 1906, many "korwars, amulets etc. were burned. They said that they would not start the new year with this rubbish."[24] From then on the churches were chock-a-block with people, first in the southwest of the Geelvink Bay, but not much later on the Schouten Islands as well. During such bouts of conversion frenzy traditional ritual items were handed in by the hundreds, most of which found their way to the Netherlands.

By 1914, four of the five villages on Roon Island had embraced Christianity, and from here the mood change had spread. Even Korido village, on Supiori (one of the Schouten Islands), which used to be "one of Satan's strongholds", a cauldron of "demonic violence and devilish ruse,"[25] now revealed promising developments. By the end of the 1930s, *c.*100 schools had been founded in the Geelvink Bay and the *Sampari* ("morning star"), a Protestant periodical that had been published from 1933 on in the Biak language, had reached a circulation of 2000 copies.***

Several causes pertaining to the sudden diffusion of Christianity from *c.*1907 on have been cited, by various authors (cf. above, p. 36). They include (a) the long-term effects of 50 years of proselytizing; (b) the presence of a government post in Doreh Bay since 1898; (c) government support for schools; (d) the recruitment of Moluccan teachers; (e) the *koreri* cults as a fertile ground for conversion; and (f) western

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* J.A. Godschalk, in his preface to Ottow & Geissler 1857b; cf. Kamma 1976: 173 ff., and van Asperen 1936: 22-3.

** A survey dated 1909 lists 12 schools staffed by *gurus*. These Protestant teachers were mainly recruited from the Moluccas and accompanied by their wives (*Laatste Berichten* 1909, n.p.).

*** Remarkably, and perhaps ironically, the Morning Star, Venus, was prominent in traditional Biak cosmology, which associated the Morning Star with a major deity: *korano* Wammurmi, the Lord of the East Wind.

medical care. Effective measures had been taken by missionaries as well as colonial authorities against a number of devastating smallpox epidemics, whereas korwars had failed to render any help at all. It was not unusual for clan heads and indigenous ritualists to be the first to be baptized, with others following, as a collective action, not so much as an individual initiative - as the missionaries preferred to frame it in accordance with their religious doctrine.

Indeed, the clerics themselves attributed this unexpected turnaround to their own paramount spirit: "I have tried to merely present you with bare facts," missionary D.B. Starrenburg writes in a report on the progress of the New Guinea mission on the Windesi Coast, "but I hope that these simple facts have convinced you: God is at work. He works with great force, and it is a delight to see His work" (*Laatste berichten* 1909: 22-1). However, van Balen also, somewhat ironically, observes that initially, "the want for missionaries in fact was a want for articles we had for barter, and we were used as milk-cows." He goes on to attribute later developments no longer to real-life but to supernatural causes.[26]

Notwithstanding the steady progress of the missions in the Geelvink Bay, from *c.*1907 on, regular restorations of the traditional ways took place, too. In 1920, for example, F. van Hasselt reported: "all *guru*s complain about revivals of paganism."[27]

Degrees of persuasion

Various degrees of persuasion have formed an essential part of the missionary effort since its beginnings, ranging from subtle discouragement to outright coercion. The words of F. van Hasselt (1926: 133), imparted to a village chief in *c.*1925, summarize the missionary attitude maintained from the mission's early years on as follows: "Church and spirit temple do not combine: you cannot at the same time serve the God I teach you and the demons your ancestors have taught you to fear!"

Countless korwars and other ritual items were handed in under pressure or destroyed - usually burned or thrown into the sea - by the villagers themselves or by the missionaries. In 1861 Geissler threatened to leave if the villagers were not willing to throw a number of large, recently carved effigies into the sea.[28] On New Year's Eve of the year 1895 Metz posed a similar ultimatum directed at the Papuans of Anday, the village located south of Doreh Bay where a missionary post had been established in 1868.

The missionaries would also buy used as well as newly carved korwars, but often would bid in vain for cherished items. Most of what they managed to obtain was sent to the Utrecht Missionary Society (Utrecht, the Netherlands), until the turnaround of *c.*1907 on a relatively modest scale, but from then on in substantial numbers.

On 14 September 1864, the first stone of a church was laid on Mansinam Island. Several hundred of individuals both from the island and the Doreh Bay shores attended this ceremony, singing appropriate psalms the meaning of which they did not grasp, learned by heart for the occasion. Missionary Geissler urged those present to discard their "idols". In a fierce sermon he stressed that this act would only benefit them if they would start to really believe in Jesus. "Some replied that yes, they would give him all their idols, provided that all their dead would rise from their graves. Having witnessed this they would believe and attend church" (Baltin 1878: 99, 106-7, citing Geissler's diary). Others however feared that handing over effigies would enrage their spirits and their ancestors. Geissler complained that although numerous objects were turned in, this was usually no sign of any internal, spiritual change.

J. van Hasselt (1888: 93) describes how during the 1860s Geissler at a certain point

> tried to advance the process of Christianization by means of one of their own traditions. He took a rope into which he tied a number of knots. He told them he would leave and not return if they would not have lent him their ear by the time the last knot would have been untied. The result was: the Papuans delivered a number of their "korwars" to him and to me. When I asked them whether I should burn them or chop them into pieces they said I should preserve them. I cannot say this answer pleased me.

At least 30 korwars were handed in at this occasion. They were mainly old and no longer actively venerated ones, as van Hasselt realized only much later.

A naturalist on an acquisition journey to the Geelvink Bay in *c.*1870 mentions the new church on Mansinam Island:

> Next to the mission post there is a small, well entertained church where Brother Geissler every Sunday conducts a service for forty to fifty attendants … [who,] prompted by Geissler, [have] taken the korowar idols from their houses and publicly burned them, in the presence of the entire population (von Rosenberg 1875: 18).

The missionaries' letters, reports, diaries etc. clearly illustrate that many Papuans actively stood up against missionaries. We read:

> They won't give up their idols which represent their ancestors. For example, I saw that when arriving by boat during heavy weather the very first thing they did was bringing the idols safely ashore. Oh, if only the Christians [among the Papuans] would honour their God like these heathens! The first concerns of the Christians are always their own livelihood and their own life! (Baltin 1878: 47, citing Geissler's diary).*

During the early decades of the mission, the Doreh Bay Papuans tenaciously continued to rebuild shrines which had collapsed or been destroyed by fire, in spite of the missionaries' resistance. Others left Doreh Bay and established themselves on the Amberbaken coast (located *c.*100 km to the west) where they would be able to uphold their rituals without any missionaries subduing them. This transmigration only offered a temporary relief, as not much later a missionary post was established on the Amberbaken coast too (Kamma 1976: 130).

The following four examples of resistance against missions have been chosen from many manifestations hereof reported by missionaries themselves:

(a) In 1864, a Doreh Bay clan chief was deeply troubled when handing in the korwar containing the soul of his beloved father, finally doing so with tears in his eyes (J. van Hasselt 1888: 74).

(b) In 1865, Doreh Bay villagers requested for a large effigy, "a kind of national god", to be returned to them, which van Hasselt refused.[29]

(c) In 1865, too, van Hasselt wrote, "[the] Papuans claimed that in their hearts they wanted to serve God, but they persevered with their pagan songs in spite of my sustained request to stop." He told them straightforwardly that "if you will stick to this harsh attitude, you will be damned in hell."[30]

(d) In 1904, a *guru* named Apituley, having entered a house on Roon Island in which a large korwar was seated on a wooden box, said to its owner: "My friend, give me that korwar; or sell it to me. He answered: < If I give up that korwar to a *guru* I will soon pass away for that korwar is of great help to me >."[31]

In the course of their 1901 annual meeting the Geelvink Bay missionaries unanimously decided to request the colonial authorities to once and for all prohibit the *wor* ritual dances which were an essential part of every ritual. It was argued that these dances, mainly performed after dark, threatened the night's rest of the missionaries and their families. The "squandering" of large quantities of food was cited too. Accumulating it took many months during which the children did not attend school classes. The rituals with their "excesses of a sexual nature", as pointed out to those present at this meeting, "create a mood which is at odds with the influence of teaching and preaching."[32] The missionaries also decided to beg the authorities to proscribe any display of human skulls obtained during head-hunting raids in the past.

In 1908 F. van Hasselt strongly urged the annual convention of all missionaries active in the Geelvink Bay to henceforth "formally oblige villages that ask for a *guru* to first hand in their idols, amulets, etc."[33] In a letter from the same year, D.B. Starrenburg, stationed in the Wandammen Bay, reports that on the occasion of the installation of a Christian teacher [*guru*] he had forced the locals to "give up their korwars, amulets, and the like, as proof they meant serious business. They soon did so. I counted about 160 items. After I had put a few aside [for shipping to the Netherlands] we burned the rest in front of the teacher's house."[34] Starrenburg admits that parting with their old traditions inflicted much pain to converts (*Laatste berichten* 1909: 21-2).

Time and again the missionaries stressed that such actions were "spontaneous", born from the converts' personal initiative, and testified to an authentic religious impulse of a Christian nature - to God's voice which finally spoke in their hearts. However, on the one hand, the missionaries themselves in fact nudged, persuaded or, on occasion, forthrightly forced and/or blackmailed the local population into disposing ritual items. On the other hand, as mentioned above (see p. 36, 39-40), a majority acted based on a well-perceived self-interest, adopting Christianity in exchange for a school with a *guru* and any other benefits missionaries provided, including spiritual benefits.

Rather than obliterating indigenous beliefs Christianity itself was incorporated in the *koreri* cults, supplementing them and vice versa. The Christian message resembled the *koreri* expectations of the Papuans. *Manseren* Manggundi tended to be identified with Jesus Christ; *manseren* Nanggi, Lord Sky, with

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* A translation of: "*Oh dass die Christen doch ihren Gott auch so ehrten als diese Heiden. Die Christen denken immer zuerst an ihren Brotsack und am eigne Leben!*"

Fig. 22. Papuans hailing from the Arfak Mountains in the interior used to frequent the shores of Doreh Bay in order to trade. In the course of the 19th century trading had alternated with mutual raids here (cf. Fig. 302b). In the same period Arfak men would also steal corpses from Doreh Bay graves, the heads in particular, "to indulge in devilish pleasures with," i.e., conduct rituals with (Berichten Utrechtsche Zendingsvereeniging 1882: 153). *Four of these posing Arfak men, who have just arrived from the inland, are holding items wrapped in cloth which in view of their size and shape are almost certainly korwars. Small (wooden) parts of the korwars are visible (e.g., in the case of the second package from the left, part of the korwar's round base). The building in the background probably is a church or a missionary's dwelling. The photograph was taken at Doreh Bay, probably during the 1920s or 1930s, at the occasion of the handing over or selling of these korwars to the missionary who took the photograph. Source: J. Hoogerbrugge Archive.*

God; *nanek*, spiritual force emanating from Nanggi, with God's grace (cf. above, pp. 18, 20). Both religious discourses promised resurrection of the dead, eternal life and paradise. Kamma (1976: 661 ff.) lists numerous examples of Christian influences - syncretistic elements - in the *koreri* cults. He also points to the possibility that requests for *guru*s may well have been motivated at least partly by *koreri* expectations. The *koreri* cults involved the building of new shrines and, occasionally, the disposal of traditional ritual items, which made handing them over to missionaries easier.

Religious traditions in the wider Geelvink Bay region may well have been more dynamic and open to foreign influences than one may think at first sight (cf. p. 12). The region's religious traditions betray early Hinduist and Islamic influences. Sea voyages of over 1000 km were not exceptional during the last few centuries before Dutch rule was established. Moluccans and other Malay speaking Muslims, Chinese and Europeans traded in the Geelvink Bay and connected the area to a global market. So did a dynasty of Tidore (Moluccas) rulers to whom most Geelvink Bay societies, the Biak in particular, pledged allegiance. Bird hunters of mixed ethnic background constituted a strong presence during the early 19th and the early 20th century. Earthquakes, tsunamis, storms and the rapid decay of organic materials in a humid tropical climate necessitated regular rebuilding of the shrines and contributed to the dynamics of the region.

To a certain degree the transition to Christianity too well fitted an old pattern of regular renewal and adoption of foreign things and habits, as has been argued for other parts of New Guinea (Williams 1928, Itéanu 2017). Indeed, considerable indigenous initiative could be observed on the missionary frontier in Northwest New Guinea.

Fig. 23 "Deploy, ye valiant troop." Three gurus*, two of them accompanied by their wives, are about to leave Yapen Island in order to establish a Protestant mission on the opposite Waropen Coast. Source: Photographic archive of the Zendingshuis Oegstgeest at Het Utrechts Archief.*

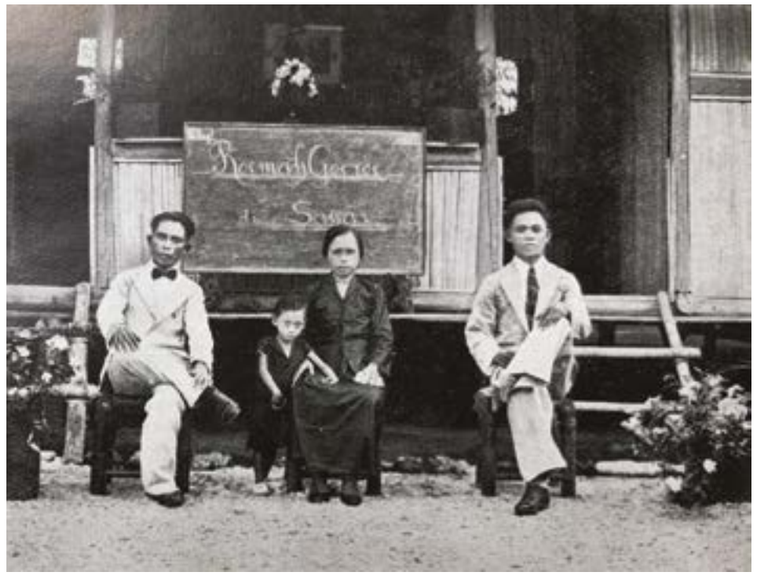


Fig. 24. Indigenous gurus*, teachers-*cum*-preachers, especially those hailing from Amboina in the Moluccas, often proved even more tenacious than certain missionaries when it came to discouraging indigenous ritual art and practices. As knowledge brokers they had their own cultural biases and personal agendas. Source: van Asperen 1936.*

Korwars on the move

Three periods during which numerous korwars and other items started travelling on the Protestant missionary frontier deserve special mention: *c.*1908-9 (Biak and Supiori), the 1920s/1930s (Yapen), and the 1930s (the Raja Ampat archipelago).

(1) Biak and Supiori, *c.*1908-9

In April 1908 Petrus Kafiar was installed as an *inlandsche hulpzendeling* ("indigenous assistant missionary", *guru*) on Biak and a school was opened here. Kafiar, a son of a clan chief, had been taken and enslaved as a child. After missionaries active in Doreh Bay had purchased him, they then manumitted and educated him. When Kafiar arrived, "piles of korwars were handed over."[35] Both Kafiar and van Hasselt preached, as did a former ritualist named Lucas Bruoos. Next, "68 korwars were delivered to me [van Hasselt] spontaneously … in earlier years I have often attempted to purchase for museums, to no avail, despite my high bids. Now I could take it all just like that" (*ibid.*). The lot included korwars from an inland village. On the occasion of Pentecost in 1908 van Hasselt arranged "the *c.*100 korwars I had brought back from Biak into a trophy" at his mission post.[36] A few weeks later, in a letter to another missionary, he writes: "I have 100 korwars sitting in my attic now. Can I indulge you with a few characteristic examples?"[37]

After the inauguration of the *guru,* the mission vessel *Utrecht* (Fig. 7), on her way back to Manokwari (Doreh Bay) visited the "cemetery island" Meos Bepondi (see p. 21) in the northwest of the Schouten Islands. Here, "the boatswain got hold of two [effigies] portraying the ancestors of the clan, one male and one female, and threw them among the other [effigies], after which van Hasselt returned to Mansinam Island with a shipload of paganism" (van Asperen 1936: 57; cf. van Hasselt 1926: 118; see Figs. 179, 187). The Papuans who witnessed this event were as baffled by the seizure of their ancestral couple as by the fact that van Hasselt's vessel did not go down immediately. Both effigies are visible on a table chock-a-block with korwars on display during a missionary exhibition held in Utrecht in 1909 (Fig. 36). The Utrechtsche Zendingsvereeniging gave both effigies in loan to the Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde Rotterdam in 1912 and the museum acquired them in 1955.

At least 200 Papuans were baptized on the Schouten Islands in the course of ceremonies held in the Spring of 1909. F. van Hasselt subsequently shipped *c.*400 "pagan attributes" to Utrecht, packed in wooden crates, where they arrived just in time to be included in a large exhibition celebrating the Utrecht Missionary Society's 50-Year Jubilee. In a letter dated 16 April 1909 van Hasselt refers to this shipment as "the spoils of war."[38] Prior to his arrival on the Schouten Islands the local population had already burned a large number of korwars because these ancestors had not been able to prevent a smallpox epidemic.

Shortly after these events, on Sunday, 30 May 1909, *c.*1000 Papuans attended the Pentecost ceremony held at Doreh village. On this occasion inhabitants of Sowek (Biak Island) attending the service handed *c.*200 "idols" (*afgodsbeelden*) over to van Hasselt, which were piled up. One villager even forwarded the korwar containing his father's skull.[39]

During his more than 25 years of service on Biak-Supiori Island the abovementioned *guru*, Petrus Kafiar, burned countless korwars as well as other ritual objects, under van Hasselt's supervision.[40] Nonetheless van Hasselt disapproved of fanatic house-to-house searches carried out by another *guru.* The latter "campaigned against the korwars," which he took to his missionary post "in triumph". Van Hasselt remarks: "Had he consulted me first, I would not have allowed it."[41]

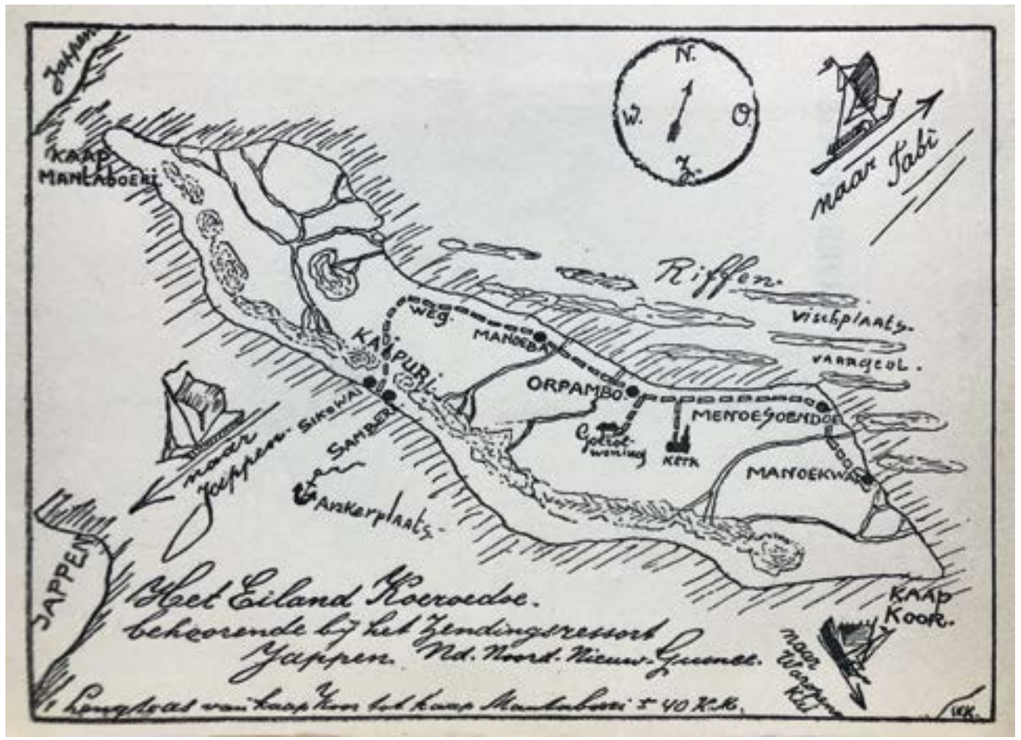
(2) Yapen Island, 1920s/1930s

The Doreh Bay missionaries had paid occasional boat visits to Yapen during the late 19th century and more regularly from 1906 on, setting off from Roon Island. "I've heard that Ansus [on Yapen] has torn down its paramount temple [*moedertempel*]," Frans van Hasselt wrote in 1915, "I will send them a guru."[42] Any permanent missionary presence on Yapen only dates from 1924 onwards. A few years later a wave of conversions set in, combined with the burning and handing over of ritual items. The process resembled what had happened from 1907 on in the southwest and north of the Geelvink Bay as well as what would transpire in the Raja Ampat archipelago as soon as the missionary effort started to receive traction there during the 1930s. In around 1929, 26 schools employing *guru*s had been founded on Yapen, now home to *c.*1220 pupils and *c.*5500 baptized Papuans (Kamma 1976: 733).

It was not unusual for missionaries to handpick the finest woodcarvings from the bonfires to then send them to the Netherlands. In the course of the 1920s and 1930s, under pressure of the colonial authorities, numerous traditional dwellings on Yapen and elsewhere in the Geelvink Bay were replaced by western style, one-family houses. Villagers had to select which of their belongings they wished to keep when moving to modern, smaller houses. This was a favourable circumstance for missionaries keen on acquiring "idolatrous" items.

D.C.A. Bout was stationed in Ansus (Fig. 132), a large settlement and harbour located on the southwest coast of Yapen. A chapter of a short book he wrote in 1928 for a broad audience is entitled "Crumbling paganism" (*Afbrokkelend heidendom*). In it Bout provides a general portrait of the demise of the traditional ritual art on Yapen during the 1920s. "For long they had kept secret what they had in their houses and their hearts," Bout reports, to further add that

> [when] you saw all these people go to church you wouldn't suspect how much pagan things they preserved in their dwellings. … When asked if they still possessed such heathen objects as korwars, amulets or slave shackles they would assure you that the district commissioner had requested and burned them. But this was only partially true (*ibid.*: 22-3).



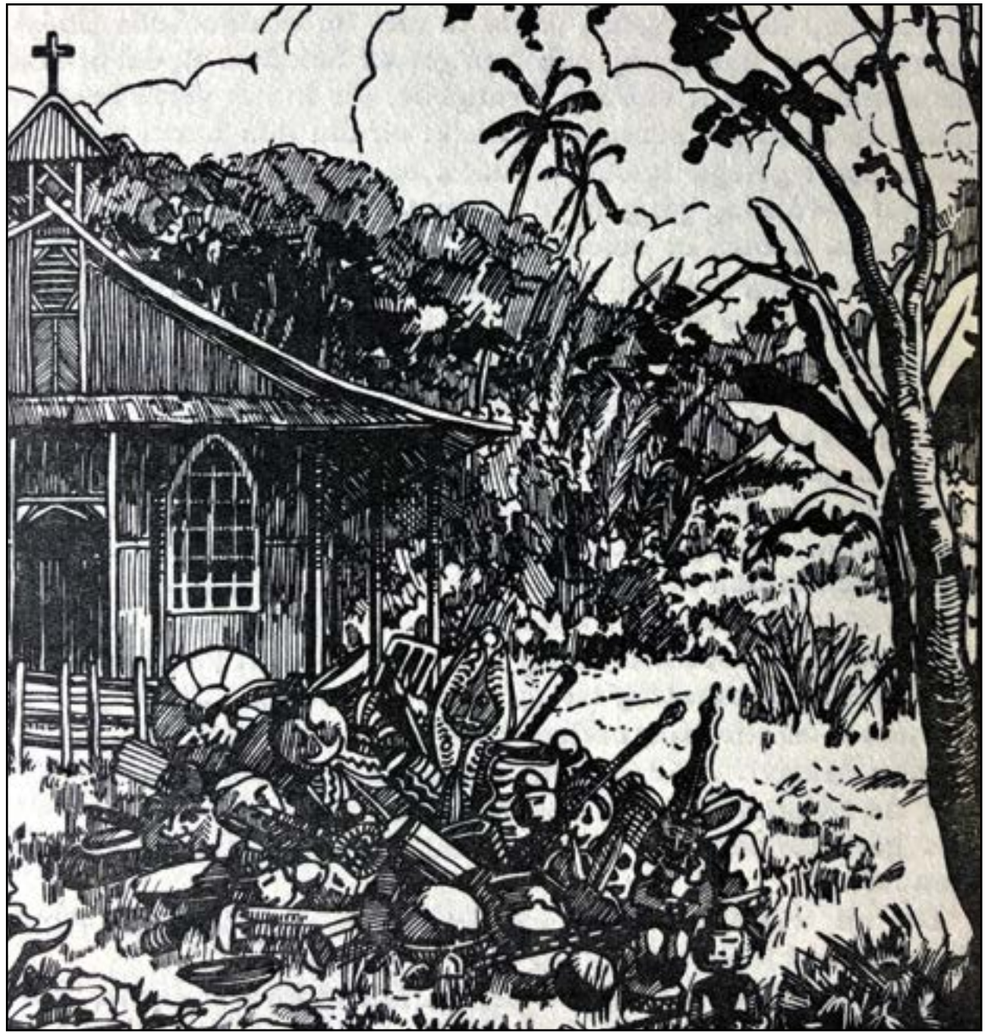


Fig. 25. On Sunday 16 October 1930, after a service during which he baptized 648 villagers, missionary Albert de Neef orchestrated a solemn burning of korwars and other items on Koeroedoe Island. He describes what transpired as follows: "In groups young men went from house to house in order to collect the heathen attributes and figurines. These were piled up in the spacious courtyard behind the school-cum-church [marked kerk *on the map, left]: a huge stack of various sorts of sorcery items. … After sunset we all stood there in a wide circle around those items. While the school's pupils were singing flames blazed up and illuminated the surroundings. We saw how these wooden figures, which once had been their venerated protectors, were consumed by the intense fire and returned to ashes. A great deed of definitively breaking with the past! This was a sacrifice the value of which only God Himself could fathom"* (Kennemer Bode *12 Nr. 2, Febr. 1933). Source of the etching (above), probably after a photograph of the church in Fig. 320: de Neef 1937b: 77 (and cf. pp. 20-21, 75-76); the map (left) is the frontispice the same publication.*

Fig. 26. Missionary A. de Neef setting off on a tour of duty from the village of Serui on the southern coast of Yapen Island, 1930s. Source: Photographic archive of the Zendingshuis Oegstgeest at Het Utrechts Archief.

During the initial years of the missionary presence on Yapen, ritual items had changed hands only occasionally. The indigenous ritualists and the elderly were particularly adamant because they were afraid of being punished by the spirits of the deceased. However, from January 1924 on, when Bout had arrived, he obstinately refused to baptize until the villagers had conceded. A factor working in his favor was that the people coveted protection by the powerful foreign spirits he mentioned in his sermons.

Bout (1928: 18 ff.) describes how in 1925 out of the blue the *babwin ketui*, female indigenous healers, started to hand in their ritual paraphernalia on a massive scale, indeed in their hundreds, in a kind of religious movement that arose rather suddenly, not unlike the turnaround witnessed on Roon Island in *c.*1907.

A number of stories aimed at a broad audience by missionary Albert de Neef (who also applied the pseudonym Albert Zaaier) provide us with a rich source regarding Protestant proselytizing on Yapen. De Neef (1937a: 96-7) describes events in Ambai villages (East Yapen) as follows:

> In October 1929 I was privileged to learn that these people expressed their wish to abjure paganism and accept God as their Lord … Two *guru*s had plowed, sown and weeded on this marvelous field. … It was touching, heart-rending to see how slave blocks, slave skulls, handcuffs, ancestor effigies, sorcerers' pouches and little medicine bottles were brought in. This demolition of paganism took many days. For the elderly it was really difficult to part with things that had once been their pride. … Many of these items had not been used for a long time. Yet they had finally lost their value in their minds because the Holy Scripture had brought the people into a new mood.

A close inspection of the Dutch missionary periodical titled *Kennemer Bode* as well as Bout's unpublished diary[43] yields the following - incomplete, sampled - chronicle of dealings with Yapen ritual items:

September 1926: Shortly before baptism Bout preaches on the necessity of handing in "pagan *barang*" (*barang*, Indonesian, means gear, items).

November 1926: "It is always requested they give up all their sorcery gear [*tovergerei*] before being baptized," Bout writes, adding that hundreds of villagers had been baptized, preceded by the changing hands of "manifold pagan trinklets [*een massa heidens gedoe*]."

January 1927: Villagers sell items of ethnographic interest to cruising globetrotters and their crew, including small korwars carved especially for sale.

November 1927: A large amount of ritual items (*rommel*, Bout writes, which is Dutch for rubbish) changes hands at Serui village on the occasion of a baptism, including three crocodile-shaped slave-cuffs (as in Figs. 290 ff.) and a number of drums (as in Figs. 253 ff.).

March 1928: "Pagans" confess their sins publicly and hand over their "heathen attributes"; *c.*100 people are baptized. Nevertheless "pagan practices" continue to prosper.

October 1929: A missionary confronts a village chief turned *konoor* (leader of a prophetic religious movement, see p. 37) who claimed to have visions of a ladder to Heaven as well as angels. This *konoor* threatened people with a great flood as punishment if they did not listen to him.

January/February 1930: Pagan feasts with "boasting and squandering" must disappear, a missionary complains in the *Kennemer Bode*. Amulets and other items are handed over in Ambai. About 700 individuals are baptized.

October 1930: Village or clan chiefs burn many pagan items on Koeroedoe Island (east of Yapen) on Sunday 16 October 1930, after a service during which 648 villagers were baptized (Fig. 25).

August 1931: Approximately 1000 souls are baptized. This event is preceded by the handing in of "a prahu full of korwars, amulets, dancing attributes, protective sticks and [porcelain] dishes on which oaths used to be taken."

February 1932: "Pagan" travelling blacksmiths from Biak selling magical potions and spiritual advice create commotion.

Autumn 1932: A somewhat vague picture (not included here) in a Dutch missionary periodical shows "[the] handing in of heathen items - amulets, idols, etc. - by individuals about to be baptized on Koeroedoe Island (Yapen), which items have been burned afterwards," as the caption reads.[44]

February 1935: A revival of pagan practices takes place [similar to a preceding revival, in 1928] which includes soothsaying and copious consumption of *sagower*, an alcoholic potion made from sago.

(3) The Raja Ampat Biak, 1930s

A third case in which ritual items started travelling concerns goings-on during the 1930s in the Ayau Atoll, located in the north of the Raja Ampat archipelago, and home to *c.*1000 individuals belonging to Biak clans.

Fig. 27. Waropen men meet A. de Neef during a tour of duty, upriver from the Waropen Coast, 1930s. Source: Photographic archive of the Zendingshuis Oegstgeest at Het Utrechts Archief.

In an unpublished autobiographical note,[45] Kamma describes a mass conversion-*cum*-confiscation which took place during the mid-1930s when he made his first journey with the recently acquired mission boat *Bantara*:

> That evening the journey continues to Dorehkar, the large village [of the Ayau Atoll] which has always offered resistance, the seat of real paganism in Raja Ampat. I do not know what I hear and see. Four hundred souls in the Church! ... An interest that resembles hunger. ... I was able to observe how they had changed: the haughty attitude had disappeared. They now asked for the Gospel and its demands and took that very seriously ... One no longer hesitated and now discarded paganism with utmost determination. Enclosed in a group of a few hundred interested people, I repeatedly heard "We have thrown out all our medicines which we received from our spirit priests [*geestenpriesters*] and now expect help from God and from your medicines." ... In the past all the humanly possible was done in order to call for mediation by "spirit-seers", who then provided the medicine they had seen on their "journey to the spirit world". Several dozens of idols were forwarded to me. And when considering they had been most sacred to the families from generation to generation, you will realize the impact of this act.

On the morning of the baptism

> a huge number of amulets, the attributes of their paganism, lay under the pulpit. All kinds of objects, such as pig teeth, beads, ... small pieces of tree bark to which heathens attribute a preserving or reinforcing effect, soul statuettes [i.e. korwars], bottles containing magic potions and "medicine", as well as a large eagle.* I place them in the hold of the Bantara ... That morning 285 people will be baptized in one church service.

When Kamma returns to his mission post in Sorong, located *c.*120 km to the south on the New Guinea mainland, he is accompanied by a number of Biak from Ayau Atoll. He reports that the mission boat

> carries a load of amulets and ancestor statuettes. The return journey is tempestuous. When we are in the middle of the sea, dark showers slither along the horizon ... The wind pushes us back and forth furiously, the waves grow higher and higher ... The rain then lashes down to instantly drench us ... I observe fear on the faces of the people on board and I know that they think this storm befalls us because of the soul statuettes we have on board ... [but the] "Bantara" does an excellent job, not one small wave engulfs us.

* Possibly the effigy depicted in Fig. 181.

Fig. 28. Three korwars acquired by F.C. Kamma in the northern part of the Raja Ampat archipelago. Photograph taken by the author in the depot of the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam in 2019 (cf. Fig. 39 and pp. 198 ff.).

A few score of other korwars were thrown into the sea at the occasion of the same baptism.[46]

The demise of the shrines

While korwars were kept in dwellings in order to be venerated by and assist their living descendants, much larger effigies of deities and remote clan ancestors (*mons***) were venerated in shrines or spirit houses (*rumsrams*; Figs. 29 ff.)*** where male adolescents usually slept. Here, too, they were initiated into the secrets of the spirit world in general and into those of sexuality and marriage in particular, during communal rituals that continued for nights on end.

Missionaries Ottow and Geissler (1857b) describe these shrines as follows:

** The term *mon* also referred to spirit priests themselves. In order to avoid any confusion, in the present publication this term exclusively pertains to spirits and spirit effigies.

*** The etymology of the term *rumsram* (or *rum sram*) remains obscure. However, *rum* is almost certainly derived from *rumah*, the Indonesian word for "house" or "dwelling". In the southern part of the Geelvink Bay shrines were called *aniosara*.

Fig. 29. The "sacred house of Dorey", as witnessed by members of the French expedition vessel Astrolabe *between 26 August and 5 September 1827 in Doreh Bay (see also Fig. 30).*

The explicitly presented genitals reflect convictions regarding fertility and blessings which the ancestral beings depicted here could bestow on the villagers. Cf. Fig. 194, featuring two spirit effigies seen during the same visit, probably in this very same shrine. Such phenomena offended the missionaries who arrived here in 1855 and immediately started to discourage such shrines and the associated cults. During the first decades of the mission the Papuans resisted this approach with great vigour.

Could the remarkable headgear of these effigies have been inspired by that of western visitors to Doreh Bay during the late 18th century, e.g. aboard vessels of the British East India Company in 1775 (commanded by Thomas Forrest) or 1793 (commanded by John Hayes)? And signal a high status in the spirit world, in line with an argument presented on pp. 230 ff.? If so, this would be another example of the appropriation and incorporation of the foreign which was so typical of Biak culture (Kamma 1982; Rutherford 1997, 2002; cf. Fig. 35).

Source: Dumont d'Urville 1835b.

> Each community or village of the seafaring Papuans has such a house; it stands in line with the other houses and is distinguished from these in that it has no access from them and, furthermore, that wooden statues of people or crocodiles are attached to its stilts or poles. This house is dedicated to their faith or rather their fear and strictly speaking may be entered by no one already familiar with the secret of procreation … [boys] or youngsters … make use of it as many of them sleep in it. Constructing such a new community house or repairing it is a social event and always accompanied by revelry.

The missionaries also mention that a shrine built on Mansinam Island in Doreh Bay

> collapsed on 8 January 1857, causing great fear, as it was thought that the korwars were angry. Singing went on for many nights in order to still their anger, lest they would send to them the evil spirits *(manwen)* blamed for any calamity.[47]

In such shrines *manseren* Nanggi ("Lord Sky") was revered, "as were the ancestors, the great Mon Beyawawos - the Speaking Dead - who were now and again identified with *manseren* Nanggi. For it was emphatically claimed that Nanggi had his abode in this house" (Kamma 1972: 93). Kamma further mentions that *manseren* Manggundi, the ancestral culture hero who had disappeared and would return bringing wealth, could now and again have similar attributes as Nanggi. In various myths Nanggi yields his place to persons with unusual powers. Missionary sources mention the construction during *koreri* cults of special spirit houses for *manseren* Manggundi, filled with effigies portraying spirits and ancestors (cf. below, pp. 235 ff.).

Many of these shrines were vessel-shaped (Figs. 32-3):

> When the leaders of the two Numfoor *keret* [clans] went to the west, they left the mythical center, their island, behind. They founded the *rumsram* and built it in the shape of a canoe lying at anchor. In the center of the roof there is an elevation resembling the *papidan* (cabin) … of a canoe, the seat of the prominent persons. Stem and stern are decorated with a ball like a melon, representing valuable beads, the treasures of the ancestors (Kamma 1972: 93).

In 1858, a member of the Dutch Etna expedition sketched the *c.*25 m long, boat-shaped *rumsram* in the village of Doreh, built on the shores of Doreh Bay (Fig. 32). It rested on 24 tall poles, most of which were encarved with male and female figures with large genitalia as well as with two crocodiles, a snake and a woman with eight legs. These figures, each carrying a name, portrayed the clan's ancestors (*Etna Rapport* 1862: 153 ff.) and their consorts. There were more carvings of snakes and crocodiles in this shrine, as well as two unusually large (*c.*60 cm) male korwars tethered to poles. A *c.*3 m long woodcarving was also housed in the shrine and portrayed in a drawing (Fig. 32b). It depicted a couple with large genitalia engaged in sexual intercourse as well as a child touching the man's posterior with its feet. A second equally large effigy depicted a similar scene.

Fig. 30. The (same) "sacred house of Dorey", side view. Source: Dumont d'Urville 1835b.

Fig. 31. A shrine (on the left) located in Kwatisore, a settlement on the southwestern shores of the Geelvink Bay. Cf. Fig. 192. Source: van der Sande 1907.

In the humid tropical climate the shrines, wooden structures mainly built on piles in the sea, were very susceptible to decay, storms, occasional earthquakes and fire. They therefore had to be repaired or rebuilt regularly by the clan or sub-clan community. This was an on-going, laborious process, both technically and in terms of the necessary communication with spirits and the dead (during the *wor rumsram* rituals).

Time and again the missionaries requested the shrines either to be demolished or not to be repaired if damaged or in decay. When the Doreh village shrine collapsed in May 1864 as a result of an earthquake the missionaries unsuccessfully tried to prevent it being rebuilt. They especially resented the spirit effigies associated with the shrines - "horrible caricatures with unnaturally large genitals" (J. van Hasselt 1876: 197) - and the explicit depictions of sexual intercourse. J. van Hasselt relates the end of a shrine on Meos War, an island located *c.*150 km south of Doreh Bay, in some detail:

> Here the pagan feasts, that heavy burden for the missionaries of Doreh Bay, had subsided rapidly. In the night of 17 February 1867 the people of Meos War and [visitors from] Wandammen Bay had danced and sung until 8 am. The missionary [F. Mosche] walked up the mountain to witness a pageant in rows of two or three individuals circling the *rumsram*, dancing and singing, and carrying large plait work fishes. Without saying a word he positioned himself in their way and stared them down. At first a few backed off, others followed, and the procession dissolved. The next morning they descended to the missionary's house and, as a gesture of reconciliation towards him, started to remove trees from its immediate surroundings. After these events they never sung again, and [a few weeks later] they tore down their *rumsram*. On that occasion they forwarded their effigies to the missionary, who, however, had to assure them that the spirits would not seek revenge (J. van Hasselt 1888: 113-4).

Not much later a school was built. The effigies were sent to the Utrecht Missionary Society.

By the end of the 19th century all *rumsram*s in the northern part of the Geelvink Bay had disappeared as a result of missionary intervention.* The last remaining shrine in Doreh Bay had collapsed in 1897. It was repaired because one had lost confidence in its effigies which had turned out to be powerless when facing a plague epidemic. Van Hasselt purchased a large effigy depicting two copulating spirits (cf. Fig. 32b) and dispatched it to the Nederlandsch Indische Commissie to be included in the 1900 Paris *Exposition Universelle*.** The remaining shrines, located in the southern part of the Geelvink Bay and in the Raja Ampat archipelago, disappeared during the first decades of the 20th century.

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* F. van Hasselt (1921) criticizes the Dutch army officer W.K.H. Feuilletau de Bruyn who in *c.*1915, during a military exploration of the Schouten Islands, confused young men's houses he came across with the much larger real shrines (*rumsram*s; Feuilletau de Bruyn 1920). The last of the latter, located in Doreh Bay and on the Schouten Islands, van Hasselt points out, had disappeared in the course of the 1890s.

** Van Hasselt remarks that this effigy had vanished without a trace. To date its fate remains unknown.

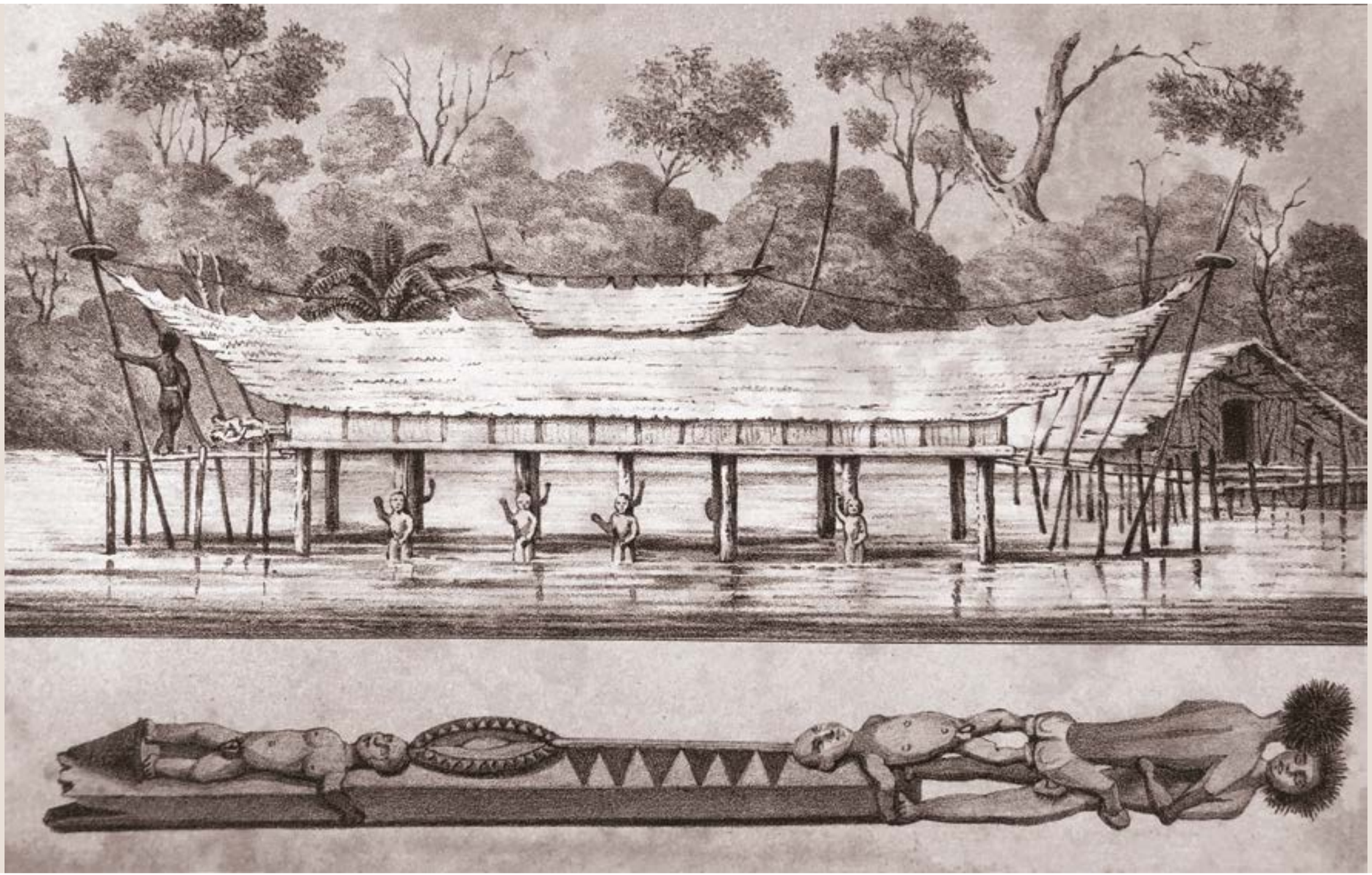

*Fig. 32 a,b. A Doreh Bay shrine (a) as observed by members of the Etna Expedition, a Dutch geopolitical-*cum-*scientific venture, during their sojourn from 4 May to 17 June, 1858. The shrine contained a log (b) with four encarved spirit figures, two of which engaged in sexual intercourse. The expedition report mentions a second log with a similar scene which was not depicted. Source:* Etna Rapport *1862.*

Fig. 33. This rumsram *located in Dorey Bay during the 1870s housed male effigies with large genitalia. Source: D'Albertis 1880.*

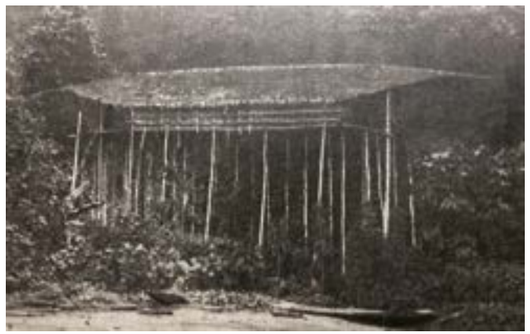

Fig. 34 A shrine or young men's house on poles at Wafordori village, on the north coast of Supiori Island. This photograph was taken in 1903 during a Dutch expedition led by the German mineralogist C.A.E. Wichmann (1851-1927). Source: van der Sande 1907.

Fig. 35. A shrine or (young) men's house with effigies attached to it, located on the cemetery isle Meos Bepondi (aka Meos Korwari, northwest of Supiori). In 1908 F. van Hasselt commissioned the removal of two clan ancestor effigies guarding the dead (Figs. 179, 187) from this island. Source: van der Sande 1907.

Critical voices

Adolf Bernhard Meyer, the German museum director who set off on an acquisition journey across the Geelvink Bay in 1873, did not share the negative assessment as expressed by missionaries:

> From Korido [Supiori Island] I brought back a series of large wooden effigies, roughly carved … which according to our own standards we would call obscene. [The] fact that they were attached to a small dwelling where young men slept, separated from the families, and other considerations … lead me to my conviction that these wooden figures are not at all obscene in the eyes of the Papuans but offer a tangible representation of how the child is begot. Al this serves education and has to be seen as, in a sense, the summit of their artistic creativity (Meyer 1875b: 31).

An End-of-Term Report (*Memorie van Overdracht*), composed by a departing civil servant and concerning the years 1936 and 1937, describes the attitude of the missionaries as "narrow-minded and meddlesome". This stance, the report continues, "has caused the straightforward destruction of a variety of cultural heritage instead of its adaptation to and incorporation in the new belief."[48] Ceremonies, ritual dances, musical instruments, woodcarvings etc.

> have been banned because they are supposed to clash with Christian beliefs, to be pagan, and everything issuing from paganism is ascribed to the devil. … There is no more zest for living or joyfulness, the old feasts have been prohibited, and if one engages in them nevertheless the menacing figure of the guru interferes immediately (*ibid.*).

In a subsequent End-of-Term Report on this region, pertaining to the year 1938, another civil servant, K. Th. Beets, was equally critical regarding Protestant missionaries and *guru*s. They prohibited each and everything contradicting Christian beliefs, whereby "often the traditional culture of the indigenous population has been destroyed or perished."[49]

Beets describes his laborious efforts to come to an agreement with the missionaries during several of their annual conferences which he attended during the late 1930s. Considering it exaggerated to claim that missions were straightforwardly striving for the destruction of the traditional culture the latter has nevertheless "certainly perished," Beets writes,

> as far as it was irreconcilable with the views and official doctrines of Christianity. Many heathen items are destroyed by the Christianized population, or sold and not replaced, because [they] believe these heathen items to be not useful anymore for them and even detrimental because at odds with [the new religion].[50]

For several years Beets did not receive an unambiguous reaction on his proposal which entailed that the missionaries would refrain from interfering with indigenous rituals. On the contrary, missionaries gathered at the annual conference of 8 April 1938 felt that their "attitude towards the popular feasts and dances [should] stay the same, to wit purifying the latter from anything at odds with Christian views." If this proved a failure converts should be forbidden to assist in those "feasts and dances".[51]

G.J. Held,* a gifted ethnologist, officiated as an advisor to the missionaries on behalf of the Dutch Bible Society (*Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap*) in the Geelvink Bay, and subsequently worked for the colonial government. His relationship with the missionaries too was strained because he did not agree with many of their practices. Held delivered one of the most emphatic criticisms pertaining to the iconoclasm of the missionaries. In an obituary J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong (1956: 344), a well-known Leiden University professor of ethnology who supervised Held's PhD, observes:

> Half a year after arriving already [Held] had to decide whether to avoid an open conflict with the missionaries or not. For the time being he decided to avoid it, because, as he would say, you cannot fight everyone at the same time. … But this did not solve what was a pressing moral issue for [him]. … During his five-year stay in New Guinea he kept trying to set up some form of loyal collaboration with the missionaries, to enhance their understanding of and insight in indigenous community life [his assignment on behalf of the Dutch Bible Society, RC], to urge them to moderate their continuous fault-finding. It did not help. In the long run their relationship grew worse instead of better.

The kernel of the issue was Held's attitude towards indigenous cultural traditions. His stance was radically different from that of the missionaries, who

> thought they had to combat everything in the native culture that was non-western, in fact the entire culture, as un-Christian or even anti-Christian. According to Held they were in the process not of reforming the culture but of annihilating it … he witnessed the cognitive and moral disorientation caused by the plethora of prohibitions" (*ibid.*, 345).

Further comments were voiced by Jacques Viot, a young French author, adventurer, art dealer, intellectual and dandy as well as, in his later life, a well-known screen play writer and Parisian socialite. Viot visited the Geelvink Bay in 1929 in order to acquire items of ethnographic interest, probably about a hundred all in all. Not much later these items made a splash in Surrealist circles in Paris and in the long run they have contributed much to the high appreciation for Geelvink Bay ritual art among present-day collectors and curators. The Surrealists, with whom he and his gallerist, Pierre Loeb, were well connected, hailed "primitive" and "savage" (*sauvage*) Oceanic art in particular as a possibility to unsettle and transgress the narrow canons of traditional bourgeois and Christian art.

Viot (1932; cf. Figs. 249, 318) describes his experiences in a satirical travelogue entitled *Déposition de blanc*. He plays with two different meanings of the French term "déposition", to wit, (a) the testimony (of a white man) and (b) the demotion (of the white man).* When visiting a weekly market in Serui, a large Christianised settlement on the southern coast of Yapen, Viot spots a group of Papuans hailing from Ambai, located further east along this coast, where no mass baptisms had yet taken place. Struck by the contrast between the proud, joyous appearance of the pagan visitors and the miserable, even despondent local Christians, he laments those residing further east because the same fate would soon await them.

Having met several missionaries, Viot is baffled by Frans van Hasselt's lack of knowledge pertaining to the use of ritual masks which Viot himself had encountered across the wider Geelvink Bay area, both east and west of Doreh Bay. And how could the missionary perhaps have known a great deal about rituals, he observes ironically, because he is not in the business of knowing about ritual practices but rather of placing them under prohibition. In the same pages Viot is annoyed by yet another missionary whom he describes as a self-aggrandizing, pompous and ridiculous air monger who talks Papuans into baptism by twisting their words in their mouths, fooling himself at the same time. The way Moluccan *guru*s terrorize the villagers, treating them as uncivilized dimwits, he finds equally disturbing. He describes the effects of the interdictions Protestant missionaries impose upon the Papuan peoples of the Geelvink Bay as disastrous.

Viot makes an exception for one missionary, Albert de Neef, who specialized in mass baptisms and at whose mission post in Serui (Yapen), he stays for some time. De Neef, in his eyes, is a good man, sincere, beguiling and of a lively intelligence. However, in Viot's view de Neef's many talents make him all the more dangerous to the Papuans, instead of turning him away from his disastrous exploits.

De Neef (1937b: 12-13), for his part, remarks that the Frenchman displayed a gentle, unobtrusive manner of acquiring objects whereby he did not interfere with missionary efforts. De Neef also mentions that a blacksmith named Sahoi refused to accept the sum of 50 Dutch guilders, a small fortune locally, which Viot offered him in exchange for a fine pair of bellows (cf. Fig. 297). "Selling my father's heirloom?", Sahoi riposted, "Never!".

All in all Viot - a pilgrim on a pilgrimage, he calls himself - is enthralled by New Guinea and its inhabitants. At the same time he experiences the unspoiled, disappearing beauty of this land and its people as difficult to access and mysterious - an enchanted world that resists his efforts and recedes.

Th. van Baaren (cf. Fig. 222), finally, in his well-known 1968 monograph on korwars, observes

> how little the older missionaries, dedicated as they were to preaching the gospel of their own religion, have known and understood of the religion of the people they tried to convert to Christianity, although some of the missionaries did their best, and with good results, to collect facts about these religions. However, practically all they have to tell us remains on the surface, without an inkling of the deep religious content of the religion they waged war on, or is tainted with misunderstanding owing to their own, often rather naive, Christianity (van Baaren 1968: 12).

Van Baaren's comment concerns the 19th-century missionaries in the Geelvink Bay, but the situation was not much better during the first decades of the 20th century, and certainly worse in terms of the quantity of ritual items taken or destroyed. An exception was missionary F.C. Kamma, who worked among the Biak and other ethnolinguistic groups of the Raja Ampat archipelago during the 1930s. Very sensitive to as well as interested in Biak religion,

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* Gerrit Jan Held (1906-1955) conducted extensive ethnographic fieldwork on the swampy Waropen Coast located in the south of the Geelvink Bay during the 1930s. This was one of the last regions to be converted to Christianity. His fieldwork resulted in the only full-fledged, fieldwork-based ethnography available regarding the Geelvink Bay as it was during the first half of the 20th century (Held 1947). It aimed at reconstructing the traditional Waropen culture as it had thrived before Dutch colonial rule was imposed.

* The following is based on Viot 1932, in particular pp. 55 ff., 73, 137, 142, and 181 ff. Cf. Viot 1931; Peltier 1992; Bounoure & Allain 2004.

Fig. 36. A table full of korwars and other Geelvink Bay items, on display at a Protestant missionary exhibition in Utrecht, 4-7 October 1909 (right). This event celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Utrecht Missionary Society. A separate photograph shows four effigies from that table (below; cf. Figs. 179, 187). The organizers referred to the assemblage on the table as "the spoils from Biak Island". This martial metaphor, characteristic for the missionary discourse of the day, was suggested by missionary F. van Hasselt, who had acquired these items. The Bible verse seen on the wall is a Biak translation of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Source: Nationaal Archief (Spaarnestad Collection).

he became the major ethnographer of this people. However, Kamma too did not hesitate to discourage and/or confiscate numerous korwars and other effigies, along with 3000 sacred-secret drawings of the spirit world created by indigenous priests (see Corbey 2017: 110-29). In 1935, in San Pele (Raja Ampat), he "decided to take away several stones the people revered. Such sacrificial spaces cannot be condoned if they want to be baptized."[52]

Missionary exhibitions

Objects sent to the Utrecht Missionary Society's premises in the course of the 19th century were accumulated in its "missionary museum".* The majority of these items were on loan to the Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde in Rotterdam (now called Wereldmuseum) from 1906 on (see Figs. 39, 40) to later be acquired by this museum in 1955. Individual missionaries as well as certain expedition members, acting on their personal account, also dispersed ritual art. A significant proportion of the korwars and other items the missionaries channelled to the Netherlands during the first decades of the 20th century was sold to the public at temporary missionary exhibitions.

Such *zendingstentoonstellingen* were organized occasionally from the late 19th century on, and more frequently since *c.*1909, to continue well into the 1950s, in particular in the predominantly Protestant northern part of the Netherlands. Numerous such events took place, not only in major cities (e.g., The Hague, Breda, Nijmegen, Groningen) but also in small towns or villages such as "Rilland-Bath, Krabbendijke [and] Kloetinge".[53] At such events ethnographics used to be sold in order to raise funds for the missions.** The same applies to the so-called *bazaars*, on an even smaller scale, held across the Netherlands New Guinea.

Between 4 and 7 October 1909 the Utrecht Missionary Society celebrated its 50th anniversary with a sizeable exhibition in Utrecht which Wilhelmina Queen of the Netherlands opened. This festivity more or less coincided with the conversion frenzy unfolding in the Geelvink Bay, as discussed above (see pp. 39-40). Next to ritual art, the exhibits from the missionary fields in the Dutch East (and West) Indies included maps, photographs, and models of houses, churches and boats.

The exhibition catalogue (*Catalogus* 1909, n.p.) and the press coverage provide an impression of the spatial lay-out, the activities, and the spirit in which such events were organized before World War II. The huge exhibition venue

> was divided into two parts, right and left. Here a pagan village, dirty, messy and unsightly, there a clean, friendly Christian village. Here heathens returning from a head-hunting raid [in fact the Biak word, *raak*, is used here, RC], flaunting the head of a defeated enemy. There heathens about to receive the light of the Holy Scripture and to burn their idols … In the large dwellings on poles from New Guinea one searches in vain for furniture … in stark contrast to a neat model of a Christian house in which one family lives together in a decent way.[54]

A large banner read "Preach the Holy Scripture to all creatures." Missionaries were present to provide explanations. School classes in particular were encouraged to attend. The main purpose was to deliver propaganda in support of the Protestant missionary effort. A painting comprising a view of Biak was referred to in the exhibition catalogue as follows:

> Biak ... has always been known as a den of thieves where the sins of the Papuan people thrive. Now the door for the Holy Scripture is wide open. When missionary F. van Hasselt paid a visit in 1908 people handed in or burned countless korwars and amulets out of their own free will (*ibid.*).

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* Apparently not a single photograph of this missionary museum's interior has been preserved. A catalogue was kept and during the 1890s the general public could visit this museum on Wednesday afternoons. According to the Board of the Utrecht Missionary Society's minutes dated 13 November 1889 (in Het Utrechts Archief), a possible sale of its contents was discussed. Most of it went on loan to Rotterdam in 1906, while the remainder was to be used for or sold at temporary missionary exhibitions. Subsequently, since 1917, many korwars, along with other items, passed through the Zendingshuis Oegstgeest (the Netherlands), then the home base of the joint Dutch Protestant missions.

** During the first half of the 20th century, too, even more Roman Catholic so-called *missietentoonstellingen* took place, mainly in the predominantly Roman Catholic south of the Netherlands. Here, as far as New Guinea was concerned, visitors were introduced to ritual art from indigenous societies home to the southern coast of West New Guinea, which the colonial government had allocated to Roman Catholic missionaries. The northern and western coasts were allocated to the Protestant denominations.

Fig. 37. A small-scale Protestant missionary exhibition, presumably held in Zaandam (the Netherlands) in 1932. This event included a display of korwars, drums and neck rests. Source: Nederlandsch Zendingsblad *1932.*

Fig. 38. A Protestant missionary exhibition, probably held in Leiden (the Netherlands) during the winter of 1947/48. We see six or seven korwars in the centre. Source: Nederlandsch Zendingsblad *1948.*

The exhibited Geelvink Bay effigies (Fig. 36), many of which were for sale, were described in a derogatory manner:

> [The] most striking and touching section was the collection of idols [*afgodsbeelden*] or korwars from Biak. Imagine a long table covered with over 200 of those disgusting idols … Atrocious wooden puppets and monstrous creations [*gedrochten*] as well as human skulls covered with dirty cloths. Also imagine, at least if you can manage, that these apparitions [*schrikbeelden*] for years if not centuries have been subject to superstition, fear and veneration. Imagine that the people have handed these items over to the missionaries out of their own free will, because they have turned out to be idle and of no relevance, because the human soul unconsciously hungers for something better (*ibid.*).

The image of colonially dominated ethnic groups residing in the East and West Indies which such exhibitions disseminated among support groups active in the Netherlands was black and white. Self-righteous visual narratives of progress framed faraway peoples as backward pagans, living in fear of both spirits and raids; as gluttonous, happy-go-lucky; as not fully capable of autonomous action; as in need of redemption; as either passive or actively resisting recipients. At the same time the missionaries presented themselves as self-sacrificial, heroic donors with a deep calling to distribute medical help, education and, in particular, their own spirit beliefs.

Countless Geelvink Bay ritual items have found their way into private hands and/or collections through such missionary exhibitions. A remarkable example concerns a private collection assembled during the first half of the 20th century which surfaced in The Hague in 2010 (Fig. 41). It consisted of 22 korwars, several amulets and an initiation board from the Geelvink Bay, as well as a similar number of objects from another part of the Netherlands East Indies. All this had been brought together by Henry Blekkink (1888-1953), a secondary school teacher based in The Hague. He almost certainly acquired the majority of these items through missionary exhibitions, or through direct contacts with either the Utrecht Missionary Society or individual missionaries.* Numerous korwars will have landed in private hands in the same manner.

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* Robert van de Heijden, pers. comm., October 2018. This Amsterdam-based tribal art aficionado-*cum*-dealer came across these korwars in 2010 (cf. Weener 2012). The provenances written on the accompanying labels provide valuable additional information as to differences between various style areas, in particular the Schouten Islands and Yapen. This information has been heeded in the present publication.

Expeditions and museums

The period under consideration in the present publication, to wit, between *c.*1855 and *c.*1940, was one of rapid imperialist expansion. Both expeditions (including military explorations) and administrators acquired items of ethnographic importance in the wider Geelvink Bay region, often as a side activity, but now and again in a substantial manner. They were encouraged by Dutch museum curators who realized that indigenous cultural traditions had started to transform rapidly. The reports on and proceedings of such ventures constitute another source, in addition to missionary records, for a better understanding of the ritual art (cf. Wentholt 2003). However, we must never forget that, as the expedition members themselves were often the first to acknowledge, much or even most of their information was obtained from or with the help of the missionaries, as were numerous objects.

The following acquisition ventures, among others, have enriched the Geelvink Bay holdings of Dutch museums:

(a) The so-called Etna Expedition of 1858, the first official exploration of West New Guinea by the Dutch, collects ethnographic items (including the korwar depicted in Fig. 56) which probably end up in the Ethnographisch Museum associated with the Artis Zoo in Amsterdam. In 1923 this museum was incorporated into the predecessor of the Tropenmuseum (*Etna Rapport* 1862; van Duuren 2011).

(b) J. van Oldenborgh, a colonial official stationed on Ternate Island, acquires 300 items during a tour of duty to the western and northern coast of New Guinea in the Spring of 1881 (van Oldenborgh 1882), which he donates to the 'sRijks Ethnografisch Museum (Leiden) in 1895.

(c) F.S.A. de Clercq, one of van Oldenborgh's successors on Ternate, collects *c.*1000 items during four similar voyages (1887-88) which are also donated to the above Leiden museum. In collaboration with a curator of this museum, J.D.E. Schmeltz, de Clercq documents these objects in a 300 pp., amply illustrated monograph which to this day constitutes a major reference (de Clercq & Schmeltz 1893; cf. Corbey 2017, Ch. 5).

(d) G.A.J. van der Sande, a medical officer, acquires several hundred objects from the Geelvink Bay during the 1903 Netherlands New Guinea Expedition, led

Fig. 39 a, b. The rich collection of korwars held at the Wereldmuseum (Rotterdam, the Netherlands), formerly named Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde (cf. Fig. 45). A substantial part hereof was acquired through the Utrechtsche Zendingsvereeniging. Photographs by the author, 2018.

Fig. 40. The handwritten inventory of northwest New Guinea art hoarded by the Utrecht Missionary Society which went on loan to the Rotterdam Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde. The museum would acquire these items in 1955. Source: Archives of the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam.

Fig. 41. Most of the korwars once owned by Henry Blekkink, a mid-20th century high school teacher from The Hague. A Dutch dealer in tribal art took this low-resolution snapshot shortly after acquiring this set in 2011. Many of these korwars are illustrated in the second section of the present publication.

by Arthur Wichmann. These too are forwarded to the abovementioned Leiden museum (van der Sande 1907).

(e) Captain A.J. Gooszen acquires thousands of items during military explorations carried out in 1907-8 and 1913, which find their way to either the Museum van het Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen in Batavia (now named Museum Nasional, Jakarta) or to the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (Leiden).

(f) J.C. van Eerde, an Amsterdam curator and university professor, acquires *c.*90 items from the colonial administration during a voyage through the area in 1929; they include the renowned Mayalibit Bay (Raja Ampat) altar group now kept at the Tropenmuseum (Amsterdam; see Fig. 195). These items had mostly been either confiscated or acquired by officials and were housed at the government post at Manokwari (Doreh Bay, Fig. 53; cf. Corbey 2017: Ch. 3).

(g) C. van der Wijck, an administrator at Serui (Yapen) procures ethnographics between 1927 and 1930.

(h) W.A. Hovenkamp, *Resident* in the Moluccas, dispatches a shipment to curator van Eerde not long after they have met during the latter's voyage of 1929.*

The majority of acquisitions resulting from these journeys were presumably procured by the Leiden 'sRijks Ethnographisch Museum (the present Museum Volkenkunde) and the Amsterdam Tropenmuseum. The museums supplemented these holdings with items which from the hands of missionaries, administrators, seamen, travellers and individual expedition members had initially found their way into private collections, the antiques trade, and auctions, to later end up in museums too.

Another Geelvink Bay collection is kept at the National Museum of Indonesia (Museum Nasional) in Jakarta, which until 1949 was named the Museum van het Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen (the Museum of the Royal Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences). While the present publication was being prepared the Jakarta museum was under reconstruction and its collections

* For more detailed surveys of how ritual art from West New Guinea found its way to the Leiden and Amsterdam ethnological museums, see Smidt 1992, van Duuren 1992 and Veys 2018; if pertaining specifically to the Raja Ampat archipelago, see Corbey 2017.

were not accessible. How much presently remains of this museum's considerable early Geelvink Bay holdings is unclear. Fortunately, the former Leiden curator and museum director L. Serrurier published line drawings of 30 korwars curated in Batavia in 1898 (Serrurier 1898; see Figs. 14-6, 165).

In addition to the numerous objects passing through Dutch hands, quite a number of foreign acquisition initiatives, albeit more modest, can be mentioned. For example: the French expeditions of the first decades of the 19th century, led by French naval officers L.C. de Saulces de Freycinet, L.I. Duperrey, and J.S.C. Dumont d'Urville, respectively; a voyage embarked upon by the Italian naturalists L. G. d'Albertis and O. Beccari in 1872 (D'Albertis 1880; Gnecchi Ruscone 2011); an acquisition journey undertaken in 1873 by the German naturalist Adolf Meyer;* and cruises enjoyed by globe-trotting socialites such as on board of the *Marchesa* during the early 1880s (see Guillemard 1886).

In 1912 the German naturalist and entomologist Paul Kibler collected a number of ethnographics in the Geelvink Bay, as a side activity. At least part of these items were acquired by the Linden-Museum in his native city Stuttgart (Germany), which deaccessioned some of them during the 1960s/70s.

The 1929 collecting venture by the French art dealer and writer Jacques Viot, already discussed above (p. 61), channelled some 100 items straight into the vibrant art scene of one of the European metropoles: Paris.

Special mention deserves the American ethnologist A.B. Lewis, who travelled across Melanesia between 1909 and 1913, acquiring artefacts for the Field Museum of Natural History (Chicago). In December 1912 Lewis left 500 Dutch guilders - the equivalent of US $200 - with Frans van Hasselt at Manokwari in order to purchase items with. Lewis mentions that the latter "was in the habit of making trips every year to various parts of the coast and said that in the course of two or three years he could easily make a fair representative collection."[55] In *c.*1915 van Hasselt shipped 300 items, including several large wooden figures and approximately 25 "rare and valuable" korwars, which due to World War I arrived at the Field Museum only in 1919. Lewis further remarks that at the time of his visit indeed "very little of original workmanship was to be had", citing the long-standing influence of Europeans, Malay and Chinese. This explains why it had taken van Hasselt three years to assemble this collection (*ibid.*).

* Adolph Bernhard Meyer (1840-1911) was a German naturalist and Darwinist. During his 3-month journey across the Geelvink Bay between March and July 1873 he acquired plants, birds and other animals, as well as items of geological and ethnographical interest, on behalf of various European museums (Meyer 1873, 1875a, 1875b; cf. Figs. 118-9, 212). The next year he was appointed Director of the Königliches Zoologisches und Anthropologisch-Ethnographisches Museum zu Dresden (Germany), in which capacity he officiated enthusiastically during 30 years.

Fig. 42. An interior in Amsterdam, c.*1917. Source: Archief Alkmaar, RAA-PON-0030.*

Fig. 43. An administrator on a tour of duty, Yapen Island 1951. Source: Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Inv. nr. TM-10008383.

BOX I: MISSIONARY IDIOM

The first activity pertaining to Evangelisation in Northwest New Guinea, as the Board of the Utrecht Missionary Society (Fig. 21) stated in 1870, was the initiative taken by missionaries

> **to come to live among this barbarian people. A people without love, engaged in heritable battle and feud between tribes, villages and families. A people that displays no conscience, to whom capturing and murdering other humans are not crimes but glorious deeds of heroes. A people that has no religion, fears and flatters their dead and sees them as evil spirits, a people that sacrifices and defers to roughly hewn sculptures while dancing like madmen.[56]**

Similar stereotypical characterizations of the Geelvink Bay Papuans can be found throughout the letters, diaries and articles written by missionaries during the next 70 years. These formulations do not change noticeably during this period and occur side-by-side with pervasive agricultural, biblical and martial metaphors such as, e.g., "plowing/sowing in fertile soil", "night and daybreak", "light and dark", "struggle and victory" and "war booty".

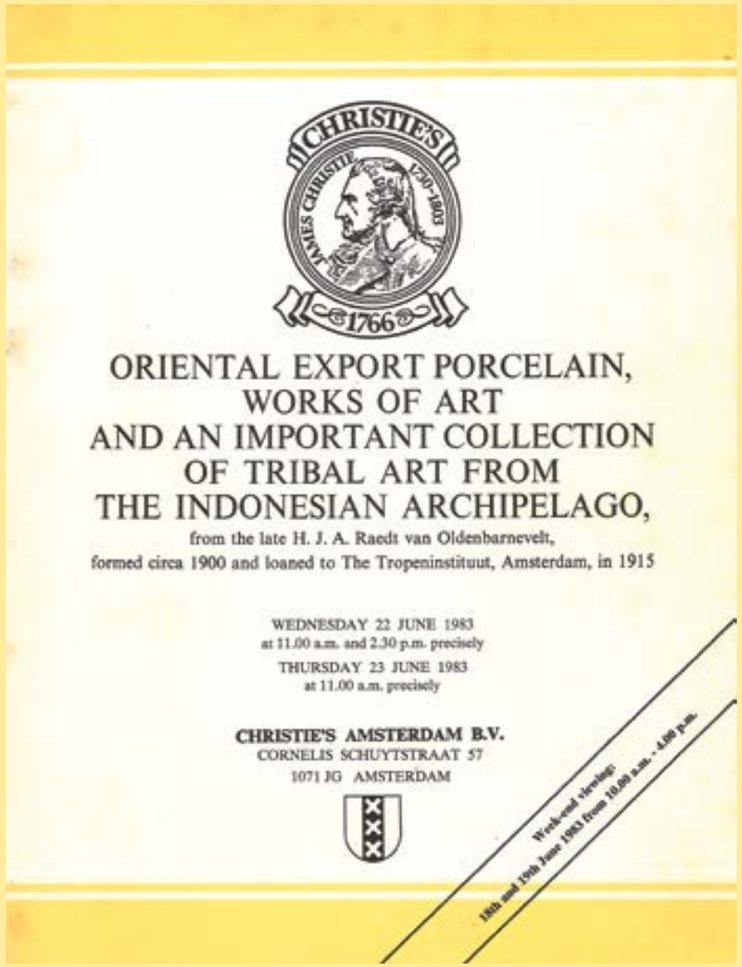
Here are some examples of stereotypical terminology abounding in the missionary sources under study, often, paradoxically, juxtaposed to sharp ethnographic observations and unstinting human engagement:

duivelshuis = devil's house (regarding shrines)
schandalige afgodsbeelden = scandalous idols
duivelskunstenaar = devil artist, wizard
heksensabbath = Witches' Sabbath (regarding funerary rites)
leugenprofeet = false prophet
onrustverwekker, *amokmaker* = troublemaker
bedrieger = deceiver (regarding indigenous priests)
dronkemansgelagen = drinking bouts
dronkemansbende = drunken party
wellustige danspartij = lustful dance party
gejoel en getier = howling and jeering
zwelgpartij = carouse
dolle nachtelijke feesten = frenzy nightly revelry
bacchanalia = bacchanalia
gesnoef en verkwisting = bragging and wastefulness (regarding rituals)
rommel = junk (regarding confiscated ritual items)
oorlogsbuit = war booty, spoils (referring to confiscated ritual items)
tovergerei = magic gear
heidens gedoe = pagan hassle
zwerfziek = of a roving (erratic) disposition (referring to Arfak groups)
ernstige karakterzonden = serious personality flaws
hocus-pocus in plaats van medicijnen = hank-panky instead of medicine
amokmaker = a person running amok (regarding *konoor*s, religious leaders)
burcht van Satan = Satan's stronghold (regarding certain un-Christianized Papuan settlements)
een roos op een mesthoop = a rose on a dung heap (the Protestant mission amidst local traditions)

Fig. 44. Papuans from Moor Island in the south of the Geelvink Bay, c.*1920. Several men are wearing shirts and trousers, two women (right of centre) beads strung onto necklaces. Source: Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Inv. nr. RV-A313-3.*

Fig. 45. A showcase in the then Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde in Rotterdam in 1903 displaying korwars and (Geelvink Bay) prows. The effigies placed on the top shelf reveal the very distinctive art style encountered on New Guinea's northern coast to the east of the Geelvink Bay, including Yamna Island and the Humboldt Bay area. Source: Verslag over het Jaar 1903 van het Museum voor Land- en Volkenkunde *(kept in the archives of the Wereldmuseum).*

Fig. 46. These five korwars (right) originate from the private collection of H.J.A. Raedt van Oldenbarneveld (1860-1936), a high-rank civil servant stationed in the Moluccas. Christie's Amsterdam auctioned these items in 1983 (below). Cf. Fig. 58.


CHRISTIE'S

1766

ORIENTAL EXPORT PORCELAIN,
WORKS OF ART
AND AN IMPORTANT COLLECTION
OF TRIBAL ART FROM
THE INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO,

from the late H. J. A. Raedt van Oldenbarnevelt,
formed circa 1900 and loaned to The Tropeninstituut, Amsterdam, in 1915

WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE 1983
at 11.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. precisely
THURSDAY 23 JUNE 1983
at 11.00 a.m. precisely

CHRISTIE'S AMSTERDAM B.V.
CORNELIS SCHUYTSTRAAT 57
1071 JG AMSTERDAM

Week-end viewing:
18th and 19th June 1983 from 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.

Fig. 47. H.J.A. Raedt van Oldenbarneveld and his wife, D.E. Raedt van Oldenbarnevelt-van Maarseveen. Source: J. Hoogerbrugge Archive.

Fig. 48. Korwars privately owned by a well-known Dutch artist and astute collector. For some of these items, see Figs. 81, 97, 124 and 134. The korwar on the far right is a so-called "soldier's korwar". Such items, often painted in vivid colours, were carved in considerable numbers to be sold as souvenirs to American troops stationed in the Geelvink Bay during the aftermath of World War II. Nowadays they occasionally surface on Ebay, as do many recent copies of korwars carved on Bali (Indonesia). Photograph by the author, 2018.

Fig. 49. A private collection of Geelvink Bay ritual art. A number of these items are presented in more detail throughout the present publication. The figure on the far left is a mid-29th century plaster cast, probably made for didactic purposes. Photograph by the author, 2019.

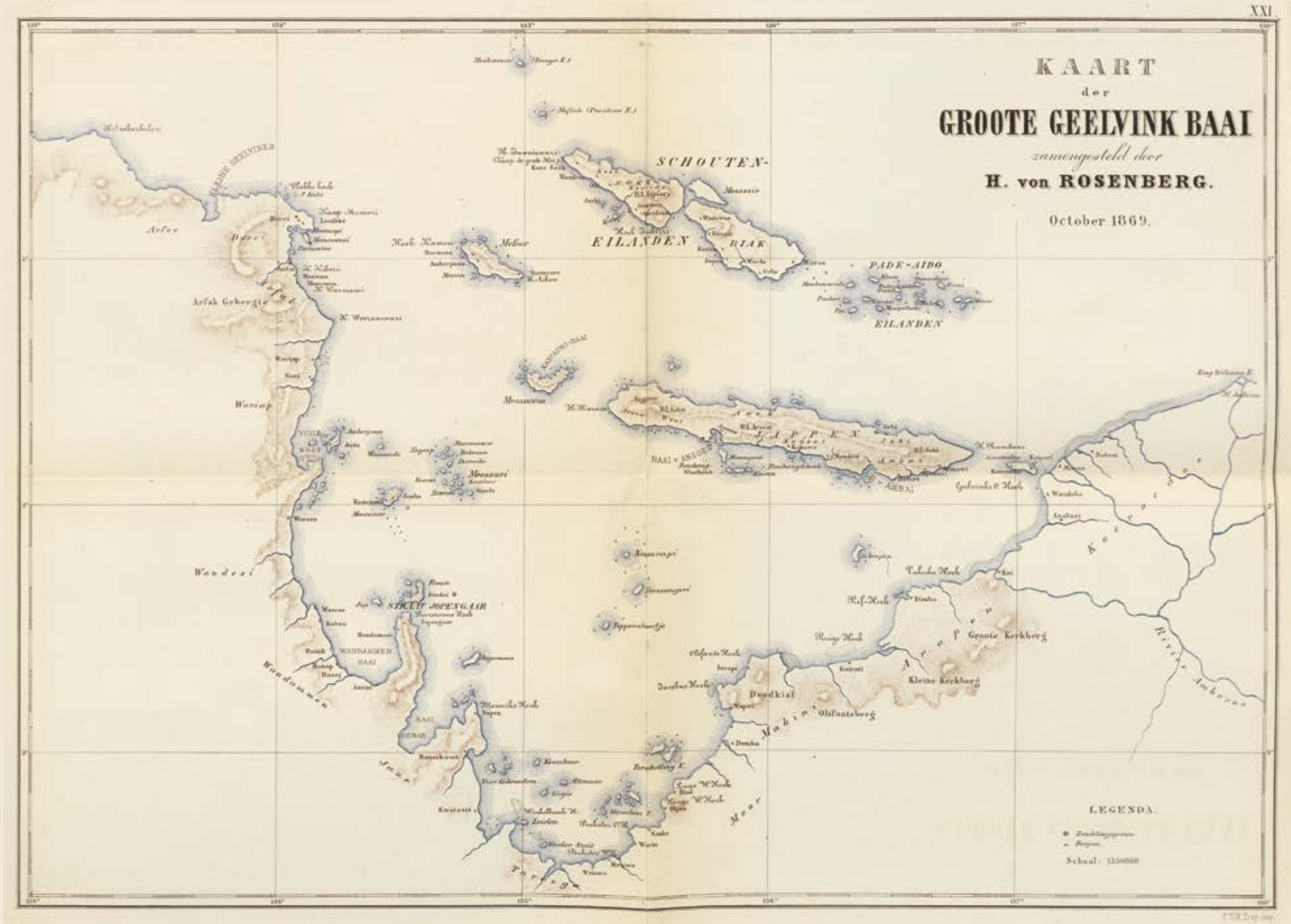


Fig. 50. Map of the Geelvink Bay (slightly edited). Source: Rosenberg 1875.