

UPPER SEPIK – CENTRAL NEW GUINEA PROJECT

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The trip to document Mountain Ok collections in the United States of America was undertaken from the 9 July to 1 August 2005 and was followed by a visit to the University of Queensland's Anthropology Museum where from 16 August to 19 August I documented the David Hyndman Wopkeimin collection.

The preparation for the USA trip had proved difficult because the staff at the Los Angeles County Museum (LACM) were unsure of whether they would be able to accommodate me within the period that I had arranged with all other participants. They could not, however, come up with an alternative so I arrived in Los Angeles according to their estimates of the best possible time. Secondly the PAA conference in Salem in late July was fitted into the tight timeframe between recording George Morren's Mianmin collection in New Jersey and Arnold Perey's Oksapmin collection in New York, and subsequently visiting Charles Penney in Lockport, NY. Even a day's delay would have caused great problems. Thankfully there were no problems and the success of the trip was beyond initial expectations.

The LACM was the first port of call. Prior to my departure I had identified in notes held by Barry Craig that 360 Ward Williams objects in the LACM were possibly from the Mountain Ok area. At the museum I was able to find and document 351 pieces, only two minor pieces were missing and two other possible pieces appeared to have been mis-registered. This has been the best success rate we have had so far. Additionally, I also found four pieces from other collectors that belonged to our area: one Mountain Ok shield, one Mountain Ok houseboard and two phallocrypts from the Upper Sepik Basin. Unfortunately, while I found a lot of documentation associated with the Ward Williams collection we are still far from being able to determine exact collection points. However, we do believe that some of the information exists and have followed a few avenues and we have recently obtained Stuart Campbell's (Ward William's colleague on the 1938 expedition) journals from the Mitchell library in Sydney and some of Ward William's notes from the Explorers Club in New York.

While I was in Los Angeles I also visited the Fowler Museum at University of California Los Angeles. Barry had contacted them prior to my departure and three Telefomin houseboards had been identified there, two of them collected by Barry. By the time that I had arrived in L. A. this was all that they had located due to inconsistencies in their database field entries. That day I scoured the database and tried all manner of queries and recovered two more objects from the Telefomin area; one, a cuirass that curiously had been donated by the collector who had also donated the shield and houseboard that I had discovered while I was at the LACM. I was able to get a printout of the objects' measurements, provenances and images.

The George Morren collection proved to be even more fruitful as not only did I find ten new objects but I was able to get field notes that, while inconsistent in their content, have gone a long way in providing collection and source points for this collection and for correcting some previously suspected and unsuspected anomalies and erroneous entries in the PNG National Museum register. They also reveal that there should be 57 more pieces from Morren than originally suspected at the PNG National Museum. These pieces apparently were never registered. The Morren collection in New Jersey ended up consisting of 116 pieces and I managed to record 112 pieces. Two of the other pieces, a shield and arrow, were housed outside of George Morren's house and their location was known to the collector; he will be recording them for us at a future date. Two other pieces, palmwood spatulate clubs, remain unaccounted for and their whereabouts are unknown; however his collection notes do suggest that they are with him and not with the PNG National Museum.

My main task in New York was to glean information about Arnold Perey's Oksapmin collection in PNG which had no specific collection point data. Also, Arnold Perey's collection at the PNG National Museum numbers 200 pieces but 60 pieces are as yet unaccounted for. Part of the problem is that the collection was never given field numbers and the accession numbers were written on black tags that could have easily fallen off some of the objects. This belief is supported by the fact that 42 of the pieces unaccounted for are arrows in the collection and it was the arrows tags that were the easiest to remove. While I was at the PNG National Museum I saw arrows that were analogous to Perey's arrows situated on a rack of West Sepik arrows, but without proof of provenance I had no choice but to place these to one side near where I had placed arrows that I had successfully catalogued. I had believed at the time that I would eventually have enough information to identify this material using Perey's notes and vernacular evidence supplied by him from New York. Curiously enough, six of the remaining Perey objects that were missing from their appointed storage areas were bamboo smoking tubes, a fact that follows a pattern at the PNG National Museum that I have elaborated upon in a previous report.

Perey had not as yet gone through and compiled his notes by the time I had arrived in New York; however he gave me access to his personal collection of objects from Oksapmin. The extent of the collection had been unknown to us and it turned out to be significant - some 53 pieces. I was able to record every piece and collection point data was provided with Perey stating that more information would be forthcoming with his notes. Not only did I gain access to this collection but I was introduced to a colleague of Perey's who had been undertaking field research in the Oksapmin area simultaneously with Perey's research in Oksapmin. The colleague, Devorah Tarrow, had the material in her house in New York and I was given full access to this material with Arnold Perey being able to provide collection point data for this collection as well. This collection included 50 pieces which meant that we were able to assimilate an additional and unexpected 103 pieces from the Oksapmin area.

The final collection that I catalogued in the USA was the Wilson Wheatcroft Mountain Ok collection held by Charles Penney in Lockport, New York. This collection contained no surprises and 91 of the 93 pieces were found and recorded. Unfortunately, as expected, no further notes concerning the collection were found and Wheatcroft's notes remain incomplete and difficult to decipher. However, Wheatcroft will be available over the course of the project to respond to enquiries and provide more data.

As for most of the USA collections, the documentation of the David Hyndman collection at the University of Queensland proved to be fruitful beyond expected results. I was able to find and document 90 pieces. Two others were recorded as missing by the museum and I found that two more had gone missing since the last record. Prior to my arrival in Brisbane I received a copy of the database printout of the collection and had noted that the field numbers were missing from the records - field numbers are important when collector notes are not fully entered into the museum register or when trying to differentiate between similar material that may have different qualities. I was rather alarmed at this as the Hyndman field numbers were written on tags and were susceptible to becoming de-attached. As it turned out, most of the tags remained and only four had become detached. The survival of Hyndman field numbers was only due to the fact that the registrar had used the same tags on which to write the new accession numbers, crossing out the field numbers, and on close inspection I was able to discern the numbers. The documentation of the Hyndman collection allowed me to cross-check his field notes and I established that there were 73 more pieces from his collection at PNG National Museum. These pieces also appear not to have been registered and the thirteen pieces of his that I found when I was at the Museum suggest that they may all have been given ‘NN’ numbers.

I was also able to identify at the Queensland University Museum another small collection of which we had no previous knowledge. This collection was made in 1949 by the first medical officer at Telefomin, John Akerman. There are six distinctive pieces including a shield and a *bogol-men* — a ceremonial net bag associated with the male arrow cult of the Mountain Ok. We have found it difficult to locate many of these ceremonial and initiation net bags as they are rare and were made only sporadically throughout the Mountain Ok region. Akerman gave a collection to the Berndt Museum of Anthropology at the University of Western Australia and we are currently investigating whether any of this material comes from the areas covered by our project.

The results of the trip to the United States and Queensland are tabulated below. 762 objects were documented during this trip, bringing the total of objects that we have recorded during the project so far to around 4,890.

Central New Guinea material

<u>Collector</u>	<u>No. of objects recorded</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Museum repository</u>
Morren G.	1	1968	Personal collection, New Jersey
Wheatcroft W.	2	1969-	Penney Collection, Lockport, NY, USA
		1970	
Stendahl A.	2	?	LA County Museum, California, USA
TOTAL	5		

Upper Sepik material

<u>Collector</u>	<u>No. of</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Museum repository</u>
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objects

recorded

Morren G.	111	1969, 1981-2	Personal collection, New Jersey
Perey A.	53	1967-8	Personal collection, New York
Tarrow, D.	50	1967-8	Personal collection, New York
Wheatcroft W.	89	1969-1970	Penney Collection, Lockport, NY, USA
Williams, W.	351	1938	LA County Museum, California, USA
Elaine Irell	2	1969?	LA County Museum, California, USA
Various	5	?	Fowler Museum, UCLA
Hyndman, D.	90	1969	University of Queensland Anthropology Museum
Akerman, J.	6	1949	University of Queensland Anthropology Museum
TOTAL	757		

Just prior to the USA trip, Barry was able to identify two further collections of Mountain Ok material, one representing the Kwermin, collected by Sveinn Eggertsson and one representing the Dulanmin (Asabano), collected by Roger Lohmann of Toronto, Canada. Both were assembled in the early 1990s. The Dulanmin collection, which numbers between 120-150 objects, is vital. The Dulanmin are an unrelated language group within the Mountain Ok cultural region and we have recorded only 17 Dulanmin pieces so far. Lohmann's wife, Heather Miller, has agreed to organize an honours student to record and photograph the collection according to our requirements and will use the material for their own research project as well.

Eggertsson, whose collection in Reykjavik, Iceland represents a south-eastern Mountain Ok fringe group that speaks a dialect of Bimin, has agreed to perform this task himself. Importantly, Eggertsson has alerted us to a small collection he deposited in the PNG National Museum. It is almost certain that this collection has not been registered and designated to an appropriate storage point and will be difficult to identify unless field numbers survive. He will provide the images and information concerning his personal collection prior to our departure to PNG and this will be crucial in identifying the nature of the material and the characteristics of his field numbering system, to assist in locating it in the PNG National Museum.