

UPPER SEPIK - CENTRAL NEW GUINEA PROJECT

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Collection of data for the USCNG Project has occupied Andrew Fyfe, assisted in Sydney and for a short time in Port Moresby by Barry Craig, for almost two years. There is still one collection of approximately 200 items for which a list and images are about to be sent from the USA, data of c.50 items recently received from Iceland and some 250 items also recently received from France. Added to those noted in several progress reports to date, the total number of objects recorded is approximately 12,000, thus exceeding the target set in the project proposal by around 3000 objects. Of this total, around 58% are from the Upper Sepik and 42% from Central New Guinea. However, not all the material was found to be provenanced in sufficient detail to locate a particular spot on the map for the purpose of GIS-based analysis. It is estimated that around 8,500 to 9000 objects will be eligible for such analysis. More definite figures will be available early next month when the recently employed Research Assistant, Dandong Zheng, has analysed the combined database. Data coding is well advanced and a powerful desktop computer is to be purchased to dedicate to analysis.

It should be noted that several hundred designs carved on arrows were recorded by Barry Craig but the arrows themselves were not collected. These designs nevertheless can be included with the designs on arrows that were collected, thus expanding considerably the sample size for that particular analysis. In preparation for such analysis, some three thousand designs have been photocopied by Dandong Zhen. These will be supplemented with photographs of arrow designs taken by Andrew Fyfe when he was recording collections around the world, as few museums would permit him to do crayon rubbings (the method used by Barry Craig). Exact figures are not yet available but it is anticipated that perhaps as many as 4000 arrow designs may be available for analysis. It is intended that preliminary statistical analysis of the project data, guided by Dr Ari Verbyla, will be commenced some time in November.

Periods between interstate and overseas trips to collect data have been occupied by reading relevant ethnographic literature, and books and journal articles dealing with method and theory. At present, Andrew Fyfe is preparing a paper for publication dealing with the method and theoretical basis of the project in general and of his thesis in particular. This paper is well advanced and scheduled for completion in early October. A second paper, dealing with the practicalities and problems of recording data on ethnographic collections in museums is also being prepared by Andrew Fyfe and is scheduled for completion at the end of the year. Both papers will be submitted to a refereed journal (*reCollections*), published on-line by the National Museum of Australia.

The project website <http://uscngp.sai.net.au> has been designed, and is being hosted, by Sai Perchard, currently a Year 12 International Baccalaureate student at Glenunga International High School. At the beginning of 2007, data and images of a selection of objects will be placed on the website as a precursor to making the entire dataset available after completion of Andrew Fyfe's thesis. Work will also commence on making pertinent information and photographs of all the objects in the dataset available on disc for distribution to high schools in the PNG study region, for use by those schools in cultural heritage education.