

AN INDONESIAN MOTIF, THE SQUATTING FIGURE, THE HOCKER AND ITS INFLUENCE ON AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL ART

by

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Summary

Regard this article as a contribution to the at present rather heated debate about foreign influences on Australian Aboriginal art, I select one motif and show its influence on Aboriginal art.

A typical motif of Indonesian art: the squatting figure, the so-called "Hocker", it comes in many, often surprising variations, some of them reach far into the Pacific Ocean and one or the other even reaches Australia. In this article I concentrate on those which reach Australia and leave aside those, as interesting they may be, which did not touch the shores of Australia.

The squatting figure, the Hocker, comes as round sculpture, as rock-painting, as painting, as relief, as line drawing, as ornament on shields. Sculptural representation of a squatting-figure motif covers a region extending from ancient China to Burma, southern Indochina, large portions of Indonesia and Melanesia, and the central Solomons. In the South Seas true squatting-figure images appear in a weaker form; the occur purer forms only in north-western America, sporadically in Central America, Colombia, Venezuela and the Aleutian Islands.

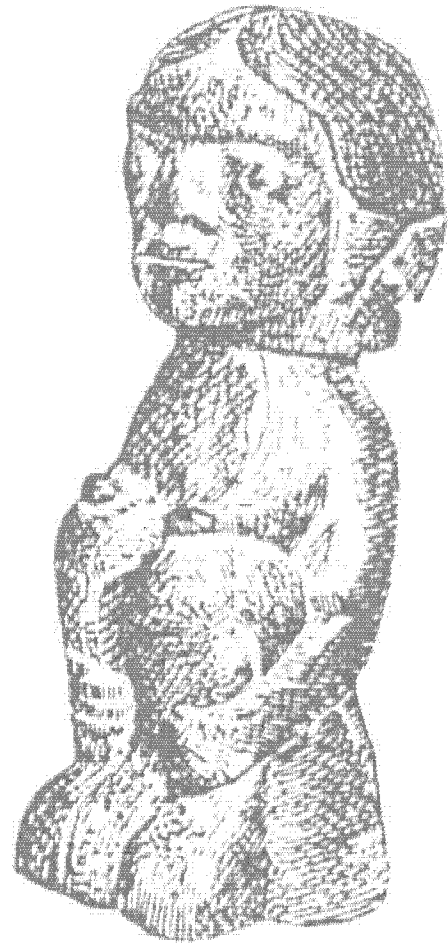
The prototype of the hocker in the round sculpture occurs mainly in the Babbar, Tanimbar and Leti Islands in a clear, explicit and predominant form. The Leti figures are quite similar of those of upper Burma on the one hand and of western New Guinea on the other. In the Philippines the motif is found in northern Luzon both explicitly and in derivations; These figures, too, can be stylistically compared with those of eastern Indonesia and upper Burma. In western New Guinea squatting-figure images are widespread, as ancestors images or as skull holders. Derivatives of the squatting figures occurred here very early, including statues in the round having only a profile view (in the Mimika and Asmat region). Coarsened squatting figures occur in the region of the Sepik and Ramu, and in the decorative art of the Massim region in eastern New Guinea. A variant in which the drawn-up legs are turned backward is known of the island of Tami. On Choiseul, in the Solomon Islands, squatting figures in stone and wood are found, although not very frequently. Clear and definite squatting figures in the round do not occur in the rest of Polynesia, and reappear only in America, where, however, the motif is seldom so clearly depicted or worked out as in Southeast Asia and Indonesia.

The religious concept of the squatting figure motif:

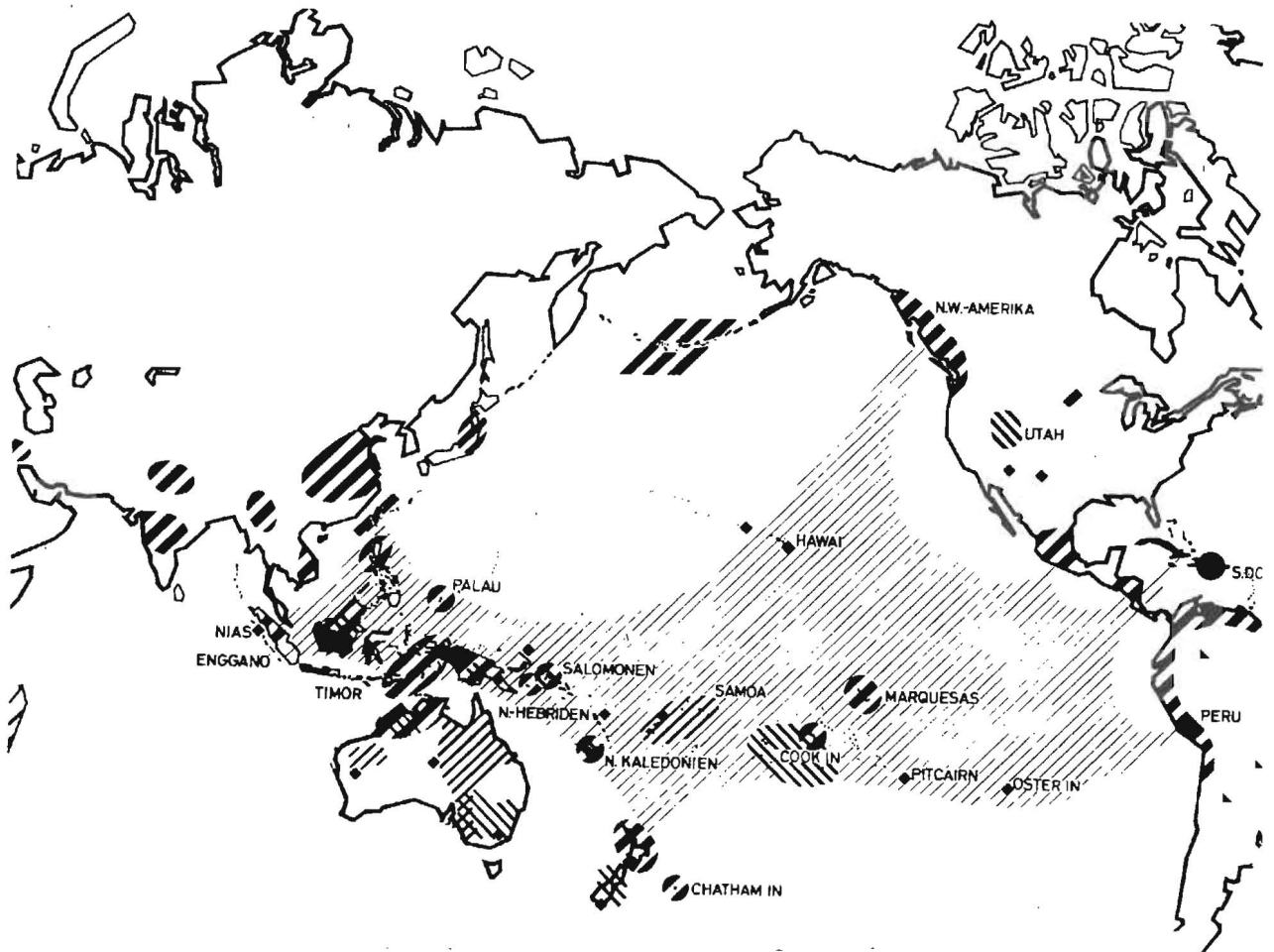
IN EARLY times the squatting position must have symbolized the birth position, and perhaps also the fetal position. The widespread custom of burial in the flexed-knee position is undoubtedly not intended to bind the dead and prevent them from returning, but rather to return them to the fetal position in order to assure their rebirth; it represents the belief in resurrection or reincarnation. This train of thought leads to representing ancestors as squatting figures, a custom which may have started in China, and is typical in extensive regions in Indonesia and Melanesia.

Naturally enough, from the squatting-figure representation of the ancestor there derived images aimed at protecting and at warding off evil, and ultimately images representing fertility in general. In the course of history, all these representations are reduced and abstracted. The history of Oceanic art consists to a great extent of the transformation of the squatting-figure motif from the degree of change we can detect the remoteness and the advancing degeneration of the art of entire regions in Polynesia and Melanesia, and particularly in New Guinea.




I GIVE a few examples of this motifs and begin with a map of the distribution and a few examples of hocker-figures from Alaska, Northwest America, which Chen Chilu does not include in his survey as he is not aware of the fact, that the motif is not restricted to Indonesia and the South Seas but is in reality a circumpacific motif. And a little wooden figure, a typical hocker of the Molukkas, the Island of Babbar, belonging to the Völkerkundemuseum Munich, height 32cm, the prototype of the Indonesian hocker-figure.



This exceptional little figure carved out from Walrus Ivory, comes from the Aleutian Islands (after Ivanov). Height 5cm



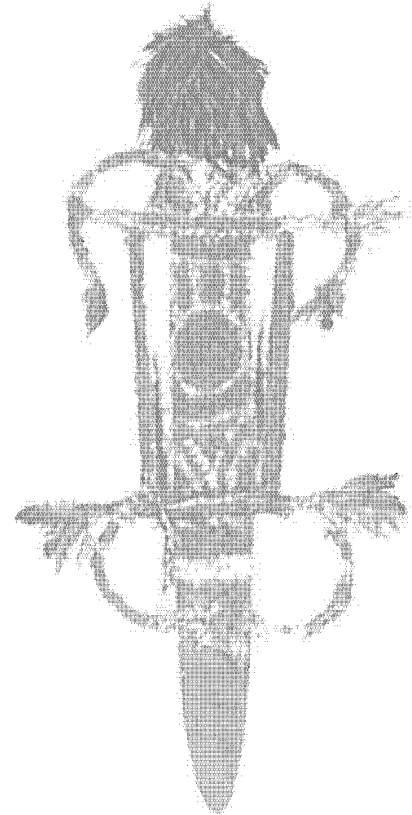
**Map showing the distribution of the Hockermotif
in some variations:**

-  Clear hockers as sculptures or rockpaintings
-  Hockers as representation of movement
-  Hockers as fertility design



**Totem pole. Ketchikan, Alaska,
Northwest Coast Culture.**

**This typical hocker-figure comes
from Northwest America, from
Quakiutl Tribe.**



**This most exceptional transformation of a
Central Australian Tjurunga into a
hocker-figure shows that the idea of the
hocker of course with all its religious
conception has reached central Australia.
Height 146 cm.**

**Every one familiar with central Australian
ideas and ceremonies can imagine which
enormous work and transformation of
ideas would have been necessary to
produce this work of religious art.**



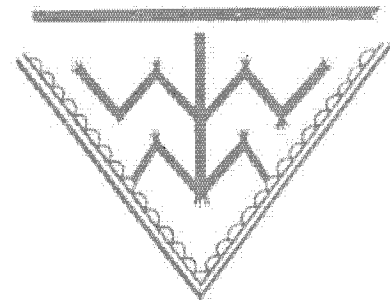
A little wooden figure, a typical hocker of the Molukkas, the Island of Babbar, belonging to the Völkerkundemuseum Munich, 32cm, the prototype of the Indonesian hocker-figure.

Early Squatting-Figure Images

The earliest squatting-figure images we know of in the Pacific region come from China.

LI CHI discusses Southeast Asian squatting figures with reference to their relationship to, or presumptive derivation from, the Chinese. He believes that squatting images might go back to a group, called Eastern F or "squatting barbarians", that lived on the eastern coast of China in the second millennium BC, and can be identified archaeologically by a type of black pottery.

The contemporaneous or somewhat older squatting figures on Yang Shao pots (2200-1700BC) are anthropomorphic figures with elbows lowered and hands raised. The depiction of the legs varies; often the knees seem to point down rather than up or legs bent upwards.



Painting of a human figure on a Chinese pottery of the Ma Chang period (1700-1300 BC).

From I.G. Anderson: Research of the prehistory of the Chinese; Bulletin of the Museum of far Eastern Antiquities Nr.15; Stockholm 1943.



Human figure with hands raised and knees pointing down, painting on a pot of China, Jang Shao period (2200-1300 BC).

Bulletin of the Museum of far Eastern Antiquities Nr.15; Stockholm 1943.



Rock painting of a hocker, site Sara, Irian Jaya, height 23cm (after Röder).

The squatting figure images on rock paintings

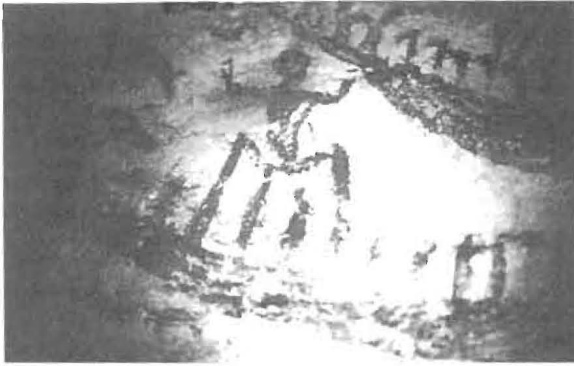
The simple concept of the squatting figure on Chinese pottery examples lives on the rock paintings of Indonesia and even Australia.

BY AND LARGE, squatting figures are the main motif in the rock pictures of the Pacific. No other predominant motif seems to have existed before the spread of the squatting figure, nor does any motif seem to have arisen later to take its place. Both painted and incised squatting-figures occur. Their region of distribution begins in Borneo; extends to western New Guinea, northwestern and western Australia.

The Australian squatting figures, which can best be compared with those of western New Guinea, are chiefly in the central Kimberley region and Arnhemland and one isolated picture in southeast Australia.



Rock painting of a hocker, site Koralyi, western Australia, Kimberley Region, copied 1938 by A.S. Schultz, height 28 cm.



Rock painting of a hocker of Kalimantan, Borneo. Photo from the Museum of Völkerkunde, Leiden, The Netherlands.



Kimberley. Region Northwest Australia. Rock painting of a squatting figure; site Ngungunda; height: 62 cm; copied by Katharina Lommel.



**Hockerfigures in different styles. Rockpaintings from Irian Jaya (after Röder).
Height Nr.1: 11 cm; Nr.2: 8,5 cm;
Nr.3: 22 cm; Nr.4: 11 cm.**

When following a fleing kangaroo I had this painting suddenly in my glasses. Katharina, my wife, copied it later. Our Aborigines pretended not to know it. They were visibly annoyed about us having found and copied this painting. They kept their woman folk away from it. They made no remarks about it. So it is possible that this painting belongs to some sort cult which is or was unknown so far.



Rockpainting Nourlangi; Arnhemland, Northern Australia;

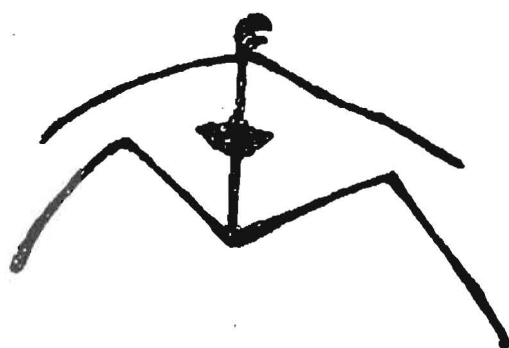
The painting shows three hockerfigures, male and female ones. Beneath them a row of figures, barebreasted women with voluptuous hairdo, clad in Sarongs. The ornamentation of the sarongs could be Timorese. Do we have here a painting of Indonesian women? Not very likely – the painting could show Aboroginal women clad the Timores way returning from a visit to Timor.

Foto: Detail enlarged from a photo of Jutta Malnic in Elaine Godden/Jutta Malnic: Rockpaintinmgs of Aboriginal Australia; A.H. & A.W.; Reed NSW 1982.

So do we have here a hint towards a relation between Northaustralia and an Indonesian Island Timor?

MEETING 1938 among the Unambal, a tribe who lives on the northwestern shore of the Kimberley District, a man with distinctive Indonesian features. I inquired a bit. I found out that there existed a perhaps ageold relation between western Timor, the town Kopang and northwestest Australia.

Timorese fishermen worked at a certain season near the Australian shore and borrowed Australian women for a while. The women gathered near the shore at traditional meeting places, kindled huge fires to show where they were to be collected. When they bordered of the Timorese ships in Australia they were naked, when they returned after having lived a while in Kopang they were clad in sarongs the Timorese way of course.



Hocker-figure obviously female from the Konig Range rock shelter in Victoria, southeast Australia; after D.J. Tugby (this figure is in this region unique and as there are no visible traces of wandering of this motif from north Australia to the southeastern corner, an influence over the sea seems to be possible.



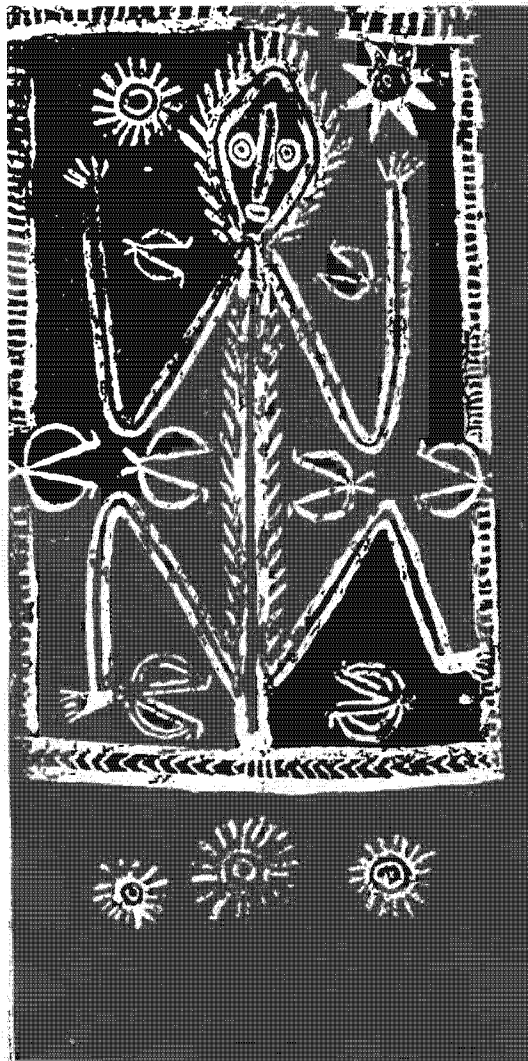
Two ornamented textiles from Timor, Eastern Indonesia.

Both ornaments show hockerfigures, one above the other; a form of the ancestor pole design.

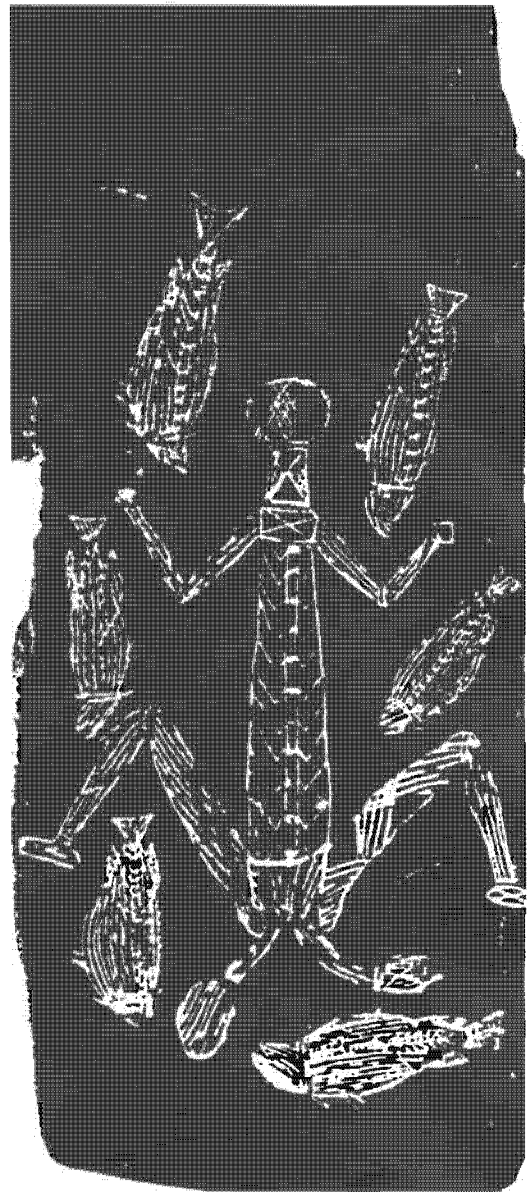
The other one abstracted hockers.

Modern hocker figures on paintings

THE MODEL formulation given by the rock pictures prevails up to the present day in the art of Melanesia, Polynesia and northern Australia.



Hocker painting from the Banks Islands, New Hebrides; height 72 cm; Museum für Völkerkunde Basel.

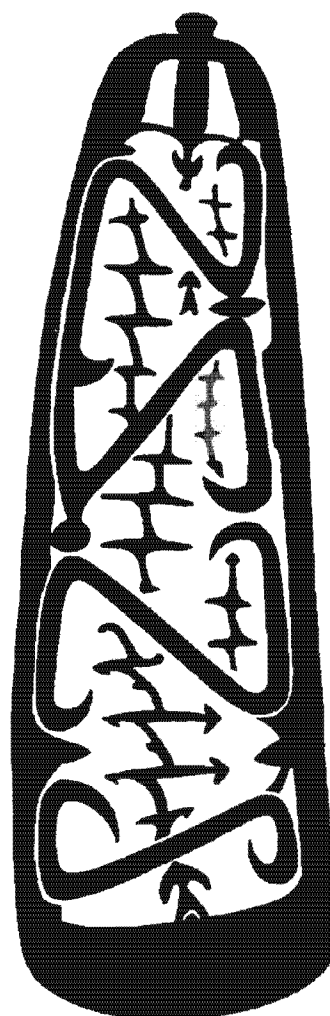


The same type of squatting figure on an Australian bark painting from northern Arnhem Land.

The squatting figure on shields

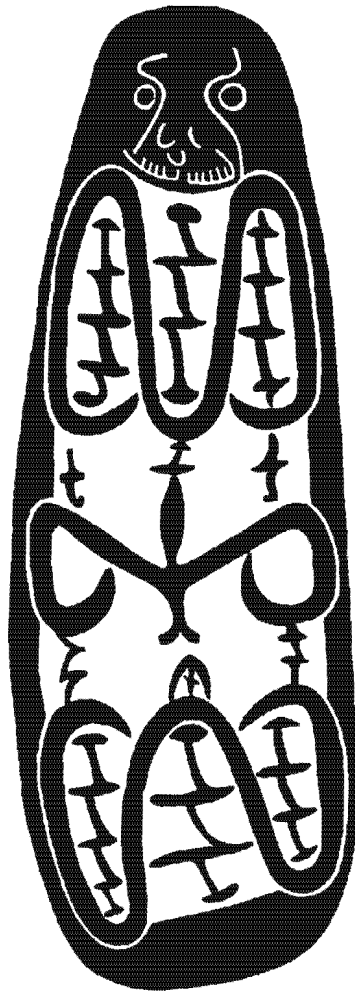
Here we can find on shields innumerable variations of the hocker motif on shields, as protective design the picture of the ancestor. In southeastern Irian Jaya in the Asmat region, the sculptural squatting figure image is abstracted in many variations in the two-dimensional art. Attempts were made to put the profile view of the squatting figure on a surface, but on shields these were soon abandoned or remained isolated. Here the motif "ancestor pole" as protective sign is often used on shields, the special capability of the south eastern region, the Asmat region, express itself.

ON THE SHIELDS of eastern Irian Jaya we can see every stage of abstractions of the hocker motif: fragmentation, dissolution and a tendency to simplified superpositions which are clearly the motif of the so-called genealogical tree. There are forms on every stage of fragmentation, dissolution of the abstract new order along with simplified superpositions, which may be reminiscences of genealogical trees. Shields from the Asmat region show progressive variations of the squatting figure, on in an advanced state of dissolution, with the motifs all but unrecognizable, as well the ornamentation on a shield from the northern coast from Papua New Guinea (Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna).



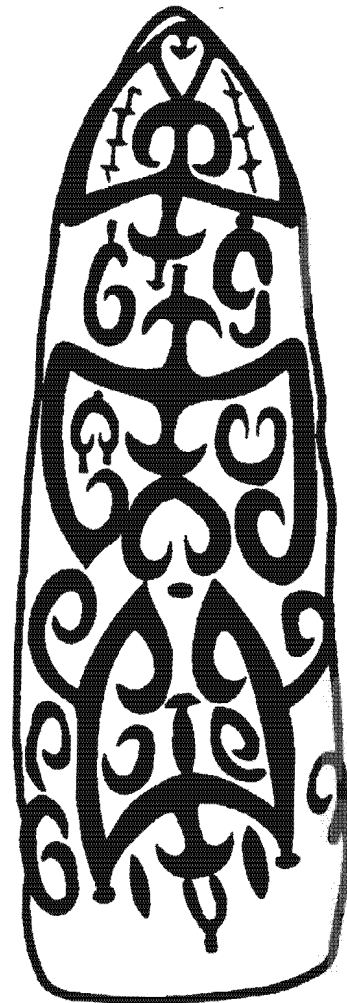
**Shield from Eastern Irian Jaya.
Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde
München; copied by Katharina Lommel.**

**The ornamentation of the shield shows
hocker figures in profile.**



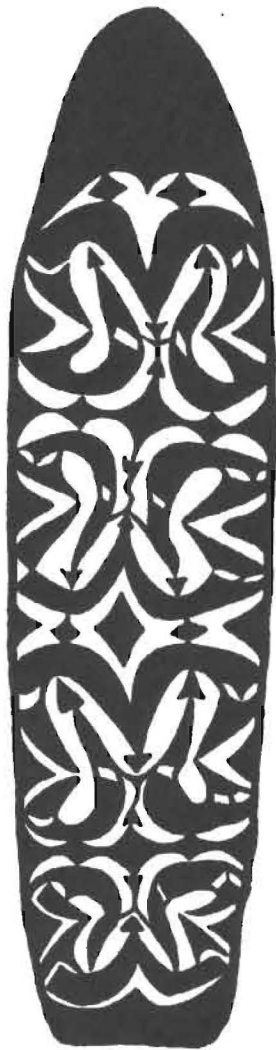
Another shield from eastern Irian Jaya, Asmat region, from the Museum für Völkerkunde München; copied by Katharina Lommel;

The ornamentation shows hocker figures.



Shield from the Asmat region in New Guinea; Museum für Völkerkunde München; copied by Katharina Lommel;

Again another variation of the hocker motif.



Shield from Irian Jaya; from Museum für Völkerkunde Basel; copied by Katharina Lommel.

It shows again another variation of the hocker motif.



Shield from the north coast of New Guinea, once "Berlin Hafen", Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna;

The "variation" of the hocker motif is not anymore recognizable, if one does not know the line of development or degeneration of a single motif.

Fertility representations

Squatting figures are in essence ancestor images. Understandably, they are regarded as having power to ward off evil, and the idea of promoting fertility is not far removed from this. This idea is then represented by more or less simple designs of copulation scenes. Designs which reach Australia from New Guinea on two ways in very different formulations: simple anthropomorph pictographs in the northwest, the Pilbara district and abstracted designs on shields in Queensland and the southeastern corner of Australia.

CLEARLY DEPICTED copulation scenes are most common in southwestern New Guinea wood carvings, but were also found in Borneo and in eastern New Guinea, in northern New Zealand, and as engravings on bark in the Chatham Islands.

In America they appear sporadically on rock pictures, as in Santo Domingo and Venezuela. It is relatively simple to represent such scenes in sculpture; for the most part there are two squatting figures facing each other.

THE MOST elegant design comes from the Isla Marajo on a public cover for young girl.

Two-dimensional representation of scenes of copulation is widespread in southwestern New Guinea, and it may be presumed that it was invented and given its definite formulation there. The two squatting figures are stylized and placed one above the other in a design that looks at first like two double inward curving arcs.

Here we have the Oba River formulation in several variants. On the Northwest River the squatting-figure motif is simple and clear, sometimes appearing with profile depictions.

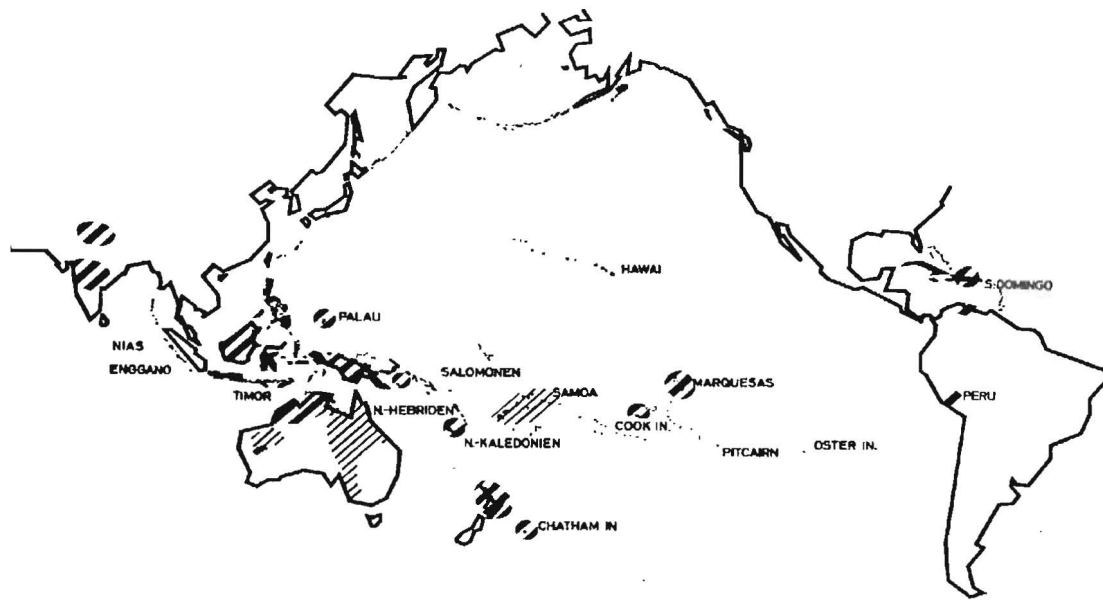
AND THIS formulation reached and penetrated Australia.

This motif is the main motif on shields in South Australia. Typical Australian aspect: to change a clear and obvious design into a secret graphic formula with can only be explained initiated persons in a ceremonial cult.

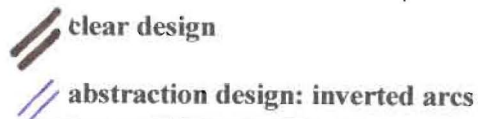
Here we find two inverted arcs instead of four that means that the New Guinea model has just been reduced – after a lot of experiments: four inverted arcs have been reduced to two.



**Shield from Queensland, Australia;
South Australian Museum Adelaide;
Copied by Katharina Lommel.**



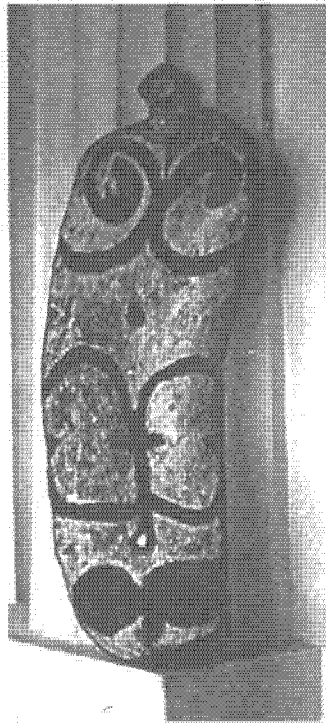
Map showing the distribution of the copulation design in the Pacific



Public cover for young girls, ceramic coming from the island of Marajo Island; mouth of the Amazonas river, Brazil, South America.

The copulation scene is most elegantly done.

The piece comes from the Völkerkundemuseum in Zürich.



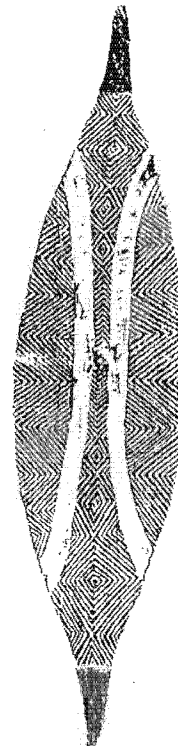
Copulation scene of a shield from eastern Irian Jaya, the Oba river;
The piece is in the museum of Jakarta.



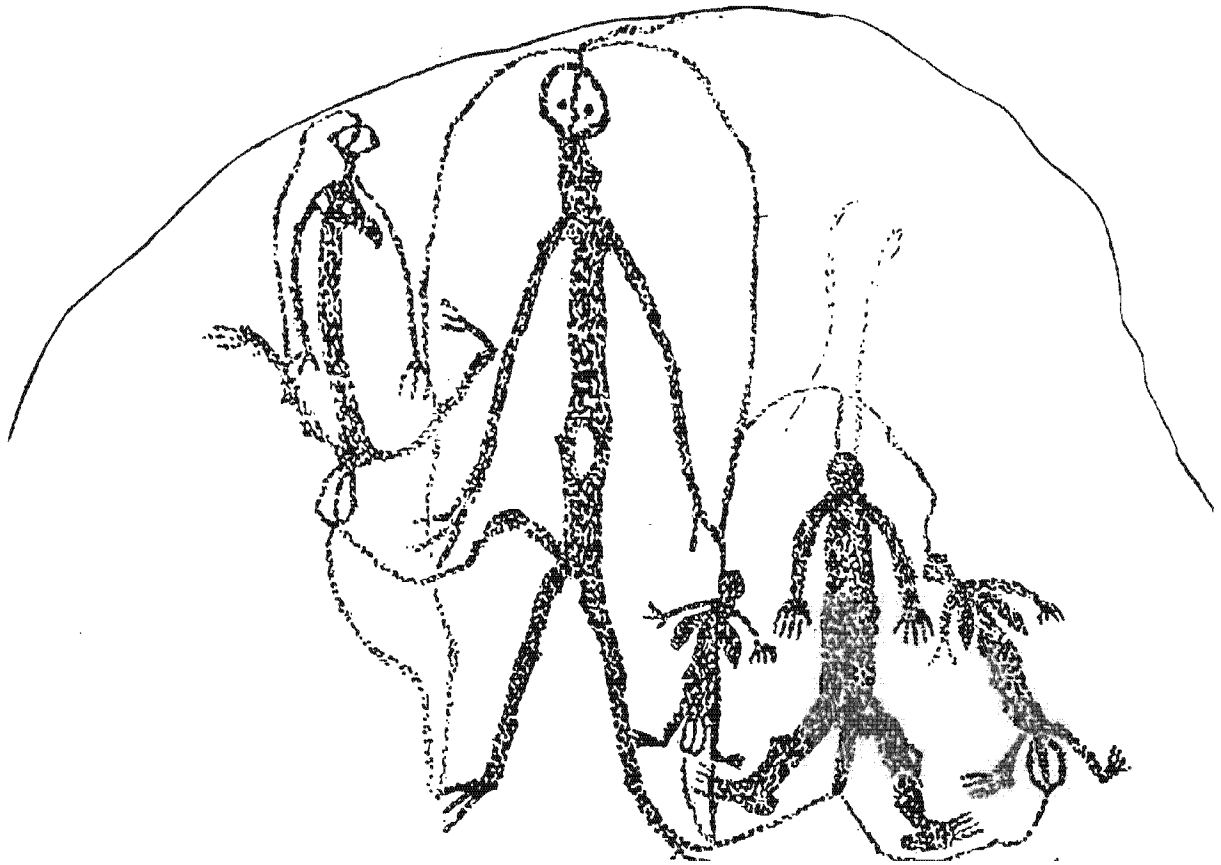
The same design two inverted arcs on a shield from the Turama River; Papua Gulf; New Guinea; Museum für Völkerkunde, Basel; Height: 129 cm.
Copied by Katharina Lommel.



Shield from Queensland, Paroo River, showing the same design, two inverted arcs.



Shield from the National Museum Sydney, coming from South Wales;
Reproduced by McCarthy;
Copied by Katharina Lommel.
Height: 72 cm.



**Copulation scene from a pictograph from the Pilbaradistrict;
Northwest Australia; (after Petri and Schulz).**

**In the Australian Northwest, the Pilbaradistrict occur
copulationscenes as pictographs.
The human figures in movement are clearly hocker
derivations, the sexual union is shown by lines which
unite the genitals (after Petri and Schulz).**

Genealogical trees – the ancestor pole

Another widespread motif of the circumpacific especially the Polynesian art is the so called genealogical tree, very often shown as squatting figures one above the other. It reached Australia in one single case.

THE ATTEMPT (made primarily in the sculptures of Oceania) to represent generations by squatting figures set one above the other led to the development of ancestor poles; they are found in New Guinea, the New Hebrides, New Zealand, and North America. In a smaller, more sketchy form, often reduced to merely ornamental art, they exist among the Bataks on Sumatra, in the Philippines, in New Ireland, in the Marquesas, and in the Cook Islands and New Caledonia.

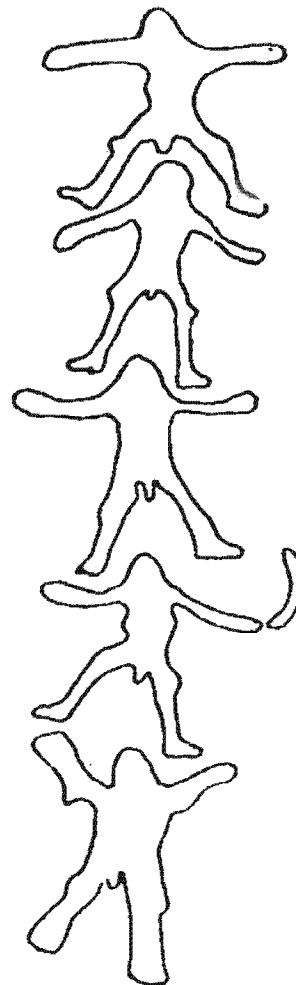
Schuster points out the occurrence of ancestral representations of this kind, in a highly abstracted form, in the Admiralty Islands and in many parts of South America. Australian ritual objects also seem to be derived from these genealogical trees. Polynesia has abstract images of the genealogical tree motif, especially in the Cook Islands and in the Tubuai (Austral) Islands.

STILL ANOTHER modification of this image are the Tangaroa representations from Rarotonga, which are not statues in the round but show only a profile view; the reduced, rodlike body is a row of bosses that upon closer examination can be recognized as stylized squatting figures.

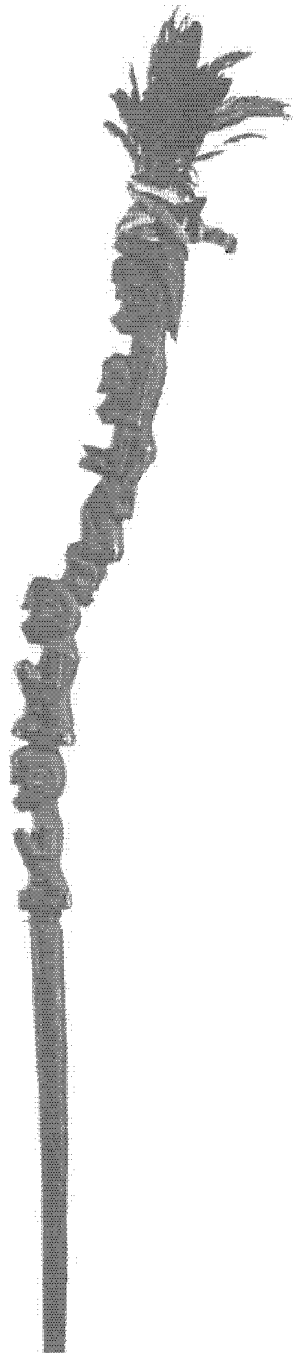
The last abstraction of this motif we find on the famous door posts of Caledonia. The lines on this posts are as Carl Schuster points out in reality representations of generations.

In New Guinea and New Ireland we find almost identical genealogical designs of this hockers one above the other on shields and boards and house posts.

THERE IS one single example of this motif: the ancestor pole in Australia in the southeast, a stone engraving around Sydney. Davidson reports it but has never seen it by himself and nobody has found it afterwards even McCarty who specialised in the rock engravings round Sydney could not find it. It is a stone engraving of 5 human figures, one above the other. These figures cannot be regarded as "Hockers", but the meaning of the engraving is distinctly that of an ancestor pole.



The only example of the "ancestor pole" in Australia comes as a stone engraving in the environments of Sydney. It is documented by older scientists.



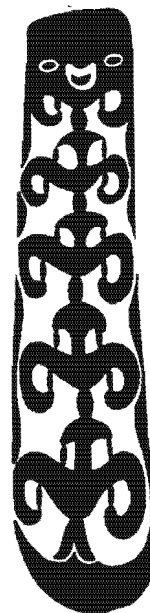
Typical ancestor pole from the Batak;
Sumatra; height 138 cm;

Carved in wood showing hocker figures
one above the other.



Shield from eastern Irian Jaya in the
Museum for Folkenkunde, Leyden; copied
by Katharina Lommel.

The ornamentation shows hocker figures,
one above the other. The motif: ancestor
pole and smaller hocker figures in profile.



Shield from eastern Irian
Jaya, Asmat region,
from the Museum for
Folkenkunde, Leyden;
Copied by Katharina
Lommel.

The ornamentation
shows hockers one above
the other, again the
ancestors pole motif.



A famous ancestor pole from the Cook Islands, a picture of the god Tagaroa. A closer look shows that the figures one above the other are really hockers.



Sculpture of Tangaroa; in creating gods and man out of his body the figures are all hockers. This extraordinary piece has been collected in the 18th century. It comes from Cook Islands and is 112 cm high. It is now in the British Museum in London.

The very impressive sculpture shows the importance of the hocker motif in the conception of the universe by the people of eastern Polynesia.

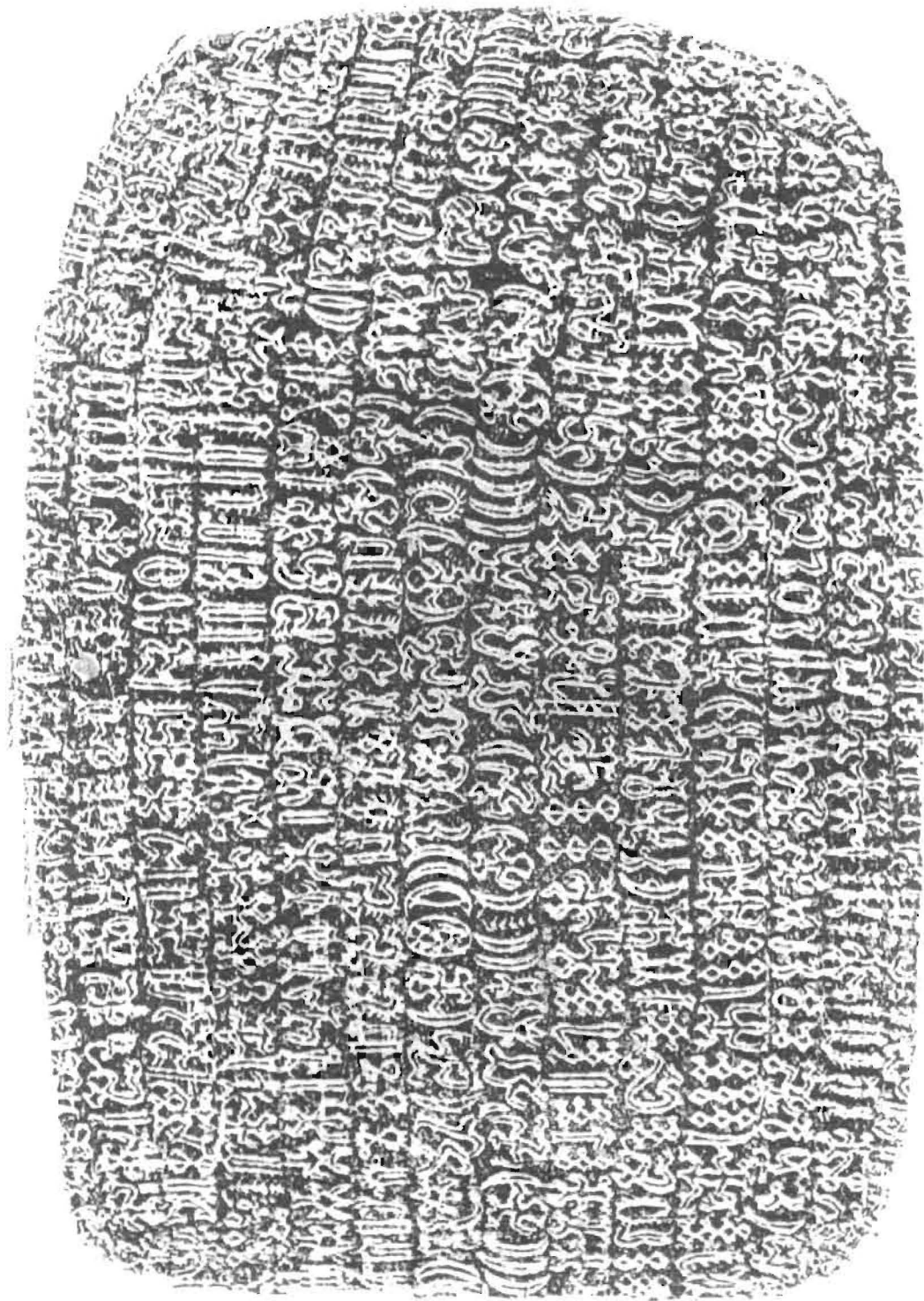


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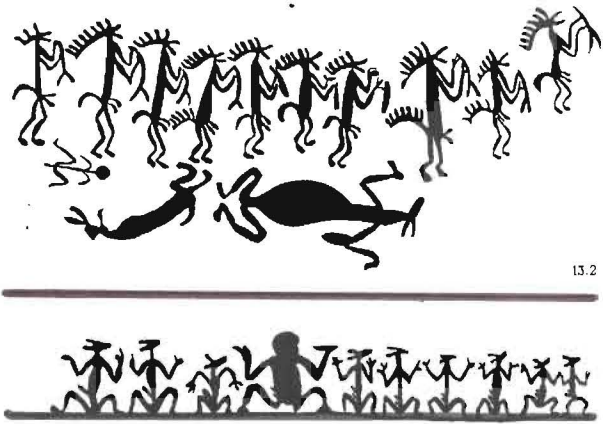
Tablet from Easter Island ; The incised figures show many motifs and many hockers or squatting figures in variations, so for instance left in the third line a row of dancers, in other lines you find hockers in all variations, standing on the head, hockers in profile and so on. The tablet shows that the hocker motif reached also the utmost fringe of Polynesia. Easter Island Tablet; L 28 cm; B 14 cm; Toromiro-Wood; from the Völkerkundemuseum Wien; No.22869; Collection Westenholz; bought 1886.



Door post of New Caledonia; the zigzag lines mean generations as Carl Schuster has well demonstrated.

Representation of motion

HERE THE hocker motif changes its protective meaning into a representation of motion. Squatting figures as portrayals of motion occur mainly in the form of the so-called "line of dancers". In the Solomons the Cook Islands hockers as figures in motion occur also in Hawaii and New Zealand sporadically. A notable example is a bark picture from the Aird River delta on the Gulf of Papua in New Guinea. Rows of dancers appear on Groote Eylandt (McCarthy). In southeastern Australia, in contrast to the northwest, the squatting figures are very well done in New South Wales.



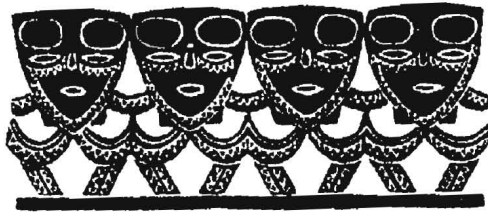
Bark painting from the Papua Gulf; New Guinea. British Museum London; copied by Katharina Lommel.

THIS EXTRAORDINARY painting has been collected and described by Seligman. It comes from the Aird river delta from the Papua Gulf in New Guinea and the style is concerned absolutely not from New Guinea. The dancing persons in the upper half remind one on Indonesian or early Indonesian figures on drums of the Dongson period.

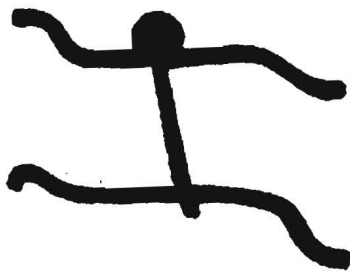
The dancing persons in the lower part show clearly the hocker position.



Row of dancers; from the Solomon Islands; Shell carvings.



Row of dancers; wood cutting from the handle of an Oar; Cook Island.
Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde; Munich.



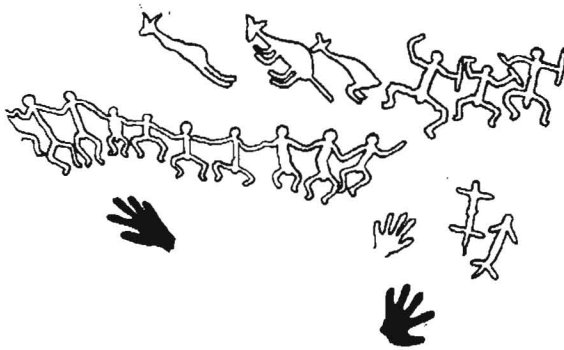
Rock painting; running person, from Lanai; Hawaii Islands.



Persons in motion; rock painting; New Zealand.



Row of dancers; Cave paintings of Groote Eylandt; northern Australia; (after F. McCartney)



**Rock painting from Australia after Tugby;
New South Wales.**

**The dancers are most lively drawn and
clearly in a hocker position.**

Conclusion

IN SHOWING an Indonesian motif of art, the squatting figure, or so-called hocker how it reaches Australia changes Australian Aboriginal art gives an outlook of the relation of Australian culture to surrounding Indonesian and Melanesian culture and art. From a geographical point of view this relation or better influence to Australia is quite understandable. Most surprising is that three motifs – the simple hocker, the genealogical tree and the hocker as representation of motion – has also reached southeastern corner of Australia. They are no traces which could show this migration over land. So an influence from the sea – perhaps New Zealand – must be assumed.

There are most interesting variations, one is the hocker representation with ribs which reaches from China until the Chatham Islands east of New Zealand but has never touched Australia and another one, the motif: “figure with bent legs”, is a very important motif all over Melanesia and Polynesia. It reaches Africa via Madagascar, but never reached Australia, because it is a motif which is used in round sculpture only and in Australia there

is no round sculpture. So I have to leave out these two interesting motifs.

The versatility of Indonesian and Pacific art in using an ancient and well defined motif in quite another way is surprising.

THE HOCKER motif as sculpture in eastern Indonesia – and one single exceptional piece from Central Australia.

Early squatting figure images. Is its origin Chinese? Hocker images on rocks in Indonesia and Northern Australia and one single example in the Southeast.

The hocker motif in painting in Indonesia, Polynesia and northern Australia. The hocker motif on shields of New Guinea is fragmentation, dissolution and abstraction especially in eastern Irian Jaya but also in Papua New Guinea.

The hocker motif as fertility sign, protective sign, the double hocker as copulation design. Its acceptance in Australia via Queensland to South Australia the main motif there on shields – the so-called inverted arcs. In quite a different formulation almost as “natural” picture the copulation design is represented on rocks as engravings in the Northwest, the Pilbara district.

THE HOCKER as ancestor pole hockers one above the other in sculpture Sumatra on shields Irian Jaya and one example rock engravings around Sydney. Hockers as representation of motion in the Solomon and Cook Islands and two examples rockpaintings in northern and southeastern Australia.



By showing how some variations of the hocker motif have reached or even penetrated the art of the Aborigines – think I can point out a new relation of Australia and to the surrounding world. That such influences reached the northern shore of Australia is as far as geography is concerned quite

understandable. Surprising is that three motifs: the plain hocker figure, the hocker as representation of motion and the hockers as ancestor pole have reached the southeast of Australia. As there are no traces of landroute as there are in case of the inverted arcs a way

over sea must be assumed? The article shows that at least one motif of Indonesian art: the hocker. The squatting figure has reached Australia at different times, in different variations was accepted there and integrated Aboriginal Australian art.



Map showing variations of the hockermotif coming From Newguinea to Australia on rock- and mobile art.

-  **Hockers on rocks in the Northwest; hockers as representation of motion as rockpaintings in the Southeast.**
-  **Hocker as fertility motive; copulationscenes on rocks; pictographs in the Northwest (Pilbaradistrict); abstracted copulationscenes on shields from the north to the south of Australia.**

Zusammenfassung

In dem vorliegenden Artikel versuche ich zu zeigen, dass die Kunst der australischen Aborigines oft weitgehend von der Kunst Indonesiens oder auch Neu-Guineas beeinflusst worden ist. Aus dem reichen Motivschatz der indonesischen Kunst greife ich ein Motiv heraus: den Hocker, die sogenannte squatting figure.

Das Hocker-Motiv kommt in Indonesien in zahlreichen Varianten vor. Oft sind sie so weit verändert, dass sie als Variation des Hocker-Motives kaum mehr kenntlich sind. Bei meiner Untersuchung beschränke ich mich auf Variationen des Hocker-Motives, die Australien erreicht haben. Dabei muss ich interessante Variationen weglassen, z.B. das Motiv der Figur mit den leicht gebeugten Beinen. Dass dieses Motiv im Grunde ein Hocker-Motiv ist, verdanken wir einer Arbeit von V.J. Jansen. Das Motiv kommt nur in Rundplastik vor, verbreitet sich über Madagaskar bis nach Afrika. In Australien gibt es keine Rundplastik – bis auf wenige Ausnahmen – also wird das Motiv hier nicht akzeptiert.

Der Prototyp des Hocker Motives, die hockende Figur, ist am besten ausgearbeitet in den östlichen Molukkeninseln, entsteht aber offenbar in China. Es ist dann zu finden auf Felsbildern in Borneo, West-Neu-Guinea (Irian Jaya) und sporadisch im Kimberley-Gebiet und um Arnhem-Land. Überraschend findet sich auch eine Hocker-Figur auf einem Felsbild in Südost-Australien.

Die einfachen Formulierungen auf den Felsbildern haben sich bis auf den heutigen Tag in modernen australischen Malereien, Rindenbildern und Felsbildern erhalten.

Häufige Variationen des Hockers finden sich auf Schilden in Neu-Guinea. Der Variationsreichtum ist beträchtlich. Von Neu-Guinea aus reichen Hocker-Variationen bis nach Australien. In einem Fall sind es Fruchtbarkeitsdarstellungen, also Kopulationsdarstellungen, die in Australien abstrahiert werden zu dem Motiv der eingeschwungenen Bögen, das Hauptmotiv in Südost-Australien ist.

Ganz andere Fruchtbarkeitsdarstellungen, d.h. Kopulationsdarstellungen, finden sich im Pilbara-Distrikt im Nordwesten Australiens.

Eine interessante Wandlung, d.h. Formulierung des Hocker-Motives ist das Motiv des Ahnenpfahls, das in einem einzelnen Beispiel in einer Felsgravierung in der Umgebung von Sydney zu finden war. Es wurde bis heute nicht wieder gefunden.

Völlig anders ist auch die Wandlung des Hocker-Motives zu einem Motiv, das Bewegung bedeutet. Die Hocker erscheinen hier meist als Tänzerreihe, in einzelnen Fällen auch als einzelne Figuren, aber im Südosten Australiens sehr typisch.

Durch die genannten Beispiele kann dargelegt werden, dass die Kunst der australischen Aborigines oft und weitgehend Motive aus Indonesien aufgenommen hat.

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BOOK REVIEW:

**Caroline Eliot Zelt: Masken auf Neukaledonien
LIT Verlag; Münster 1995; ISBN 3-89473-638-0**

In her book presents Caroline Eliot Zelt the New Caledonian works of art above all masks, how there are to be found in collections in western Germany.

Those collections small are numerous but hardly ever published or exhibited.

New Caledonia was discovered in 1774 by James Cook, who did hardly be mentioned and was later occupied (1853) by France just to contain somewhat the British influence in the South Seas.

Only the Swiss ethnologist Paul Sarassin (died 1942) and the French missionary Maurice Lenhardt (died 1956) and Jean Duiart (for long time director of the Musée de l'homme, Paris) have written about the culture of the islands and the masks.

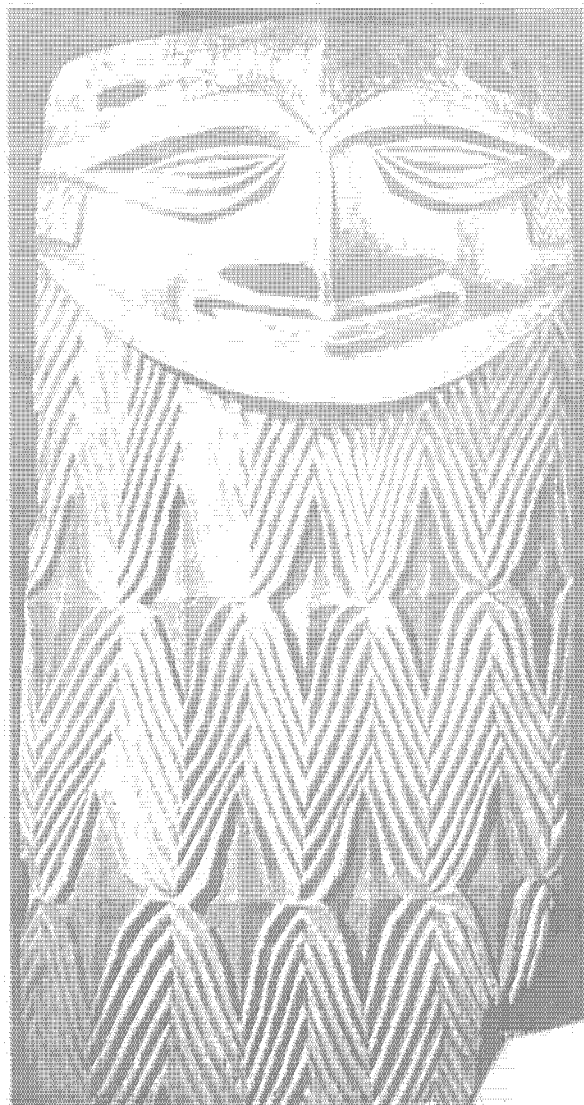
Today the island is economical interesting because there are large resorts of nickel. Otherwise the island is no paradise. The original culture has been lost, the original inhabitants are today a rather marginal group – 38% of the population, which consists today of whites, Polynesian and Melanesian immigrants and Vietnamese.

As far as art, original art, is concerned, there are the masks to be mentioned. There are two types which have been made with stone implements. Rather brutal faces one above the other, sculptures, which are called ancestor poles. And then the typical New Caledonian masks with long protruding noses.

The other remarkable item of this art are houseposts, brutal faces again, under them lines, Zigzag-lines, incised in the wood. As Carl Schuster has found out and demonstrated with many examples, this Zigzag-lines do not mean something natural plants or even waves, they are just expressions of ancestors and generations.

The typical masks are long nosed. They represent as far as is known a spirit of the water who is very dangerous. How this type of mask came into being is not yet clear and will probably never be discovered as the culture is lost.

Caroline Eliot Zelt makes an interesting remark. The aboriginal population tries to develop the nose of babies with massages and a medicine made by plants and roots: is there an old idea of a long nosed type of man still alive and represented by the long nosed masks?



**Door post of New Caledonia. The zigzag-lines
Mean generations as Carl Schuster has well
Demonstrated (Private French collection).**



**Typical long-nosed mask
from New Caledonia
(Jean Guiart).**