WILEY

2. Introductory Notes to a Study of the Totemism of the Elema Tribes, Papuan Gulf.

Author(s): J. H. Holmes

Source: *Man*, Vol. 5 (1905), pp. 2-6

Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2787536>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 08:38 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, *Wiley* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Man*

or two other types. As strung at present these beads alternate with circular discs of white shell, carefully finished, their external surfaces being apparently all polished.

Both the shell and the beads are, however, considerably changed by long burial. The beads are in all cases in a state of iridescent decay, the surfaces being in many cases deeply pitted and presenting exactly the same appearance as beads of the same kind from the Mediterranean area. Superficially, in fact, the crystalline glass in this necklace is identical in appearance with those from the tombs at Camirus in Rhodes, dating from the sixth century. Without insisting too strongly on this point, it is at least worthy of note that we have here glass beads of classical style found for the first time in West Africa, and presenting features that in point of date may justifiably be associated with the name and time of the Carthaginian Hanno, a name often invoked when objects of indeterminate age are found on the African coast. One technical point may be of interest, viz., all the crystalline glass beads are clearly made on a mandril, while the blue cylinders are as evidently sections of canes. Theories have been formulated with regard to these two methods of making beads which may or may not have solid value. Beads are so eminently portable, so attractive to primitive peoples and so enduring, that they form a very unsafe foundation for theories of direct trade relations. But assuming the accuracy of the story of the finding of those now in question, which I have no reason to doubt, they certainly provide a new datum in the story of West Africa.

C. H. READ.

New Guinea: Totemism: Sociology.

Holmes.

Introductory Notes to a Study of the Totemism of the Elema Tribes, Papuan Gulf. *By the Reverend J. H. Holmes, Local Correspondent of the Anthropological Institute.*

2

That a phase of totemism still exists among these tribes subsequent statements will prove; whether it be a degenerate form of an old-time, highly-developed cult, or whether it be still in the course of evolution, students acquainted with the cult in its many phases among other races must determine; that the totemism of these tribes may be regarded as a cult will be evident as we proceed, and, as such, it has a far reaching influence on the social and moral life of the Elema tribes.

TRIBAL ORGANISATION.—As each community is built up of the units of related and co-related members of many families, likewise, each tribe is a segregation of related and co-related communities. Such a process of tribal construction is inevitably conservative, and proves the truest safeguard in the maintenance of the tribe, as a unit, among alien or kindred tribes. The social organisation of these tribes must be regarded as an elaborately evolved system (not as an irrational institution), which duly recognises the rights of property, the privileges of birth, and the claims of the brave and strong. It is based on sound tenets; it insists on the observance of these tenets and a breach of the same has its penalty, either in ostracism or in payment.

The senior male member of a family is regarded by his family, by his community—which may have many sub-families—and by other communities of his tribe, as the representative of his particular family in all matters affecting the interests of his tribe. In large communities, having many families, there may be as many men regarded as the heads of their respective families but these are not all regarded as representatives of their respective families in tribal matters, as each tribe has its chief, so each community has its head and in all matters of tribal importance he represents his community.

The representative head man of a family is known as “papuvita,” the representative head of a community is a “pukari” (chief), i.e., he is chief to his community but regarded as sub-chief by the tribe as a whole, and, like the “papuvita,” at certain periods presents a portion of food to the tribal chief. Invariably the chief of a community is

the largest landowner of his community, but he is not so in virtue of his social position as chief. All property in land and its indigenous products is inherited; personal effects, as weapons, tools, cooking utensils, and articles of adornment, may be inherited, purchased, or made.

Because a man is a large landowner, that in itself does not give him the social position of communal chief, it is his birthright by the same law of descent which constitutes another man tribal chief.

It is inevitable, with a system of communities thus constituted, that each chief must have a considerable amount of responsibility in all matters which concern the interests of the tribe, but in no way can he dominate over the decisions of the tribal chief. The latter, like the former, is chief of his tribe by birthright, but his word is final in all important tribal business by common consent, on the assumed, if not expressed, idea that he is also tribal chief by supernatural or, to modernise, divine appointment. The tribal chief may, or may not, belong to the largest community of his tribe, but he is invariably hereditary chief, unless the line of succession has been broken, either by death, or by physical incompetency to fulfil his duty as chief to the tribe. When a chief dies without male issue, or resigns his chieftainship of his tribe on account of old age and debility, his successor is appointed by him alone, and his choice generally transfers the honour to a male member of his fraternal kin.

FIG. 1.—OROKOLO. SEMESE MASK, LEAVING "ERAVO."

An introductory survey of the social constitution of an Elema tribe is not complete without a reference to the club (*eravo*), or, to name the same more correctly, the totem temple. To the casual observer the "*eravo*" is merely an accommodation house for the male members of the tribe,* to the initiated native it is a building having many sacred associations; it is the repository of a vast variety of objects, representing to him his tribal, communal, and individual totems, "*ualare*,"† in effigy or carving on shields or prows, masks or floor; the pageantries of tribal festivals are all rehearsed in "*eravo*"; the masks worn on special festive occasions are made in the "*eravo*," and no uninitiated member of the tribe must enter to see them and will not dare to criticise them unfavourably when they are paraded in public because—as the children are told—they are gods.

The fully initiated native regards his "*eravo*" as his alma mater; all he knows of the past history of his tribe; his knowledge of his duties and obligations to his tribe

* Cf. *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, XXXII., p. 419.

† *Ibid.*, p. 426.

and community ; his reverence for all and everything sacred to his tribe and community ; his contempt and dislike for all and everything opposed to the interests of his tribe and community ; in brief, all that he is he owes to his "eravo," and the teaching he received in it during his initiation will dominate his actions through life.

TRIBAL MARRIAGE LAWS.—(1) (a) (*Toripi*).—A man must marry a woman of another communal totem family.

(b) (*Morea-ipi*).—A man may marry a woman of his communal totem family, but not a woman having the same totem object as her individual totem. On the other hand, he is free to marry a woman of another communal totem family having the same totem object as her individual totem.

(2) A man must marry within his tribe ; failing to do this, he must observe the following law.

(3) The laws of marriage relating to totem kinship that are recognised by his tribe must be observed by a man who marries without his tribe.

(4) A man who marries without his tribe, but duly observes the law of totem kinship, may bring his wife to live with his tribe, but she continues to be a member of her maternal totem family. A deliberate violation of the above laws ostracises a man from his tribe, and gives him no social position in the tribe of his adoption, although he may be admitted into her family and share, in a limited sense, in the communal life of her male kin. Very rarely does it happen that a man is so foolish as to disregard the laws of marriage of his tribe, but when it does happen, the individual is so completely ostracised by his tribe that he is no longer regarded as having once belonged to the tribe. His land-property and its products are confiscated by his male kin, but if he felt brave enough to risk a quarrel with them, the terrors of sorcery are more than enough to keep him away from his tribe.

It is doubtful if the foregoing marriage laws are binding on either sex of illegitimate birth. Illegitimacy is so comparatively rare among the Elema tribes, and held in such contempt, that it is difficult to get definite information on this detail. Personal observation is, in a matter of this kind, very restricted, as the native never seems inclined to confirm or negative one's observations, but gets away from the topic as if it is disagreeable to him. It is probably safe to infer that neither sex of illegitimate birth can marry into a totem family and be regarded as a member of it in the same sense as individuals of legitimate birth.

It seems that the grades of social position are in some way determined by the totemism of the respective tribes ; be that as it may, it is rarely that a boy of illegitimate birth is initiated, and that in itself debars him from having any status in his tribe, as it prohibits him from taking any representative part in tribal celebrations.

Enough has been stated to show that the totemism of these tribes has a far-reaching, restrictive, and preventive influence on the social life of the tribes ; the former, in that it imposes such conditions of marriage that it is felt undesirable to marry without the tribe ; the latter, in that it minimises the possibility of land ownership being transferred from one tribe to a kindred or alien tribe.

LAND TENURE.—The land tenures of each tribe may, for present convenience, be defined as follows :—

(1) *Tribal Territory*.—Each tribe has its own territory ; the same has well-defined boundaries, which are in the main duly respected by kindred and alien tribes. The right of ownership of these areas is, in nearly every case, based on the assumption that the ancestors of the respective tribes received these areas as free gifts from a guardian spirit or god, or secured the same by conquest, which constitutes equally legal rights of possession. In either case, *i.e.*, be the right of possession based on the claim of free gift or of conquest, the guardian deity who made the gift to a particular tribe, or the

original ancestor who made the conquest, each is regarded as the tribal deity of the respective tribes, whose territorial claims rest on the above assumptions.

(2) *Communal Territory*.—Each tribal territory is divided into communal areas, according to the number of communities of the respective tribes. Many communities claim to have received their land areas direct from an ancestor of supernatural origin whom they reverence to-day as a deity; other communities, who belong to the maternal totem kin, assert that their most remote ancestor became acquainted with a female deity, and she endowed him with supernatural powers that he was able to create coconuts, sago, betel nuts, and many other things; this he did on certain plots of land and gave the same to his posterity.

(3) *Personal Territory*.—Communal gardens are divided and sub-divided into allotments and each adult male member of the community has a plot, varying in size according to his social position in the community. We are unable to say with our present knowledge if a man's personal totem affects his social position in his community; it may do so but we have no definite information to give on this detail.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS.—It is difficult to determine how the children of legitimate marriage are regarded in relation to the totemism of these tribes; the probability is, that the children born to parents of the maternal totem kin are members of that totem kin and remain so permanently, but among those families who claim to be members of a paternal totem kin it seems to be left to individual choice of the male children; *i.e.*, a boy, during the period of his initiation, can decide if he will be regarded as a member of the paternal totem kin, or if he wishes to be identified with the maternal totem kin of his mother. This seems to suggest that the females of these tribes have no choice; very probably they are supposed to be born into the maternal totem kin and continue to be associated with it through life.

It is when reaching this stage in our study of the totemism of these tribes that seeming confusion sets in and the writer seems quite unable to express those ideas which are not a little embarrassing to the native. It may be premature to suggest that there are indications of their phase of totemism having reached a stage of transition from the matriarchal to the patriarchal stage, but it does seem as if the transition is still going on, as such communities as belong to the matriarchal stage are, so far as our present research takes us, a conspicuous minority.

All children of legitimate birth, male and female, have as their birthright the protection of the tribal totem, and are identified as having been born into the totem kin of the respective communities of their parents, but it must be recognised that each individual has his, or her, individual totem object, not necessarily that of the father, or mother, although it may be that the male child has his father's totem object as his individual totem object; or, the girl has and reveres the same object as her individual totem object as her mother.

It is important to note here, however, that the individual gets his, or her, individual totem object from the person, living or dead—usually a relative—after whom he, or she, is named. Children are sometimes given names of foreigners who reside among them for any length of time, always with a view of frequent presents to the child from the foreigner thus honoured, but careful inquiry will prove that a child thus named has also his native name, and by this name is known in all important tribal matters in which he may ultimately be concerned. A man is not named after his totem object, but he claims as his totem object the totem object of the man after whom he is named.

To summarise the foregoing we can say, a boy born in the Morea-ipi tribe has as his tribal totem Iva,* the god who became a man and created many good things; he may belong to the coconut community of Kaiva, a patriarchal totem, also a deity but

* Cf. *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, XXXII., p. 425; XXXIII., p. 126. (Ivu is a misprint for Iva.)

the original ancestor of the community which bears his name ; he also has the animal, bird, fish, or tree, as his individual totem which his relative after whom he is named had, or has.

Individual rights in land property, or products of the same, are such as are inherited at birth, or cultivated by personal effort. Priority of birth has full significance in the distribution of property, but if a man dies without issue, his communal land rights are claimed by his male kin.

The foregoing notes indicate conclusively that the phase of totemism recognised in Elema has a marked influence on the social life of these tribes : it preserves the entity of the tribe and thus avoids a detrimental merging into other tribes ; it neutralises the possibility of the transference of ownership of land and stationary property, as coconut and sago plantations, to kindred or alien tribes, but we have yet to observe its influence on the moral life of the Elema tribes.

TRIBAL OBLIGATIONS.—Totem kinship has a greater influence on the moral life of the Elema tribes than the relationship of husband and wife, or, that of parents and children. It fosters fidelity in family life, fellowship in communal life, and loyalty in all things sacred to the highest and best interests of the tribe. This tends to peace among the respective communities of the tribe and minimises the possibility of frequent splits from the tribe. Quarrels are not unknown, but are rarely allowed to develop into serious dimensions ; such quarrels may lead to fighting with bows and arrows and a loss of life, but totem kinship saves a tribe from annihilating itself, or even reducing its numerical strength very perceptibly. Such fighting is regarded as a family quarrel and known by a distinctive name as such.

The terms "relative" and "neighbour" are synonymous in the respective dialects of the Elema group of tribes ; blood relatives and neighbours are all known by a common term, and their totem kinship is of the first importance.

Shallow as may be the affections of husband and wife for one another ; superficial as may be the love of parents and children for one another, their loyalty to the members of their respective totem kin cannot be questioned, and no duty imposed by the laws associated with their totemism is allowed to pass unfulfilled. But this loyalty and devotion so spontaneously rendered to one another of the respective totem kin—not necessarily to members of totem kin of kindred tribes—is only secondary in importance to the ever manifest reverence for the tribal totems, as distinguished from communal and individual totems.

J. H. HOLMES.

Flint Implements.

Hogg.

The Patination of Flint Implements. By A. J. Hogg.

The subject of the patination of the surface of flint implements is one of importance both to the implement-hunter and the geologist ; and, as it seems just now to be exciting considerable interest, perhaps a few notes on the process may be of use in helping to elucidate the manner in which this patination takes place.

Sir John Evans in his *Ancient Stone Implements* quotes M. Moilliet as stating that flint is of two kinds, viz. :—I. White, and insoluble in water ; II. Black, transparent, horny, and soluble in water.

The more recent researches of Mr. B. C. Polkinghorne have led him to suggest that a homogeneous black flint consists of four-fifths or five-sixths of anhydrous silica, and a fifth or sixth of hydrated or colloidal silica.

Flints, then, as we know them, are composed of a mixture of the two kinds : the one crystalline and insoluble, the other amorphous and soluble.

The amorphous silica, having been dissolved out from the surface of the flint as a colloid, is capable, under favourable conditions, of being redeposited in a vitreous form, and is then insoluble in water. Hence, the enduring quality of the brilliant spots and