THE COWRIES-SHELLS AND PIGS IN THE HIGHLAND OF PAPUA: THE LAPITA INFLUENCE?

(Keberadaan Cangkang Kerang Cowrie dan Babi di Pegunungan Tinggi Papua: Pengaruh Lapita?)

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ABSTRACT

Cowrie shells and pork was instrumental in the life of tribes in Papua. Shellfish and pork cowries used as a medium of exchange, dowry, and death rituals. This paper aims to describe the relationship with the coastal areas of the mountainous region of Papua, as well as the influence of Lapita in the mountains. Data collected by literature study and qualitative descriptive analysis. Shellfish and pork cowries were introduced by Austronesian speakers to the indigenous people in the mountains of Papua.

Keywords: cowrie shells, pig, Papua highlands, Lapita

ABSTRAK

Kerang cowrie dan babi sangat berperan dalam kehidupan suku-suku di pegunungan Papua. Kerang cowrie dan babi digunakan sebagai alat tukar, mas kawin, dan ritual kematian. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan keterkaitan wilayah pesisir Papua dengan wilayah pegunungan, serta pengaruh Lapita di pegunungan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan studi pustaka dan analisis deskriptif kualitatif. Kerang cowries dan babi diperkenalkan oleh penutur Austronesia kepada penduduk asli di pegunungan Papua.

Kata kunci: Kerang cowrie, babi, pengunungan Papua, Lapita

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INTRODUCTION

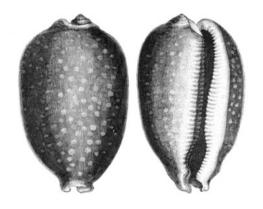
The attractive shells-material have fascinated people throughout history and subsequently, have been used extensively in jewelery, for other decorative, ceremonial purposes and also as a shell-money as been shown by some tribes in Indonesia. In the east part of Indonesia especially, in Papua highland, shells used on the human body in connection with exchange, outside relationships and also used for the reason to build the concept of social personhood. In some cases shells were worn on the human body and removed from it so as to enter into transactional pathways where they would take on a new life and enter into new relationships with different owners. Also when somebody worn shells can be seen as carries of the agency of persons and this definition can be extended to the physical substance of the person including the biographical consciousness and social standing of the previous owner. Worn shells for Papuan people, will create relationships that bring them together and ultimately lead to further exchange. At the same time individuals are in competitive relationships seeking to out do each other and maximize their prestige.

This paper will be presenting materials primarily from highlands papua especially a number of ethnic groups, well represented in ethnographic studies, reside in the known as the Grand Valley Dani, the western Dani, Mee, Jalemo, and Ngalum.

Mee tribe most live around the Paniai, Tigi, and Tage lakes and the allet of the Edege river. The locations were of Mee people lived, runs from the middle reaches of the Kema to the western most tip of the highlands. Dani people habitat of the western Dani centerns on the valleys of the North Baliem, the north of the Grand valley, the Toli, Tamo and the lla rivers.

They occupy the entire middle section of the western highlands north and west of the Grand valley. Jalemo, geographically, places in the northeast of the Grand Valley lies a series of valleys draining down the northern slopes of the central highlands into the Idenburg river, which meanders through the lake plains. These area used shell valuables as a monetary form in the past prior to the introduction of paper money and coins by the Dutch colonial power. The areas have markedly different histories, missionaries, European colonialist and Indonesian.

The number of shells, especially the species of Cowrie (Cypraea) were so important and have been used at the oldest known forms of Wealth in the highland of Papua. Wealth refers to great value and used as means of payment, markers of identity, gifts and as ritual objects. The wealth items used by Dani tribes, Mee, Yalimo, and Ngalum were largely had similarity in the cases of used Cowrie and pigs (Pospisil, 1963:301, 1978:18), seemed commercial transactions with each other. The cowrie-shells are usually smooth and shiny, often colorfly patterned, and more or less egg-shaped, with a flat belly showing a long, narrow, slit-like opening, ofening toothed at the edges. Their lengths range from a tiny 5 mm to robust 19 cm.



Pic. 1 Cowrie Sources. Natural History: Mollusca (1854), p. 169 – "Full-grown Cowry"

In highland of Papua, cowries were so important that many characters relating to money or trade contain the character for cowry.

Circulation of some goods follows a regional trade gradient especially pigs. Pigs are traded both to and from the Jalemo by the Dugum Dani. Trade connections between the Grand Valley and the Upper Balim were the route by which hard blades were moved from their guarry area in the Nogolo, north of the Upper Balim, into the regions to the east. The most obvious trade connections lie along the Baliem Valley itself. The other routes which lead from the upper Baliem over the high over the flanks of Wilhelmina Top (Trikora) and enter the Grand Valley through the Bele or Wamena valleys. Pigs are very important as wealth objects throughout New Guinea. Based of ethnographie record, pigs are culturally the most important animals used in many forms of exchange and as symbols of social status. Pigs are used for bride prize payments, as gifts to establish or maintain social relations and as payments to resolve social disputes or strenthen relationships between individuals, families, clans and tribes. Pias also used durina initiation rites, funerals and ceremonies or gatherings. Pigs were expensive and relatively scarce items, capable in turn of both attracting other scarce items in exchange, and also serving as the appropriate basis for the political and ritual exchange enterprises and the power and influence derived from them by individuals and groups noted briefly above (Watson, 1977).

In daily life, for example shown by Dani people, pigs are killing rarely for eating but always related to important social occasions such as cremation, marriage and initiation rites, except if they are sick or been stolen. The most regularly occuring event at which pig meat is consumed is at a cremation.

In Ngalum tribes, the number of pigs also used to judge the social rank of a person/family,and also such a position within the society.

In the group of these tribes, pigs and cowrie used for different purposes, for Mee, pigs were an important item to collect cowries. The Dani also used both for ritual purposes and as primarily alineable gift items. In northeast of Grand Valley, a bachelor since he was unable to assemble the pigs and shells needed for bridewealth. In daily life cowries were handled and used by men and women for trading. This also held for pigs, which more cared for more by women than by men. The existence of cowrie-shell and pigs (domestic) in some tribes in the highland of Papua, arose some question, especially where this material/culture are coming from. Its related with the homeland of both of them. As we know cowrie-shells a marine mollusk of the Cypraeidae family, These sea snails are native to the Indian and Pacific oceans, particularly the water around the island nation of Maldives, off the southwest tip of India, and for the pigs, are domestic species. According to this phenomenon, the further question that could be arise likea.where these influences coming from? Does the Austronesian speakers had dealing with the Papuan (Non-Austronesina) in the highland such as exchange wealth?.

DISCUSSION

Refers to the prehistoric in the whole island of Melanesia (Papua) is made up of many movements of people and Papua New Guineans are heirs to a long and varied genetic, linguistic and cultural history. Related to the migrants, the new-comers have reached the coastal area about 3,500 years ago referred to the Austronesians (Lapita) entered the pacific (Kirch, 2000: 91). The cultures developed and eventually began with the horticultural

practices and domestication as pigs. characterized Lapita primarily earthenware with complex dentatestamped motifs, also have other typical feature in aspects of subsistence, economy and material culture. The Lapita people had emerged on the islands near the New Guinea coast and used shells as working-material and also as a exchange. The evidence have been shown by Kirch (1988a) who stated, the long run of long-distance of shells with the cessation of Lapita as a stylistic horizon exchange is does not end in the Mussau Group site, in area of Bismarck Archipelago. Shells as being a major raw material for Lapita. The shels genus *Thorny Oyster* which include on Spondylus spp, been used in the Mussau group sites as shellworking.

As a part of Lapita culture shells artefacts are a unique and integral

componen of the Lapita cultural complex. While in some respects shell may be seen to replace scarce quality stone resources for tool producion across sectors of the Lapita range, it is clear that shell is not a simple substitute material. There are some species of shells which used in Lapita as shell-working, commercial, asthethic. The species which used for shell-working including: the Turbo marmoratus (found west of Fiji), but is is considered to be restricted to larger islands in Papua New Guinea. the Solomon islands, adn Fiji (but not in Caledonia), a large Green Snail is used as a raw material for fishhook production within its natural range of occurence, but this range is rather limited (Eldredge, 1994:55) Conus litteratus and Conus leopardus predominate as raw materials (as a larger artefacts).

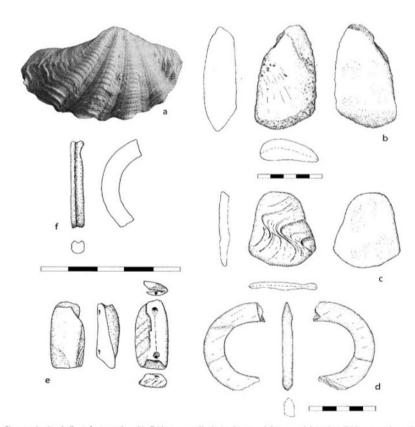


Figure 5: Lapita shell artefacts produced in *Tridacna* spp. Clockwise from top left corner: (a) modern *Tridacna maxima* valve; (b) *Tridacna gigas* hinge section adze from RF-2, southeast Solomons; (c) *T. maxima* dorsal or body section adze from RF-2, southeast Solomons; (d) large *Tridacna* ring from Vao, Vanuatu; (e) *Tridacna* long unit from Site 13A, New Caledonia; and (f) narrow, grooved *Tridacna* ring from Kamgot, New Ireland. Scale bars are in centimetres.

The commercial topshell *Trochnus niloticus* and a suite of coneshells dominated by the large species *Conus litteratus* and *conus leopardus* (all off these speciess occur naturally within the Melanesia-West Polynesia area but some are at their easterly limit here, with *Trochus niloticus* stated to not occur east of Fiji and Wallis (Eldredge, 1994:45) and *Tridacna gigas* (being found in Micronesia to the north (Rosewater, 1965; Eldredge, 1994).

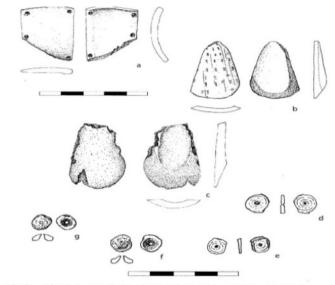


Figure 4. Further artefacts in Conus spp. Clockwise from top left corner: (a) curated broken broad ring fragment from RF-2, southeast Solomons. The top edge has been abraded smooth, while the lower edge is an unmodified break; (b) and (c) Conus adzes from Kamgot, New Ireland; (d) and (e) Conus bead preforms made from the inner spire portion of large Conus shells from St Maurice-Vatcha, New Caledonia; (f) and (g) naturally-modified Conus spires utilised as beads at RF-2, southeast Solomons. Scale bars are in centimetres.

Trochus niloticus being recorded for sites on Niuatoputapu (although in low numbers Kirch, 1988b:225) as well as Samoa in equally low numbers (e.g. Morrison and Addison, 2008), Present-day occurrences beyond West Polynesia are evidently the result of 20th century translocations as a part of aquaculture initiatives (Eldredge, 1994). Other species which have been recorded developed in Lapita culture (Szabo, 2010) such, Conus shells, indicate a Lapita aesthetic which have some particular colour and pattern.

Within the Conidae, a variety of different species was selected for manufacture into rings of varying sizes and widths, beads, curated ring units and small adzes (Szabo 2010). Large

rings also manufactured from *Tridacna spp. Valves*, and inculde stout.

In the context of used the shell-materials in coastshore of Melanesia by Lapita people, may be has fascinated the Papuan people in the highlands. In this cases, of course the newcomers they might be introduce them self to the household, what they have etc. In the relationship the exchange of culture or goods exchange (raw material etc), to keep the network between them.

Related with this Kirch assumption. (1988a) stated that Lapita shell many artefacts could have been 'trade valuables' agreement with Malinowski (1922)thus. the Lapita shell implied a deep antiquity to formal exchange systems expressed in the ethnographic present such as the Kula Ring sites.

Shell artefacts are a ubiquitious and integral component

of the Lapita culture complex. The Lapita shell artefact assemblages are characterized by a standard tuprs. While in some aspects shell may be seen to replace scarce quality stone resources for tool production across sectors of the Lapita range, it is clear that shell is not a simple substitute material.

Regarding to the exchange and social formations in Oceania, Friedman (1982:182-191) offers some hypotheses based on the archaeological evidence for long-distance exchange in the Bismarck archipelago. He noted that 'Melanesia was characterized earlier by long-distance trade similar to the more recent trade of West Polinesia and Micronesia. The hierarchization

within these societies, with a monopoly by ranked lineages over 'prestige-good imports that are necessary for marriage and other crucial payments, for the social reproduction of local kin groups' (1982:184).

In connection with domestic pigs which have been linked with some of the models of human colonization of Oceania including Melanesia. The Austronesian speaking farmers which originating in Taiwan, spread south through Island Southeast Asia and then eastward into the Pacific, has taking pigs as one of domesticated animals together with Chickens and dogs (Bellwood, 2001, 2006). Beyond these theorie, pigs also suported by foragers which have coming from Island of Southeast Asia who had a longstanding experience of domestication in Neolithic times (Spriggs, 1996). This evidence in caves of Sarawak namely Niah, Kudih, and Lobang were studies of the Sus and claim that introduction of pigs species 'allochthonous' as a domestic pigs appear during the Neolithic period (Medway, 1973). Bellwood stated, the development of agriculture in Melanesia seemed to sit, rather uneasily with introduced pig remains in the New Guinea Highlands at 4000 BC and more uncertainly at 8000 BC. The pig is not indigenous to Melanesia and would have had to have been brought in from island Southeast Asia (Bellwood 1995). Based of zooarchaeological evidence, suggest that pigs first appear during the Holocene in the area of Molluccas (Bellwood and White, 2005), Timor (Glover, 1986) and Flores (Morwood, et. al.2004).

To summarized this evidence, the presence of pigs in Papua be on connectivity with the origins and spread of Lapita as a ancestors of Oceanic people. Based of archaeological evidence this theory more stronger, showed by the three result research had been assessing the evidence

with different ways, such as White (1972), Chistensen (1975 and Bulmer (1975) had agree on a date of about 6 000 BP by which agriculture was well established in the highlands which also introduce domestication as pigs and shell-material. In related with adoption of shell-material and pigs, there is sweet potato which has been adopted together with domestic pigs to the highland people. The adoption of sweet potato gave an advantage to the highland people to produce more pigs thus becoming wealthier than their neighbours.

TheearlycolonisationofMelanesia would have been made up of small independent movements from different starting points to different places on the coast of Papua and have affected the Papuan people in the highland. As we know in some area of Melanesia are referred to non-Austronesian or Papuan as 'householder'. They settled the Melanesia before newcomers Austronesian. The incoming bringing with them Austronesians, language immediately ancestral Proto-Oceanic as well Lapita pottery, sailing canoes, agriculture and domestication. As a result of contact with Non-Austronesian, there is a intrusive of Austronesian Lapita tradition becoming 'Melanesianized' (Bellwood, 1995), including innovation of domestication. The movement of Austronesian speakers to mainland New Guinea in the last 2500 years may have marked to introduction of the pig particularly to the Papuan people in the highlands area. In this time the transformation of culture in the highland of Papua, may have started during the arrival of the new-comers Austronesian speakers, include shells-materials and domestic pigs. In relations with exchange, the sells such as cowries came to the highland of Papua by trade from the coast on the south coast (Pospisil, 1963:308) and from the north Hylkema (1964:299). Based of this, that could be, the Austronesian speakers in coastshore, may be took part on this transactions with the Papuan in the highland.

CONCLUSIONS

The appearance of Cowriesshells and pigs in the highlands of Papua is could be used as an evidence which can showing a red-lines of interaction between Austronesian people's and Melanesian. This based of some assumptions that the local-pigs and cowries are not showing some significance of local-products of the people in the highlands.

The presence of cowries and pigs in the highlands is probably through some interactions, communications, etc. According to the function, cowries and pigs becoming the 'holder of the roles ' in the some ceremonies or traditions that have been held in every community in the highlands of Papua.

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