

KEYWORDS: Petroglyphs - Historical records - Ethnohistorical interpretation - Vanuatu - Melanesia

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## SOUTHERN VANUATU ROCK ART

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**Abstract.** Previous reports and interpretations of rock pictures, predominantly engravings but including some painted sites, reported from the southern islands of Vanuatu, mainly Aneityum but also Erromango and Tanna, are revisited. New results are presented in the form of a gazetteer of sites with accompanying illustrations. A comparison is made with rock art from New Caledonia and islands to the north, including the Solomons and parts of eastern New Guinea, then their possible meanings are considered briefly. The authors conclude that more detailed recording is necessary along with a cautious and systematic approach to ethnohistoric and ethnographic materials in interpretation.

There are one or two caves that have been formed by the sea; aqueducts for the irrigation of plantations, which, though extensive come far short of that which now unites Glasgow and the Highland Lochs; and a very large stone, on which are representations of men, fish, and heavenly bodies, the two last according to the old opinions of the natives, are the work of superhuman agents. When Mr Layard and his successors have ransacked Egypt, Assyria etc., they may turn their attention to the *Inhat Ungmit* of Aneityum, and give it a place among the monuments, and works of kingdoms that have long ago fallen.

The Reverend Copeland, quoted above (1860: 346), was the first literate observer of the rock art of southern Vanuatu, the present administrative district of Tafea comprising the islands of Erromango, Tanna, Aneityum, Futuna and Aniwa (Figure 1). In 1860 he described the rock engravings at Aname on the north coast of Aneityum (Site AT19). His invitation to archaeological study of the rock art of the area has not seriously been taken up until today, and we hope in this paper to give a reasonably complete description of the Aname site and the other Aneityum rock art sites. The rock art of Erromango, both paintings and engravings, has not yet been fully recorded and will be given a much briefer treatment here. Of the three remaining islands of southern Vanuatu, the small islands of Aniwa and Futuna have been subject to quite detailed archaeological survey and no rock art has been found (Shutler and Shutler 1966). The nearly complete lack of recorded rock art on the much larger island of Tanna, however, is almost certainly an artefact of limited archaeological survey. The Shutlers were only permitted to survey in part of the island and no further archaeological work has been carried out in the intervening twenty-three years.

#### History of research

After Copeland's initial description, there were further references to the Aname petroglyphs by missionaries (Patterson 1882: 119; Inglis 1887: 30; MacDonald 1889: 171; Lawrie 1892: 712). Lawrie provided only the briefest mention and Patterson simply paraphrased Copeland's remarks, but Inglis, who held the incumbency of the mission station at Aname from 1852 to 1876, and MacDonald, a missionary visitor from Efate, gave further details which are worth quoting. Inglis' account (1887: 30) is in a description of '*natmasses*, spiritual beings ... who ruled over everything that affected the human race'

and to whom offerings were made in propitiation in pre-Christian times.

Stones were the chief *fetishes*, or representatives of the *natmasses*; these were of all sizes, from that of a pebble to blocks of some tons weight. About a mile inland from our station are two blocks each as large as the roof of a small cottage; both of them were recognised as *natmasses*; the one, the larger, was called the sun, and the other the moon. The sides of the larger rock are marked with some rude sculptured figures of fishes and birds; and as one of the best fishing grounds could be seen from these rocks, certain incantations performed on these were believed to effect the success or non-success of the fishing.

MacDonald (1889: 171) reported having visited the AT19 site with Lawrie in 1883. He recorded that the faces of the stone were:

... covered with engraved figures, among which are figures of the turtle, the sun and the moon. The sun is represented by a rayed circle as in the ancient semitic (Assyrian and Phoenician) monuments, and the moon by a half circle.

MacDonald made an interesting comparison with the Feles cave site on Lelepa Island, off Efate, where, '... there is a rayed circle easily recognised as the same as the sun circles on Aneityum, and it is called *narai nawot*, the face of Wot ...' (1889: 172). Wot is a large sea stack off Efate which was worshipped by the local inhabitants (MacDonald 1889: 168). In a later publication MacDonald (1913) gives further details of the worship of Wot whom he interprets as originally a sun god. He also illustrates some of the designs from AT19 and from the Feles cave, including *narai nawot*, comparing them with Babylonian and Phoenician art (1913: 35, reproduced here as Figure 2). The Feles cave is discussed later in this paper. MacDonald also mentioned that 'A Stone on Fotuna [Futuna] has the sun and moon carved upon it', citing as authority Dr William Gunn. In Gunn's own works there is no mention of such a stone and MacDonald appears to be confused with the wooden altars of Futuna, the two tallest posts of which represented the sun and moon (Gunn 1914: 218).

The Reverend William Gunn, who regularly ministered on Aneityum between 1889 and 1918, was particularly interested in the Aname engravings and was also the first European to be shown a second group of rock engravings at Ehili on the south side of Aneityum (Site AT20). Gunn published three short articles in the *New Hebrides Magazine*, providing photographs and drawings of the Aname and Ehili sites. His description (1906a: 16-7) of the

Source: Mc Donal, J. & Haskovec, I. (eds). 1992. "Gate of the Art: Regional Rock Art Studies in Australia & Oceania". Australian Rock Art Research Association, Melbourne.

Aname engravings gave one or two details not found or not clear in earlier accounts:

Even in the days of Dr Inglis, who began his missionary labours in 1852, when the natives' knowledge of mythology and folklore was comparatively fresh and abundant, they could give no information regarding the origin or object of the figures. Some may be easily recognised. A few resemble birds. Others are evidently intended to represent fishes. The turtle near the top towards the left is unmistakable. The star-like figures are said to represent the heavenly bodies, but those with the double tail are for trees ... The figures could not have been the work of one person or of a few. The sides of the boulder are so steep that a scaffolding would be required - the work of many.

While pondering the meaning of the engravings, Gunn sent a photograph to A. H. Sayce, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford and an expert on cuneiform writing. Sayce (quoted in Gunn 1906a) replied that,

Analogy would indicate that they are intended to be a record of some event, or more probably of a religious ceremony or invocation, like the Eastern [Easter] Island inscriptions. They are one more proof that man is a writing animal all over the world. The suns with hooks attached may find their explanation in Aneityum mythology.

Gunn noted that similar figures were found in other areas of the Pacific, and in his second article, 'Petroglyphs in Aneityum, Pitcairn Island and New Zealand compared' (1906b: 16-7), he included drawings of rock paintings from Weka Pass, near Waikora in New Zealand which he had copied in the Christchurch Museum in 1893, Pitcairn Island petroglyph drawings sent to him at about the same time by a Miss Helen Young of Pitcairn and an illustration of a '... carving on a Wendigo or box Containing War God of American Indians'. This last he had copied in 1894 from the lower right corner of the lid of a box which he saw in the possession of a Mr G. A. Barclay in Edinburgh, Scotland. These drawings were accompanied by those of motifs from the Aname boulder, some of which were not visible in the photograph of one face he had included in his earlier paper (Gunn 1906b: 16; reproduced here as Figure 3):

The top and bottom left figures are on the side of the boulder opposite to that photographed. This side contains only a few figures. The top figure is interesting because it resembles a cross leaning, and the lowest resembles some figures in the other squares. But the former is not by any means intended for a cross; it is characteristic of native carving, and is sometimes seen on their bamboo combs, armlets, etc. What the other figure is intended to represent I will not venture to conjecture, but simply point out the resemblances between it and the bottom figure of the New Zealand Rock Paintings, the middle figure to the right in the Pitcairn group, and that on the box containing the Indian war god. Other figures in the Pitcairn Island petroglyphs are similar to those in Aneityum, as examination will show.

In addition, Gunn suggested some similarities with the Easter Island rongoro-rongo script motifs.

Gunn's illustrated account appears to be the first attempt in Pacific ethnology at a comparative motif analysis of rock art, used as was then fashionable to establish possible migration routes into the Pacific. He may well have been inspired, however, by MacDonald's earlier linguistic researches and interest in rock art. It was claimed by Gunn (1906b: 16) that the results showed,

... that some figures were common to the natives of Aneityum, the Maoris of New Zealand, the lost race of Pitcairn, and perhaps the North American Indians. It has been maintained by some, as Dr J. Dunsmore Lang, of Sydney and Sir J. W. Dawson, that America was peopled from the Pacific Islands (the latter says from Asia and Europe as well). Possibly this single figure may be a link showing the connection between the Pacific Islanders and the Indians.

The 1909 paper was the first published record of the Ehili petroglyphs (AT20) and Gunn included photographs of six of the boulders, '... volcanic blocks, scattered like

black cattle on the hillside, overlooking the Umetch [Umej] river' (1909: 10-1). He was able to collect some account of who had supposedly created these engravings (1909: 10-1):

The 'artists' in those past years belonged to one tribe, and devoted themselves solely to their art. They received their food from the people, for they did not make plantations for themselves. ... Each day the artists prepared their materials - hard stones - and went to their 'studio' on the hillside. The volcanic rocks and boulders were very hard, but the artists had no harder material than stones, or perhaps coral, for wearing down, day by day, the outlines which composed their pictures.

Gunn gives his own commonsense interpretations of the motifs, but the 'sun and moon' representations had already been mentioned to him before his 1908 visit (1909: 10-1, reproduced here as Figure 4):

On the boulder 1, there is a representation of the sun on the left, the crescent moon in the middle, and the full moon, beside some unknown figure, on the right. This stone probably had something to do with their worship of the sun and moon, but it is difficult to see that any others had. In the middle of No. 2 there is a 'turtle', and on the left corner the 'frigate bird', often seen in south sea carvings. No. 3 gives a good picture of a 'crayfish'. In No. 4 the human feet are a little out of proportion, being in perspective; and No. 5 may be intended for a kind of 'starfish'.

He was also informed of another petroglyph site 'some miles' away but did not visit it. Gunn mentions the Aname and Ehili sites in passing in a later publication (1914: 218-9) and also corresponded with the Swiss ethnologist Felix Speiser when the latter was preparing his *Ethnographische Materialien aus den Neuen Hebriden und den Banks-Inseln* (1923). Speiser quotes extensively from Gunn's letter to him which in large part is copied from Gunn's *New Hebrides Magazine* papers, but there is an interesting postscript (quoted by Speiser 1923: 443):

Since the above [the 1909 article] was written I have heard that petroglyphs were on a boulder on the west side of the island, similar to those above, but the boulder was buried under a landslip during a great rainstorm on 1st Jan. 1911.

This was presumably the site he had been informed of during his 1908 Ehili visit. Speiser also discussed the Aname and Ehili engraving sites in another publication but all of his information was derived from Gunn (Speiser 1935: 129).

The first archaeologists to note the Aname and Ehili engraving sites were Elizabeth and Richard Shutler who visited them in 1963-4 (Shutler and Shutler 1966). Les Groube visited these sites in 1972 and also mentions a third site (Site AT54) in Uche district (Groube 1972). All three sites were recorded in detail by the late Norma McArthur and Mumford in 1973. Specht (1979: Site 197) cites a personal communication from Mumford concerning a painted site on Aneityum but this appears to be a misunderstanding. During archaeological fieldwork in 1978 and 1979, Spriggs recorded five further engraved sites on the island (Site AT41, 44, 446, 734 & 824) and was informed of one further site which was not visited. Descriptions of these sites are given later in the paper.

The Erromangan rock art is much less well known and no detailed recording has yet been undertaken. Until Spriggs' fieldwork in 1983 only one example, a rock painting site, had been recorded on the island. This site was first reported in 1923 by H. D. Skinner (1923: 97):

Mr T. W. Riddle tells me that in a cave some three miles south of Dillon's Bay in Erromango he has seen a large number of negative imprints of hands. The natives who accompanied him said that these were made by filling the mouth with charcoal dust and puffing it over the hand which was placed on the rock face. They stated that no significance attached to the imprints.

C. B. Humphreys, who was the British District Agent for the Southern (now Tafea) District at about the same

time, published an account of Southern Vanuatu in 1926 which discussed Erromangan rock art. The site he describes is in fact the same as Riddle's but Humphreys correctly places it north of Dillon's Bay. Humphreys' account (1926: 175-7) is worth quoting in detail as a site description and for its speculation on methods of paint application:

The cave is at the top of a coralline formation. There is a dome-like roof, 70-80 feet above the floor, and the depth is perhaps 60-70 feet into the cliffs, the entrance being rounded, about 14 feet high in the middle of the arch and 30 feet wide at the bottom. There is a raised apse-like formation of limestone around the circle of the cave, the floor enclosed by this being flat, with two lateral chambers in which piles of bone are still found, although they are not in any case lying in regular formation but have evidently been disturbed since the place was used for burial. There are no bones in the main chamber and no evidence that any were ever placed there, though the width of the opening and the lack of protection from molestation may account for this.

On some of the walls, which are fairly smooth and often stained dark green or even black by the natural percolation of moisture through the limestone, numerous impressions of human hands and a few of feet are made in solid colour, of about the shade of the coral powder of the floor, although they are not really made of that. They show up very plainly on the dark green surfaces. The hands vary from 9-12 inches in length to quite small examples not more than 7 inches over all and, wherever they occur on the dark green or black background, are quite distinct. There can be no doubt that they have been made by laying the hand on the dark background after it has been dipped in some preparation of the colour referred to above. Wherever they may be reached the substance does not rub off and is apparently indelibly stamped on the limestone. Most of the impressions are from 20-30 feet above the spectator who, standing on tiptoe on the raised formation of limestone referred to, can touch only a bare half dozen of the hands, the number increasing as one's eye travels higher up the walls of the cave. There is no incision of the rock in connection with the impressions as far as they can be felt, nor does there look to be in those out of reach. The flat surfaces of the walls have been taken advantage of, and the impressions are much more numerous where there is a flat stretch of wall space and they increase in number considerably around the entrances to the lateral chambers.

It is certain that these impressions of the human hand and, it may be added, in the case of the larger ones, of the hand of the male of the older or Papuan type of Melanesian, must have been made at a time either when the floor of the cave was at a considerable height above the present floor level (which is unlikely, since the cave is gradually filling up from the bottom today with a slowly accumulating deposit of powdered coral), or by men mounted on some sort of scaffolding, or on the shoulders or backs of other men. Some of the hands are small enough to be those of women, but may be of course of youths. The impression is invariably made by spreading the palm of the hand, flat, on the surface of the cave wall and the fingers are always complete, unlike the impressions found in prehistoric caves in some parts of the world. In one or two instances the forearm is indicated half way to the elbow; the feet are few and are not so well impressed as the hands. Many of the impressions are superimposed on others and there is no attempt at any order or regularity in the arrangement. At the very top of the cave there are a few round solid impressions of the same colour as the hands, not unlike one of the forms of the *navela* stones already referred to, these being about 9 inches in diameter, as far as one can judge, from the floor below.

While it is futile to suggest that the cave in question is of an age comparable with that of caves in other countries where hands occur, the present-day native knows nothing of the origin of the hands and will on no account accompany the visitor to the cave to have a look at them. As this avoidance of all burial caves is common to the Erromangan no special significance can be placed in the dislike to go near this cave in particular.

*Navela* are images of the new and full moon made from fossilised giant *Tridacna* shell in the form of often-large crescents or rings. They were used in chiefly exchanges, but commoners might own the smallest size of *navela* which was often a more recognisable *Tridacna* shell arming.

Spriggs' 1983 fieldwork revealed a further two painted rock art sites and five engraved sites. Survey coverage of the island was not complete and there are doubtless further rock art sites to be found. Indeed, further painted and engraved sites were reported to Spriggs in 1983 but there was no time to visit them on that occasion.

Only one rock art site has been reported from Tanna, an engraved basalt boulder noted *en passant* by Jim Specht (personal communication) in 1984 somewhere on the east coast, possibly near Waesisi.

### Techniques and context

In this section of the paper we will follow the format of Specht's (1979) review of Western Pacific rock art, to discuss the techniques used and the context of the art including geological context, the nature of the sites and their location. Specht's (1979: 59) definition of rock art is also followed:

... all markings of presumed human origin on natural or prepared rock surfaces, except where it can be demonstrated that the markings are a by-product of a manufacturing activity unrelated to any designs at the site.

The engraved sites on Aneityum (called there *inhat acnyit*), Erromango and Tanna, were produced by pecked percussion, although the technique at AT44 and AT446 sites seems to have included abrading. The Erromango painted sites include mechanical methods (Specht 1979: 60) for producing stencils (i.e. blowing the pigment from the mouth), and delineated drawing. It appears that wet painting was also used at least at one of the sites but this needs to be checked.

In terms of distribution the number of rock art sites in Vanuatu has now increased from eight in Specht's 1979 list (excluding the supposed Aneityum painted site) to twenty-two, a nearly threefold increase! The previously recorded two painted, five engraved sites and one painted and engraved site have been increased to four painted, seventeen engraved sites and one painted and engraved site. Of the previously recorded painting sites, one was in black and red paint, one was uncertain (Erromango) and the painted and engraved site was almost wholly in black paint. The previously recorded Erromango site (L-19) has black and a small amount of red painting and the two new sites are in black, making two red and black paint and three black paint sites (including the painted and engraved site). From earlier reports Specht (1979: 64-5) was unclear whether the L-19 'hand impressions' were stencils or imprints. They can now be confirmed as stencils, as are those in the other two Erromango painted sites L-2 and L-34. All are in black paint with one possible exception from L-19. Previously, detail of stencil colour had only been recorded at one Vanuatu site, where both black and red pigment had been used (Specht 1979: 65).

If the geological context of Vanuatu rock art is examined, Specht recorded two painted sites on limestone, four engraved sites on igneous rock and one uncertain, and the one painted and engraved site was on igneous rock (1979: 65-7). This can now be expanded to four painted sites on limestone, eleven engraved sites on igneous rock, one on limestone, one uncertain and four on 'sandstone' to use Specht's terminology. Three of the 'sandstone' sites occur on beach rock exposed by local coastal erosion and the fourth is on a cliff of uplifted beach rock or possibly altered limestone. If the nature of the sites is examined (Specht 1979: 67-9) there were two painted sites in caves, four engraved sites on boulders and

one uncertain, and the painted and engraved site was also in a cave. The tally now reads three painted sites in caves and one in a shelter; eleven engraved sites consisting of boulders, one on a cliff face and in the adjacent shelter, one in a shelter, one uncertain and three on beach rock exposures, this latter a new category. One of the engraved boulder sites actually occurs inside a shelter, to complicate matters (L-33, Erromango).

Specht (1979: 67, 69-70) noted that his definitions for site location categories could be challenged and that an alternative set might prove more relevant, but pointed out the imprecision in the published literature. We have re-assigned the locations of the previously recorded Southern Vanuatu sites to provide more accurate description but have not altered Specht's categories. The figures now read one painted sea cliff site and four painted hillside sites, seven beach or sea cliff engraved sites, three ridge or hilltop engraved, three hillside engraved, one riverbank or course, three uncertain engraved and one sea cliff painted and engraved. In his review, Specht (1979: 69-70) urged consideration of further aspects of site location:

... position relative to habitation areas, site extent in terms of area and number of decorated surfaces, accessibility, and perhaps even the economic value of the land on which the site stands. Of particular relevance to sites situated away from beaches is altitude.

Lack of detail in much of the published literature and considerations of space meant that he could not pursue these additional criteria in his review. Another factor which should be added is aspect, the direction in which the art faces recorded in terms of cardinal points and/or significant landscape features such as facing the sea, facing upstream and so on. These further criteria for the Southern Vanuatu art are included in the individual site descriptions which follow. Map references are from the 1:50 000 Aneityum and North and South Erromango topographic maps (Institut Géographique National 1969, 1976).

#### GAZETTEER OF ANEITYUM ROCK ART SITES (Fig. 5)

**AT19, ANAME area.** GR: 3734.77712. Figures 6 to 8. Altitude 64 m. Recorded by Mumford.

The site is in fern scrub on an eroded, thin soiled ridge (i.e. of low economic value), thirty metres above the east bank of the Aname River with a clear view down to the sea. It consists of two large basaltic boulders, Nagesga ('the sun'; c. 12 x 4 x 3.5 m high), which has engravings and the nearby, smaller Inmohoc ('the moon') which is plain. The majority of the engravings are on the northern face (facing the sea) with several on the flat top and only a few on the south-facing side (Figures 6 to 8). The short east- and west-facing sides have no engravings. The northern side consists of a near vertical face and one at a 45 degree angle at the western end. The site is 1500 metres from the shore and 500 metres from the nearest pre-contact settlement site and irrigation systems. There are slight differences in the recording of the designs by Gunn, Mumford and Spriggs. Further recording and checking would sort these out.

**AT20, UOEKLIYU, EHILI area.** GR: 3778.77605. Figures 4, 9. Altitude approximately 90 m. Recorded by Gunn, Mumford, Spriggs.

The site is in *Miscanthus* grass and fern scrub similar to that at AT19, on a hillside above the south bank of Ehili stream which drains into Umej Bay. It consists of two concentrations of basaltic boulders, at least five boulders to the upslope side and four downslope. Immediately inland of the lower group is a landslip area and informant Chief David Yautaea of Umej stated that his father had told him there had once been more boulders, and when Yautaea himself was a child (c. 1920-1930) there were also more engraved boulders. Some have been turned over or buried in landslips. One boulder, now disappeared, was said to have a design on it resembling an aeroplane, which would presumably have been some kind of bird motif.

Many of the engravings are now very faint and hard to make out.

The designs occur on the northern face (Boulders 4, 5, 9), eastern face (Boulders 3, 6), western face (Boulder 9), and the top (Boulders 7, 8). The positions of the designs on Boulders 1 and 2 were not recorded in the field. Apart from on Boulder 9, designs occur only on one face of each boulder. The 1909 photograph by Gunn (Figure 4) shows Boulder 1 (his Stone 5, bottom right), Boulder 4 (Stone 3, centre bottom), Boulder 5 (Stone 1, top right), probably Boulder 6 (Stone 2, top left, but depicting much more than recorded by Mumford and Spriggs), Boulder 8 (Stone 4, centre right), and a further boulder drawn by Mumford in 1973 but not noted by Spriggs in 1978 (Gunn's Stone 6, bottom left). In addition, Mumford recorded motifs from an additional boulder not noted by Gunn or Spriggs. There is a commanding view of Umej Bay and the sea. The site is about 300 metres from the shore, and about 100 metres upslope of an irrigation and associated garden system and scattered house sites. The site has not been fully recorded.

Yautaea recounted that the Ehili people who made the engravings had their own *natimi elpas* or sub-chief and were a different group from the Umej people (Spriggs 1986 has a discussion of traditional social organisation on Aneityum). They were said to be great fishermen and the engravings were said to do with fishing magic. He recounted a custom story, obviously a version of that told to Gunn in 1908:

Neta was *natimi elpas* of the Ehili people. At that time there were too many people and not enough garden area for them to work so they became specialists in rock engraving. At night they made a fire with cooking stones but had no food. They did a custom dance and people came to look at the engraved stones. When they came they brought food with them which was how the Ehili people got fed. They started doing their custom dance every afternoon and the noise spoiled the kava drinking of Karahedmu, *natimarid* or high chief of the wider area, who lived at Umej. Karahedmu sent his men over and Neta and all of his group were killed. This is why no-one now knows how to make rock engravings.

It was not clear how many generations had elapsed since Karahedmu's time. Karahed was *natimarid* of Umej in 1848 when the first white missionary arrived but he was clearly not the one referred to in the story.

**AT41, INWA RAKA area.** GR: 3690.77640. Figure 10. At sea level

The site is a dark basaltic boulder broken from a large rock on the sea edge of the beach, among other boulders and covered at high tide. The design faces inland and the cup marks, just over ninety in number although some appear to have flaked off, were said by informant Lalep to represent the number of wives of a man named Nagrici. The stone is near the boundary between Inwa Raka and Iteg districts in an area of marginal economic value. The nearest recorded pre-contact settlement site is about 600 metres north along the coast. A small taro swamp is about 250 metres to the south-east.

**AT44, ANPAK area.** GR: 3721.77648. Figure 11. Altitude 240 m.

The first engraving was discovered by Daniel Kauypae in 1977 and during Spriggs' visit another design and spear sharpening grooves were discovered on a second face after removal of vegetation growing on the boulder. The engravings are on a dark basaltic boulder on the west bank of the Uche River in the valley bottom. It is adjacent to a flat, recently gardenized area. The 'face' design (No. 1) is engraved in sharp outline and probably involved abrading, while the 'heart' design (2) is pecked and has wider (20 mm) lines. The first design is on a vertical face and faces north-west, while the second is at 45 degrees to the vertical and faces west-south-west. Lower on this latter face and to the left are five parallel sharpening grooves of varying lengths covering an area about 500 mm wide. Nearby on the opposite bank of the river is a small taro swamp named Ahat Arepan and there are also former settlement sites in the vicinity. The site is about three kilometres from the shore.

**AT54, PIKAD U FIJI FIJI, UCHE area.** GR: 3710.77629. Figure 12. Altitude approximately 60 m. Recorded by Mumford, Spriggs.

The site is a large black basaltic boulder near many similar-sized boulders on a ridge in open and eroded fern scrubland, similar in environment to AT19 and AT20, above the east bank of the Uche river. There are clear views up and down the Uche valley and to the sea. Most of the engravings are very faint and hard to make out and occur on two faces of the boulder, south-eastern and north-eastern. The name of the boulder means 'the pig of Fiji Fiji' and the general area is Nalaig U Fiji Fiji, 'the road of Fiji Fiji', Fiji Fiji being a *natmas* or spirit. Daniel Kauypae was the informant for this information. The site is immediately upslope of a large garden area and about one kilometre from the shore and former coastal habitation sites. In 1979 a pine plantation was started in this area by the Government and the engraving site was damaged by forestry workers carving their names on it and going over the engravings with bush knives.

AT446, ITUNURAUITAC, ISIA area. GR: 3841,77654. Figures 13, 14. Altitude 75 to 85 m.

The site consists of two basaltic boulders on an eroded fern scrub ridge north of the Isia river adjacent to and above a path, and with clear views out to sea. The designs are on the near vertical face of the upslope boulder (1.7 x 0.7 x 1.0 m high) which faces the sea (east). The design is lightly pecked with lines about 5 mm across. The second boulder is about twelve metres away below the path. The design faces inland (west) on the vertical face of the boulder. It is deeply cut, presumably abraded, but has probably also been gone over with a metal knife in comparatively recent times. The top of the boulder appears to have flaked off. The site is about 150 metres from the sea down a very steep slope. It is about 300 metres from a small taro swamp and 500 metres from the main agricultural and settlement focus of Isia Valley.

Phillip Tepahae had heard a story that if a woman touches the upslope design (Figure 13) she will make well-patterned baskets, but if she touches the more irregular downslope design (Figure 14) then she will make badly patterned ones. A much more detailed custom story was recorded from Tentarere who had heard it from his grandfather Nalolac who was from Anumej district. An English translation of part of the story is given below (translation by Spriggs from Bislama [Pidgin]):

A woman, the moon (Inmohoc) lived in a cave called Uramad under the red hill (eroded ridge) at Isia. The red hill is called Etonurau. Her husband was the sun (Nagesga). He has two tabu places which are his home: one is the spring at the head of the Isia river which no-one can visit, and the other is a branch of the Anumej river called Anwanomo. If a person visited this latter place they would hear the sun and this would cause their death. The sun works in the day, the moon at night. The large rock called Ralau, off the coast near Isia is the *nabanga* (fig tree) marking their *intipiang* or kava-drinking place. The moon made mats and fans, so she made the petroglyphs at Isia. The one of the mat (the upslope one) is for women to look at to get the design right. They rub their hands on it so that they will make smooth mats. This boulder is called Ue Amoeuitima. The other boulder is to show women how to make a fan, but is not rubbed. The fan stone is called Nohoyam.

The story is interesting in its involvement with the moon and the sun, after which the two boulders at AT19 were named, and representations of which were said by informants to be the meanings of motifs on both AT19 and AT20.

AT734, UOGA, ANAUWAWU area. GR: 3702,77685. Figure 15. Altitude 274 m.

The site is a single large grey basaltic boulder (5 x 4 maximum width x 2 m high). It is on a hillside about twenty metres above the south bank of the Anauwau river and immediately inland of a side creek. It is upslope of an irrigated taro garden and dryland garden areas, and is in *Miscanthus* and fern scrubland. The designs are in two groups about 60 cm apart on the upper part of the east vertical face. They face inland (east) but from the top of the boulder there is a clear view down valley to the sea to the west. The boulder has a flat top but there are many cracks and striations in it making the surface unsuitable for engraving. The designs are pecked with the lines 20 mm across and up to 7 mm deep. The site is 2.5 kilometres from the shore. There are garden and settlement sites both further inland and towards the coast but there are no sites upslope of the boulder.

AT824, ANEPLAEDOGLDOGL, EHILI area. GR: 3777,77600. Figure 16.

The site is a cliff face on the beach of soft volcanic breccio-conglomerate. The name is that of a nearby cave. The cliff face has many cup marks pecked into it, in excess of 144 in wandering lines over several metres. The cup marks face south-east, out into the bay. In Jack Yauotau's lifetime (he was born in 1924), many of the cup marks have disappeared because of wind and sand erosion of the cliff. If not continually re-cut they erode quickly. He remembered when they extended about half as far again to the north and when they occurred higher up on the cliff face, as high as a man could reach. The cup marks are said to record the number of children a man kidnapped and hid in the nearby cave. It was his intention to eat them but they managed to break out and escape. The site is 300 metres south of a coastal taro swamp and settlement site.

Additional Site, ANAWAEO, ANEKRO area of Umej Valley. Not visited.

Chief Yautaca described this site as being similar to AT41, with cup marks recording the number of wives of Pinake. Pinake was an Aneityum culture hero who set up the first *natimarid* of Anumej/Anekro and started the current social organisation of the eastern part of the island. The stone is in or adjacent to the river.

## GAZETTEER OF ERROMANGO SITES (Figure 17)

L-2, YALIWAU YOBINIMO. GR: 2897,79169. Altitude 25 m.

The site is a fortified refuge cave in a coastal limestone cliff formation. There are two small entrances but inside the cave is about fifty metres deep and has a maximum width of twenty-five metres, with small side passages and apses. There is little deposit in the cave but evidence of hearths, midden and small walled off or terraced areas said to be sleeping spaces. Much of the cave floor is covered with large roof collapse boulders. At least two areas of black hand stencils are found inside. The first, near the entrance to the right, consists of at least eight stencils in a group from 0.5 metres above the floor to 1.5 metres and covering a 1.5 metre length of the wall. The second area is further into the cave on the same wall and consists of a single hand stencil three metres above the cave floor. The visit to the site, accompanied by Joe Kewalu, was brief and there may be more paintings in the cave.

Adjacent to the cave is an associated village site. The village and cave were the headquarters of Auwi Auwi (or Kowiwi) during a war from 1865 until his death in battle nearby in 1867. He was a local chief and was infamous as the killer of the missionary John Williams at nearby Dillons Bay in 1839. The cave is mentioned in an account of his death (Gordon 1867: 129-30). The name of the cave means 'Yaliwau made the house'.

Site L-19, VELEMENDI. GR: 2890,79209. Altitude approximately 50 m.

This is a large limestone cave just upslope of a walking track from Suvu beach to the airfield, with a ceiling about fifteen to twenty metres high. There are four side chambers, two of which contain human bones. This is the cave reported by Riddle and in detail by Humphreys, as quoted earlier. The cave is about twenty metres deep and ten metres wide and has a large high entrance. There is excavatable deposit in the cave although towards the back the deposit consists largely of bat guano. The paintings exist up to about six metres above the floor level. There are at least 116 hand stencils in black and one possibly originally in red. There are also (as Humphreys reported) at least six small circular stencils in black of *navela*, but the foot stencils reported by Humphreys were not evident. In addition there is a red chevron design and other non-representational black (charcoal?) drawings similar in style to those at site L-34. Green algae covers the walls near the entrance and according to informant Willy Tovovur has destroyed or covered many further hand stencils. The area today is in secondary forest and near to a habitation rockshelter and to a burial cave adjacent to the beach. Straight-line distance to the shore is about 200 metres.

L-33, ILPIN area. GR: 2951,79082/3. Altitude 80 m.

The site is a rockshelter complex at the base of a limestone cliff. It is about 75 metres long and the overhang is generally three to five metres high. Excavatable deposit is present, and there is shell midden on the surface. In the shelter is a limestone boulder (1.5 x 1 x 1.5 m high) with rows of cup marks on its front vertical face and on its top. On the front are traces of about ten rows of cup marks but some are indistinct. There are at least 121 still present. More recently metal-carved names and what appears to be a sailing ship have been added. On the top of the boulder are five to six even less distinct rows of cup marks, the clearest of which contains ten cup marks. The front faces towards the sea (west). The site is 450 metres from the shore at Bunkil Bay, and near garden and former house sites.

L-34, POTNANGAI. GR: 2993,79057. Altitude 95 m.

This is a rockshelter complex at the base of a limestone outcrop seaward of Rampunrongo village on the main path down to the shore. There are paintings on the ceiling and walls in black (charcoal and/or manganese) pigment. The paintings include stick figures, some with tails, and non-representational geometric designs. There are well in excess of one hundred designs. In places black hand stencils are superimposed over them. Most of the paintings are about 3.5 metres above the ground on the ceiling of the overhang in an area six by four metres. There is little deposit in this part of the shelter but associated with a recent fire are marine shells of *Haliotis*, *Drupa*, *Turbo* and *Trochus*. A second concentration of paintings occurs at the upslope end of the shelter system. In addition, there are some recent paintings (names, a dog and a car), but they are stylistically easy to distinguish. The cave is used today as a temporary shelter. Straight-line distance is about two hundred metres to the shore.

No story concerning the paintings was elicited but guide Jerry Taki likened some of the motifs to those on traditional women's skirts (*numpelat*). The site is near traditional garden and settlement areas.

R-18, TAEANGAT. GR: 3083,79269. At sea level.

The site is one of three engraving sites on exposed beach rock in the intertidal zone along the shore north-west of Potnarevin village. This section of beach rock is the one furthest away from the village and is adjacent to an area of raised coral, named Suva. Some of the engravings were covered by beach sand at the time of the visit. The engravings include cup marks, a pecked outline said to represent a yam and representations of fish.

The landowner, Moses Nopen, said he knew nothing about the engravings. He is also the owner of the other two beach rock engraving sites R-17 and R-24. The beach rock has presumably been exposed by slight coastal retreat in this area.

R-17, NOLU. GR: 3088,79265. At sea level.

This is the middle beach rock engraving site, separated from R-18 by a stretch of sand. The engravings consist mainly of cup marks in long lines, said to represent the number of wives of a man, the number of men killed in a fight and so on. One was a representation of a fish with a row of cup marks through it, said to represent the number of fish caught. Also present were engraved circles with cup marks adjacent to or running through them and zigzag lines. A natural eminence had been shaped to represent a large *navela* ring.

R-24, MALAP. GR: 3096,79262. At sea level.

The closest to Potnarevin of the beach rock engraving sites. This site appeared to have the greatest variety of designs, but tidal conditions prevented close examination.

R-23, NAVON. GR: 3095,79260. Altitude: below 10 m.

The site is a rockshelter, five minutes' walk west of Potnarevin village and inland of R-24. The shelter cliff appears to consist of raised beach rock or altered limestone, and is six by two to three metres wide below its overhang. There are designs engraved on the outside of the low overhang and on the back wall of the shelter, all facing east. The designs are generally very faint and no attempt was made to record them. An oval with a dot in the centre on the overhang was said to represent a vagina, and a kite-shaped design on the back wall was said to be associated with sorcery for killing men. People have recently carved names into the soft stone and this has further obscured some of the designs. The shelter has excavation potential and people still use it as a sleeping shelter and place to drink kava.

The cave is associated in story with a snake which lives in the hill and is able to converse with humans. Informant Johnson Naitai said that there is a similar shelter with engravings at Tuit in Cook Bay.

## THE TANNA ROCK ART SITE

TA-1, east coast.

The site is a dark volcanic boulder (c. 3 x 2 x 1.5 m high, from Specht's photographs) immediately behind a rocky beach and just above the high tide mark. The designs face inland. Three names have recently been scratched on the boulder obscuring part of the design.

## The Aneityum and Erromango engraved motifs

The most detailed motif analysis of a significant corpus of rock art in Melanesia is Frimigacci and Monnin's (1980) inventory of New Caledonian engraved art. In that study 2198 designs were divided into thirty major categories (their Figure 3 has the basic categories). To aid in comparison, their categories have been adopted for the study of the Southern Vanuatu material where they appear applicable. A total of 145 separate designs can be distinguished in the Aneityumese rock art illustrated (Figures 6 to 16) and in notes and photographs of further parts of site AT20 not included here. Thirteen of these appear to be incomplete and are not included in the analyses, leaving 132 designs for comparison (Table 1).

In insite comparisons on Aneityum we find turtles (Category 19B) and cup marks (Category 7) to be the most widespread motifs, each found at four out of the eight sites. Birds (another variant of 19) appear at three sites, and motifs which occur at two sites are simple enveloped crosses (Category 3.2), circles (5b.17), 'stars/suns with hooks' (a variant of 8), fish (19A), 'lizard

men' (19c), and zigzags (20).

The Erromangan engraved art has not been recorded in enough detail to present motif frequencies or even a full motif category list. It is clear, however, that cup marks (Category 7) are by far the most common category and that zoomorphic motifs are nowhere near as common as on Aneityum; only occasional fish were seen (19A). Also present are Categories 5a.1, 5b.17, variants of motifs 4a, 20 and 23, and other geometric motifs not present on Aneityum or in New Caledonia.

## The Erromango painted motifs

At all three painted sites, hand stencils (almost all in black paint) are present, uniquely at one (L-2), as the predominant motif at another (L-19), and as a superimposed, comparatively minor motif in the other (L-34). At this last site, geometric as well as anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures occur in profusion but have not yet been systematically recorded. A few stylistically similar geometric designs occur at L-19. Also at L-19 are stencils of round objects, said to be *navela*, *Tridacna* shell arm-rings.

## Comparison with other regions: engravings

Of the thirty categories isolated by Frimigacci and Monnin (1980) in their New Caledonian inventory, eleven are comparable to ones found in the corpus of Aneityumese motifs: 104 individual Aneityum designs with a further sixteen somewhat related designs. This leaves some twelve designs (11 separate motifs) not paralleled in the New Caledonian materials.

The motif comparison (Table 1) shows some important differences in the percentages of different categories. The most obvious is in the portrayal of zoomorphic forms (Category 19). These total just over one per cent in New Caledonia while they account for over 45 per cent of the designs in the Aneityumese corpus. Star/sun motifs (Category 8) account for over fourteen per cent of the designs on Aneityum but only just over one per cent of those in New Caledonia, and foot motifs (Category 18c) exist on nearly eleven per cent of Aneityumese designs whereas *all* categories of anthropomorphic figures (Category 18) account for only just over one per cent of the designs in New Caledonia. The only other reasonably common category on Aneityum (i.e. more than 5% of the corpus) was represented by variants of Category 5 based on circles. These are even more common in New Caledonia, however, representing over 22 per cent of the total.

The commonest category in the New Caledonian material is Category 3 with its many variants of the '*croix enveloppe*' or enveloped cross which represents nearly 27 per cent of the total. Only two examples of this (1.5%) were found on Aneityum and represent the simplest and one of the rarer forms of this design in New Caledonia (Category 3.2). Next in popularity after Category 5, which has already been mentioned, is Category 4 (13.4%) which is not found at all in the Aneityumese material. Other reasonably common categories in New Caledonia are Categories 7 (8.9%) and 1 (5.3%), cup marks and spiral designs. Only one example of the latter is known from Aneityum but cup marks make up three per cent of the Aneityum corpus and include examples of more complex form than are found in New Caledonia.

Another interesting pattern emerges if we look at the geographical concentrations in New Caledonia of categories and sub-categories shared with Aneityum. Of

seventeen comparable sub-categories, seven are widespread throughout New Caledonia, six are found in the Eastern region, two are from the Northern region, one from both the Loyalties and the Eastern region. There is thus a concentration of shared forms between Aneityum and the New Caledonian areas 'facing' it or most directly accessible by canoe.

The few oral traditions connected with New Caledonian rock art sites show an interesting parallel in one case, and a very specific link between Aneityum and New Caledonia in another (Frimigacci and Monnin 1980: 51-2). The general link is provided by one of the cup mark sites in the Eastern region which is said to record the number of wives of a chief named Kanake. There are of course similar stories in relation to two Aneityumese sites. The other relevant tradition relates to a site on beach rock at 'Leon' on Mare Island in the Loyalty Group (Site L.MA.005) in a place where people from 'Kiam(u)' came ashore (Dubois 1975). Not only is kiamu an alternative name for Aneityum, at 220 kilometres distant to the north-east the nearest of the main Vanuatu Islands, but the motifs at the 'Leon' site include zoomorphic ones rarely or never found elsewhere in New Caledonia. There are two fish, a turtle reminiscent of Aneityumese examples and another figure which is probably an incomplete turtle (Frimigacci and Monnin 1980: Figures 12.7, 25.1-3, 25.22). There are also various cup mark design groups at the site, some in direct association with one of the fish and the turtles.

No zoomorphic figures have been found on the other islands of the Loyalty Group and fish occur nowhere else in New Caledonian rock art. Apart from the Mare Island turtles only six other such designs have been recorded in the region - four of them from three sites in the Canala area of the Eastern region, a possible example from the Western region, and a northern design (19.5) which does not to us have any resemblance to a turtle at all. In oral traditions collected by Dubois (1975), Aneityum is one of the places of origin of the Mare population and various aspects of its culture. The petroglyphs suggest a material manifestation of these connections.

The Erromangan engravings cannot at this stage of research be subjected to detailed comparison but it should be noted that only one of the motifs comparable to New Caledonian categories is uniquely shared between Erromango and New Caledonia, all of the rest are also found on Aneityum. This unique motif is a variant of Category 4a, found at Navon (R-23) and identified as representing a vagina by informants. Interestingly enough the Tanna site, as far as can be seen from Specht's photographs, consists mainly of variants of New Caledonian Motif 4a, at least eighteen examples being present. Motif 4 is found predominantly in northern New Caledonia. Several cup marks, some associated with the main motif are also visible on the photographs.

Other engraved art sites have been reported elsewhere in Vanuatu. In the Feles cave on Lelepa, a small island off Efate north of Erromango, are groups of cup marks as well as the painted art. Garanger established that the cup marks were earlier than the paintings because part of a section of wall with cup marks had broken off and paintings had been placed on the new wall surface (Garanger 1972: 43). Further, in excavation at this spot, part of the fallen block with cup marks and 'crescents' was found at one metre depth. A charcoal sample at 1.5 m depth gave an uncorrected date of  $1040 \pm 85$  b.p. (GX-12632). This

suggested to Garanger that the engravings were slightly later than this date (1972: 43-4), but in fact it only means that the block with the engravings came away from the cave wall after this date. The engravings could be considerably earlier. In another part of the cave, the paintings are actually superimposed over cup marks (1972: Figures 58-61).

Somerville (1894: 9) reported rock art on Emau, another small island off the east coast of Efate. He was shown:

... a large stone lying in a field, on which was rudely carved an undoubted representation of the sun and of the moon: the former circular, about 18 inches in diameter; and the latter an ogee cut square at the top, also about 18 inches long. The natives said that they represented the sun and moon, and that 'ole fella man e makum': they certainly appeared to be very ancient.

The boulder was volcanic as was a smaller monolith set up nearby with a carving of a skull on it. It would be interesting to compare these 'sun' and 'moon' motifs with the Aneityumese engravings. In 1965 Hébert reported further rock art from Emau, two sites with human faces carved on boulders and a monolith (1965: 56-61). One site consisted of three faces on a boulder and a monolith, and the other was a boulder with twelve to fifteen human faces, some resembling skulls. The Ambrym engravings reported by Speiser (1923: 441) include a sailing ship and are recent in age. Shutler (1967: 124) reports '... an old village site with stone carvings', from Hiu Island in the Torres Group but gives no details.

Further afield in the Solomons a large corpus of rock art, particularly from Guadalcanal Island, is currently being analysed by David Roe (this volume). We leave to him the task of making detailed comparisons with the Southern Vanuatu material, but there do appear to be similarities. Michael Gunn (1986) has recently published a study of the rock art of Tabar Island, off New Ireland in the Bismarck Archipelago. Some of this is also comparable, as is the Goodenough Bay (Papuan coast) material reported by Egloff (1970) and before him by Williams (1931). Indeed, the characteristically Aneityumese motif from AT19 of 'star/sun with hooks' is found on an engraved monolith from Wedau village illustrated by Williams (1931: 134).

Egloff (1970: 154) noted the parallels of the Goodenough Bay art with the New Caledonian material, and engravings from New Hanover. Golson (1974: 584) compared it with the motifs on incised shells found at Wanigela in nearby Collingwood Bay and with Dong-son 'ship of the dead' motifs (cf. Badner 1974 for a discussion of these motifs). The incised shells appear to be dated between 500 BP and 1500 BP, and Specht (1979: 74) notes that a hooked circle design is also known on Lapita pottery dated to prior to 2500 BP. Specht suggests that there is a widespread engraving style including sites in Goodenough Bay, New Hanover, New Britain, Vanuatu and New Caledonia, involving curvilinear geometric forms such as spirals, concentric circles, face-like forms and other concentric forms (1979: 74-5). He notes also that the style always occurs on boulders or open rock faces, by watercourses or the sea, and the sites are all in areas where Austronesian languages are spoken. The association with Austronesian languages suggests a maximum time-depth of between 3500 to 3000 BP for this art, and in the case of Goodenough Bay probably only about 2000 BP. The basis for this is the presumed association between the spread of Austronesian speakers and the spread of Lapita and related pottery styles in the

region.

### Comparison with other regions: paintings

While there is a rich body of engraved art in New Caledonia, this is not matched in painted sites. The only New Caledonian painted site mentioned in the literature is the cave of Wanaham on Lifou Island in the Loyalty Group, which contains hand stencils, both positive and negative according to Frimigacci and Monnin (1980: 38). Four hand stencils from here are illustrated by Langdon (1967: 91). Recently a painted cave site has been discovered on New Caledonia itself (Frimigacci, personal communication).

There are two painted sites on Lelepa. The  $1040 \pm 85$  b.p. date for the Feles site can be used in placing the painted art at that site within the last 1000 years. Garanger suggests a link between the art and Roy Mata, an important chief whose grave was excavated and dated to  $685 \pm 140$  b.p. (GX-1144) on bone collagen (1972: 77). He notes links between the Feles cave, Roy Mata's mythical father and Roy Mata's death in oral traditions (1972: 44). A link to Erromango is that the sea-voyages that brought Roy Mata to Vanuatu from the east always feature that island as his last stop before settling on Efate (Garanger 1972: 128). The Feles paintings are in black and include human beings, often armed with clubs, birds, fish, a marine mammal, geometric figures, and rows of dashes and dots. These rows are in red as well as black (1972: 43). The designs illustrated by Garanger (1972: Figures 55-68) are in some cases reminiscent of those in Erromango site L-34 but further study of both sites is needed before any firm conclusions can be drawn. None of the illustrations by Garanger show anything resembling the rayed circle reported by MacDonald (1889: 172; 1913: 35) and illustrated above. The other painted site on Lelepa, Markua, is said by Garanger to have similar geometric designs in black to Feles, near the entrance (1972: 39-40). About forty metres back from these are six hand stencils, three red and three black (1972: Figure 51).

Shutler notes hand stencils on Malekula but gives no details (1967: 123, cf. Langdon 1967: 91), and also in a cave on Hiu in the Torres Islands. Langdon provides further details of the latter based on information obtained from Shutler. The cave is in limestone on the northern tip of the Island at about eight to ten metres above sea level and has a large opening. It is '60 to 70 feet deep, and its ceiling was about 70 feet high' (Langdon 1967: 91). About twelve red hand stencils were scattered over the wall and ceiling. The Hiu Islanders were said to have no tradition about the paintings except that the artist or artists had used bamboo ladders to reach the ceiling.

### Meaning: a bridge too far?

The question of the meaning of Pacific rock art has recently been revived, in part a response to the stimulus of Hodder's 'contextual archaeology' (Hodder 1986). Thus Rolett (1986) has studied turtle motifs on Marquesan rock art and extended his analysis to include examples from elsewhere in Polynesia, Fiji, Aneityum and New Caledonia. As well as looking at the art itself he examined the cultural significance of turtles in the region using ethno-historic sources. He concluded that the significance of the turtle was 'related to a symbolic association between turtles and the transcendence of boundaries between worlds' (1986: 87). More recently, Van Tilburg and Lee (1987) have looked at Easter Island rock art in relation to

sociopolitical changes which occurred after about 1500 AD. A close attention to context and chronology is a feature of this study and it benefits from and contributes to the enormous amount of basic descriptive data available for the island. Even with all this, however, the interpretation of cup marks is based on the most general of ethnographic analogies, and the interpretation of lunate designs as boats, although plausible, is then extended to an ever-wider ramifying system of meaning, a symbolic load in danger of swamping the vessel. As the authors admit, 'Some of the postulated symbolic meanings of these 'boats' ... contrast sharply with the lack of carving expertise evidenced in their execution' (1987: 147).

As Rolett has noted (1986: 86), the iconographic significance of rock art can vary in space and in time. When significance is attached in current tradition to a rock art site, it may not tell us about the significance of the site to the original artists. The locations of the Aneityumese rock art sites overlooking fishing grounds and the representation of fish, turtles and (?sea-) birds suggest an association with the sea and fishing, a 'commonsense' interpretation of which would be that the sites are to do with fishing magic. This interpretation is found in oral traditions relating to the sites. There is also the suggestive recurrence in the traditions of connections of the sites with the sun and the moon, which figure prominently in Aneityumese mythology. Further study of sun and moon traditions on the island and elsewhere in Island Melanesia may well help to illuminate the meaning of the art. If recurrent associations of these kinds are found in other areas of Island Melanesia, we may be in a better position to get at the question of meaning.

### Conclusions

More detailed recording of the rock art and its context along the lines suggested by Specht (1979), and cautious but systematic use of relevant ethnohistoric and comparative ethnographic materials for the region are needed at this stage of research, rather than essentially intuitive leaps towards meaning. Specht and others have postulated similarities between some of the rock art of the area and designs on other media such as pottery, engraved shells, barkcloth and tattoo designs. Such comparisons also need to be pursued if questions of chronology and function are to be meaningfully addressed.

The Southern Vanuatu and other parallel studies of Island Melanesian rock art by Roe, Ballard and others are adding an enormous and more reliable body of data to our knowledge of the rock art of the region. While it may not yet seem that much progress has been made in explanation of the art since Specht's review of ten years ago, the groundwork is being firmly laid. We can anticipate important results well before the twentieth anniversary of his paper.

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Frimigacci & Monnin Category	Examples in New Caledonia	Per cent of Total	Examples in Aneityum	Per cent of Total	Distribution in New Caledonia of Comparable motifs
1	117	5.3	1	0.8	widespread.
2	36	1.6	0	0	
3	587	26.6	2	1.5	cf. Category 3.2m, N.
4	294	13.4	0	0	
5	488	22.1	14	10.6	cf. 5a.1, 5b.17, 5c.35-36, all widespread.
6	51	2.3	0	0	
7	195	8.9	4	3.0	cf. 7A,B, widespread
8	28	1.3	12 (7)*	14.3	cf. 8.15 closest, E (* stars with hooks).
9	21	1.0	0	0	
10	9	0.4	0	0	
11	9	0.4	1	0.8	cf. 11.4, E.
12	30	1.4	1	0.8	cf. 12.30, E.
13	31	1.4	0	0	
14	30	1.4	0	0	
15	8	0.4	0	0	
16	9	0.4	0	0	
17	8	0.4	0	0	
18	27	1.2	14	10.6	cf. 18c, E 'feet'
19	26	1.2	51 (9)*	45.4	cf. 'fish', 'turtle' of L & E 'lizard' of N (* other zoomorphs: birds, crustacea). cf. E examples
20	21	1.0	3	2.3	
21	34	1.5	0	0	
22	10	0.5	0	0	
23	72	3.3	1	0.8	cf. 23.22 E, but linked to Uvea
24	4	0.2	0	0	
25	16	0.7	0	0	
26	7	0.3	0	0	
27	8	0.4	0	0	
28	4	0.2	0	0	
29	7	0.3	0	0	
30	11	0.5	0	0	
Other	n.d.	n.d.	12	9.1	motifs not paralleled in New Caledonia
TOTALS	2198	100%	132	100%	

Table 1. *New Caledonian and Aneityum motif categories compared*. Key: n.d. = no data; numerals in rightmost column refer to Frimigacci and Monnin categories; E = eastern and N = northern regions of New Caledonia, L = Loyalty Islands (Frimigacci and Monnin 1980: 18).

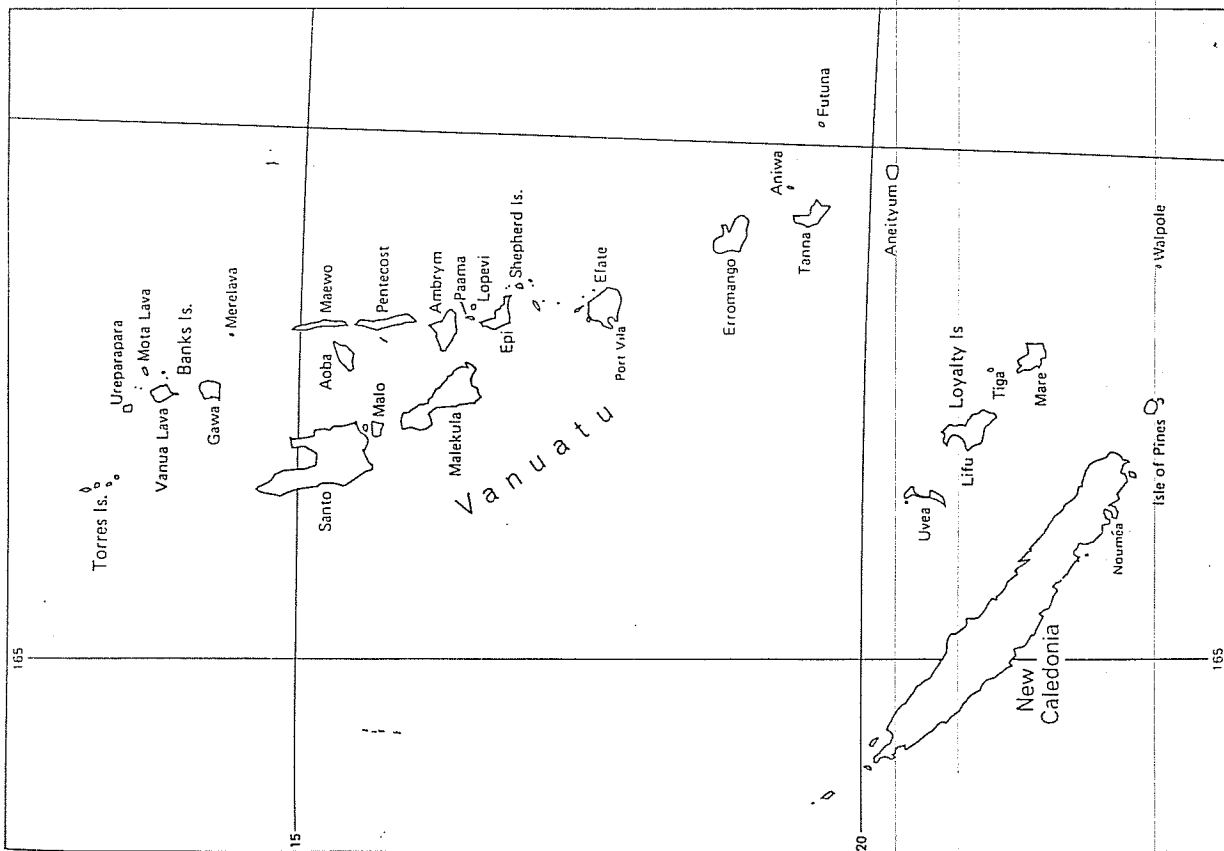
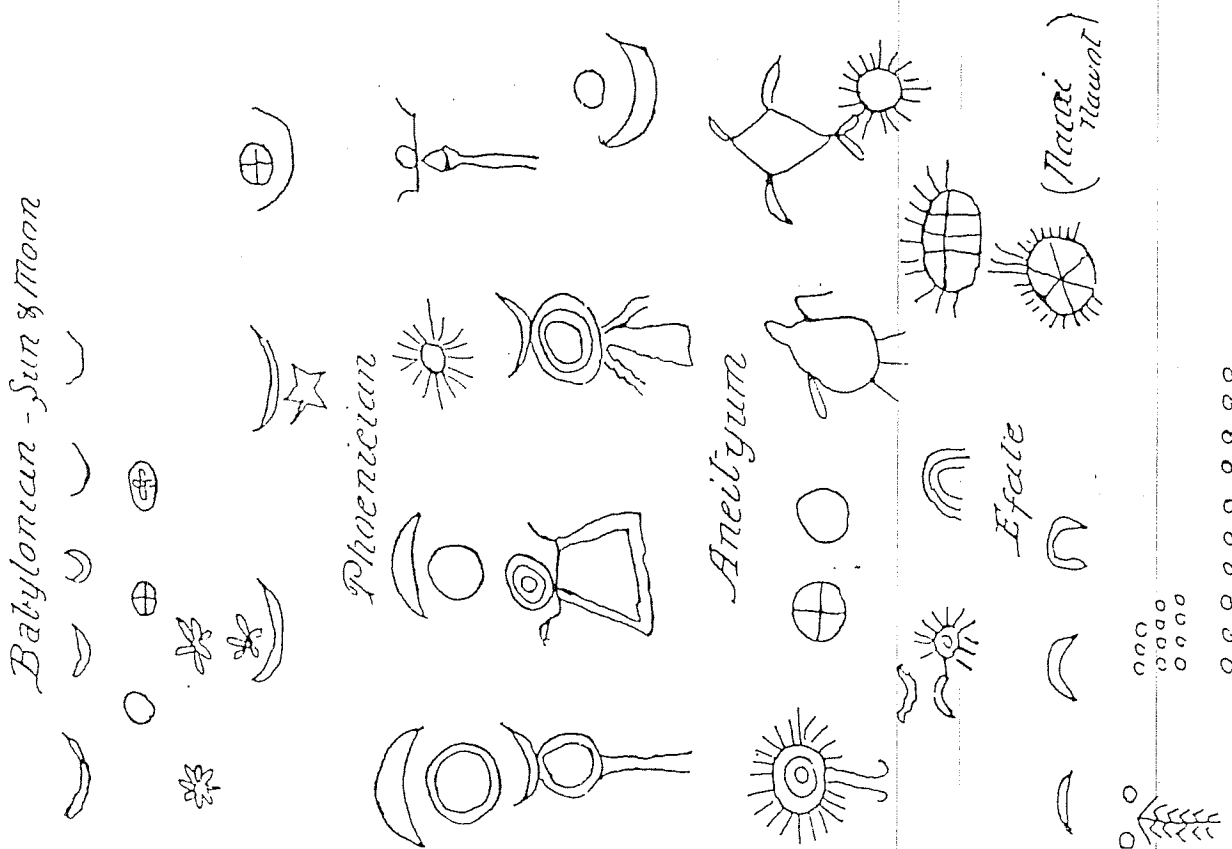
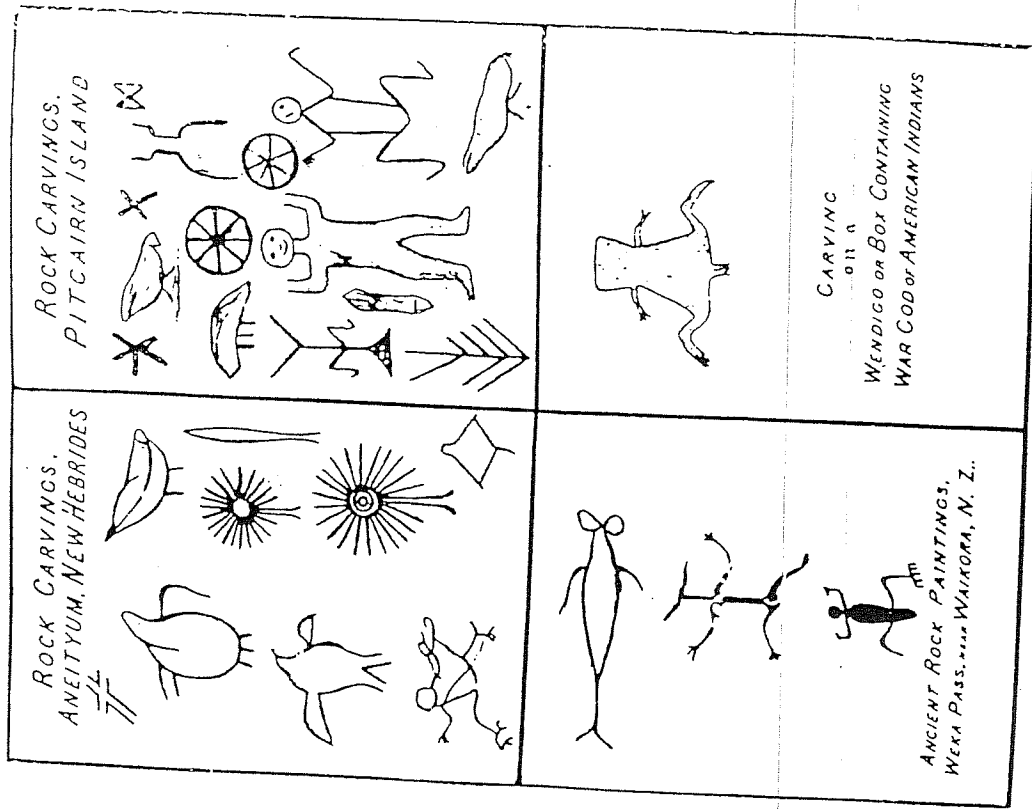


Figure 2. Drawings from MacDonald (1913: 35).

Figure 1. Vanuatu and New Caledonia.



COMPARISON OF PRIMITIVE CARVINGS.

Figure 3. Drawings from Gumm (1906b: 17).

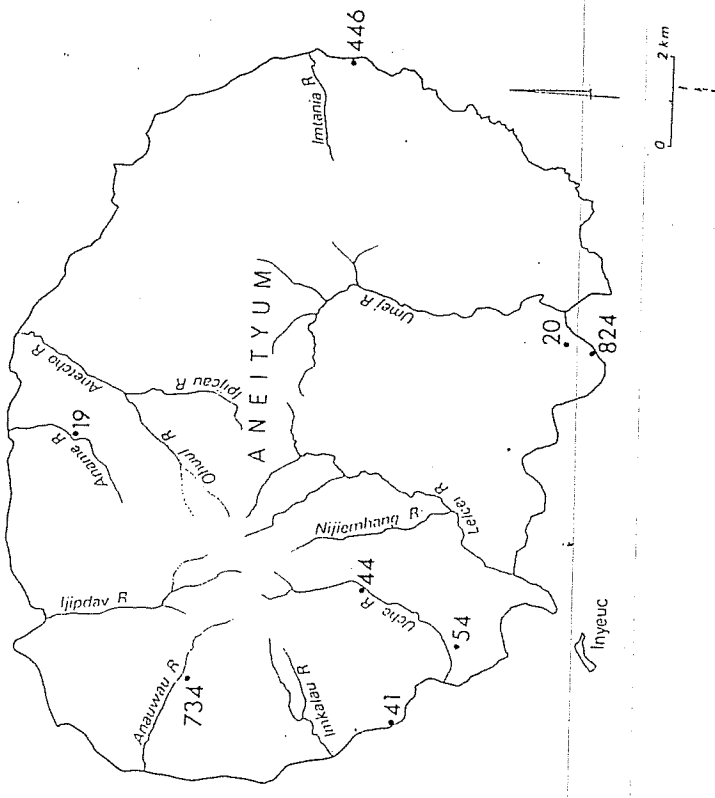


Figure 5. Map of Aneityum showing rock art sites.

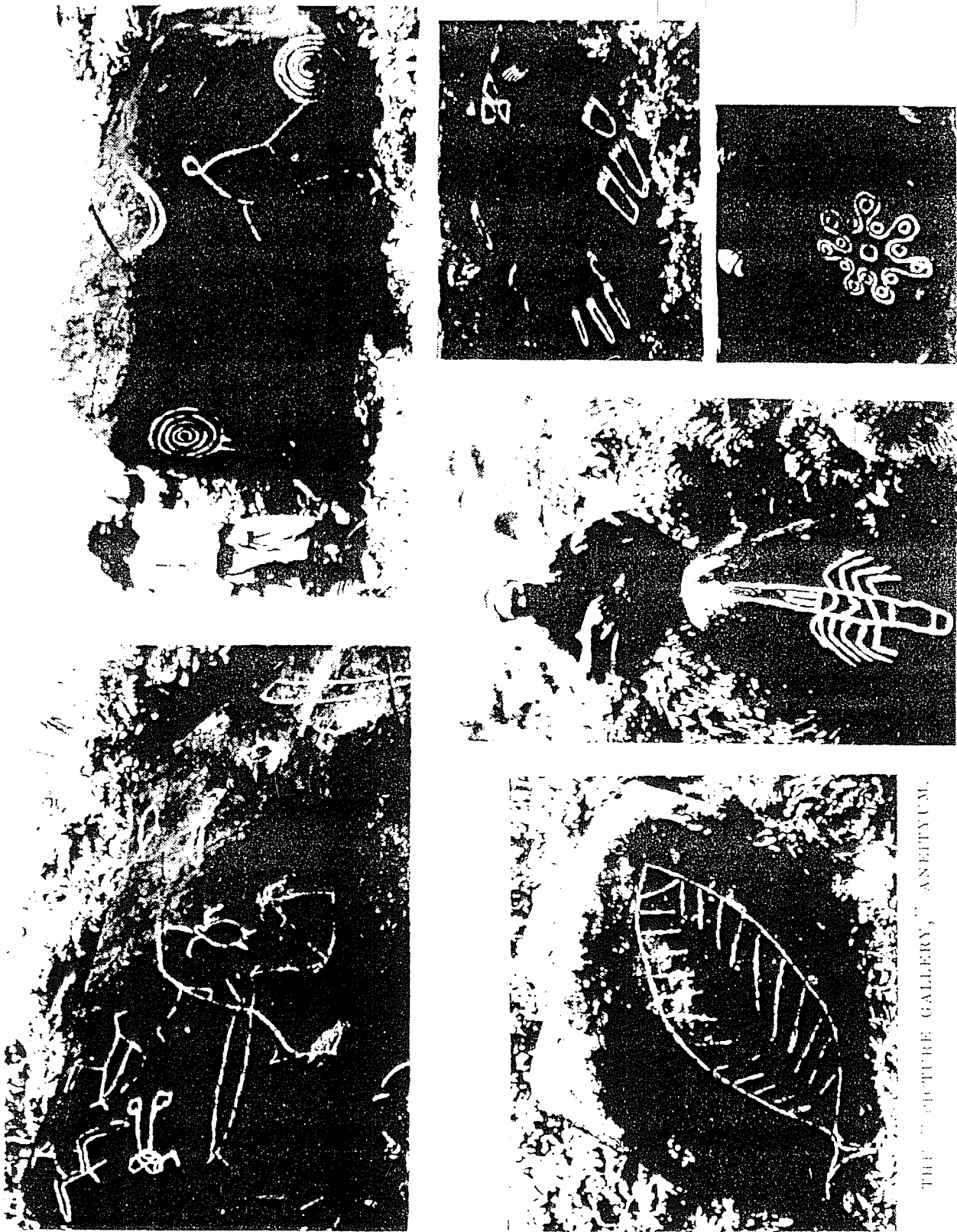


Figure 4. V-20 Petroglyphs (Cannon 1960: 137; photograph by Cannon 1944: 18)

THE "PICTURE GALLERY," ANETHVUM.

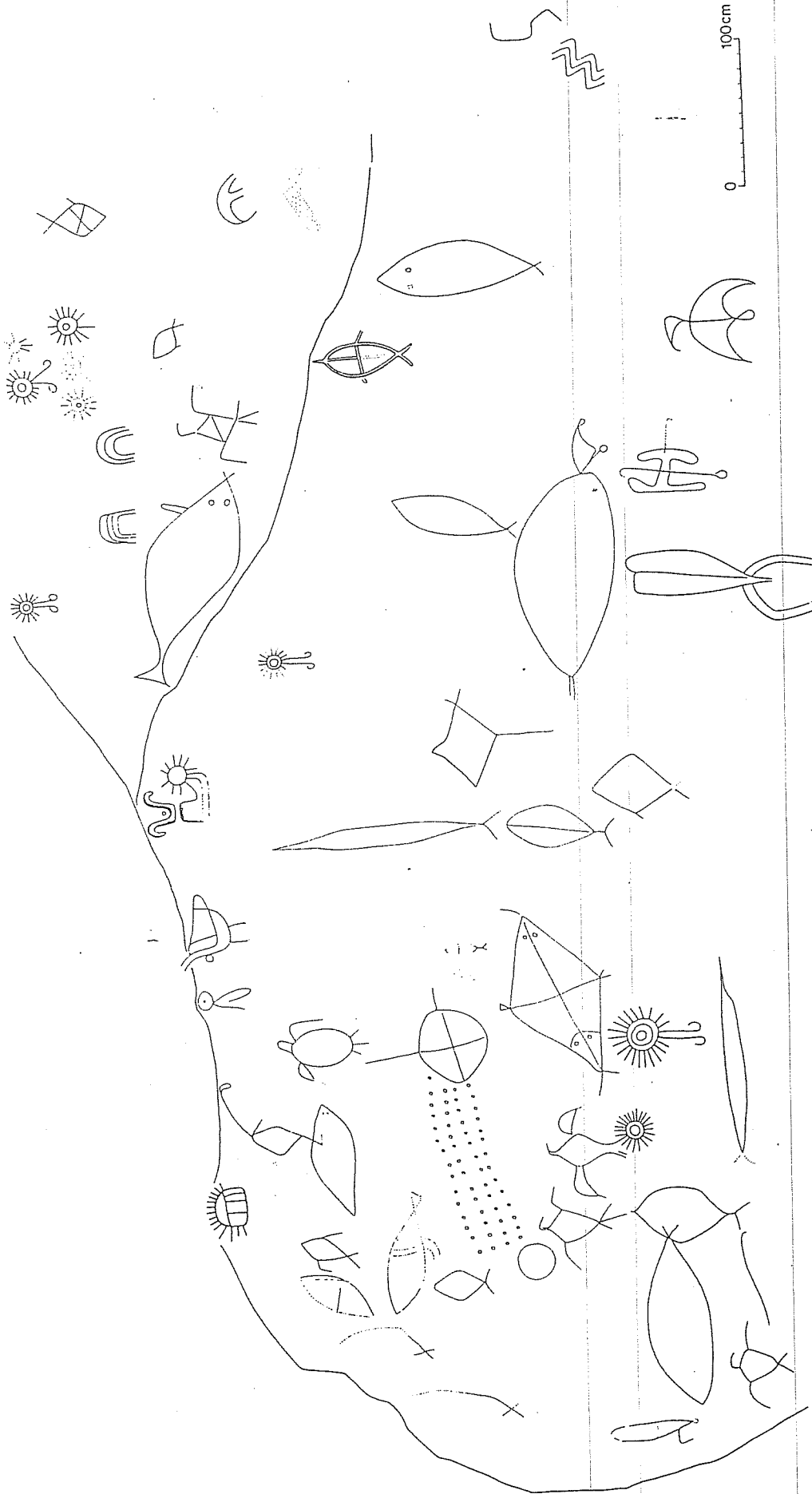


Figure 6. AT19, Naqosga, Ananie area, northern face.

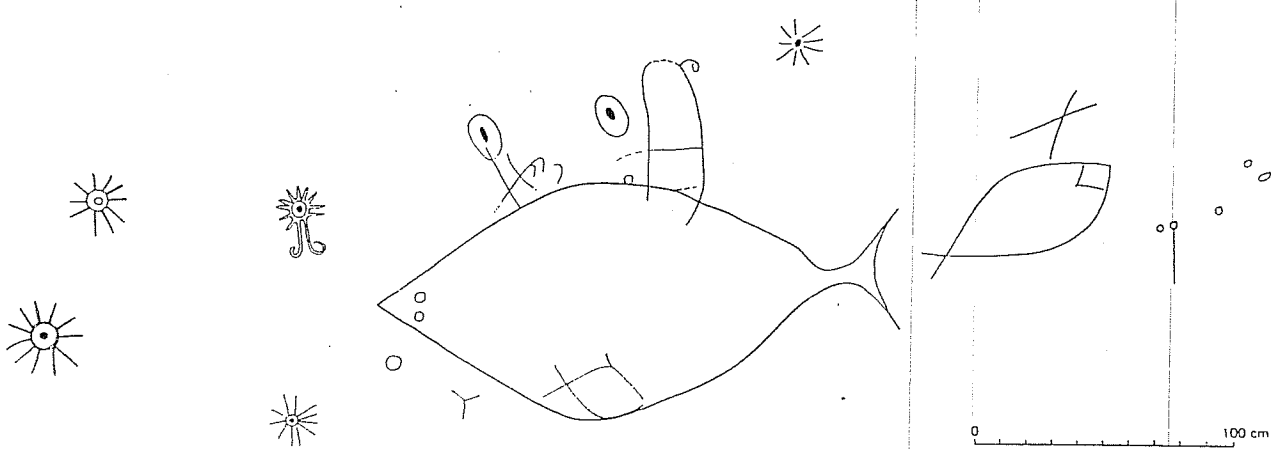
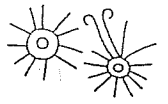


Figure 7. AT19, Nagesga, Aname area, top of boulder.

Figure 8. AT19, Nagesga, Aname area, southern face.

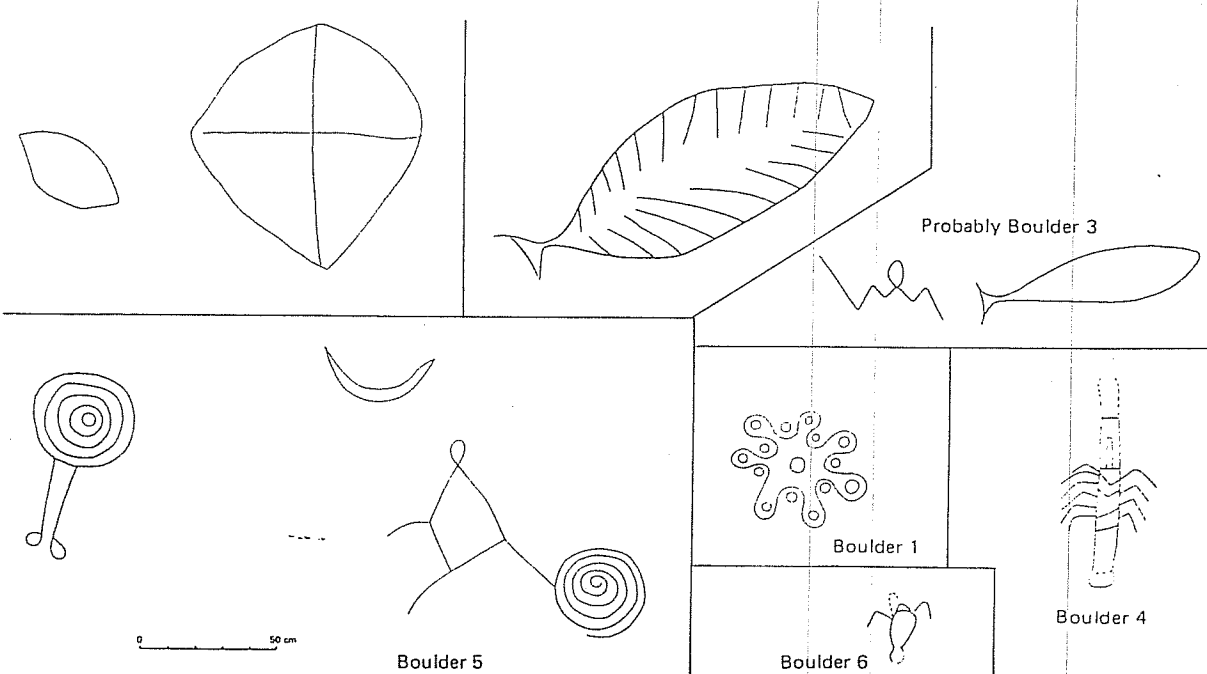
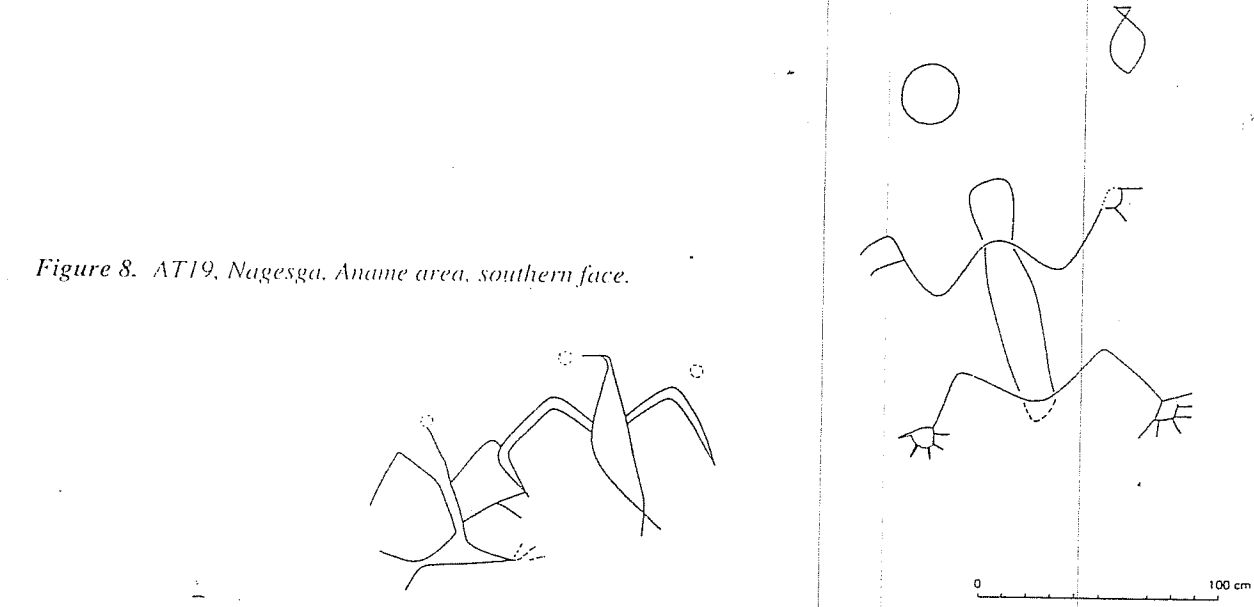


Figure 9. AT20, Uoekkliyu, Ehili area, designs on boulders.

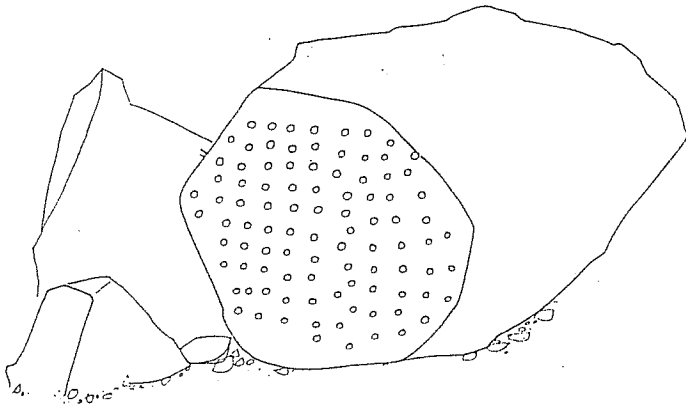
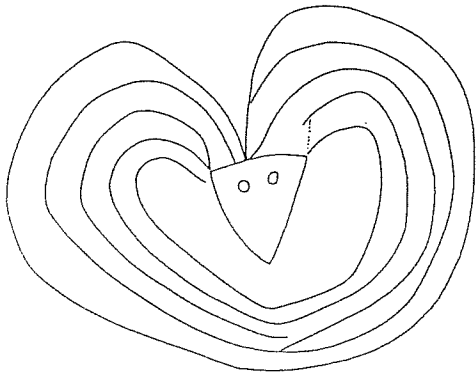


Figure 10. Sketch of AT41, Inwa Raka area.



0 30 cm

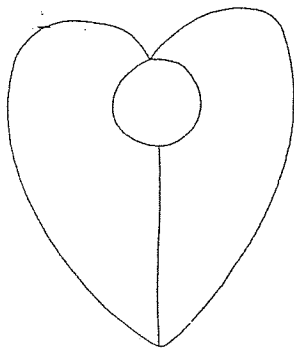


Figure 11. AT44, Anpak area.

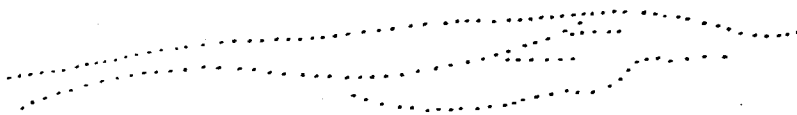


Figure 16. Sketch of AT824, Aneplaedogldogl, Ehili area.

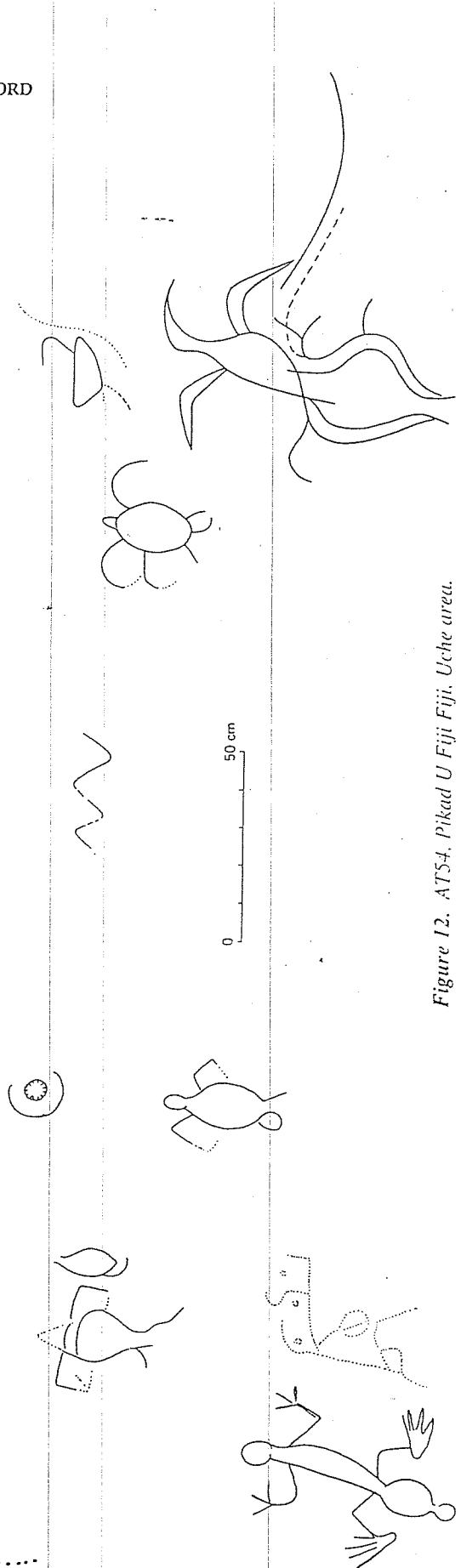


Figure 12. AT54, Pikad U Fiji Fiji, Uche area.

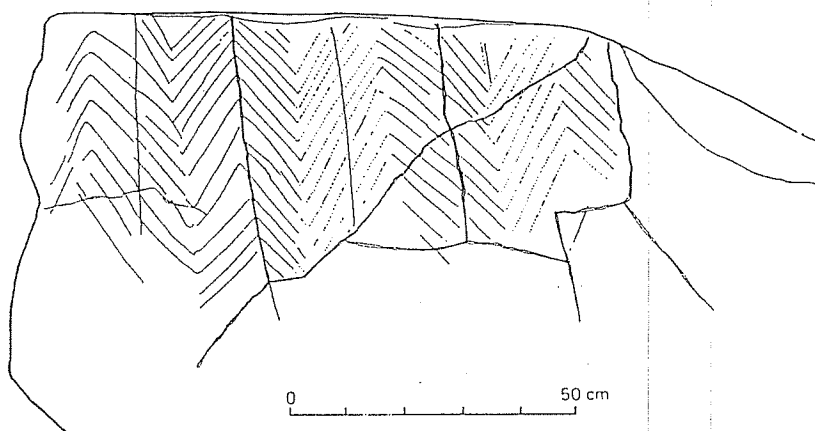


Figure 13. AT446 (Boulder 1), Itunuraitac, Isia area.

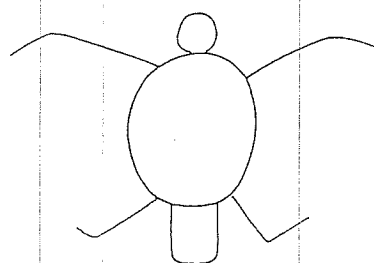
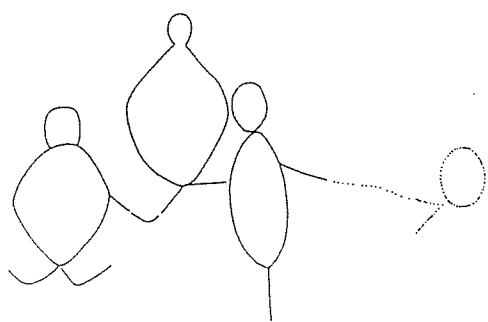


Figure 15. AT734, Uoga, Anauwau area.

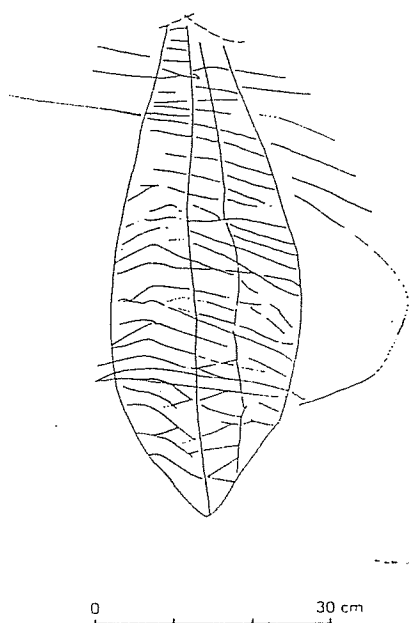


Figure 14. AT446 (Boulder 2), Itunuraitac, Isia area.

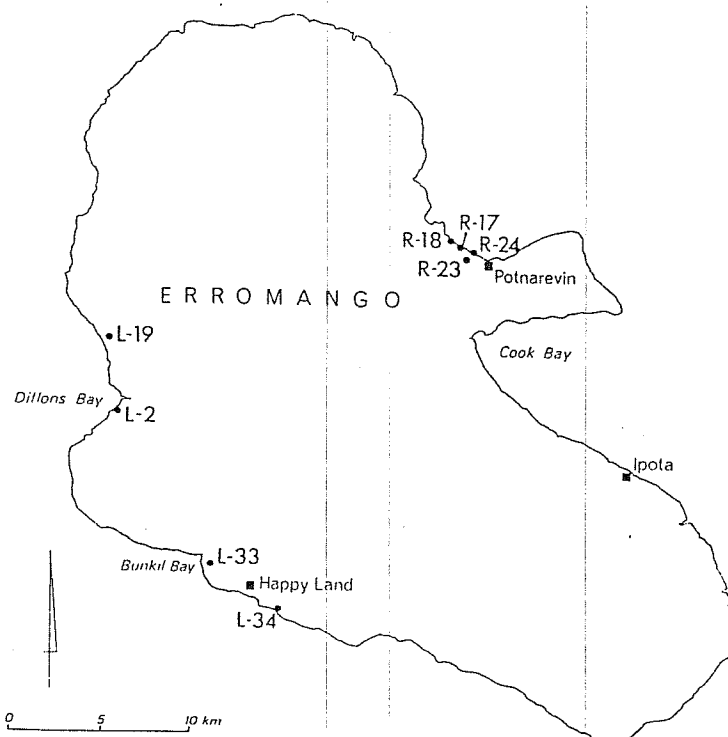


Figure 17. Map of Erromango Island, showing rock art sites.