

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

GERALD WHEELER

Manuscript on the Mono-Alu people of the Solomon Islands

Reel M599

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Gerald Clair William Camden Wheeler (1872-1943) was born in London and educated at St Charles College and the University of London. He had a passion for languages and was fluent in English, French, Portuguese, German and Swedish and competent in eight other languages.

Under the direction of W.H.R. Rivers, he participated in an anthropological expedition to the Solomon Islands in 1908-9. He first worked on Simbo Island and then settled in Alu Island, where he became acquainted with the German anthropologist Richard Thurnwald. In referring to the inhabitants of Alu, he coined the term 'Mono-Alu', as at some time in the nineteenth century Mono people had invaded Alu and killed or expelled the 'old Alu' inhabitants. Wheeler remained on the island for less than a year, but acquired an extraordinary knowledge of the Austronesian Mono-Alu language.

On his return to England, Wheeler published *The tribe and intertribal relations in Australia* (1910), based on his doctoral thesis at the University of London. He taught part-time at the London School of Economics for a number of years, but failed to secure a university position after World War I. He was a friend of Bronislaw Malinowski and collaborated with L.T. Hobhouse and Morris Ginsberg on their comparative study, *The material culture and social institutions of the simpler peoples: an essay in correlation* (1915).

In 1926 Wheeler published *Mono-Alu folklore*, describing 79 myths, stories and songs. For each myth he provided a transcription in the Mono-Alu language and an English translation. At the time of Wheeler's death, his monograph on the 'sociology' of Mono-Alu was unfinished. The School of Oriental and African Studies holds two versions of the draft, one manuscript and the other typed. There are references in the text to several chapters which are now missing, such as 'Genealogy', 'Crafts', 'Cooking', 'Technology', 'Philology' and 'Grammar'.

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School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London MS184245

Gerald Wheeler. Typescript copy on an incomplete and unedited manuscript of the Mono-Alu people of Bougainville Strait, Solomon Islands, with some associated correspondence.

1. Correspondence of George B. Milner (School of Oriental and African Studies), Mrs E. Wheeler (Gerald Wheeler's wife) and the Royal Anthropological Institute concerning the life of Gerald Wheeler, the typing of his manuscript, and the transfer of the manuscript to the School of Oriental and African Studies, 1953-54.
2. Manuscript on the Mono-Alu people (2 boxes)

The manuscript is arranged by subjects, some of which have subdivisions. There are title pages for some additional subjects, but no texts have survived. The bulk of the manuscript is paginated, but there is some duplication of page numbers and the order of folders does not correspond exactly with the pagination. In addition, the glossary and two other folders are paginated differently, while another two folders are unpaginated.

Box 1

Folder

- 1 The plan: manuscript and typescript notes and jottings
- 2 Totemism (pp 435-68)
- 3 Kinship (pp 469-98)
- 4 Death rites (pp 499-565)
- 5 Death rites (unpaginated)
- 6 Eschatology: death; the soul; the life after death (pp 1-36)
- 7 Eschatology: the life after death (pp 37-72)
- 8 Justice; morals; folkways; war, anthropophyteia (pp 566-638)
- 9 Sickness; magic; taboo (pp 639-53)
- 10 Ownership: the Toniga (Thrall) (pp 654-86)
- 11 Ownership in land, trees and other things; inheritance (pp 687-703)
- 12 Ownership: shell money; Kia; Gorau; Pago (pp 704-31)
- 13 Chiefship (pp 750-834)

Box 2

Folder

- 1 Religion: Introduction (pp 1-87)
- 2 Religion: Dudueri (pp 88-184)
- 3 Religion: Soi (pp 185-255)
- 4 Religion: Bego (pp 256-325)
- 5 Religion: Bunosi (pp 326-60)
- 6 Religion: Sisimino, Divo, Kiriaku, Fetunu, Bakuai (pp 361-78)
- 7 Religion: Sakusaku; Ome (pp 379-401)
- 8 Religion: Cosmology, taboo; sundry observations (pp 402-34)
- 9 History (unpaginated)
- 10 External relations (pp 882-904)
- 11 Ritual pastimes: feasting, dancing, music (pp 835-81)
- 12 Ritual pastimes: games (11pp)
- 13 Astronomy, time, numbers, measures (16pp)
- 14 Glossary: Mono-Alu - English

Note: The images appear from right to left on the film, with the title page at the end of the reel.