

CHAPTER ONE

PANA TOTOSO KAME RANE**IN THE TIME OF LONG AGO**

Pace 'classical' anthropological models of later vintage, their chiefdoms were not islands unto themselves. Nor did they suffer from 'closed predicaments', . . . have 'cold' cultures . . . , or occupy the timeless *Lebenswelt* that social scientists would . . . attribute to them by contrast to ourselves . . . Quite the opposite: . . . [they] were caught up in complex regional relations, subtle political and material processes and vital cultural discourses.

Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991: 126
[references in original omitted]

Although the ultimately exploitative character of the global economy can hardly be overlooked, an analysis which makes dominance and extraction central to intersocial exchange from its beginnings will frequently misconstrue power relations which did not, in fact, entail the subordination of native people.

N. Thomas, 1991: 83-84

Totoso Kame Rane—Time of One Day

Kame Rane has many referents, but always implies some time in the past. It refers, first, to a vaguely defined epoch when the ancestors reigned over the Simbo cosmos. As such, its most recent allusion is to the time shortly before pacification, a time which is assumed to have been characterized by the unchanging replication of Simbo's cultural practices. At that time, Simbo had already been in contact with Europeans for at least 125 years and, from a "traditional" anthropological perspective, Simbo society was already transformed. As I explain shortly, that view is not held by Tinoni Simbo. *Kame Rane* also refers to the period when *tamasa* ("gods") shaped the material world (Chapter Two). This period is evoked by verbal stress—*kame rane sosoto* ("truly one day") and is as accurately glossed "once upon a time". (Indeed, it may be substituted by *kame toto*—"one time"). It is not associated with any particular sequence of events. There is no local account of the creation of the world. The ancestors emerged from particular parts of the earth at a time that is ambiguous: while some men can provide written genealogies purporting to reach back to their first lineage ancestor (which implies that the intervening period can be calculated) there is a simultaneous sentiment that these genealogies span eons which are lost in the mists of time. This imprecise interval is

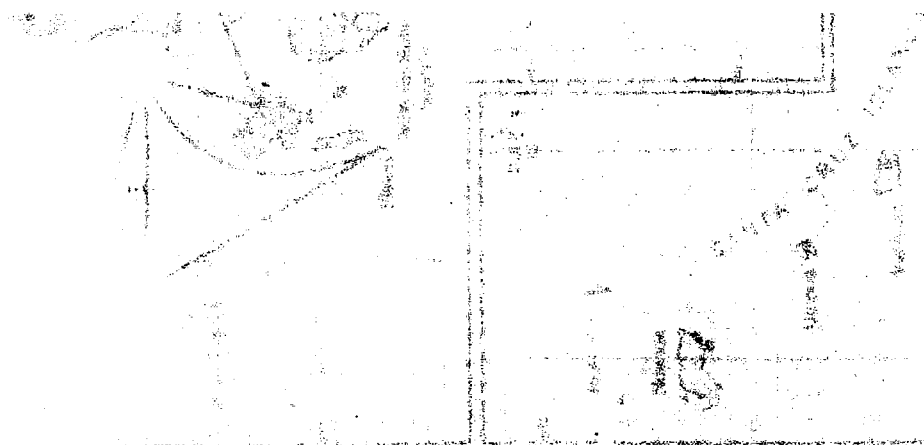
the third sense of *kame rane*—the inestimable period between the generation of the local landscape and the time immediately before pacification.

This rather inchoate concept, acknowledging a vague beginning but declining to posit sequence or social history, suggests both temporality and atemporality and is not entirely unlike structural-functionalist anthropological models of “traditional” society. There is a difference—Tinoni Simbo refer to that timeless past in order to deal with their present realities whereas functionalist anthropology spatializes evolutionary time and places the indigenous present in the European past (Fabian, 1983: 15-17). The resemblance lies in the way that, for functionalists and for Tinoni Simbo, the period immediately preceding contact is the period of greatest concern, the “true” traditional society which must be “salvaged”. But, an intriguing feature of the “traditional” as postulated by Tinoni Simbo is that it unproblematically included Europeans, a point which I consider shortly. There is thus a dissonance between Simbo’s “traditional”-prepacification society and some anthropologists’ “traditional”-precontact society. Yet both, identically, reify cultural practice as “tradition” or “*kastom*”, suggesting the timeless constancy of social practice, evoking stasis and repetition. Yet both depictions also describe a moment on the eve of their respective “revolutions”. It is not that contact and pacification did not change things for ever. But they transformed an already dynamic world.

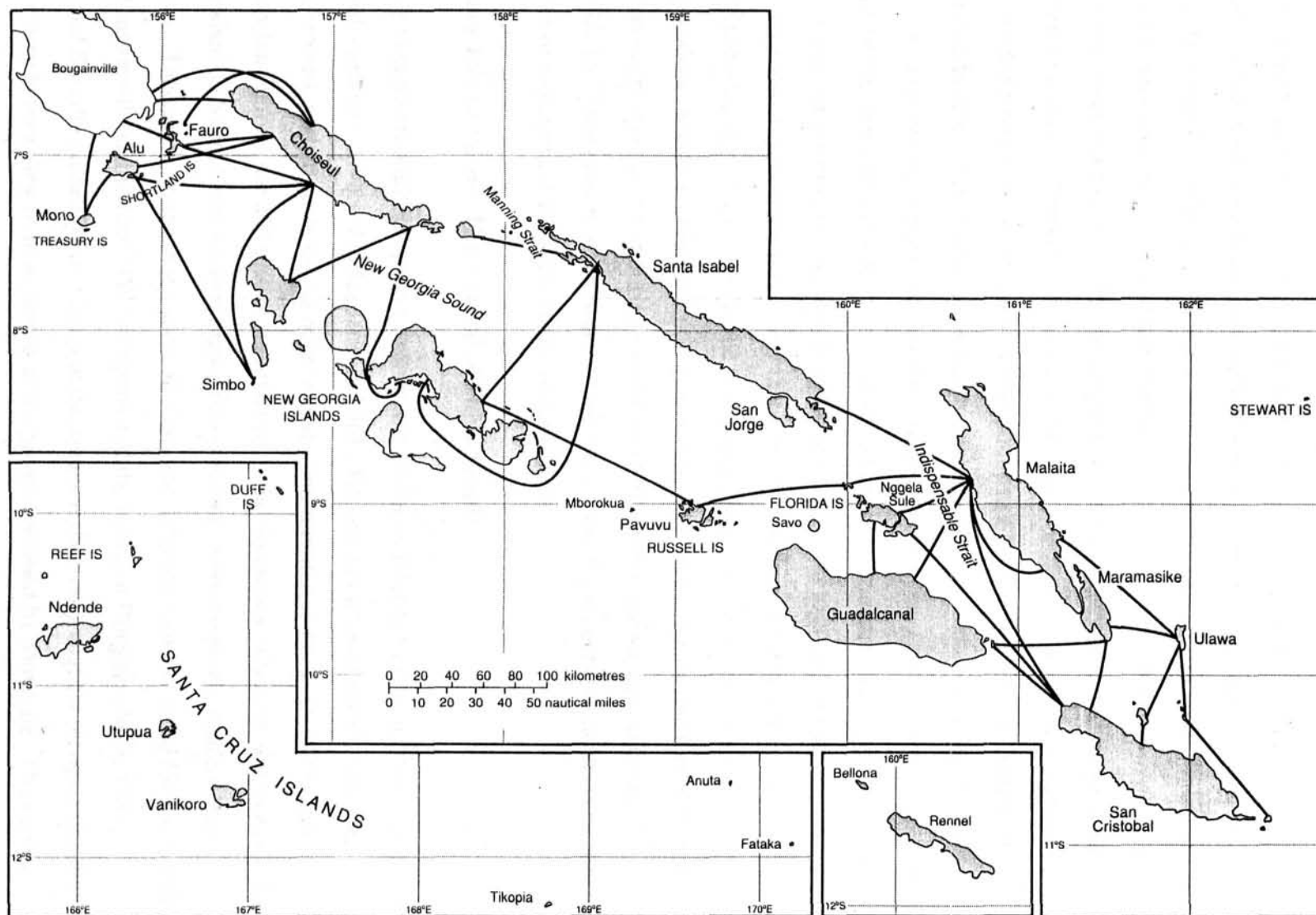
Here I briefly consider the murky *kame rane* of the anthropologist—the time before first contact with Europeans. I then go on to consider the fact that Tinoni Simbo do not regard first contact as a notable event. I then consider, by contrast, Tinoni Simbo’s *kame rane*—the period which stretched from European contact until the eve of pacification by the BSIP.

Very little of New Georgia’s particular long term history is known. Solomon Islands archaeology is in its infancy and poorly funded. The Solomon Islands’ government’s limited funds are largely dedicated to cataloguing and preserving customary sites from the recent past and the region is not a focus of European research efforts either. What we know of the prehistory and linguistic distributions of the Pacific, however, indicates that the area has been characterized by a historical kinesis which contradicts the stasis evoked by the indigenous and anthropological models outlined above (Harding, 1978, cited by Kirch, 1991:160). The evidence suggests protracted long-distance migrations within the Pacific. Settlement of the northern Solomons is currently estimated at between 30,000-40,000 BP (Irwin, 1992: 5; Kirch, 1991:142,146). Such movements suggest outward-orientated, rather than insular, populations. They suggest, further, that even settled populations in target areas were

constrained to interact with immigrant groups. Within New Georgia itself, two Papuan or non-Austronesian language groups (on Vella Lavella and Rendova)¹ persist in the midst of eleven Austronesian language groups (Tryon & Hackman, 1983: 41,47). This evinces a history of migration and population displacement within the group over a sustained period (Irwin, 1992: 174; Reeve, 1987). Such population movements and interactions imply process and change, rather than structure and permanency. The effect of these large-scale migrations and displacements, in facilitating cultural dynamism, was augmented by the existence of long-distance trading networks up to, and succeeding, both contact and pacification (Kirch, 1991: 146, *passim*). The *kula* trade of the Massim area of Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the best known in modern times and the Lapita pottery complex, stretching between Melanesia and South East Asia, probably the most prominent of the ancient trading complexes. However, such networks—involving both chains of contact between near societies and long-range excursions—have been common (Biersack, 1991:13; Irwin, 1992: 9,14). Indeed, if “our knowledge of the prehistory of Melanesian exchange teaches us anything, it is that the ethnographically documented patterns are but the latest episodes in continually changing configurations” (Kirch, 1991: 158). Within the Solomons, there is evidence of a series of trade routes extending throughout the double line of islands from San Cristobal in the southeast to Bougainville in the northwest (Daniel Miller, 1978; Kirch, 1991:153; see Map III), where they presumably articulated with networks extending into the Massim and PNG mainland. While the longevity of this network remains to be established (Reeve, 1987), similar situations of regular, routine interaction were probably a feature of the area for centuries. Along with artifacts, ideas and practices inevitably moved within such trade systems.



MAP III: Ethnographically Recorded Exchange Routes, Solomon Islands. (From Reeve, 1987)



MAP III: Ethnographically Recorded Exchange Routes, Solomon Islands. (From Reeve, 1987)

Cultural history can, in no way, be said to have begun with the arrival of the first European ship in Solomons waters. While there are no records of Simbo sociality before first contact between Islander & European,² a few tentative suggestions may be made. I presume that Tinoni Simbo were already an outwardly-oriented society who engaged in trade with other islands within New Georgia, that they were therefore receptive to the possibility of novel or innovative artefacts and that social practices—whether or not they appeared to participants as immutable—were sufficiently flexible for people to adapt to new possibilities generated from within or without. Simbo's role as a central node in trading networks may perhaps have had an extended history before contact. Kirch, points to a long-term regional "pattern of specialist middle-men traders situated in highly central positions within networks" (1991: 145,156). As a necessary concomitant of their trading situation they must have been capable of manufacturing and operating deep-sea canoes, which in turn implies the presence of stone adzes and other equipment necessary to felling trees, hollowing logs and carving canoes and paddles. This also suggests the possibility that warfare was directed outward as it was during recorded Simbo history. Little else can be speculated about the prevailing social structures, cultural practices, material culture or polity of so long ago. What we do know of Simbo at first contact suggests only the enduring mutability of its society and its non-isolation. That, as Wolf (1982: 13-23) argues, is a necessary premise if we are to comprehend the developments consequent to engagement with an expansive capitalism.

Na Kinamu Tinoni Vaka—The Arrival of Ships People

According to conventional European histories, the Solomon Islands were first "discovered" by the Spanish explorer, Alvaro de Mendana, in 1568. He landed on Santa Isabel, remained about six months, visited some of the other islands, and returned to Peru. In 1595, after ceaselessly haranguing the authorities, he returned to the Solomons, where he and most of his party perished on Santa Cruz, leaving only a few survivors who eventually reached the Philippines. Thereafter, so the story goes, all European-Islander contact ceased for about 200 years. Bougainville sighted the NW Solomons and the island of Bougainville in 1768, Casteret and Surville passed by in 1769, but the area was then only vaguely recognized and it was some time before they were accepted as the group described by Mendana. The earliest direct contact between Europeans and New Georgians that I have been able to trace occurred on 6 August, 1788 when Lieutenant Shortland, Agent of the First Fleet, was returning to England, via Batavia, from the establishment of European settlement in Australia at Botany

Bay. The point of contact was offshore from Simbo. I reproduce this "first" contact story in full as Appendix I. Appendix II presents a second contact story—the Simbo account, as collected by Hocart in 1908. When I worked on the island, this story was unknown and I was not able to record any alternative version of these events.

Contact is usually regarded by observers as a momentous event to indigenous people, if not to the more cosmopolitan Europeans. The supernatural is typically evoked to account for their perceptions of foreigners (see Obeyesekere, 1992: 631-632). Thus, Schieffelin (1991: 3) notes of the recent contact with Highlands Papuans that "the arrival of the first outsiders is usually recalled as an exciting but deeply unsettling event of apparently cosmological import". Bennett (1987: 22) surmises that

[t]he Solomon Islanders tried to fit the ships and their company into their own cosmology. Because many societies disposed of their dead in the sea, it was the home of ghosts. Great vessels with white flapping sails of white-skinned crew could only be ghosts' ships. Were these new ancestors bringing rewards or retribution?

I do not dispute that contact may be an astounding event—the accounts of "people you see in a dream" in Schieffelin and Crittenden's (1991) volume, among many others, confirm as much. But something different seems to have occurred in at least parts of the Solomons.

White notes, of Mendana's contact with Santa Isabel on his first voyage, that

[t]he local attitude toward the newcomers was a bold one. Mendana commented that several men remained on board and urged him to choose the port in his district. The Spaniards were not only initially welcomed, they were briefly incorporated into existing networks of chiefly alliance and rivalry. (1991: 84, citing and quoting Amherst & Thomson, 1901)

This sequence appears remarkably similar to the Simbo response to Shortland in 1788, in which canoes came alongside the ship and solicited its approach:

At the same time they appeared extremely desirous that our people should anchor on the coast, and go ashore with them; and, by way of enticement, held up the rind of an orange or lemon, the feathers of tame fowls, and other things, signifying that they might be procured on shore. (Appendix I)

This response was unambiguously interpreted by the seafarers as a hospitable "invitation" and only regretfully declined.

Three explanations for the Islander's aplomb suggest themselves: that, following Bennett, they were on remarkably good terms with the ancestors and confident about such a millennial event as their apparent return; that, as peoples engaged in long-distance networks of relations with outsiders, they were not as overwhelmed at the arrival of strangers as European notions of indigenous insularity might suggest; finally, that they already had some awareness of Europeans.

The first of these possibilities is speculative. The second is not. If Tinoni Simbo, in 1788, may conceivably have had an inkling of Europeans, Santa Isabel people could have had

none in 1568. Yet, despite their clear readiness to defend themselves, they clambered aboard the Spanish vessels and tried to induce them ashore. I would suggest that they recognized the situation for what it was—the arrival of a vessel crewed by human beings—and followed local cultural “protocols for transcultural sociality” (Biersack, 1991: 13-14). The ships and people were perhaps “different” to those with which they were familiar, but they were hardly inconceivable. Bennett posits two particular features as indexing the supernatural—the sails and the colour of the visitor’s skins. Sails, however, were hardly unique to Europeans. Irwin (1992: 7-9; 44) places them on the prehistoric canoes that colonized the Pacific. Further, skin colour was not necessarily as meaningful to indigenous peoples as it was to Europeans. The peoples of New Georgia may be very dark, but they were undoubtedly aware of lighter-skinned peoples on Guadalcanal and Vella Lavella against and with whom they raided or traded. The colour of Europeans, tanned after many months at sea, need hardly seem momentous. Europeans are referred to throughout the area as “Ship People” (*tinoni vaka*, on Simbo; *tie vaka* on Roviana; *mae vaka* on Santa Isabel), *not* as “White People”. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that the ancestors in this region were conceptualized as white or colourless, as they were in some Papuan societies. It is Europeans who have had problems with colour. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw the controversies about abolitionism and, slightly later, evolutionism in Britain. If Darwin had not yet published the *Origin*, there was nonetheless fervent debate about the degree of humanity to be found in “savages”, the possibility of genetic relationship to them and the extent to which they might be “raised” to the level of Europeans. Darwin’s tortured self-reflection on these issues was echoed and amplified in contemporary debate and political unrest (Desmond & Moore: 1991: 221-222, *passim*). The attribution, to Islanders, of feelings of awe or assumptions of Caucasian godhead is perhaps more reflective of a presumption of superiority on the part of Europeans.

In 1568 and 1788, the peoples of Santa Isabel and Simbo seem to have behaved towards Europeans as they would towards other foreigners: they approached their vessels armed and ready to defend themselves or, certainly in the latter case, to exchange. Thus,

in this situation they willingly exchanged a kind of rings [*sic*] which they wore on their arms, small rings of bone, and beads of their own manufacture, for nails, beads, and other trifles, giving however a manifest preference to whatever was made of iron. Gimlets were most acceptable, but they were also pleased with nails, and pieces of iron hoops. They dealt very fairly, not betraying the least desire to steal or defraud. (Appendix I)

This passage suggests that Tinoni Simbo had knowledge of Europeans before this “first contact”. Unless the utility of metal is conspicuous at its very first sighting (see next section),

their "manifest preference" for iron implies prior familiarity. Bennett (1987: 23) notes this logic and passingly alludes to prior knowledge from "drift wreckage or from the islands' communication network reporting on [the few early] explorers". Perhaps this is, indeed, what happened. Another possibility suggests itself. Jack-Hinton (1969), the definitive volume on the "discovery" of the Solomon Islands, makes much of the repeated proximity of European explorers and traders to the Islands without their ever recognizing the fact. Although in the late seventeenth century, the Solomons were increasingly reputed to be contiguous with the Marquesas, "[i]n fact the Solomons are laid down [on maps] . . . immediately to the East of New Guinea with individual island names . . . but with the denial that these are the Islands of Solomon" (Jack-Hinton, 1969: 227-229).

There is a strong sense that their continued ignorance of the group means that the Solomons were "undiscovered" and therefore unengaged or unactivated. Comaroff & Comaroff (1991: 89-97) attest to the necessity of cataloguing, mapping and naming to the colonial quests of demarcation, possession and administration in Africa. This also occurred in the Solomons. It is now something of a truism, counterpointing dialogue about Europeans "discovering" the world, that indigenous people had already discovered their own lands. That is not the point here. I am suggesting that European vessels may have been far more prevalent within Solomons waters than the Europeans, themselves, recognized. Throughout the seventeenth century, Dutch traders passed to and from Batavia and from the late seventeenth century, buccaneers, such as Dampier, were active in the area (Jack-Hinton, 1969: 236) and the French had also extended their explorations in this direction. Not all ships' logs or journals are preserved; many of those that are contain sparse details on contact with indigenous peoples. It is therefore possible that ships had sporadically, without recognition, passed through the, as yet, unnamed Solomons. If I can appropriate the language of "discovery" of a region through recognition and naming, perhaps Solomon Islanders had "discovered" Europeans and their things long before they themselves were "discovered". This is outrageously conjectural, but the common assumption that a place and a people remain ignorant of the world, until Europeans proclaim that they have made contact, is objectionably arrogant.

This brings me to the contact story gathered by Hocart and my own non-recording of such an account. Bennett (1987: 22) uncritically replicates Hocart's account of Simbo first contact (Appendix II) as a factual record to support her generalized depiction of the event throughout the Solomons. Hocart's account of first contact both reinforces and counterpoints

the written account of Shortland's encounter. In both versions, it is Tinoni Simbo who proffer items of food. In Shortland's account, they overtly seek to exchange; in Hocart's it is first a gift of food which is offered—a green coconut, symbol of nurturance and friendship³—whereupon the foreigners displayed a willingness to exchange. The second clear similarity is the privileging of iron as an object of Simbo desires. When I repeated this account in 1991, listeners almost uniformly responded—"Of course! Because it was good for warfare". But this desire is arguably more complicated than that (see below).

The differences between the two accounts are marked. Particularly striking is the attribution of passivity and activity. In Shortland's account, the English wake up one morning with the island to one side and are actively approached by Tinoni Simbo, who extend their efforts to entice the visitors ashore. In the other, bemused Tinoni Simbo see the ship far away, but wait for it to approach them; it comes into the harbour unsolicited. Related to this is the demeanour of Tinoni Simbo (in both accounts that of the English is invisible). Shortland's numerous indigenes are self-confident and unafraid. While they refuse to board the ship, they are happily towed alongside and volubly express their own desires. In Hocart's version, a single man tremblingly goes aboard, verbalizing his fear and eventually assuaging those of his fellows. In Shortland's account, the bestowal of European names is prominent: "Two Brothers", "Cape Satisfaction", "Eddystone", "Indian Bay" and "Cape Middleton" are all applied to an island of about four square miles, despite their clear understanding that it was locally known as "Simboo".⁴ Despite the naming, however, Tinoni Simbo appear indifferent to the Europeans' interest. Unaware of their categorization, they do not regard themselves as possessed. No such labelling occurs in the Hocart version, but it suggests precisely the containment which the Europeans had previously presumed to be their own domain.

Consider the context in which Hocart collected his account. Simbo was a newly "pacified" society—only seven years previously the new BSIP had eliminated local warfare. Simbo had moved from being a producer of tortoiseshell and *beche-le-mer* to being a supplier of copra. It is significant that the name of the man who first boarded the British vessel is Paragusura, meaning "burn coconut", which evokes images of copra manufacture over an open fire. That name, his timidity, Simbo passivity are not so much an evocation of contact as a reflective of the state of perceived Euro-indigenous relations after domination had been clearly established (see Chapter Three). The concluding remarks about the expectation that Europeans must be benign in their dealings with Tinoni Simbo is not only a justification for what had long been Simbo's position as brokers between locals and foreigners (see below). It

is equally an expression of the dismay, or a sense of betrayal, experienced by Tinoni Simbo when their "friends" turned violent in "pacifying" them.

Totoso Vaka—Time of Ships

Hocart's account is as much a story about understandings in 1908 as it is about events of 1788. I would suggest that this story was unfamiliar to Tinoni Simbo in 1991 because it no longer played on relevant themes. Today, the significant "contact story" concerns the descent of Christianity (Appendix III). This still leaves the question of why there is *no* contemporary first contact story. The answer lies partially in deconstructing European ideas about indigenous views of contact with them. The period we are talking about predates the Papuan contact, related by Schieffelin and Crittendon (1991), by at least a century and a half. This also might contribute to an explanation. It is more than just time and faded memories, however. The lack of a current first contact account is primarily, I suggest, because Europeans are part of the taken-for-granted Simbo world. Europeans were perhaps part of that world before they even realized that they were in the Solomons. European have exchanged a succession of trade goods over 200 years; they have lived on Simbo or arrived regularly to collect their cargoes; they eventually dominated Tinoni Simbo militarily and then arrived as missionaries, administrators, anthropologists, aid and development workers, tourists on yachts . . . European faces peer from magazines, their mythologies are replete in the pages of the popular westerns, their songs radiate from radios and cassettes. Simbo is not "western", but, nor is it, in any way, a "post-contact society".

In the remainder of this section, I trace the brief history of early Simbo-European contact and exchange relations from about the time of Shortland to the beginning of the copra trade. Since their first tenuous contacts, the peoples of New Georgia have had steadily growing involvement with Europeans. As Jackson (1978: 57-61) makes clear, it was Simbo that was initially most comprehensively involved in exchange with passing whalers and traders.⁵ In what follows, I rely largely on Bennett's (1987) & Jackson's (1978) accounts of this history. Unlike them, however, I am not primarily concerned with broad historical processes, nor with the economic history of the area, which they have ably documented, so much as with shifts in relationships and ideas as people appropriated, and/or reacted to, their own interpretations of several exotic forces, such as traders, missionaries and administrators.

Economic imperatives clearly motivated the European presence right up to the arrival of the Methodist Mission—which was itself, inextricably enmeshed in European-indigenous

economic relationships. The earliest visitors were possibly those buccaneers or explorers, mentioned earlier, who were uncertain of their precise location or their ultimate destination. The buccaneers gradually gave way to officially sanctioned explorers, who Jack-Hinton (1969) depicts as rather tentative wanderers in the region between the late-sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth century. Cook's journeys were only the culmination of that era. These callers seem to have been little interested in immediate enrichment through trade with indigenous peoples. Rather they anticipated victualling their ships through exchanges with indigenes. Tinoni Simbo, as portrayed in Shortland's account, recognized this, given that it was only food that they carried out to offer the vessel. From the establishment of Botany Bay, a further shift occurred, as explorers were supplanted by convict transports and provisioning vessels. Although most journeys proceeded via the Cape of Good Hope, returning vessels were often constrained by prevailing winds to return to Europe via Batavia. These frequently passed through the Solomons. At this point, Europeans were still concerned with acquiring ~~some~~ provisions and sometimes "primitive artifacts". In 1803, Mrs William Kent, aboard the ship "*Buffalo*" records the purchase of such items at Simbo (Kent Family Papers, 1803: 28/6/1803-29/6/1803). In the early nineteenth century, whalers also began traversing Solomons waters and, by mid-century, were regular visitors. ~~for~~ ~~local attack~~ Finally,

It was in this period that trade became established, although it remained episodic. But the whalers were primarily pursuing the resources of the oceans. From local people they were interested in obtaining food, water, rest and shelter. The whalers persisted until 1860 but, before they declined, a new European presence began to make itself felt. From about 1840, the number of passing traders who sought local natural products increased. This transition from whalers to traders was completed by 1870 (Bennett, 1987: 20-21; 46). Like their ~~new~~ predecessors, traders sought reliable supplies of water, food and shelter but their major ~~were~~ purpose was the extraction of tortoiseshell, pearlshell and *beche-le-mer* for European consumption, trade with China or exchange for desired products elsewhere in the South Pacific. Solomons tortoiseshell was traded on Tanna (Vanuatu) for pigs, which were exchanged on Santo (Vanuatu) for sandalwood, which was traded in China for tea for ~~European~~ consumption, for example (Shineberg, 1967: 156-157). On Simbo, it was ~~groups~~, tortoiseshell and *beche-le-mer* which were initially sought. By mid-century, Europeans were well established. Land alienation began about this time as traders gradually began settling in the area. The object of their attentions also moved gradually: by the 1860s, locally produced coconut oil was being purchased but, once the drying technique was perfected, was quickly

superseded by copra (Bennett, 1987: 47). From that time (around 1880) to the present, copra has been the major New Georgian resource sought by foreigners.⁶

So much for European trading interest in New Georgia. I will now sketch Simbo's history of involvement with Europeans and the way this articulated with regional networks, before considering the indigenous significance of European artefacts.

In the Western Solomons, the need for reliable supply of water, food, safe anchorage and/or cargo structured initial European dealings with New Georgians and resulted in the slow strengthening of ties to particular places which were considered safe. Simbo became one of those places, for a time the premier point of contact between "West" and West. Why? The topography of the island must have had some part to play in this. Although rugged, it is very small and the population, distributed over four districts around various points of the island, was correspondingly so, a characteristic which European voyagers favoured as leaving them relatively free from attack by rival groups (Bennett, 1987: 26-27). It also has a distinctive profile from the sea, a distinctiveness matched, in the region, only by the massive crater of the dark, densely wooded and furrowed Kolombangara. Not only was it readily identifiable, with a manageable population, but Simbo has a well-sheltered harbour on the western coast where ships could moor close to shore without danger from either weather or local attack.⁷ Finally, there is plentiful clean, fresh spring water which is reached over easy terrain within a few hundred metres of the harbour.⁸ No other island had the same combination of desirable geographic features. While the coastal areas of New Georgia Island offered ample food and water, for example, the extensive reefs there made shipping extremely dangerous in bad weather or in situations of forced retreat following local confrontations. Such factors were presumably vital while ever major contact was via transient shipping. By the time settlement became more permanent, concerns such as safe anchorages and recognizable topography were of significantly less relevance and issues such as geographical centrality were of more importance.

But geographic or geological fortuity are merely one factor and cannot explain the cordiality which pertained between Tinoni Simbo and Europeans. For some reason, Tinoni Simbo came to be seen as more reliable and less threatening to Europeans than other groups, as Cheyne's account reveals (Shineberg, 1971b: 303-305).⁹ Similarly, Tinoni Simbo must have regarded connexion with Europeans as desirable. European accounts of contact with Solomon Islanders in general are, from the time of Mendana (Amherst and Thomson, 1901; Graves, 1989)¹⁰ to well into the twentieth century (e.g. WPHC, 1931:5; Knibbs, 1929;

Luxton, 1955), laced with references to their alleged fierceness, brutality and duplicity. There are no records of early Solomon Islander evaluations of Europeans, but something of the nature of their reactions may be surmised from the ethnocentric records and accounts of the Europeans themselves. Such representations both justified, and presumably stimulated, often chillingly violent European reprisals or pre-emptive attacks, actions which, as Jackson (1978: 93-95) points out, were frequently both highly irrational from the perspectives of those who suffered them, and contrary to recognized European standards of justice and law at the time. From the almost hysterical brutality of Mendana's harried party in 1595 to the delayed and erratically directed reprisals meted out by Royal Navy gunboats in the 1890s (Graves, 1989; Jackson, 1978: 98-103; *pace* Hogbin, 1969: 7), indigenous experiences of European character must have been of beings at least as duplicitous as they themselves were reputed to be by Europeans. (Shineberg, 1971b: 303-305) He also noted that there were no problems in

How it was that the two sides came to establish mutually beneficial relations is unclear. The needs of transient ships meant that harmonious relations with key local groups were necessary and this imposed requirements of tolerance and acceptance on the part of the foreigners. Not merely tolerance, but some adaptation to local mores and custom (Shineberg, 1967: 163-175) underlay the relatively agreeable relations between passing traders and indigenes in the pre-settlement period. But this does not explain the cessation of hostilities by Solomon Islanders. Given, however, that their violence against Europeans often occurred in response to aggression it might be that the amelioration of European animosity was sufficient to allay that of indigenous peoples in those places which developed provisioning and trading roles, thus allowing them opportunity to assess the possibilities for trade and strategic alliances with foreigners. What indigenes made of visitors and their artifacts was determined by their own prevailing cultural and political realities (Thomas, 1991: 83-124).

This can only be speculative history. What is certain is that New Georgians, given the opportunity, eagerly entered into material relations with Europeans and adopted a range of exotic artifacts, objects which rapidly became entangled in webs of local meanings, values and relationships (Thomas, 1991). Mrs William Kent's journal makes note of the ship "Buffalo's" trade at Simbo in 1803, commenting, like Shortland, on the preference for metal objects in trade. She also remarks upon Tinoni Simbo's enthusiasm for trade and their irreverence towards the ship people (Kent Family Papers, 1803). In the same year, the captain of the "Patterson" noted their familiarity with "hatchets, gimlets, knives, etc." and their preference for those items (PMB 770: 15/12/1803). Just as the foreigners sought objects

which had meaning in the European context, so, too, New Georgians, in acquiring foreign goods, attached their own meanings and significance to the objects. Thus, of the many potential uses of iron bars, New Georgians used them, first and foremost, in pursuit of the cultural goals embedded in headhunting. It is significant that the Scottish trader, Andrew Cheyne did not set his blacksmith to work making horticultural or household implements on the beach at Simbo: "I had brought this man from China purposely to make tomahawks. . . [for the] natives of New Georgia . . . would not part with it [tortoiseshell] unless for tomahawks" (Shineberg, 1971b: 305). Likewise, the trade in *beche-le-mer* was dominated by "tomahawks and other items of trade" (1971b: 306).¹¹ ~~Europeans was pivotal (see map IV).~~

When Cheyne visited in 1843, he found three Englishmen already living on the island and that Simbo had assumed the role of mediator between Europeans and other New Georgian groups (Shineberg, 1971b: 303-305). He also noted that there were no problems in communicating because nearly all the people spoke "broken English" (Corris, 1973: 9). Up until this time, there was little permanent white settlement in the islands. Contact between whalers and sandalwood traders and local peoples was episodic. This marks the period in which the island reached its peak as an *entrepot*. Simbo was not only political mediator between transient European and settled New Georgia peoples. It was also a major site of economic articulation. The island was the centre of a local trade and spoils network extending throughout the West, acting as a funnel for the local produce sought by Europeans (Bennett, 1987: 27) and for the distribution of European artefacts. Although the extent to which this developed in association with the growth in trade with Europeans is unclear, it undoubtedly existed prior to initial contact, as evidenced by indigenous trade routes running the length of the Solomons chain as far north as Buka (Map III; Reeve, 1987). It was, however, unquestionably stimulated by the expansion of headhunting that followed the introduction of metal implements, which particularly promoted the manufacture of *maza*, the long-handled headhunting axe of the West.¹² Through trade relations with traditional allies and snatching of booty from enemies, Tinoni Simbo were able to accumulate much of the cargo sought by passing traders and whalers in exchange for the European goods demanded by the West. Much of the tortoiseshell sold from Simbo had, for example, been acquired throughout the West by trade and war. Blue *tapa*¹³ purchased in Roviana or looted from Santa Isabel¹⁴ might be exchanged for taro on Vella Lavella, taro ultimately exchanged for tortoiseshell from long term allies from Roviana Lagoon who might, in turn, have purchased or seized it from other regions of New Georgia Island. Alternatively, axe-heads acquired from Europeans might be

exchanged for tortoiseshell for further trade with Europeans or for clamshell money (*poata* or *bakia*) on Roviana.¹⁵

Cheyne complained of the power of Tinoni Simbo in acquiring the now much-desired muskets. What he perhaps did not realize, given that he justified trading muskets with them because he thought that they were friendly towards Britain, was the extent of integration within the indigenous regional economy. The guns and hatchets exchanged on Simbo and elsewhere inevitably found their way, directly or indirectly, to Roviana, Marovo Lagoon, Bilua and eventually to Ranongga, Santa Isabel, Choiseul, Kolombangara and so on. Thus Simbo, although not alone in its trading relations with Europeans, was pivotal (see Map IV). Guns and axes followed the prevailing routes of trade and warfare, their distribution governed by the salience of local networks in configuring headhunting. The particular nexus of alliance between Simbo, Roviana and Vella, and enmity with Santa Isabel and Choiseul, had much to do with the patterns of nineteenth century warfare in the area. Simbo's initial dominance in European trade contacts, partly facilitated by its prior involvement in local trade and alliance networks (Bennett, 1987: 27), meant that the technological and strategic advantages bestowed by steel within the New Georgia Group were initially monopolized by Simbo, Roviana and Bilua, the three areas which dominated aggressive headhunting. The later shift to Roviana occurred within the same alliance system. The first experience of metal technologies by other areas, then, was as victims. Bennett (1987: 43) points out that the geographical contingency of bush or salt-water location also determined access. The coastal groups in some areas were eventually so well provided with iron goods that they could shift their focus of trade with Europeans onto luxury items while people in the interior might not yet have had any access at all to metal goods. Tobacco was already in demand on Simbo by 1850, for example (1987: 42). The intertwined regional trade and marriage networks ultimately resulted in all areas procuring these items, but the delay was decisive in determining patterns of dominance and victimization.¹⁶

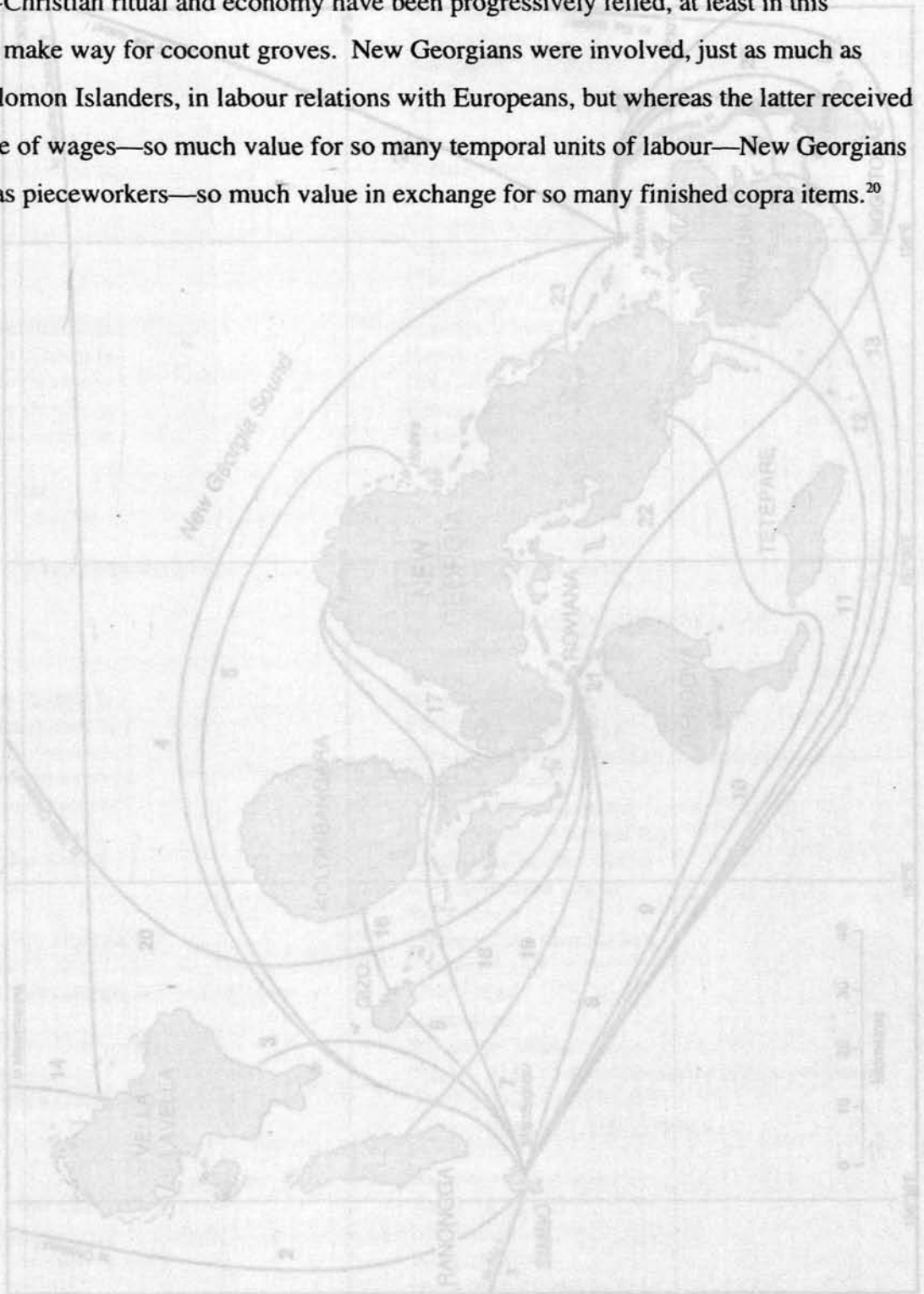
Simbo's pre-eminence was also decisive in ensuring its early integration within the world economy. As both Bennett (1987) and Jackson (1978) make clear, the advantages in the initial stages lay with the indigenous peoples. In an environment of regional self-sufficiency, integrated in a system of trade routes running the length of the Solomons chain, and in the absence of resident coercive foreign powers, Tinoni Simbo, like others in the West, remained autonomous in the face of needy traders.¹⁷ Europeans initially found themselves overtly constrained by local desires. Seeking produce or services, rather than labour, and

lacking the coercive apparatus to force supply, they had, perforce, to acquire what they needed on indigenous terms. And they were constrained by the greater strategic and numeric power of New Georgians: Cheyne (Shineberg, 1971b), and the unnamed captain of the "*Patterson*" (1803), illustrate the constant awareness of, and actual dangers to, Europeans, whose ships were on a number of occasions forcibly taken by islanders, their cargoes looted and crews dispatched,¹⁸ although there is no record of this having occurred on Simbo.

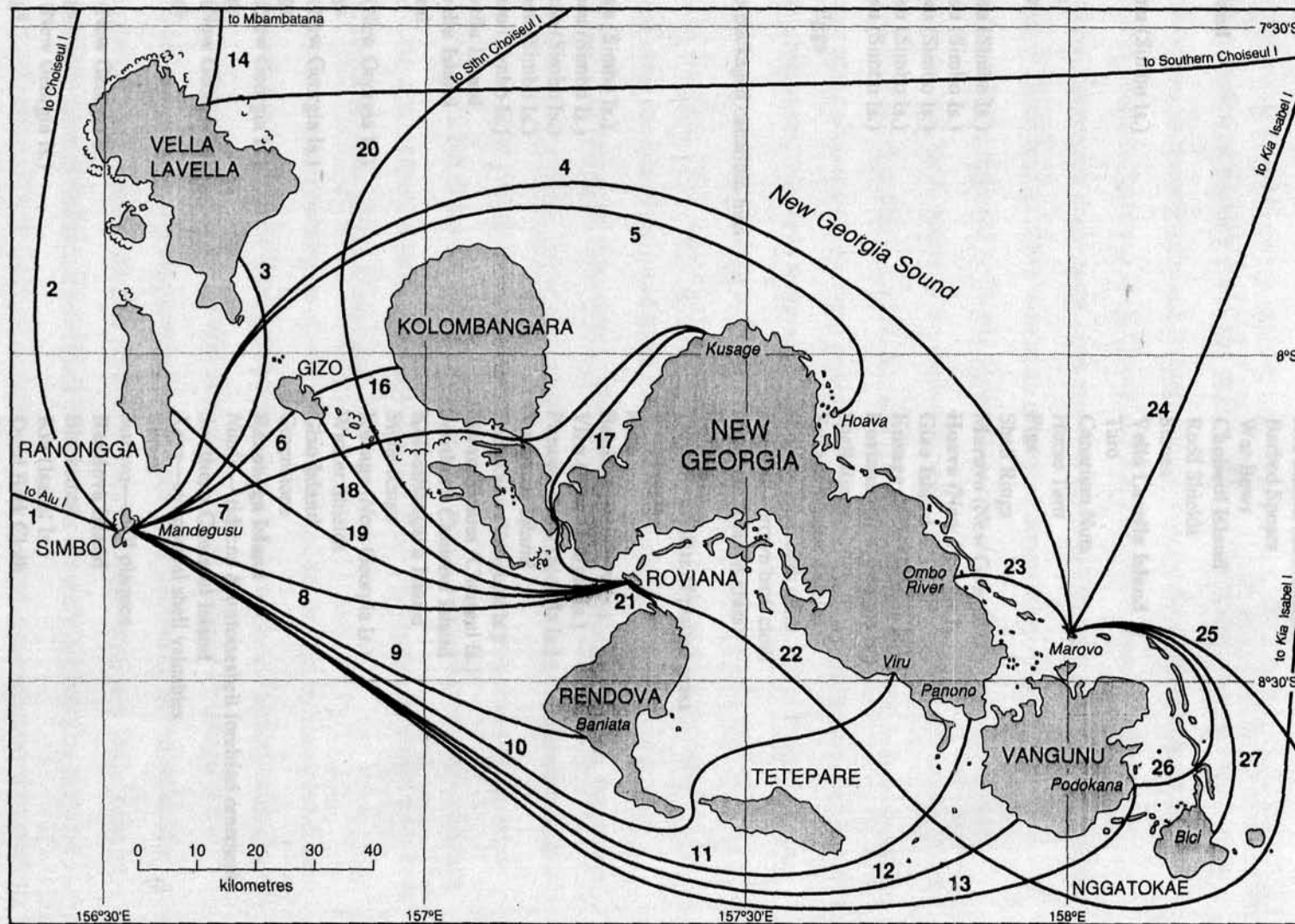
Because Simbo was the earliest point of frequent, direct contact, the advantages to be reaped were reaped disproportionately by Tinoni Simbo and their allies. Conversely, whatever disadvantages flowed on were also more directly assumed by Tinoni Simbo. If the people of Santa Isabel were enmeshed in the world system,¹⁹ first through their victimization by New Georgians armed with iron and later, reactively, through their conversion to Anglican Christianity, Tinoni Simbo were equally involved through their regional dominance and associated dependence on the iron products of the traders. They and their allies in Roviana could not have maintained their dominance in warfare without continuing access to those technologies, and were thus constrained to maintain cordial relations with Europeans. But that dependence was, perhaps, veiled by the unequal power at the surface of trade with Europeans where, as both Bennett (1987: 43-44) and Jackson note, to all apparent purposes local people determined the shape and success of European endeavours. The situation of indigenous advantage persisted until about the 1870s, but with the decline of the various wayfaring trades, the controlling powers of the suppliers of local products and indigenous provisioners of ships also deteriorated. With the contraction of trade routes, roving shipping was increasingly characterized by transportation of labour recruits, a trade which was focused on the Eastern Solomons and Vanuatu. But the decline of the traders did not see the New Georgia area thereby closed to European contact.

Quite the contrary, now Europeans sought New Georgians' labour and land as their contribution to the growing copra trade. As Jackson shows (1978: 139-148, *passim*), the alienation of land was accomplished by means of administrative incompetence, misunderstanding and corruption over a period of some 75 years. Although western Solomon Islanders were consistently resistant to labouring for plantation owners (Corris, 1973: 29-31), their labour was nonetheless obtained through the economic forces which compelled them to produce copra in order to continue to procure European products (Zelenietz, 1979: 104-105). Non-alienated land was also indirectly utilized by Europeans through these means. Indeed, land devoted to copra production was essentially alienated from subsistence gardening. McKinnon (1972) notes that crops can be interplanted with coconut palms. However, this is

feasible only for so long as the palms are immature. Afterwards the danger of falling coconuts is too great. Burman (1981: 263) also notes that the canarium trees which were so central a part of pre-Christian ritual and economy have been progressively felled, at least in this century, to make way for coconut groves. New Georgians were involved, just as much as Eastern Solomon Islanders, in labour relations with Europeans, but whereas the latter received an analogue of wages—so much value for so many temporal units of labour—New Georgians were paid as pieceworkers—so much value in exchange for so many finished copra items.²⁰



MAP IV: Ethnographically Recorded Exchange Routes, New Georgia Group. (From Reeve, 1987)



MAP IV: Ethnographically Recorded Exchange Routes, New Georgia Group. (From Reeve, 1987)

Map IV: Ethnographically Recorded Exchange Routes, New Georgia Group. Key:
(From Reeve, 1987)

1. Simbo Island
2. Simbo Island decline in passing trade, the d
3. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.)
Eggs
Baskets
Blue Tapa
Shell Rings
4. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.)
5. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.)
6. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.) local potential for
7. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.) th century, acceptance
8. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.)
Girls
Megapode Eggs
Necklaces
Taro
Mbomoro-packaged canarium nuts
Pigs
9. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.)
10. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.)
11. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.)
12. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.)
13. Mandegusu (Simbo Is.)
14. Vella Lavella Island
15. Vella Lavella Island
16. Gizo Island
17. Roviana (New Georgia Is.)
Shell Rings
18. Roviana (New Georgia Is.)
Shell Rings
19. Roviana (New Georgia Is.)
Shell Rings
20. Roviana (New Georgia Is.)
Shell Rings
21. Roviana (New Georgia Is.)
Shell Rings
22. Roviana (New Georgia Is.)
Shell Rings
23. Marovo (New Georgia Is.)
24. Marovo (New Georgia Is.)
25. Marovo (New Georgia Is.)
- Alu Island (Shortlands)
Barbed Spears
War Bows
Choiseul Island
Reed Shields
Slaves
Vella Lavella Island
Taro
Canarium Nuts
Horse Taro
Pigs
Shell Rings
Marovo (New Georgia Is.)
Hoava (New Georgia Is.)
Gizo Island
Kusage (New Georgia Is.)
Roviana (New Georgia Is.)
Shell Rings
Kusage Wicker Shields
Mbuha—blue bark cloth
Ragana—brown bark cloth
Mendaka (plaited grass)
Baskets
Tutupa—armlets of plaited grass
Wristbands
Mats
Baniata (Rendova Is.)
Viru (New Georgia Is.)
Panono (New Georgia Is.)
Vangunu Island
Podokana (Vangunu Is.)
Mbambatana (Choiseul Is.)
Southern Choiseul Island
Kolombangara Island
Stone Rings
Kusage (New Georgia Is.)
Wicker Shields
Gizo Island
Greenstone
Ranongga Island
Ndala—tridacna & tortoiseshell forehead ornaments
Southern Choiseul Island
Kesa—cylindrical shell valuables
Slaves
Barava—shell plaques
Rendova Island
Blackstone
Kia (Isabel Is.)
Dyed Bark Cloth
Slaves
Turtles
Ombo River (New Georgia Is.)
Black Clay
Kia (Isabel Is.)
Blue Bark Cloth
Guadalcanal Island

Woven Armbands

26. **Marovo** (New Georgia Is.)27. **Marovo** (New Georgia Is.)**Podokana** (Vangunu Is.)

Wicker Shields

Bici (Nggatokae Is.)*Kato*—stone bowls

With this decline in passing trade, the degree of New Georgians' incorporation in the world system begins to become obvious through their accommodation to the copra trade. Earlier economic relations between New Georgians and Europeans may have been characterized by indigenous dominance, but this was at the hidden cost of reduced economic self-sufficiency. There was, in other words, an emergent dependence on exchange relationships beyond the regional economy long before that dependence became obvious. This is not to argue that local potential for self-sufficiency had necessarily been utterly eroded. But by the mid-nineteenth century, acceptance and use of European products was widespread. Rice, tea, sugar and calico may have been occasional items of local consumption, but iron and tobacco were ubiquitous. Nor was there any route to successful withdrawal from economic exchange relations by western Solomon Islanders and herein, surely, lies the fact of dependence (*cf.* Bennett, 1987: 42-44). If all European contact had suddenly ceased throughout the area, the islanders could have managed quite well. They did not require foreign products for purposes of subsistence. Even to maintain cultural practices, they were not dependent upon Europeans. However, in the context of aggressively competitive and warring indigenous social groups, New Georgians needed them, given that any group who unilaterally withdrew from direct or indirect trade with Europeans would have been radically disadvantaged *vis-a-vis* other western Solomons groups. This disadvantage would have been manifested in terms of sheer physical survival.

Access to the novel technologies of war, introduced and facilitated by European trade, determined the relative success of local groups' survival and dominance. Simbo, with ready access to those technologies, and the natural strategic defences afforded by dangerous surrounding seas and the island's topography, had been highly successful in the wake of European contact. Other islands, such as Kolombangara and Gizo, with less initial contact and less formidable natural defences, saw their populations severely depleted by raids by technologically advantaged New Georgia groups. People in those areas responded by seeking their own sources of those technologies and, in the case of Santa Isabel, adopting headhunting for the first time (Jackson, 1975; White, 1979).²¹ Since European products were needed for reasons generated by the indigenous relations of warfare and dominance, New Georgians were

indeed dependent upon the maintenance of economic relations with Europeans, irrespective of where the overt exchange advantage seemed to lie. The withdrawal of itinerant traders was therefore not matched by a decline in indigenous trading relations with Europeans. Rather, New Georgians adapted their own economic behaviour in order to maintain economic contact with the Europeans and when European interest shifted towards copra, so did local production (Zelenietz, 1979: 104-105). The increasingly sedentary white presence in the Group was thus paralleled by an increased indigenous production of copra. ~~goods became necessary to the~~
~~in the imperialist creation of needs.~~

Kamisa Vaka—European Things

~~at the time when Tinoni Simbo be~~ lift their
 From the earliest recorded contact between New Georgians and Europeans, iron predominated as the object of indigenous exchanges. In 1788, Shortland remarked on Tinoni Simbo's ~~first~~ preference for iron; in 1803, two observers noted both that preference and their "cheekiness" towards ships people; in 1843, Cheyne complained that they refused to accept anything else. Some time thereafter, tobacco was added to the list of demands. Other items followed and by the turn of the century, Tinoni Simbo were purchasing numerous foreign goods at the trade store down on the harbour. In 1908 Hocart recorded the following list of goods, in order of demand, sold at the trade store: ~~assumption that their value is self-evident.~~ What is given

Tobacco, matches, clay pipes, calico in the order white, red, grey, blue, rice, biscuits, meats, 12 in. by knives, 16 in. knives, fish hooks, fish lines, tomahawks, Harrison no. 2, axes, kerosene; then follow indiscriminately: seed beads, necklets, soap, blue [sic], maypole soap, wood pipes with furl, at especially bent ones (furlless pipes are not in demand as they are lighted with a live ember) ~~specific~~ blankets, twoels [sic], trousers, white pants, belts and straps, braces, plug tobacco, lamps, it. saucepans, kettles, frying pans, pocket knives, files, rasps, plane irons (for adzes), fish spears, knives, forks, spoons, Jew's harps, flags (as flag neckerchiefs, the Union Jack sells best as being the government flag; the German has not bright enough colours), needles, cotton, lamp wicks, ~~did~~ singlets, braces and bits, key hole saws, plates, scents, handkerchiefs, women's dresses (long gowns and petticoats), sugar, hats, basins, nails, buckets (n.d.h.: 10). ~~The~~

This sequence suggests two things. First, it suggests an initial pattern of local autonomy in a situation in which Europeans were more needy than indigenes who were able to refuse trade if they did not get what they wanted. The cockiness of local people *vis-a-vis* Europeans suggests that Tinoni Simbo were well aware of their advantage. Indeed, the captain of the "Patterson" notes their snatching of hats from the heads of Europeans, an action which may be interpreted as a symbolic "decapitation" (Dureau n.d.c.). That local dominance gradually gave way to a more obvious pattern of reliance of Europeans for a wide range of manufactured goods so that by the time of Hocart's sojourn, foreign things were intrinsic to many aspects of Simbo sociality. Indeed, even Simbo's regional trade position depended on the trade store, as trading

expeditions carried tobacco and calico to other islands for exchange (n.d.h.: 10). Jackson and Bennett have both documented this shift from autonomy to dependence.

The second thing implied by the above sequence is the process by which this dependence emerged. That is, Europeans offered naive natives something that they needed and which was of innately superior quality. The product, in this case iron, was accepted and soon became indispensable. By the time local demand for that product had waned others were introduced, in this case, tobacco,²² until eventually imported goods become necessary to the conduct of everyday life. This is the classical sequence in the imperialist creation of needs.

There is little doubt that by 1870, at the time when Tinoni Simbo began to shift their economic activities towards copra production to suit European demands, their economy was articulated with the world system. N. Thomas (1991) has recently cautioned, however, against the assumption that contact with Europeans inevitably contained the seeds of incorporation. He argues the need for cultural interpretation of the meanings of objects exchanged between indigenous and foreign peoples in order to understand the significance of trade within indigenous histories. His critique pivots on the nature of the products exchanged between locals and foreigners. He argues that it is necessary to consider the meaning of artifacts from both perspectives, questioning the assumption that their value is self-evident. What is given or lost by one party to a transaction is not necessarily the same as what is accepted or taken by the other. Of particular relevance is the cultural construction of the items in question. Metal is a prominent example in Thomas' argument and he demonstrates the variability of Pacific Islanders' willingness to entangle themselves in relations with Europeans in order to obtain it. Niue, for example, was consistently resistant to trading for metal, despite its demonstrated qualities of sharpness and durability (1991: 89-93). In this case, those qualities simply did not have sufficient cultural relevance to stimulate adaptation to European demands. "The local situation, not the foreigner's acts, gave the process of contact its singularity" (1991: 89).

Simbo was at the opposite end of the spectrum in reactions to iron, because, this analysis suggests, of its local salience. Thomas (1991: 87) argues that it may have been particularly appealing to societies deeply involved in canoe-making and swidden agriculture and it certainly made canoe-making far more efficient in New Georgia (Bennett, 1987: 34). It was also a far more efficient instrument of decapitation than stone adzes. In New Georgia, then, metal technology had immediate utility. It would take little in the way of self-conscious or unselfconscious demonstration by the ships' people to convince an astute indigenous observer of this. The metal nails which they so readily accepted would also have had great

value in accelerating canoe-building. Indeed, Shortland's account implies that the value of metal was first recognized by Tinoni Simbo: it is only in later accounts, such as that of Cheyne, that the foreigners are actually *offering* hatchets. In Shortland, they seem unprepared for such exchanges. They offer, rather, beads and other nicknacks which are not greedily snatched up, as they may have anticipated. The only metal they had to offer—gimlets, nails and hoop iron²³—are items of ships' stores more than they are items of exchange. Although I have suggested that Shortland's was not the first local encounter with Europeans, his account nonetheless implies that metal in this area was demanded by locals, rather than offered by foreigners. This demand was later displaced by indigenous demand for firearms that were, again, not offered by the visitors. Cheyne was reluctant to sell them and the British High Commission, in Fiji, later prohibited their sale by British nationals. By 1890, however, New Georgians were as insistent on taking firearms as they had previously been on metal. They were clearly successful, if the Anglican missionary and Penny's account of the Isabel chief Bera's arsenal in any indication (White, 1991: 86,88).²⁴

N. Thomas cautions further, however, against the assumption that a kind of indigenous "greed" for European goods is responsible for their ultimate incorporation into the world economy:

[T]he fundamental implication is that their "loss" of their own culture and political autonomy is the result of the fatal attraction of European goods: the people are innocent but hopelessly greedy. Asymmetry is thus constituted in the nature of first contact rather than through a history of subsequent engagement, as a consequence of later imperial intervention and annexation. The power difference is recognized from the very start by the indigenous people themselves and is thus not an effect of the actual application of force or violence later on. (1991: 85)

Simbo provides a case in point. Although the initial acceptance of exchange relations with Europeans was the first step towards what ultimately proved to be incorporation, that fate was not writ large in the initial encounters which are more appropriately depicted as the meeting of two trading nations. Whatever asymmetry was manifested was to be that between needy Europeans and independent Islanders. From the Simbo perspective, contact facilitated a period of regional military dominance—including New Georgian intimidation of foreigners—and economic ascendancy over Europeans. The nineteenth century represented the zenith of achievement for Simbo, Roviana and Vella Lavella, not the nadir of desperate dependency.

We also need to consider the nature of what was given away in exchange for European goods. From the local perspective, this was very little: water, *beche-le-mer* and tortoiseshell, and later copra, were the main objects of European attention. None of these were particularly

precious in local evaluation. Simbo's main water supply, coming from an underground spring, is apparently endless; *beche-le-mer* is useless locally;²⁵ tortoiseshell, although it was used for decoration, was not of major regional significance. Even copra demanded only labour (which, as with all of those other desired items, could be applied at the labourer's discretion) and coconuts which were not then an item of wealth. Compare this with Thomas' accounts in which particular items could not be elicited by Europeans by any means. ^{then,} Marquesans, for example, adamantly refused to exchange their cherished pigs for iron (1991: 95). Indeed, on the eve of political annexation by Britain, resident European traders were lamenting the reluctance of New Georgians to devote themselves to copra production because they were too intent upon local warfare (Jackson, 1972: 27). While New Georgians clearly required European manufactures by this period, they lost little in obtaining them, and it was only with the clear assertion of British dominance in suppressing indigenous polities that they were to be unambiguously subjected to the demands of the world economy.

Thomas' two related arguments—that the value of exotic items is not self-evident, and that first exchange does not *a priori* thrust indigenous people into dependence—casts an interesting light on local responses to my 1991 rendition of Hocart's account of contact. When I mentioned Tinoni Simbo's insistence on receiving metal from Europeans, the response of one group of men was to concur with one who exclaimed, "Of course. The metal (*aina*—"iron") made us big. What else could we have wanted from Europeans?"²⁶ My first reaction to that response was to see it as a retrospective comment on a situation that had been far more complex and uncertain. It may indeed have been just that. Alternatively, however, metal may indeed have been recognized locally as having great strategic value, but Thomas' analysis alerts us that this recognition arose from the particular configuration of local cultural realities rather than from the nature of the items themselves.

As I have argued, the things obtained from this foreign exchange were eagerly deployed in the pursuit of local goals which, initially, had little to do with Europeans. Even in the late nineteenth century, Europeans remained much constrained by New Georgians and we cannot yet speak of a reversal of power relations: local copra production continued to be determined by indigenous incentives, and the numerically inferior and isolated Europeans continued to be politically constrained by the power and mobility of New Georgians. Thus, when a number of the labourers who worked for the trader Peter Pratt were killed in Roviana (reputedly in a raid by Simbo warriors), Pratt ultimately refused to co-operate with the Royal Navy (RN) gunship sent to investigate the matter because of his anxiety not to alienate those with whom he

needed to remain on good terms (Bennett, 1987: 61). During this time, New Georgians continued to pursue their own cultural goals with relative autonomy, despite increasing European anxieties and rhetorical pronouncements against them. Because these local goals sometimes impinged on white property and safety, increasingly significant with the intensification of settlement, there was an amplification of calls for intervention and the eventual establishment of Protectorate authority in Gizo in 1898 (Chapter Three). Until then, however, headhunting continued apace, a phenomenon I pursue in the next chapter.

NOTES

- male for not trading directly between areas which do have exchanged under is the enmity between Roviana and Savatila strategically and
- 1: Another was extant in the interior of New Georgia Island until the 1920s.
 - 2: Or, from an island perspective, People [of the] Ships (*Tinoni Vaka*), the name bestowed on Europeans.
 - 3: Anyone may take green coconuts for their own refreshment, irrespective of whose tree or property they grow on. Green coconuts are also ideally given to a woman by her husband every day that she is suckling an infant. The flesh of the fruit is an infant's first food.
 - 4: They obviously met people from the small island of Nusa Simbo.
 - 5: He also makes it clear that this position later shifted to Roviana with the establishment there of influential permanent traders and, later, the Methodist Mission (1978: 78).
 - 6: Fishing and timber extraction by Japanese and American companies, which has grown in recent decades, are significant in parts of New Georgia. Simbo is not directly involved in these industries. They do not, in any case, rival involvement in copra production.
 - 7: Today, there are few weeks when one or two yachts do not anchor there.
 - 8: The importance of water was revealed in modern times when a Japanese fishing company installed a system of water pipes to a number of villages in exchange for rights to use a pipe located down on the wharf to replenish their own supplies.
In the past, the element of exchange must be seen as fundamental, not only in
 - 9: The perceived reliability was relative only, as revealed by Cheyne's anxieties about the armaments habitually carried by Simbo men.
 - 10: Although Graves' account of Mendana's second expedition is a fictionalized reconstruction, it is, he claims, as accurate a reconstruction as is possible from the available material. Graves' work is based on the original Spanish texts of Mendana's Chief Pilot, Quiros, rather than on the English translation of Markham, translations which, as he points out, are as much based on guesswork as on knowledge of the language. There is
 - 11: After steel axes, tobacco seems to have been the most desired item. Tobacco certainly dominated the copra trade after pacification and assumed the form of currency (Hocart, n.d.h.) However, the fact that axe-heads or tomahawks are consistently specified in descriptions of trade, in contrast to more generalized mention of other items, as in the example above, is consistent with their dominance before pacification.
 - 12: This is quite different to claiming, as do McKinnon (1975) and Zelenietz (1979), an economic motivation for the scale of nineteenth century headhunting and for its subsequent abandonment. As Jackson (1978) argues, headhunting was intrinsically bound up with indigenous worldviews and social organization. Jackson's own somewhat economistic rendering of *mana* as a motivation is queried in Chapter Two.
 - 13: *Tapa* is the generic term for bark cloth in the Pacific. The Simbo term is *ragana*. Most of this was brown or beige in colour, with decorative patterns applied. Blue *tapa* was a product of Santa Isabel and was reputedly also manufactured on Simbo. This is now denied by older Simbo women who claim to have seen it, but that neither they nor their mothers had manufactured it. This might be a case of forgotten practices. It might equally be a case of European observers, unaware of the extent of indigenous trading networks, and operating on the assumption that the place where they acquired an object was the place of its manufacture, perpetuating a misunderstanding.
 - 14: Santa Isabel, an island province in the more central Solomons, is not far distant from the Western Solomons, lying across one side of New Georgia Sound. In this account, it tends to be clustered with my comments on the Western Solomons.

15: Hocart (n.d.h.) ponders the rationale for not trading directly between areas which *de facto* exchanged indirectly. One factor he does not consider is the enmity between Roviana and Bilua on Vella Lavella (McKinnon, 1972) which prevented trade between the two. Simbo, although closer to Roviana strategically and socially, maintained an exchange relationship with Bilua.

16: These local networks were indirectly decisive in other ways, too. Thus Jackson (1975) argues that the heightening of headhunting warfare following Simbo and Roviana raiders' adoption of Western technologies directly led, first to the adoption of headhunting in Santa Isabel, and later to the Christianization of Bugotu, Santa Isabel, by the Anglican Church (see also White, 1979; 1991).

17: This is in stark contrast to the more easterly regions, particularly Malaita and Guadalcanal, which were involved later, but in far more problematic ways, with Europeans. Malaitan intercourse with Europeans began about fifty years after trade was established in the western Solomons (Burt, 1994) and overwhelmingly involved the labour trade. Whether the labour recruiting in those areas was the blackbirding and kidnapping popularly portrayed (e.g., Luxton, 1955: 14), or the relatively more voluntary temporary wage migration depicted by Keesing (1992a) and Corris (1973), relationships between black and white in those areas were far more conflictual than those in the West, involving, as they did, the removal of persons and not just valuables. Thus Burt, (1994) and Keesing attribute much of the apparently indiscriminate Malaitan looting and scuttling of European ships to vengeance for the death of migrant labourers. And Europeans were entangled in indigenous societies in different ways. Although Strathern (1988) and Gregory (1982) have argued that "things" in Melanesia can partake of personhood and *vice versa*, this transformation may have had different significance in the places where the personhood of migrants was challenged by their European employers, and those where persons were rendered "things" by other indigenous persons deploying European artifacts in the context of violent raiding.

In the East, the element of coercion must be seen as fundamental: not only were young men sometimes constrained by older men into embarking on wage migration and subsequently into parting with goods acquired through the experience, but relations between labourers and Europeans were intrinsically inequitable. By leaving home as employees (at best), Malaitans and others placed themselves, knowingly or otherwise, willingly or not, in the power, first of ship's crew and later of plantation owners in the Western Solomons, Fiji or Australia, people who, at best, regarded them as unfortunate inferiors, at worst as somewhat less than human. Conditions varied according to the worker's place of employment. Thus Moore (1985) argues that labourers in Queensland were able to maintain indigenous practices and overcome rigorous rationing, whereas Bennett (1987: 187-188, 190) is adamant that indigenous practices and activities were severely restricted in the Solomons. There at least it must have been impossible for them not to recognize the brutal power inequities of the plantations—the spatial and symbolic separation of White and Black, the violence visited against workers (whether overt, through physical chastisement or more covert, through denial of adequate food and hygienic conditions) and the culturally brutal disregard of indigenous practices and ideas, particularly in regard to pollution, described by Bennett, all patently described power relations between Solomon Islander and European. As Keesing notes, the nature of this relationship changed over time. Thus, the element of kidnapping was progressively eroded as Malaitans began actively seeking the trade goods which were available only through the sale of labour. With time, too, labour migration came to be seen as having a positive place in young men's lives. Despite the greater voluntarism, however, the negative experience of European hierarchies is patent in Kwaio descriptions of their employment.

18: On Malaita, where many ships were sacked, no anchorage seems to have ever been considered absolutely safe because of the failure of so many migrant labourers to return there. Perhaps Europeans invested less effort in establishing good relationships there with any but the few middlemen who facilitated the supply of labourers. Bennett (1987), Burt (1994) and Keesing (1992a) all note that they sought very little in the way of trading relations with Malaitans. Indeed, Keesing argues that the Kwaio, in particular, were deliberately maintained as a labour reserve by successive BSIP administrations.

19: I do not mean to imply that New Georgians' response to traders had a determined outcome for Santa Isabel which was an early site of exchange with Europeans (White, 1978). No doubt, there too, the local significance of the items obtained contributed to the particular development of Santa Isabel society, a development very different to that of New Georgia (White, 1978).

- 20: There are limits to all analogies: I do not intend to imply any comparisons of respective degrees of exploitation along the lines of the various debates about methods of labour exploitation in industrialized areas.
- 21: Although headhunting became much more than a defensive measure. White (1991: 88) notes, for example, that the great Isabel warrior, Bera, also raided internally.
- 22: Which, like the creation of demand for opium in China, had the further advantage of being highly addictive—thus guaranteeing permanent demand.
- 23: None of which, incidentally, would be directly applicable to headhunting except insofar as they accelerated canoe production. The hoop iron might have been used for the tips of the lances they refused to exchange.
- 24: Shineberg's (1971a) contention that firearms were unreliable under the conditions in which they were used in Melanesia is cast into doubt by Penny's observation that all pieces were in excellent condition (White, 1991: 88).
- 25: And regarded as repulsive, according to people who were again diving to meet a new demand in 1992. This parallels anecdotal accounts of SDAs in Marovo Lagoon (New Georgia Island) happily harvesting shellfish for sale abroad because they are being paid for something that is useless to them.
- 26: Women do not seem to regard items which convey messages about contact and interaction with Europeans as being particularly exotic. Less concerned with histories of headhunting prowess, they see metal implements and processed food as simply parts of life that have always been available. Even in regard to recent events, such as the change to European clothing, they emphasise the changing of practice (*hahanana*) rather than the adoption of artifacts (*kamisa*) *per se*.