anthropozoologica

2021 • 56 • 8

LES SUIDÉS EN CONTEXTE RITUEL À L'ÉPOQUE CONTEMPORAINE

Édité par Frédéric LAUGRAND, Lionel SIMON & Séverine LAGNEAUX

Pigs in rites, rights in pigs: porcine values in the Papua New Guinea Highlands

Paul SILLITOE

art. 56 (8) — Published on 4 June 2021
www.anthropozoologica.com

PUBLICATIONS SCIENTIFIQUES

MUSÉUM NAL HIST NATURELLE

Couverture / *Cover* :
Des cochons décorés sont exposés avant un festival d'abattage de cochons, qui fait partie du cycle *sa*. Crédits photo : P. Sillitoe / *Decorated pigs on display prior to a pig kill festival, part of the* sa *cycle. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.*

Anthropozoologica est indexé dans / Anthropozoologica *is indexed in:*

– Social Sciences Citation Index
– Arts & Humanities Citation Index
– Current Contents - Social & Behavioral Sciences
– Current Contents - Arts & Humanities
– Zoological Record
– BIOSIS Previews
– Initial list de l'European Science Foundation (ESF)
– Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)
– Research Bible

Anthropozoologica est distribué en version électronique par / Anthropozoologica *is distributed electronically by:*

– BioOne® (https://www.bioone.org)

Anthropozoologica *est une revue en flux continu publiée par les Publications scientifiques du Muséum, Paris, avec le soutien du CNRS.*
Anthropozoologica *is a fast track journal published by the Museum Science Press, Paris, with the support of the CNRS.*
Les Publications scientifiques du Muséum publient aussi / *The Museum Science Press also publish:* ***Adansonia***, ***Zoosystema***, ***Geodiversitas***, ***European Journal of Taxonomy***, ***Naturae***, **Cryptogamie sous-sections *Algologie*, *Bryologie*, *Mycologie*, *Comptes Rendus Palevol*.**

Diffusion – Publications scientifiques Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle
CP 41 – 57 rue Cuvier F-75231 Paris cedex 05 (France)
Tél. : 33 (0)1 40 79 48 05 / Fax : 33 (0)1 40 79 38 40
diff.pub@mnhn.fr / https://sciencepress.mnhn.fr

ISSN (imprimé / *print*) : 0761-3032 / ISSN (électronique / *electronic*) : 2107-08817

Pigs in rites, rights in pigs: porcine values in the Papua New Guinea Highlands

Paul SILLITOE
Anthropology Department, Durham University,
Dawson Building, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE (England)
paul.sillitoe@durham.ac.uk

Submitted on 30 April 2020 | Accepted on 12 April 2021 | Published on 4 June 2021

Sillitoe P. 2021. — Pigs in rites, rights in pigs: porcine values in the Papua New Guinea Highlands, *in* Laugrand F., Simon L. & Lagneaux S. (eds), Les suidés en contexte rituel à l'époque contemporaine. *Anthropozoologica* 56 (8): 117-136. https://doi.org/10.5252/anthropozoologica2021v56a8. http://anthropozoologica.com/56/8

ABSTRACT
This paper discusses the place of pigs in the mountains of Papua New Guinea, particularly in the Was valley of the Southern Highlands Province. After a brief introduction to the pigs of the region and their herding arrangements, it gives an ethnographic account of their use in various rites, notably those that feature curing, sorcery and cult activities. They prompt consideration of the relevance of concepts used to understand these ritual activities, whether they are offerings or sacrifices or something else particular to pigs in rites. The cults also include large pig kill festivals that have notable socio-political implications. These relate to rights in pigs and their ownership, which are complex issues that impinge on all of the foregoing activities.

KEY WORDS
Pig husbandry, sacrifice, transaction.

RÉSUMÉ
Porcs dans les rites, droits des porcs : valeurs porcines dans les Highlands de Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée.
Cet article traite de la place des porcs dans les montagnes de Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée, en particulier dans la vallée Was de la province des Southern Highlands. Après une brève introduction sur les porcs de la région et leur élevage, il propose un compte rendu ethnographique de leur utilisation dans divers rites, notamment ceux qui comportent des activités de guérison, de sorcellerie et de culte. Ils amènent à considérer la pertinence des concepts utilisés pour comprendre ces activités rituelles, qu'il s'agisse d'offrandes ou de sacrifices ou autre chose de particulier aux porcs dans les rites. Les cultes incluent également de grands festivals de mise à mort de porcs qui ont des implications sociopolitiques notables. Celles-ci concernent les droits sur les porcs et leur propriété, qui sont des questions complexes qui empiètent sur toutes les activités mentionnées ci-dessus.

MOTS CLÉS
Élevage de porc, sacrifice, transaction.

INTRODUCTION

Something that soon strikes visitors to the Was valley in the mountains of Papua New Guinea is the pigs that wander freely about the countryside. They are seen frequently rootling about the land surrounding homesteads, lazing in the sun, lolling in muddy wallows, scratching themselves on trees and fences. So long as they do no damage, notably by breaking into cultivations and damaging crops, they are free to roam anywhere; the few unruly creatures are kept tethered to stakes or penned up. The freedom that the animals enjoy recalls that experienced by the valley's Wola speaking inhabitants who recognise no authority figures and are at liberty to go about their lives as they choose, so long as they follow collectively agreed conventions of behaviour; if they transgress these they provoke disputes. An intriguing aspect of such stateless arrangements is how people contrive to maintain a relatively orderly social environment, disturbed by occasional disputes. Here pigs play a notable part. They are not only a source of prized meat but are also highly valued as animals transactable in the socio-political exchanges that are prominent in promoting stability and order. They remain the only things acceptable in exchanges from the days before the outside world burst into the valley in the mid 20th century, since when cash has replaced other customary wealth, such as objects comprising seashells (Sillitoe 1979a: 153-156). A key feature is the complex networks of relations around which pigs and cash flow, prompted often by life cycle events such as marriage and death. The valley's residents extended the arrangements beyond death to rites that included their ancestors when they slaughtered pigs for them, which are the focus of this paper. Regarding these, another change that has occurred throughout the region since the outside world's arrival is their discontinuance with relentless missionary activity (Reithofer 2006: 223-260), which extended to the destruction of associated ritual objects and structures (Wiessner & Akii Tumu 1998: 180; Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 160). The accounts given here depend mostly on the memories of those who participated in various rituals; a generation that has largely passed away. Although historical events, they continue to have relevance for those interested in comparative religion, as a unique expression of humanity's supernatural beliefs. They pose intriguing questions, for instance: What genre of activity are these rituals? Many years ago a senior colleague told me not to use the term sacrifice for any activities involving the slaughter of pigs in the Was valley. The appropriate word he suggested was offering and in my subsequent work, until and throughout this paper, I have followed his advice. The injunction has stuck in my memory and after reflecting on these activities again for this paper I am prompted to comment on it, being a senior colleague now myself with the confidence to do so.

Some commentators unhesitatingly label them as "sacrifices", albeit they may not agree what they mean by using it. In the view of Strauss (1990: 35, 40), the "function of sacrifice" in the Western Highlands lies in the "mythological self-perception of the *Mbowamb*" people, sacrifice relating to "legends about descent" that invariably feature a "sacrifice-claim" by a clan's "supernatural creator". In addition to these periodic community-wide events, these people kill pigs to gain "access to the flow of power" through "individual sacrifices" (Strauss 1990: 271). A similar dual distinction of pig killing contexts applies in the Was valley too. Reflecting generally on sacrifice, Strathern & Stewart (2008a: xiii), more recent fieldworkers in the same region, point out that it is a "means whereby humans communicate with spirits and deities whom they see as having power over their lives" and that it involves a "material offering of some kind". They are of the opinion that the "killings of pigs in the Highlands cultures clearly fall within the general field of sacrifice", which "seek communication with […] spirits of the dead/ancestors" (Strathern & Stewart pers. comm. 2021). Elsewhere in Melanesia, on the island of Malekula, Layard (1955a: 341, 342) places considerable emphasis on sacrifice, which he defines as involving a "man's relationship" with a "sacrificial animal […] the world of the spirit, and […] his soul" – with the "purpose of sacrifice" being to "link" him with the "spiritual" world – all of which relates to the "'mystery' of sacrifice". On another island, that of Malaita, Keesing (1982:128), whose fieldwork was again more recent, distinguishes between "purification" events, where a "small pig" is "sacrificed to purify an offense", and "expiation" events, where there is "consecration of a small pig" to be "fattened for subsequent sacrifice", which will involve a larger group of people, reminiscent of the Highlands' duality. According to another authority, who considers religion across the Melanesian region, it is possible to "readily identify" activities as "sacrifices […] in which the spirits are cajoled or manipulated", where the "dedicating of victims reflects assumptions about give-and-take between humans and other-than-human agencies" (Trompf 1991: 66).

In anticipation of clarifying things, we might turn to our own culture, where the term, if not the idea of sacrifice, belong – it being a central feature of the Judeo-Christian tradition – but browsing the associated historico-theological canon scarcely helps. After all, early anthropological enquiry into sacrifice drew heavily on ancient Greek, Roman and Semitic beliefs – such as Frazer's (1894) interest in sacrifices at the sacred Nemi grove in Italy and at the succession of divine rulers, and Robertson Smith's (1889) focus on the commensality surrounding Semitic sacrificial rites with tribal bonding around the totemic meal – but it only started and stoked the confusion that continues in cross-cultural contexts about the propriety of using the word sacrifice. But some understandings of sacrifice may sit uneasily with these views. If we define the term according to what occurs in the Semitic religions that gave rise to the concept, after Evans-Pritchard for instance, who has written at length on the subject of sacrifice in an African context, then some acts that feature the slaughter of an animal may "not be regarded as a sacrifice at all", if for instance the creature was not "consecrated and there was no invocation" (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 217). The confusion of meanings around the notion of sacrifice indicates the problems that attend its use for the faithful representation of beliefs and rites elsewhere, such as in the South West Pacific region. The intention here is not to engage in further tangled etymological discussion but to explore the appropriateness of the notion of sacrifice to Was valley beliefs and rites, through an unapologetically detailed ethnographic account of them.

THE WAS VALLEY

The Wola speakers, an estimated total population of 60 000, occupy five valleys in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea, from the Mendi river in the east to the Augu in the west (Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009). They live in small houses usually comprising nuclear or extended family homesteads, scattered along the sides of valleys, indistinctly grouped together on territories, where kinship affords rights to land (Sillitoe 2010), resulting in fuzzily constituted kin corporations. The valleys are divided up into a large number of territories to which these kin groups, called *sem* (families), claim rights collectively.

The country is rugged, comprising sharp-crested mountain ridges, ranging between 1800 and 2200 m ASL. Watersheds and some valley areas are heavily forested; other settled parts are under secondary regrowth, notably extensive cane grassland. The Wola are swidden and fallow horticulturalists, their carefully cultivated gardens scattered across the landscape. They depend on them to meet nearly all of their subsistence needs, living on a predominantly vegetable diet in which sweet potato is the staple, typically grown in composted mounds; other crops include bananas, taro, various cucurbits and greens (Sillitoe 1983; Bourke *et al.* 1995). They keep pig herds of considerable size, as pointed out (Sillitoe 2003: 239-334). A marked gender division of labour informs these activities, men largely undertaking the heavier work and woman assuming most responsibility for routine tasks.

The exchange of pigs and cash between defined categories of kin on specified occasions such as at marriage and death, in an unending series of transactions continue today, as noted, being a notable force for social order in what continues to be an acephalous society with weak central government authority and lawless "rascal" activity a constant threat throughout the region. In short, pigs feature in politics, as throughout the Highlands, men earning respect transacting them in socio-political exchange events, and those who excel at it achieve locally positions of renown and influence, earning the epithet *ol howma* that approximates to "big men" elsewhere (Sillitoe 1979a). But their influence does not extend to authority to direct the actions of others.

In the past, supernatural beliefs centred on ancestors' spirits causing sickness and death by "eating" vital organs, others' powers of sorcery and "poison", and malevolent forest spirits. Sometimes people offered pigs in various rituals to restrain these malicious supernatural powers, which are the focus of this paper. Today many people profess to be Christians and attend mission services. While some syncretism has occurred subsequently, with traditional beliefs continuing to inform interpretation of Christian proselytizing, associated ritual activities, as noted, are defunct (on blending of indigenous and Christian beliefs, see Strathern & Stewart 2008a: xviii). The region is peripheral in development terms, although the Highlands Highway runs along the neighbouring Nembi valley. Cash crops are few. But with gas and oil finds the position may change, with possible exploitation of these sometime in the future.

Fig. 1. — A woman leads a pig on a hend 'tether'. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

THE PIGS

The pigs are *Sus scrofa* Linnaeus, 1758 "Common Wild Boar", sometimes differentiated from Euro-Asian subspecies by the addition of the *papuensis* Lesson and Garnot, 1826 suffix (e.g., Baldwin 1982: 41). Bristles are prominent, particularly along the spine, often standing erect in adults and earning the animal the name of 'razorback pig' (Vayda 1972: 905). The Wola distinguish between *showmay* (pigs) according to their sex and size. Another term for pig is *taz*. It changes between communities over short distances. In the Nembi valley, for instance, they call pigs *maen* and in the Mendi valley *mok*. The notion of a breed is new, having arrived with the introduction of exotic breeds to the Highlands region by agricultural officers seeking to improve stock for commercial production (Malynicz 1973: 20) but the Wola approach to pig management soon results in cross-breeding with native animals and the local non-concept of breed soon reasserts itself. In addition to sex and size, people classify pigs according to differences in appearance, largely coat colour plus a few other physical features such as tail appearance (Sillitoe 2003: 245-247; compare Heider 1970: 49 on Dani pig classification).

The classification scheme serves not only to identify the pigs in any herd, but also informs the individual names women give to pigs in their charge (Fig. 1). When they wean a piglet, women will likely give it a name. It is up to the person who has charge of it. She may opt for a name that draws upon some physical characteristic, or not, as she chooses. They deny that they give pigs names for sentimental reasons. The naming of animals is part of their domestication, featuring in their subsequent management and control. They become used to their names and respond when they hear them called out. Once they have animals under control (as *honba at bay* [obedient piglets]), the pig keepers' principal concern is to promote their rapid

Fig. 2. — Pigs housed in *kuwl* (stalls). Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

and healthy growth. According to the Wola the rate at which pigs grow varies, as does the final size they reach when fully adult, the same as human-beings. They recited rhyming *namonk* (spells) over their pigs to promote their well-being and growth, which "made" their pigs grow large quickly, drawing sympathetic-magic-like on the qualities of their metaphorical allusions to size and development; they deny that their power derived from any supernatural beings, they are efficacious in their own right (see Sterly 1979: 386-388 on the Upper Chimbu and Sillitoe 2003: 265-277 for comparative ethnography).

The *kalow beray* (herding of pigs) follows a pattern common throughout much of the Highlands (Pospisil 1963; Feacham 1973; Hide 1981; Boyd 1984; Rappaport 1984) and is generally straightforward and not particularly onerous, unless the herd is large or contains a troublesome beast[1]. The average size of a herd is about four animals. Women are largely responsible. They release the pigs in their charge in the early morning, unless unruly, to go off for the day to *pilnay* (root) for earthworms in the neighbouring fallow grassland and nearby forest. They say that an earthworm diet ensures pigs put on plenty of fat. They sometimes put them in harvested gardens to feed on any remaining tubers and other crops, and to turn the soil over. Pigs are conditioned to *pil nok ebay* (rooting eat return) to the homestead in late afternoon and early evening, when women often shout out their names and make enticing clicking and guttural sounds to attract them. When they arrive they feed them their *hokay kalay* (tuber ration), and any vegetable waste from the family's meal, in the houseyard or tethered in their stalls (Fig. 2). The heaviest work involves supplying tubers to feed animals, largely carrying these to the homestead, their harvest occurring simultaneously with that undertaken to supply human needs, for both small pig tubers and larger human ones are inevitably dug up together; pigs consume around half the tubers harvested (Sillitoe 1983: 228-230). The animals spend the night in their *showmay kuwl* (pig stalls), customarily located at the rear of rooms occupied by women and children, the close proximity with humans reinforcing their domestication and imprinting on those who have charge of them (Sillitoe 2017: 156-159). But today many families house their pigs in adjacent lean-to shelters fitted with stalls in response to reproaches by outsiders that living with pigs is dirty and unhealthy. The extent to which this reflects a Eurocentric reaction to living with "dirty" pigs on the one hand or represents on the other sound health advice I am unsure. After generations of living with pigs, one might have expected the Wola themselves to have discovered any dangers to their health (see Feacham 1973: 25; 1975 on environmental health hazards of pigs, notably to surface water supplies; also Reay 1984: 71, 72 on the effects of colonial interference on pig keeping among the Kuma of the Western Highlands).

Some women regularly manage more pigs than others and are admired for their ability earning the appellative of *ten howma* (literaly "woman communal-clearing", the *howma* communal clearing, or village green equivalent, being where many exchange events occur, often featuring pigs) as a mark of their widely respected competence.

PIGS IN CURING RITES

Pigs often featured in rituals that sought to appease supernatural powers. These comprised two broad categories: small scale rites to cure personal illness and large scale rites to ensure collective wellbeing. Ghostly powers come into being at the time that *enjay* (alive) persons become *hemay* (dead) corpses. All living persons have a *wezow*, which is their life force, self-consciousness or spirit that animates every human from birth; it is also their shadow. It leaves the body at death when it transforms into a *towmow*, which is an ancestor spirit, spectral presence or ghost that people believe malevolent, which may attack living kin, causing sickness and death. The attacks are random; people deny that there is any moral dimension, that the ancestors intervene, for instance, when a descendant behaves immorally and demand offerings of pigs in atonement, which is frequently taken to be a feature of sacrifice and suggests the absence of such notions. Other supernatural powers include equally capricious mythical beings and wild forest spirits, and malicious forces released in sorcery attacks.

When someone fell ill, their relatives would perform a rite to appease the attacking *towmow* spirit, after undertaking a divination to determine its place of residence. They were believed to be nomadic, residing in various places such as lean-to structures housing *hungnaip* prehistoric stone objects (these include pestles, mortars, club heads and strange shaped stones of unknown archaeological provenance found occasionally in the region); stilted shelters displaying *wesaembow-hul* ancestors' skulls; deep *iyb-haenek* pools in flooded potholes and *woiyem towmow* flooded oven pits; under *taenktay* fireplaces in men's house foyers; and

1. A reviewer of this paper for *Anthropozoologica* rued the absence of information on wild pigs. The reason is that there are none strictly speaking in the Was valley region; only unruly animals that sometimes become uncontrollable and run off, which owners may dispose of if they prove too much of a nuisance. They intriguingly blur the distinction between domestic and wild (see Sillitoe 2003: 165, 260, 330-333).

Fig. 3. — Singeing bristles off pig (the smoky fumes 'eaten' by spirits). Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

Fig. 4. — Demonstrating fireplace prong implement (N.B. pig was dead). Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

bomboraenda sapling bowers behind their houses (Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 98, 99, 102, 103, 148, 151). The blood spilt slaughtering pigs at such locales and the smell of their singeing bristles were believed to "please" the attacking *towmow* spirits and help persuade them to desist (Fig. 3). People elsewhere in the Highlands held similar beliefs, such as the Mbowamb who said that the part "eaten by the supernatural beings" was the "pleasant smell one notices as […] animals are singed", albeit contrary to the Wola they purportedly thought it "contains the life force of the sacrificial animal" (Strauss 1990: 40, 41), which complies with Strauss' ready interpretation of offerings as sacrifices.

Adjacent to the *hungnaip* stone objects' shelter was an earth oven pit in which the participants cooked certain cuts from slaughtered pigs with heated stones, including meat from the back, belly pork and stomach. Before laying the fire to heat the stones, they placed a small *hul* (pork piece) on a leaf in the oven hole, and spat on it while chewing a pepper plant leaf, calling on the attacking ancestor spirit to come and "eat" the aroma of the burning meat. Someone would rub the unwell individual's body gently with a tree fern frond while muttering phrases such as "we are killing a pig, don't 'eat' so-and-so [the sick person]"; the fern is that routinely cooked with pork and "shows" the molesting spirit that they had killed a pig for it and to stop its attack. Sometimes, while pork cooked, men painted their ancestor stones black and red, using charcoal mixed with cosmetic oil (coming from Lake Kutubu to the south where people tap it from swamp trees [Sillitoe 1979c]) and red ochre, to further "please" the residing ghost.

During the rite at a water pool they likewise cooked pork in an earth oven, wrapping small pieces of meat in large tree fern frond parcels that they threw into the flooded pothole shouting out "Weeeeeeeeeeee" to attract the attention of spirits in the locality and repeating the names of various dead kin, urging them to join in the feast "Kem, its yours, eat", and judging by the size of the water ripples the number of ghosts that have taken the meat parcel. Another water location frequented by *towmow* (ghosts) was a flooded earth oven pit in a poorly drained spot with a small tunnel excavated on the downhill side dammed with a wide flat stone. There was a club stuck in the centre with some pig tethers wound around it used to dispatch animals offered there. After clubbing, the officiant thrust the snout into the water-filled pit displacing the blood reddened water through the tunnel, so that it flows out across the ground below, calling the ghosts in the vicinity to come and "eat" of the bloody water, and of the smell of the singeing bristles when they butchered the pig. Covering what remained of the bloody water in the bottom of the pit with a lining of banana leaves, the participants cooked the pig there with hot stones. When they removed the pork and shared with relatives present, they blocked off the hole in the pit again with the stone to fill again with water ready for the next time, and they wound the tether off the animal's front trotter around the club with the others; the sight of these, they said, further "pleased the ghosts", reminding them of all the offerings made there.

The fireplace spirits are likened to frightening snakes, and during offerings some men held a pig while another rammed a sharpened length of wood up its nostrils several times to promote a copious blood flow over the embers. They then pushed the hapless creature's snout into the fire's ashes, blowing along it and muttering invitational phrases such as the above, calling on the resident snaky spirit to accept the offering of blood and singeing snout bristles (Fig. 4). The officiant then used a stripe-painted club to drive a pronged wooden implement through the

snout and into the ashes shouting "stop it, stop it". They subsequently took the pig outside for bristle singeing and butchering on a bed of fern leaves to soak up the blood, while others present prepared an earth oven in which to cook the meat. Everyone present, men and women shared the meat on these occasions. In some rites, such as the *hwiybtowgow* performed to cure sick persons attacked by ancestor spirits or forest demons, they cooked some of the pig's internal organs with hot stones in a length of tree fern trunk pushed into the ground and hollowed out to act as a receptacle and erected behind a leafy screen to separate the actors from the lethal spectral forces invited to participate in the rite (Sillitoe 1996: 210-213).

When *towmow* (ghosts) resided in the leafy sapling bower behind a men's house they were "weak" and caused minor illnesses. The rite there occurred at night and started with the officiating relative standing outside in the darkness and reciting a spell, returning with some nettles that he hit the sick person with while shouting at him. He then took the pig brought for the offering and holding it firmly with the help others rammed a cassowary quill up into its nostrils with rapid repeated jerks, holding the struggling creature so that the blood flowed freely from its snout over a prepared pad of moss, banana and fern leaves, while someone else delivered some blows on the animal's head to kill it. The healer took the pig and went outside again making low whistles, here and there, and returned to hold firstly the pig's snout on the sick man's chest and then the bloody moss-leaf bundle. Next he took a hollow section of cassowary quill and put it several times on the man's chest, sucking flesh into the tube and then spitting saliva onto a leaf, which he inspected closely; clear spittle was a good sign. Meanwhile some of those present butchered the pig and put it to cook in an earth oven dug in the foyer of the men's house. They gave the head to the healer, who took it outside to the bower where he kindled a fire and offered the singeing smell of the head's bristles and a small piece of meat to lurking *towmow* (ghosts), whistling to attract their attention; he took the pig's head as recompense for his services.

Another procedure to ward off fatal illness was the "seedling pandanus planting" rite (Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 43, 44), often performed if a person dreamt of his own death or of seeing a relative's corpse, interpreted as a message from the *towmow* (spirit) world. While muttering a spell, the officiant smeared a tuft of hair on the individual's head with pig's blood and red ochre, in the belief that the *wezow* (life force) enters and exits through the top of the head and this secured the "door" so that it cannot leave. The dreamer then stood clenching between his teeth the liver, tongue, a rib and cut of pork, while the spell-reciter took a pandanus seedling and red-leafed balsam plant in one hand and a cane grass shoot and the club used to kill the pig in the other, and passed these down either side of his body and pushed them firmly into holes dug at his feet. These plants grow vigorously and so the dreamer will stay "rooted" in life, his "life force" not wandering off; the holding of the pig flesh in his mouth symbolizes this further with him clenching tightly onto his "life force" in place of that of the slaughtered pig, which is reminiscent of sacrifice, such a life for a life exchange being a focal feature of sacrificial beliefs. The spirit force causing the person's unease is again invited to enjoy the spilt blood and singeing bristles' smell, while those present shared the pork butchered and cooked in an earth oven, with the dreamer enjoying some choice cuts.

Another rite that featured pig organs was that performed to cleanse men who attributed ill-health to female pollution sickness (Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 110, 111). The Wola believe that men fall sick if they come into contact with menstrual blood, which collects in the chest cavity, poisoning heart and lungs (Sillitoe 1979b). The purification rite to nullify the effects of pollution involved the slaughter of a pig, from which the officiator, who knew the necessary spell, took the tongue attached by the windpipe to heart and lungs. After wrapping the organs around with certain leaves, he dipped the parcel in the pig's blood and muttering a spell rubbed it several times down the sick man's body from throat to abdomen to "clean" his internal organs. The pig's healthy pink vitals "showed" the victim's insides the "way", how they would "look" when clean, which is not a notion associated with animal sacrifice. A man may participate in the rite more than once, depending on the extent of the pollution, judged by the rate of his recovery. The officiator again received a handsome cut from the slaughtered pig, and the owner distributed the rest of the pork to his relatives and friends.

Following a death, relatives might perform a rite to put the attacking spirit out of action (Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 105-107); likewise the Mbowamb offered "up a sacrifice as part of the mourning and burial rites […] to placate" the deceased and to "persuade him to leave the settlement now that he is a spirit" (Strauss 1990: 277). Similar to other Wola rites, these were subject to variation, depending on the participants' attitudes on any occasion, and knowledge and understanding of associated rubric (Lewis 1980: 95-97), unlike the pseudo-formal accounts given here; albeit their core beliefs are constant, for instance the presence of malevolent ancestral spirits. They sometimes erected a dense leafy fence between the grave and homesteads to keep the ghost away from them, with a gap left in the middle where they trapped it. Two men who knew the necessary spell blackened their faces and bodies with powdered charcoal, and decorated themselves with white clay designs and wore coloured leaves in their hair to "dazzle" any ghosts. They clubbed pigs adjacent to the fence where the ghost lingered, which consumed the blood spilt, and then carried the animals to the deceased's house, arranging them with their snouts in the fireplace, and as in the fireplace rite pushed spikes into them to stimulate blood flow, while muttering a spell, culminating with the banging in of a trident to blind and frighten off any ghosts. Next they carried the pigs back to the leafy barrier and put them with their snouts pointing to the gap, stimulating blood flow further with more spike jabs while they recited a spell to attract nearby ghosts, and hammered another trident into the ground with shouts of "stop, stop", erecting a fence around it to trap the attracted

ghosts (Fig. 5). After some further acts similarly intended to blind and immobilise lurking spirits, the participants returned home where one of the deceased's close relatives cooked a pig's liver, which he bespelled as he stabbed it with a tree fern pin, before his kin shared it to strengthen them against further ghost attacks. Again there was no hint of any notions of sacrifice. Meanwhile others singed and butchered the pigs and prepared the earth oven to cook them, the officiants receiving selected cuts, such as neck joint, intestines and head.

SACRIFICES AS GIFTS

When people say that they share slaughtered animals with supernatural beings, they may arguably think that they are offering a gift, as suggested by Tylor (1871: 340, 341) and Spencer (1895: 96, 97), and also by Hubert & Mauss (1899), who again drew heavily on classical, Semitic and also Hindu practices in their discussion of sacrifice. The latter pair argued, reflecting Durkheim's distinction, that in sacrifices the "profane enters into relations with the divine", during which the "sacrifier" deprives himself and gives"[2], but does so in expectation of "a selfish return […] if he gives, it is partly to receive" something back and the act takes on the "form of a contract", indeed "there is perhaps no sacrifice that does not have something contractual" about it, where the "two parties involved exchange their services" (Hubert & Mauss 1899: 134, 135). It is a theme picked up a century later by Strathern & Stewart (2008a, b) who refer to "sacrifice […] as a kind of gift […] to the gods/spirits/ancestors" such that "exchange and sacrifice" comprise – reflecting their Highland New Guinea perspective – an "interlinked network of practices constituting a local cosmos", functioning "both as a kind of offering or compensation and as a means of establishing a moral bond with the spirits" particularly where these are "spirits of dead kinsfolk" (Strathern & Stewart 2008a: xiii, xv, xix). In a recent communication they stress that "there is always the element of prestige and exchange that pervades everything in the Highlands" and that this is an aspect of the "whole eco-cosmological system of values" that features "both *do ut des* and *do ut abeas* functions" (Strathern & Stewart pers. comm. 2021)[3]. And further, as they note (Strathern & Stewart 2008a: xxiii), the ethnography of Strauss (1990: 131) confirms this view among the Mbowamb, who talk about the "spirit of the dead" being "prepared to give back the soul of the sick […] in exchange for a suitable sacrifice". Strauss goes on to note the reciprocal nature of the arrangement to their minds, for the "dead are dependent on the sacrifices offered" being "sustained by the life-force of the sacrificial animals" while the "reverse is equally true, for it is on the dead that the living depend for health", in short the "living and the dead

Fig. 5. — Re-enacting the burial fence rite with a pig. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

are thus dependent on each other" reciprocally (Strauss 1990: 271). It parallels relations between living kinsfolk. Similarly on Malekula, the "ancestral spirits are 'kept alive' by being 'fed' by the spirits of […] boars continually sacrificed", though the *quid pro quo* here is that "the sacrificer may obtain entry into the life after death" (Layard 1955a: 391; 1942: 225).

Viewed in this way, the killing of pigs by the Wola when someone is ill involves a sacrifice, comprising the prestation of an animal to the ancestor who is divined as responsible for "eating" the sick person; albeit their concern to incapacitate malicious ghosts too undermines the association. As a gift it is tantamount to an exchange between the living and the dead, the offering pleasing the attacking spirit and persuading it to desist. This offering of a pig is a patent extension of Wola perceptions of their social existence and behaviour from the living to the dead. They believe that the exchange of wealth, which promotes co-operation among the living, will also smooth out relations with the dead. This is a widely recognised aspect of such behaviour across the region: "In the New Guinea Highland cultures […] the great pig-killing festivals", which may be seen as "sacrificial rites before supranormal powers are expressions of reciprocity" where the "paradigm is that of exchanging goods" (Swain & Trompf 1995: 136, 137). Following the above early writers on the topic, the transactional focus of sacrifice arguably extends globally. In his widely cited commentary on African sacrifice, for instance, Evans-Pritchard (1956: 276), who was markedly influenced by French sociological theory, observes that "Nuer sacrifice is clearly a gift of some sort" and he reports that these Nilotic people even "say that they are giving God […] a gift" that has to be "something which stands for a life". There are some clear parallels with Wola ideas, for instance the "Nuer say that the blood and the

2. They distinguished between the beneficiary, the "sacrifier", and the person who performs the sacrificial slaughter, the "sacrificer" (Hubert & Mauss 1899: 10).

3. *Do ut des* "I give so that you can give back", and *do ut abeas* "I give so that you will keep away from me". See also Strathern & Stewart 2008b.

Fig. 6. — Demonstrating the sorcery killing of a pig (N.B. Pig was dead). Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

chyme belong to God", which Evans-Pritchard suggests is a "way of saying that the life belongs to him", and they "surrender in sacrifice, the most precious thing they possess" their highly valued cattle being equivalent to pigs (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 213, 248). Furthermore they "give something to get rid of some danger or misfortune, usually sickness" and "ideas of […] exchange, bargain, and payment are very evident in Nuer sacrifices, as the words by which they refer to them indicate." (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 276).

PIGS IN SORCERY RITES

Pigs featured prominently in sorcery activities too. While these are not contexts where notions of sacrifice would seem appropriate, the rites performed are similar in many regards to those described above, which poses some questions regarding the relevance of the foregoing notions, be they spirit world exchanges or some other favoured interpretation. These sortilegious activities vary in their particulars, which is understandable for rites conducted clandestinely and surrounded with secrecy, but feature the same broad themes (Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 49-51, 117-121). They occurred at night, not only to ensure secrecy but also because this was when the target of the attack, the unsuspecting sleeping victim's *wezow* (life force), wandered around during dreams. They took place on elevated locations so that the sorcery force could "see" over the country to its target. The participants, one of whom knew the procedure and spells, killed a pig by winding a length of vine round its snout, and up around its neck to strangle it, while thrusting a cassowary bone dagger into the animal's ear or snout to produce a copious flow of blood. A spell was muttered as the animal writhed in pain, inciting the sorcery force to kill the enemy by "eating" some of his vital organs. Alternatively, they might hoist the pig up over a tree branch by a vine around its neck and then shoot it with an arrow (Fig. 6). Sometimes they slapped both the pig's ears simultaneously to put the intended victim soundly to sleep and not hear anything. According to Strauss (1990: 98), sorcery among the Mbowamb "requires that a sacrifice be offered to the group's own spirits so that they "go on ahead" and persuade the protective spirits of the victim" to give him up, but no Wola person has ever made such a suggestion.

In the *hul tort* version of sorcery, the spell-holder pushed blades of sweet flag up the creature's nostrils with a fork made of fruit bat leg bones, which caused the victim's nose to bleed and block up, inhibiting breathing and resulting in death. He cultivated the flag plant secretly and doused it in blood collected from the pig's snout each time he called on the *tort* force or it would attack him in anger; an act that arguably has sacrificial connotations. Next the sorcerer held a red painted club to his mouth and repeated the spell, then clubbed any remaining life from the pig, metaphorically beating the life out of the victim, and then threw the club to hit a nearby tree, portending the sorcery force similarly "hitting" the victim. In the *woktoiz* version of sorcery they finished the pig off with a large stone from the earth oven and placed its carcass on a rough table of wooden slats to singe off the bristles with a flaming grass torch while reciting a spell to attract the sleeping victim's roaming life force to the forthcoming pork meal so that they could kill it. In butchering the pig, the sorcerer removed the liver and wrapped it around the hot club-stone, parcelling it up in a leaf wrapped bundle and held it above a small fenced off area while whistling to lure the life force of someone from the targeted community within, and then he hit the ground inside repeatedly with the parcel to kill it. When they unwrapped the liver to eat, they threw the stone to bounce off a nearby tree, again signifying the sorcery "hit" on the enemy. In *hul tort* sorcery they used the kidneys and some belly pork instead, the sorcerer stabbing the former repeatedly with the bat bone fork and the latter with a cassowary bone dagger to push in blades of sweet flag, causing the victim to suffer painful renal failure. Next he prepared two forked sticks onto which he spears kidneys and pork, which they incinerate with some sweet flag over two fires, while muttering the spell and blowing on the smoke to send the sorcery force like the "wind" towards the intended community. Finally, the participants cooked the pork in an earth oven and shared out the meat, which they distributed to other men back home, none of whom may accept food from women or engage in sexual

intercourse for three moons because no woman or child can be exposed to the supernaturally charged pork.

When divination indicates that sorcery was causing someone's illness, the ensuing curing rite sought to ward off the attacking force (Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 45-47, 130-133). After rubbing the sick person with stinging leaves to hurt and frighten it off, the healer blackened and decorated himself as in the mortuary rite and strangled a pig by binding vine again around the animal's snout and neck, while muttering a spell. This inhibited the sorcery force, which is feared for its bite and eating vital organs, figuratively securing its mouth. He killed the animal by clubbing it with a stone smeared with red ochre and held it over a small bowl-shaped banana-leaf-lined hole while thrusting a sharpened bat's bone up its snout to induce a copious flow of blood. After topping up the bowl with water he looked at the surface to find the victim's *wezow* (reflection) to save it (Fig. 7). He smeared some short wooden stakes with the bowl's contents and after folding the leaves over, drove these in around it with the ochred stone and then scraped earth over the hole to bury its dangerous contents. He took some of the remaining stakes and while reciting a spell passed them down either side of the victim's body and banged them into the ground between the toes and behind the heel. He also twirled together a twist of hair on his head, as in the foregoing "seedling pandanus" rite, and smeared it with some of the bowl's bloody contents while muttering a spell. He hammered further bloody stakes into the ground around and inside the attacked person's house to frighten and exclude the sorcery force. There is no idea of sacrificially appeasing the attacking sorcery force, rather the aim is to nullify it. Finally, shouting out the names of possible places where the sorcery might have come from, he threw the stone away such that it hits a tree, thus repeating the sorcerer's actions and turning the sorcery back on the attackers. Meanwhile others present butchered the pig and put the meat in an earth oven to cook. Again, only men could eat the pork and must subsequently observed food and coital taboos; the healer received the head, stomach and neck joint. It was a good omen if the sick individual could eat some of the pork.

The relatives of someone whose death is attributed to sorcery sought to identify those responsible to take their revenge and they might challenge suspects to a *komay* retributive divination, which is believed to reveal those guilty of sorcery (Sillitoe 1987; Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009:123-128). Some days prior to the rite both sides chanted accusations and denials at one another, inviting *towmow* (ghosts) to attend and mete out supernatural punishment to the other party for false accusations or fake denials, which was unusual behaviour because the living usually sought to avoid attracting the attention of ghosts for fear of attack, arguably a confused sacrifice-like invitation impulse, if one at all. On the agreed day men from both sides met under a designated large tree, and faced one another chanting menacingly and rattling their bows and arrows together in threat gestures, while two of them, one from either side, jointly clubbed a pig using timber from a structure that had supported the corpse during mourning and carried his essence that was transferred to the pig. They effected further transference by burning some of the deceased's personal possessions on the fire over which they singed off the animal's bristles, both infecting the meat further and wafting smoke carrying the deceased's "odour" up into the tree where the summoned ancestral spirits "sat", so inciting them to strike down the lying party. In butchering the pig, they took the heart, lungs, liver, head and belly pork strips to cook in a specially constructed raised oven comprising the crown of a tree fern driven into the ground with a sheet of bark lashed around it to give a container, as mentioned previously, while they cooked the remainder in a normal earth oven pit. They divide the contents of the raised oven equally between both sides and those subjecting themselves to divinatory adjudication rubbed the cut of pork they received on the deceased's jawbone to imbue it further with his essence before eating it, so promoting the efficacy of the rite to identify and punish the liars, and they swore an oath declaring the truth of their accusations or denials. All those present subsequently shared the remainder of the cooked pig.

Fig. 7. — Re-enacting search for a sick person's reflection in a leaf bowl of bloody water. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

PIGS IN COMMUNAL RITES

The occasional large community wide rites may serve to promote general wellbeing or alleviate distress in times of adversity, and have clearer parallels with sacrificial acts. The *saybel* ritual, staged once a generation, was arranged to persuade *towmow* (ghosts) not to attack their kin and ensure their success in coming exchange transactions (Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009:129, 130, 138, 139, 142-145). The last *saybel* was staged in the early 20th century, which brings us to another shortcoming, namely that this account presents the cults and rites as if they follow a fixed liturgy (according to individuals' memories of single events in which they participated), whereas they were subject to considerable variation, as noted for other rites (compare accounts of similar, even the same, cults elsewhere: Strauss

Fig. 8. — Some *hungnaip* (ritual stones) hidden in adjacent hole from missionaries. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

1990: 285-327; Wiessner & Akii Tumu 1998: 179-213; Strathern & Stewart 1999; Reithofer 2006: 122-177). The first stage involved building a new "house" for the sponsoring community's *hungnaip* ancestor stones (Fig. 8) and adjacent a shelter with the earth oven in which they cooked certain cuts from offered pigs including internal organs, neck and belly pork. When completed, they slaughtered some pigs for their ancestors in the same manner as described above for sick kin and put a side of pork to cook in the ancestor stones' house, which only the men present could consume whereas everyone shared in the other meat. While the pork was cooking in the spirit house, the men performed a special shuffling dance carrying valuable pearl shells. The next stage of the *saybel* ritual involved the construction of the "long neck house", so called because it had a tall spire-like roof. It featured a large offering of marsupials cooked in its earth oven, following which the participants burned the house down. The final stage extended over two days, the first featuring a large dance and the second the slaughter of many pigs, some again killed and butchered in ritual offerings at the ancestor stones' house.

The *sor kem* was another generational ritual that featured the construction of a large building containing a long earth oven pit (Reithofer 2006: 133-145; Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 24-31). On the first day men congregated at the house where the officiator killed a small pig, removed the fatty strip of belly pork and cut it into chunks that he put on a cordyline leaf and distributed to those present while muttering a spell that expressed the ritual's aims of again ensuring the host community's well-being and future exchange transaction successes. The participants cut the fatty chunks into small pieces and running to-and-fro threw these over the house chanting to attract the *towmow* (ancestor spirits) to congregate on the other side and "eat" the pork, the house acting as a barrier to protect them from dangerous direct contact. The next day before dawn two young men, who played a central role in the ritual, stood with special decorations waiting for the sun to shine on them, which signaled the killing of many pigs (there are parallels with the Kaima cult of neighbouring Enga speakers to the north. Wiessner and Akii Tumu 1998: 184, 185). The young men retired to the *kem* house where men brought *mabera* (neck cuts) and *kagabay* (sides of pork)[4]. They cut the neck pork into small pieces and threw these into the fire heating the oven stones inside the house, as a further offering to their *towmow*, calling out the names of deceased kin to come and eat the meat. The pork sides they draped over a horizontal pole in a display, most of the meat featuring in a large secular, socio-political exchange as described below; some pork went to the two adolescents and officiator, who also butchered the previous day's small pig, his too, to cook in an earth oven. The *kem* pair stayed secluded in the house for one "moon" afterwards wearing ochred barkcloth hats donned during the ritual, being told that the "sun must not see you" nor any woman. They had to avoid homesteads when they went out and observed certain food taboos, like all the community. They slaughtered and cooked a small pig at the end of their seclusion, and when sharing out the pork between themselves they marked the conclusion by using a trotter to push off their barkcloth hats.

The *iyshpondamahenday* was yet another ritual that required the building of several structures. The motivation is redolent of sacrifice. People resorted to it irregularly in hard times, such as when crops failed and famine was imminent, to appease the spirit of a fair-skinned woman called Horwar Saliyn whom they believed responsible for unfavourable weather (Sillitoe 1996: 89-95; Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 91-94; there are again parallels with neighbouring Enga speakers and their *Enda Yainanda* [Female Spirit Cult] cult [Wiessner & Akii Tumu 1998: 318] and the *Amb Kor* [Female Spirit Cult] of the Mbowamb [Strathern & Stewart 1999]). Similar to the Wola, "only when a plague, a series of deaths […] or a general scarcity of food […] reminded the *Mbowamb* of the their 'people from above'" did they stage rites and make "sacrifices […] to persuade them to 'hand it down' again", that is, the force of life and growth (Strauss 1990: 117). Several Was valley *sem* communities participated in the *iyshpondamahenday*, each having a couple of men represent them. These men started off at Horwar in the Was valley where Saliyn came from, building a long house there, the gable ends decorated with pearl shells, living there secluded from others, observing a range of food taboos and engaging in secret ritual activities orchestrated by those who knew the requisite spells. After staging a colourful dance to the clapping together of pandan leaves, the representatives visited the places along the valley where the mythical Saliyn had rested on her journey, at each location the nearby homesteads had built a house and leafy screen decorated with pearl shells. A girl led a *hundbiy* (red-bristled) pig on a tether up to every house visited, starting at the Horwar long house. She approached along a tunnel formed by the outstretched arms of those present who held a length of vine aloft that led up to the doorway. The occupants it was said killed and burnt the animals entire as an offering to Saliyn's spirit, whereas they actually cooked and ate them, the spilt blood and singeing bristle odours appeasing her spirit. After visiting these places, the men resumed normal life, all expecting their intercession to persuade her to relent and fend off further hardship.

4. The former is the chunky cut from the back of the animal's neck and the latter comprises the front and rear legs attached together by the flank off one side.

The *timp* was the last cult to occur before the arrival of Christianity. It also featured the erection of several structures including a large building with a characteristic sloping ridge roof and small room at the rear, and adjacent lean-to pig sties to accommodate and display animals before their slaughter (Pretty 1969: 21-23; Sillitoe 2017: 210-214). After construction, the participants killed some pigs to inaugurate the cult, those contributing pigs being inducted into it (Ryan 1961: 265-287; Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 151-158; Fig. 9). They slaughtered the pigs to the muttering of a spell over a two-metre-deep hole excavated nearby and covered with a bark-shingle roof, so that the blood spilled collected in it for the *towmow* (ancestor spirits) to feast on. The splitting of firewood also featured the muttering of spells, and if the wood did not ignite immediately this indicated that the *towmow* (spirits) were not satisfied with the offering-cum-sacrifice and the participants would have to find another pig to slaughter. They cooked the pork in a long earth oven trench dug in the main room, except for the stomachs, intestines and belly pork strips that they cooked in a small circular oven in the rear room, as these demanded special treatment being the parts customarily taken by women as theirs to distribute and consume, and related to their exclusion from the cult. When cooked, the spell holders cut up the small oven contents and distributed to the participants from the small room's rear door to eat while standing outside. After distributing and eating the pork from the main oven, they collected up all the bones and tied them up in a palm spathe bundle while muttering a spell, which was likened to tying up the bones of deceased kin, immobilising their *towmow* (spirits) so that they were unable to attack because "too weak to do so".

After initiating the cult, men killed further pigs at intervals over several months to promote community well-being by both keeping the spirits happy and disabling them from "eating" their relatives, causing illness and death. They followed the same routine. Besides these periodic pig offerings, if someone fell sick while the cult was on-going, relatives would make offerings there to promote recovery if divination indicated that the *towmow* (spirit) responsible was residing in the cult house. When they tired of the cult and its demands, communities arranged a two day event to mark the end. The first day was a feast of wild game, largely marsupials, which required men to spend considerable time hunting in the forest, as previously in the *saybel* rite. The second day featured a large pig kill and colourful dance around the cult house. After dancing for a while, the participants went to the cult house rear door to join two of their number dressed like women in mourning, who emerged with the bundle of bones, accumulated over the months on a platform in the small room, slung on a pole like a corpse, and accompanied them into the nearby grassland where they dug a "grave" in which to bury the bones, which further inhibited ancestral ghosts attacking kin. When the "burial party" returned, they opened the earth ovens and distributed the pork, again in a secular, socio-political exchange. On both days women and children shared in the meat distribution too, marking the end of the taboo on them consuming cult pork.

Fig. 9. — Clubbing a pig across snout. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

SACRIFICE AND SOCIALITY

Similar large communal rites occurred elsewhere, as noted for the Mbowamb in the introduction to this essay. Among these people "myths about origin and descent" of social groups show that "the hidden power" responsible for their existence "wants sacrifices to be made" (Strauss 1990: 35). These events are "consequently the affair of the community as a whole", as Strauss (1990: 271) points out, going on to use "the term 'invocation to the sky beings' for this sacrificial ceremony" (Strauss 1990: 281), a key feature of sacrifice for many. Here the "offering up of sacrifices is the means of gaining their favour, of persuading them to act for rather than against people" (Strauss 1990: 330; original underlining). On Malekula island there was a "long cycle of rites" connected with "the sacrifice of the Maki" cult, which climaxed with "tuskers […] sacrificed on" a "stone-platform […] 200 or more valuable animals […] attached to long lines of small upright stones" (Layard 1942: 14). It demanded laborious preparations of a "dancing-ground", which Layard (1942: 61) called the "Place of Sacrifice", where participants erected a "roofed structure" and large monolithic stones. These cult activities demand co-operation, which relates to the issue of sociality. For the Malekula population, the "act of sacrifice" was central to society, being "social in so far as it" served to "maintain the tribal system" (Layard 1955a: 344). And according to Strauss (1990: 42) the "best thing the men have" in the Western Highlands is the "community they form by virtue of making sacrifice together" where a "sacrificial meal […] serves to strengthen communal bonds and ensure prosperity". Furthermore, the Mbowamb believe that by "eating the sacrificial meat, the living share food with the dead, and this re-establishes the all-important harmonious relationships" (Strauss 1990: 132).

This recalls Robertson Smith's (1889) argument mentioned earlier about commensality and social bonding being a defining feature of sacrificial activities. It sits uneasily with

Fig. 10. — A father and son butchering a pig. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

Fig. 11. — Sides of pork displayed on tok 'pole' at pig kill. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

the Wola ethnography, for no one in the Was valley has ever voiced such associations, and their apparent aim in many rites suggests the reverse, in seeking to drive malicious spirit forces away not commune with them. The notion of tribal or clan solidarity also sits awkwardly, as Layard (1955a: 344) inadvertently intimates when he points out that the "act of sacrifice is […] at one and the same time an individual act and a social one", and Strathern & Stewart (2008a: xxiv) subsequently indicate in drawing attention to the "individual dimensions of ritual action", which these authors connect with their "concept of the relational-individual". This concept matches well the social arrangements in the Was valley (Sillitoe 2010: 41) where individuals, embedded within kin networks that feature prescribed reciprocal relations, enjoy a degree of autonomy that is difficult for the state-governed to comprehend. Communal cult activities that demand cooperation present certain organisational challenges in such an acephalous context, as noted below, and belie notions of group solidarity, more concerning network affirmation. The distribution of pork following the slaughtering, butchering and cooking of large numbers of pigs in communal events demonstrates the effect, with chunks of meat changing hands and flowing around the social network.

THE PIG KILL

It was usual in the New Guinea Highlands for rituals to pass in and out of vogue, with cults moving around the region. The latest one is Christianity introduced, as noted, by missionaries when the outside world entered the valleys in the mid 20th century. Its liturgy has no room for killing pigs, unlike previous communal rituals, in which their slaughter featured centrally, as described, both to appease dangerous supernatural forces and as community wide socio-political exchange events. These large pig kills continue, as previously, in the Was valley but as secular occasions featuring the public exchange of pork with no overt reference to appeasing ancestor spirits (Sillitoe 1979a: 256-269; Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009:27-28).

The hosts prepare for a *showmay tok lorokmay* (pig beam kill – literally: pig horizontal beam [on which men display sides of pork] [we] kill) for some weeks before the event, ensuring that there are sufficient stones for the oven, erecting the *tok* (horizontal beams) for the pork displays, constructing long wooden slat tables, collecting tree ferns and banana leaves to go on these, digging the long earth oven ditch, and collecting and chopping up a large amount of firewood. At dawn on the morning of the event, pigs arrive on the *howma* (clearing) where men slaughter them by bludgeoning across the bridge of the snout with heavy wooden clubs. Next they *showmay iriy haeray* (scorch pig bristles – literally: pig hair burn) off over fires, scraping the skin away with lengths of wood, and then arrange the carcasses on their backs, legs sticking up stiffly, on a bed of banana leaves ready to butcher, keeping each person's pigs together. The *showmay say bay* (pig butchering – literally: pig cut do; Fig. 10) follows a conventional pattern with two parallel cuts down either underside, from neck to loins, and removal of the fatty belly pork strip. Next the butcher peels the flesh away from the ribs until the legs are splayed on the ground, breaking the pelvis with a heavy blow, and then he abrades the exposed ribs on either side of the chest until he can break them by pushing down on the sternum bone, which he removes with attached broken ribs to expose the internal organs. Before removing these he knots the gullet to stop chime spurting out. When he pulls the organs out, he may mutter the pig's name several times[5], and hands the offal to a female relative to take away and *showmay iy delay* (wash out chyme – literally: pig chyme & excreta rinse). Finally, he separates and cuts through the flesh along the spine to give two sides of pork with a front and rear leg attached, and severs the head.

Participants drape the pork sides over the horizontal *tok* beam that runs the length of the oven trench and may spear heads on pronged sticks driven vertically into the earth (Fig. 11). The display of pork is one of the event's highpoints, a show of wealth and transactional competence. Men may shout out challenges to foes during the display, pointing out how it

5. When asked, no one could explain why they mutter the pig's name.

Fig. 12. — Filling earth oven with pork during a pig kill. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

Fig. 13. — Distributing pork cuts at conclusion of a pig kill. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

shows their ability to maintain harmonious relations through exchange and ridiculing them for upsetting social interaction. A man who kills several pigs usually butchers the largest animal himself while relatives assist with the others because a man can only butcher one pig in time to get the pork into the communal oven. While the butchering goes on, others *showmay haen day* (arrange the oven pit fire with the stones atop, and light it – literally: pig stone cook). When it has burnt through, men use wooden tongs to remove many of the stones and charred wood that have fallen in to make way for the pork, which they place in the banana leaf-lined pit along with hot stones and tree fern fronds to soak up blood and fat, finally covering the contents with further banana leaves and hot stones, and a layer of earth to give a long steaming bed (Fig. 12). During the two hours or so that the pork takes to *showmay soway* (cook – literally: pig cook [in pit with hot stones]), there is a lull in the proceedings and people mingle talking, smoking and eating titbits of pork, barbecued over flames or stewed in bamboo vessels. If rain threatens, men may reduce the time in the oven to complete the distribution of pork before it arrives.

There is an air of anticipation with the opening of the oven, men lifting the pork out onto banana leaves again, each in delineated piles, to *showmay karay* (cut up – literally: pig cut-up) into chunks for distribution to kin and friends. It is entirely up to the man who owns the pork to decide how to cut it up, which he judges according to the number of persons he plans to give pork. It is a demanding responsibility remembering all those who stand to receive pork and judging the carve-up appropriately, as I can personally testify, having to resort to pen and paper when I have had pigs killed, to organise the distribution I had in mind! Then comes the event's climax with the *showmay karuw tol bay* (pork distribution – literally: pig cut share do) where men stand with their pile of meat and shout the names of the recipients while holding the cut above their heads for them or a representative to take, starting with the largest joints of pork for close relatives mainly and working their way through to the smaller cuts for distant relatives and friends (Fig. 13). Some parts of the pig customarily go to the woman who herded the animal to distribute, these *tenon kaga sha tol bay* (women's shares – literally: woman's *kaga* part share do) comprise the jaw, tongue, brains, ribs, kidneys, intestines, tail and neck cuts, thin belly fat strips, and hock and trotters, although she may not get all of these if her male partner needs some of the meat to meet his transactional commitments.

There is no large feast following the distribution; people drift off to eat pork at home. They soon disperse, leaving the debris of the kill scattered across a deserted clearing except for scavenging dogs. It is the receipt not the consumption of pork that is collectively important. This is evident with men who kill pigs at the same event giving pork to one another, who may not put what they receive aside for their own consumption but add it to their pork pile to pass on to someone else. This redistribution may occur several times before the pork is eaten and sometimes continues for days after the event. The passage of meat from hand to hand traces out the interwoven social networks that spread across the region. The pork distribution illustrates the social connections radiating out from the men

giving out the meat, with close kin gathered around them and progressively more distant relatives and friends spreading out beyond them, merging with the crowds around other men who may include visitors not expecting to receive pork directly from pig kill participants but second, or third-hand from those who do. A pig kill event demonstrates the extent of participants' combined social networks with all the persons with whom they maintain relations turning up, expecting to receive pork. The large numbers of people gathered together give the occasion its buzz and prompts men to combine and share in the transactional triumph. The behaviour of participants demonstrates how exchange promotes sociability, reaffirming their relations and good intentions towards one another, and to ignore someone who expects to receive pork is an insult and signals a breakdown in relations[6].

RIGHTS TO PIGS

A pig kill is an occasion for men to demonstrate their transactional prowess by the number of pigs they kill and the amount of pork they distribute. Participation in such events affects their reputations and excelling at them contributes to renowned *ol howma* status. But taking part is challenging, particularly for individuals of higher standing because before a pig kill men have to settle their outstanding transactional commitments so as to demonstrate that they can afford to kill pigs, removing them from any further exchange circulation. Those persons engaged in ongoing exchange transactions with individuals intending to participate in a pig kill, such as those who have made a mortuary exchange investment that requires a return, claim indirect rights to animals. They are watchful of any disposal of pigs while still owed a repayment, particularly if a partner is tardy in making the expected return transaction. In short, men cannot afford to kill pigs if they are in debt, and will incur anger from their creditors and contempt from others if they do so, for recklessly disposing of wealth and likely defaulting later on their exchange obligations instead of meeting them.

The transactions include payments called *hentiya*[7], which men have to make to the women who ha+ve herded the pigs they intend to slaughter and also to any other partners. Those made to female herding partners publically acknowledge relinquishment of their shared rights and in some senses compensate them, more symbolically than materially, for their contributions. Women customarily pass on the wealth that they receive to their fathers, brothers or other close relatives; it comprises part of the series of transactions that take place between affines.

When some years have passed since a previous pig kill festival and some men think that they can meet their exchange commitments with some pigs to spare, they may moot the idea of an event sometime in the coming months. If the proposal gains traction, preparations start in earnest, not only on making the practical preparations for the occasion but also settling outstanding exchange commitments. The weeks leading up to the event are frenetic for those planning to take part with them engaged in intense negotiations as they clear their exchange obligations. The hyper-exchange activity, with increased numbers of persons visiting and conferring on arrangements, underlines the social interaction promoted by socio-political exchange. It can also paradoxically lead to dissension over the timing of the festival as some of those intending to participate struggle to meet their outstanding transactional commitments. On Malekula, Layard (1942: 378) reports similar "intense activity directed towards ensuring the proper supply of sacrificial animals", observing that "no man […] possesses at any one moment a great number of tuskers", but relying on a "complicated system of credits and debts" – that recalls the Wola exchange system – "many, if not the greater number […] do not enter the sacrificer's possession till they are presented to him on the actual day of sacrifice".

The arrangement of such communal events is exacting in stateless contexts. Those struggling to settle their exchange commitments are likely to include *ol howma* men of renown, who engage in above average exchange activity, who may try to use their marginal influence to manipulate the plans in their favour, although often unsuccessfully because they seek to favour themselves and not the majority. It illustrates how the acephalous socio-political order reveals the selfish and communal contradictions of human behaviour (Sillitoe 1979a: 289, 290; 2010: 26-84). When the majority see their way clear to proceed, they usually go ahead with the kill and oblige others hurriedly to settle their commitments if they can, so that they can participate. While a few men, even one alone, can decide to kill pigs independently of others, such small events are less exciting and bring less kudos, which are certainly considerations for ambitious prominent men, who would damage their reputations if they delayed and killed pigs after everyone else, even though they have more pigs than average.

SACRIFICE COSTS

The slaughter of pigs is a costly undertaking, which relates to another aspect of sacrifice, namely the forfeiting of something of value. This is the line that Raymond Firth (1963: 13 [italics original]) takes in distinguishing between an offering and a sacrifice; the difference for him concerns "*availability of resources*", from this perspective an offering "implies nothing about the degree or quality […] in relation to the total resources at the command of the giver", whereas a sacrifice conversely "implies that the degree or quality is significant – that the resources are limited" and that the act involves "giving up something at a cost". He draws heavily on African ethnography in making his argument, notably that of Evans-Pritchard who maintains that it is necessary, in part anyway, to "interpret Nuer sacrifice in terms of what a man loses, in the sense of

6. See the ABC film *Bird of the Thunderwoman* which features a large pig kill sequence (co-production of the Papua New Guinea Wildlife Division and the Australian Broadcasting Commission).

7. It is possible that this term derives etymologically from *hend* the word for a pig tether, although no one has ever suggested it.

abnegation", which is the meaning the "word 'sacrifice' has […] in our own language" where a person "deprives himself of something" (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 277, 278). In their more recent review of sacrifice and exchange, Strathern & Stewart (2008a: xiii), make the same point that "killing" an animal "represents a kind of destruction or expenditure of its capital value in the interest of presenting its body and life force to the world of spirit power".

The abnegation aspect certainly chimes further with Wola attitudes to killing pigs in times of sickness. While there was an exchange between the living and the dead, there was limited transactional interaction between the living, and the donors of pigs incurred something of a loss. While the owners of animals offered to the *towmow* spirits – when they did not come from the herds of the sick persons – demonstrated concern for the unwell individual, they did not stand to receive any reimbursement, although if the recipients recovered they may have reciprocated, particularly if the contributors in turn fell ill. Furthermore, the relatives and friends attending the rite incurred no formal obligation either to reciprocate the pork received in the associated low key private distribution of meat; although arguably the distribution of meat evened out over time when these people fell ill and offered up pigs. In addition, regarding costs, there were unlikely to be any negotiations over rights to the small pigs usually featuring in small scale rites and *hentiya* payments were unlikely to be offered or demanded, which was a sacrifice for women and their kin. They were further deprived because women and their children were sometimes forbidden from sharing in the pork that came from rites associated with the ancestors.

Predictably, the size of the pig was a consideration; large animals being far more valuable than smaller ones. For instance, F. E. Williams, the first anthropologist to visit the Wola, saw several pigs "sacrificed in connexion with the curing of illness" – which he noted, echoing the above comments, were "ostensibly an offering to placate the spirits of the dead, though they are of course consumed by the living" – and most significantly he discerned that the pigs "killed were all very small" (Williams 1939: 46), which contrasts with the large animals killed on grand public occasions. As Firth (1963: 19) points out "variation in the quality of the sacrifice and use of low-grade animals on occasion is not" only a material matter but also "involves an interpretation of the ideology of sacrifice". The behaviour of the Wola suggests that they viewed the need to offer pigs to ancestral spirits when someone was ill as an unavoidable imposition and they sought to minimise the cost. This attitude arguably contributed to their rapid Christian conversion too, with missionaries saying that their celestial God spirit would banish sickness-causing *towmow* spirits, which they backed up by making awesomely effective Western medicine available (Sillitoe & Sillitoe 2009: 159-162).

People were reluctant to kill a prized large pig in a small rite; neither the blood spilt nor the bristle aroma were after all commensurably more than for a smaller animal. Even so, though a small pig is less valuable and so more expendable, owners forwent the opportunity to rear it to a large animal that might feature in a prestigious festival or other socio-political exchange event. It was a deprivation to slaughter animals piecemeal in small events instead of on large festival occasions where men can demonstrate their transactional abilities and compete for reputation, and women their pig herding skills and achievements. People are keen to slaughter pigs at such large public events, the bigger the animals the better. In short, the size of the pig equated with the size of the event. They would much prefer to transact pork with the living in large public displays that earn them respect than slaughter a pig in a rite that may feature a transaction with the ancestors in the presence of a few relatives. It seems that if the notion of loss-incurring sacrifice applies at all to Wola rites, it pertains to the small private sickness rites but not to the large communal ritual cults that included publicly validated pig kill transactions, which is inconsistent and appears to rule out use of the term, as counselled by my old colleague. Evans-Pritchard (1956: 198, 199) also distinguished, arguably somewhat dubiously, between two classes of sacrifices, the personal and the collective, as God (or associated spirits) received the cattle killed in both.

Elsewhere it appears that people have less scope to choose which animals to offer up. The Mbowamb, for instance, believe that "spirits […] need sacrifices" for the "food containing […] sacrifice-smell" and so watch over pigs "that they do not stray", and say the "animals really belong to the […] dead", who have "first claim to them", and if "people use" them for any "other purposes […] the spirits of the dead are seized by "revenge anger" and send down disaster" (Strauss 1990: 119). When someone's sickness demands an offering, an initial step is to "establish which of the pigs in the herd the spirit has his eye on, for he would not be satisfied with just any pig chosen at random", which involves a divinatory procedure with a pig club (Strauss 1990: 131). Furthermore, if the "powers are angry […] and want to kill a man", they may "destroy his sacrificial animals" because they are theirs anyway, which recalls Evans-Pritchard's (1956: 277) challenge to the gift-exchange view, asking how there can be an "exchange or contract when one side in reality gets nothing" since in "Nuer sacrifices men eat the carcass of the victim", and all that the deity receives is the sacrificed animal's life, which is his in any case because "everything belongs to him" and if "he wants it he takes it". If animals belong to the supernatural powers, it also queries any concern over who has what rights to pigs when it comes to deciding what animals to slaughter, which is certainly a burning issue in secular contexts and, for the Wola, spiritual ones too.

RIGHTS IN PIGS

While the daily management of pigs is largely regarded as women's responsibility, men take over and dominate in their public dealing, where they compete to legitimate their social standing, successful transactions of pigs, as noted, contributing to respected status. But they cannot simply take possession of pigs and dispose of them as they think fit. The control of pigs is a complex issue involving two or more parties. Before they

Fig. 14. — A husband presents his wife with a hentiya 'pig payment'. Photo credits: P. Sillitoe.

can legitimately dispose of animals men have to settle others' rights in them to their satisfaction with aforementioned *hentiya* payments (Fig. 14). It is usual for at least two individuals to have interests in a pig, generally a man claiming possession and a woman responsible for herding the animal, commonly his wife, sometimes a mother, sister or daughter. They hold the pig *kahuwt* (together) that is they share rights in it (elsewhere in the Highlands pigs also belong in part to the women who herd them; see Lederman 1986: 212 on those living in the Mendi valley; Glasse 1968: 76 on the neighbouring; Feil 1984: 111 on the Enga). Another possible interested party with *kahuwt* rights may be a person with whom the herding couple have a *maha* (foster – literally: pig cause stand) relationship (I prefer the term foster to agist [cf. Hide 1981: 418-433; Bonnemère 1996: 174] that applies to the pasturing of others' cattle for a sum). A wide range of relatives agree to accept *maha* pigs from one another, often from close affines, usually as piglets after weaning off sows. The party accepting a *maha* pig agrees to make a payment to the giver – who remains the *showmayn ora* (pig's father) – at the time that he wishes to dispose of the animal, whether he slaughters it or passes it on to someone else in an exchange transaction. The *maha* payment varies depending on the relationship between the participants, the time that has elapsed since transfer of the pig, the animal's size, the expectations of the parties and what the fosterer is willing to offer – the payment being an opportunity for men to show generosity and so bolster their status.

The man whose household herds a pig may claim to be the final arbiter in decisions about the animal's fate because ultimately he claims the right to slaughter it if he so chooses. A woman is unlikely to do so – I have never seen, nor heard of a woman ever doing so, which is not to say that it is impossible, only very rare – although if small pigs in their care die women may butcher and cook them (sometimes men suspect their female partners of hastening the demise of weak animals to eat them, leading occasionally to disputes). This contrasts markedly with Anga speakers, among whom, according to Godelier (1986: 15, 16, 174), women have substantial rights over pigs. While it appears on public occasions that men control the fate of their pigs, private negotiations with the other stakeholders precede any event and inform their actions. Until he settles the claims of all parties with a stake in an animal to their satisfaction, a man would be unwise to do anything with it. It is necessary that they all agree over any action taken. While all parties subscribe to the same code about the proper way to dispose of pigs in different contexts, it is prioritising and choosing between these that may present problems when demands are likely to exceed the few pigs in any herd; ; for example, should one kill a pig at some event, such as in a sickness rite or a sorcery attack, or participate in an exchange transaction, such as contribute to a bridewealth or to meet a mortuary obligation, or today maybe sell an animal to raise cash for some purpose? The negotiations are often time consuming and can be fraught if the parties have different ideas. They may proceed in any of several directions, depending on relations between the persons, the proposed fate of the pig, and so on.

It is not possible to generalise about interactions over the disposal of pigs, which is expectable with the variety of personalities in any local community. The relations between those in a herding partnership, for instance, comprise a continuum, from overbearing men who force their wishes on female relatives to domineering women who scold their partners into complying with their wishes and in between there are those who reach decisions about their pigs relatively equably or alternatively there are those who are both forceful characters who engage in heated arguments, even sometimes physical confrontations (pig ownership is similar elsewhere in the Highlands, for example among the Awa [Boyd 1984: 34]). If his partner strongly opposes his plans for an animal's disposal, a man may increase the size of a *hentiya* payment in an attempt to break the deadlock. Women sometimes talk of the pigs in their charge as if they own them and sometimes exercise rights of disposal, particularly when they are small, giving them to others for example as *maha* (foster) pigs. The negotiations between *maha* partners to clear joint ownership rights can be equally variable. Sometimes the giver of a pig tries to drive a hard deal, depending on relations with the fosterer, how desperate he is to secure rights to the animal, and so on. The payments made can vary considerably. If the fosterer thinks that the other party is being unreasonable, he may threaten to refuse any *hentiya* payment, opting instead to share the pig, presenting its "father" with half the animal. It is brinkmanship. These negotiations may occur in private but in a small close-knit community they are not anonymous,

particularly if there are differences, which may reflect badly on a man's reputation for not properly managing joint pig rights with his partners. If he ignores others' opinions and presses ahead regardless, he will likely provoke a dispute that will tarnish his reputation not enhance it. Sometimes if the joint "owners" agree to act together in disposing of an animal, for example that it should go towards a shared relative's bridewealth or mortuary payment, the transaction may proceed with no *hentiya* payment.

Some commentators interpret women's participation in these arrangements as exploitative, who labour under a "false consciousness", in contributing substantially to pig keeping while men subsequently claim the right to use animals in highly regarded public events (Modjeska 1982, 1995; Josephides 1985; Lederman 1986; Strathern 1988). It is them who sacrifice their labour, bear the cost of seeing animals killed on various occasions, including rites. But women are fully aware of, and respect, the arrangements, expecting to play a major role in rearing and herding, while men transact pigs and distribute pork. They take pride in their achievements; after all it is excelling as pig managers that women earn respect and their equivalent of big man status. Furthermore, exploitation assumes the alienation of persons from the products of their labour. In no way do men deny women's achievements. At any public event where men transact live pigs or slaughter them, all those present know that their female relatives' efforts are central to their activities (Strathern 1972: 18, 19, 27, 133-135; Feil 1978). The *hentiya* payments show it. While these acknowledge their contributions, they do not compensate them for their work, so much as serve a key structural purpose, acting as transformation payments, representing the transfer of pigs from the production to transaction domain. The political-economic implications for the egalitarian Wola polity are significant, I argue, relating to the sexual division of labour, which encompasses many aspects of life including pig keeping (Sillitoe 2010: 430-453; 2017: 256-261). In short, those who exchange wealth have to transact it into existence, they do not produce it.

Today, people sometimes kill an animal in "business", that is, to sell its pork for cash, an increasingly common practice. If pigs fall ill, for instance, owners frequently kill them to prevent any spread of sickness, the Wola thinking that most swine illnesses are contagious (Sillitoe 2003: 278-280). A woman should not eat meat from a sick pig because there is a danger that she would contaminate other pigs in her care. They often sell the pork rather than distribute it to relatives and friends, money facilitating sale, making the evaluation of different sized cuts easier. Many do so without offering a *hentiya* payment, when their female herding partner may demand a share of the cash. The arrival of cash has confused customary expectations, as people are aware, sometimes discussing the implications, particularly when there is a dispute between men and women over the proper disposal of income. Whereas previously all wealth transacted over pigs passed to men, women passing on *hentiya* payments to their male kin, today they are demanding a share of any cash received to purchase commodities from trade stores[8]. It represents the encroachment of market arrangements on their lives, undermining the acephalous transactional order. If a man is away, as sometimes happens today with some men working elsewhere, a woman may dispose of small pigs as she thinks fit, even sell them and keep the money herself. She would be unwise to dispose of a large pig, sell it for example, without her partner's knowledge and consent, unless the animal falls sick when she may arrange as a matter of expediency for its slaughter and sell the pork in "business".

CONCLUSIONS: OFFERING OR SACRIFICE?

My mentor gave his "offering" advice while structural-functionalism still had some sway and the pronouncements of Africanists such as Evans-Pritchard had prominence. In his study *Nuer religion*, he maintains that sacrificial rituals feature the four key acts of: "presentation, consecration, invocation, and immolation", which among these Nilotes structure the "piacular […] substitution of lives of cattle for lives of men" that occur in "situations of danger arising from the intervention of Spirit in human affairs […] brought about by some fault" on the part of humans, as evidenced in the act of consecration that comprises a "transference on to the victim of the evil which troubles the sacrificer […] and departs with its life" serving in the "role of scapegoat" (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 208, 230, 272, 281). These four stages do not feature in Wola rites, nor do piacular or atonement concerns characterise them, nor the ritual slaying of animals serve as an act of expiatory communion. Lacking these defining Nilotic features of sacrifice, Wola rites appear to be offerings of some kind. Others think not, such as Strathern & Stewart (2008a: xxi) who include a discussion of the Nuer ethnography in their review of sacrifice, and see in it a "connection with New Guinea Highlands concepts of exchange and sacrifice". During his interpretation of Malekula sacrifices, Layard (1955a: 395-398) also gives a summary of the Nuer ethnography, where he sees similarities, albeit simultaneously engaging in dubious incestuous psychological analysis. According to him, when the Nuer "sacrifice a bull provided by" a bride's "father […] it must have an inner meaning" which Layard declares is her father "sacrificing his own father-daughter incestuous desire", which "pleases the Nuer spirits" (Layard 1955a: 396).

In contrast, on the island of Malekula, "boars are given in exchange for wives", which "represents the price that a man pays in terms of libido for ever having had incestuous desires" for his sister (Layard 1955a: 362). And while a sister "robs a man of his live boars", a mother "demands a total sacrifice" both to "sever the psychic umbilical cord" and to ensure that the "incestuous libido" is "entirely cut off with regard to the mother by killing the animal outright" (Layard 1955a: 379, 381, 382). According to Layard (1955a:

8. The Anga share the proceeds from jointly owned pigs equally when killed for sale (Lemonnier 1990: 32).

348), the "incest taboo" has the effect of "transforming […] incestuous desire into soul-substance", on which "Jung expanded […] showing how the incestuous libido withdrawn from mother and sister become internalised", and on Malekula it resulted in the "sacrificial system, on which […] the whole social organisation depends". He associates all this with kinship organisation, notably marriage, with an extended discussion of "circular connubium" arrangements (Layard 1955a: 363-371). When the "boar is sacrificed, the sacrificer" is "immolating the object which he has used" to "transform his deepest incestuous feelings"; it apparently "fulfils the function of an *alter ego* […] of which he is only dimly aware" (Layard 1955a: 342, 344, 402). It is noteworthy that this interpretation differs entirely from that in *Stone men of Malekula*, which is a typical ethnographic account for the time (Layard 1942). All this is supposedly indicative of a "condition of considerable unconsciousness" (Layard 1955a: 346), an assertion that suggests free rein to the writer's empirically unconstrained imagination, as demonstrated when Layard (1955b: 7) argues that there are parallels between the "dream of a schizophrenic, in which the sacrifice of a boar" featured and "those accompanying the sacrifice of tusked boars in Malekula" describing both as "forms of 'sacrifice' […] on a deep psychic level". He thinks that it is possible to "enter into the native's mind and find out, from what he says and does, and in what social and psychological setting the act of sacrifice takes place", what any activity "means" (Layard 1955a: 343). By which he intends that he can access the unconscious – or else admits that he fails to enter "the native's mind" – because he owns that "If the Malekulan were told that the boar represented incestuous desires or the sister, he probably would laugh" (Layard 1955a: 373). Frankly, Layard's interpretation tells us more about his mind and his unstable sexual life than it does about these Melanesian Islanders' concerns.

The recourse to "Jungian […] Self and […] Ego" (Layard 1955a: 345) starkly underlines the dangers of ethnocentric interpretation, the avoidance of which demands the careful use of terms as addressed here. It is a cardinal anthropological rule to exercise caution in any situation not to force distorting alien ideas on others. Although not as outrageous as Layard in his interpretation of sacrifice, Evans-Pritchard was accused of such distortion, in drawing Semitic parallels with Nilotic beliefs, regardless of his apparent recognition of the danger and disagreement with Robertson Smith's (1889: 378-392) Semitic-religion-derived formulation of establishing fellowship with God rather than persuading him to leave people alone (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 273-275). In his discussion of sacrifice, however, he asserts that the identification of "sacrificer with victim is […] quite explicit in some religions, in particular in certain Vedic, Hebrew, and Muslim rites" and likewise among the Nuer apparently "one consecrates and sacrifices […] oneself" and in so doing is "asking God to take away the evil" (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 279, 281). It is arguable that in his delineation of sacrifice Evans-Pritchard ethnocentrically leaned towards imposing his Catholic Christian beliefs (Engelke 2002: 5, 6; Larsen 2014: 107-111), as Leach pointed out in a characteristically waspish aside, commenting on "E-P's masterpiece *Nuer Religion"* that "cynics have remarked that it exhibits the Nuer as first-class Jesuit dialecticians" (Leach 1980: 24)[9]. The charge of allowing Christian ideas of sacrifice to cloud judgement of people's beliefs and rites may also be levelled at Strauss, who served as a missionary with the Lutheran Mission in the Western Highlands for decades (Stürzenhofeker 1990: xxiii-xxv). Similarly, biblical sacrifice influenced Layard who depended heavily for ethnographic information on the notes and publications of Father Jean Godefroy (1936), a Marist missionary, whom he credited with insight "regarding the spiritual life of the natives […] as essentially a 'mystery' in the sense in which the Church uses this word" (Layard 1942: xx).

Whatever, it seems that sacrifice only strictly applies to theistic religion, which clearly rules out ancestor-spirit-preoccupied Wola activities. While there are aspects of Wola ritual behaviour that seem to comply with sacrifice, there are others that do not. It is sometimes possible in this situation where no English word can capture adequately others' beliefs and actions to resort to a local term – as I have previously for key concepts for which there are no adequate English glosses (Sillitoe 1979a: 48; 2010: 10) – but there is no comprehensive term in the Wola language for the various activities discussed in this paper, other than the generic phrase *showmay lubtuw* (to kill pigs). The nearest is *dubiyay*, which refers to the killing of a pig in a sickness rite and could arguably be translated as "sacrifice". These issues pertain to the familiar postmodern problem, which Evans-Pritchard picked up on in his preface long before that oxymoron came into vogue, noting the "difficulty relates not to Nuer words but to our own" such that "sometimes even communication is difficult", although he seems to think that a universal vocabulary is feasible with borrowing terms "from native languages […] an indication of the failure to build up an adequate and agreed-upon terminology" by the discipline of anthropology (Evans-Pritchard 1956: vi).

Acknowledgements

I thank all of my Was Valley friends, past and present, for lively conversations about the practices discussed here, particularly the late Maenget Kem and late Mayka Kot for telling me about various events that they had participated in, and Wenja Neleb and Maenget Pes for gamely arranging re-enactments of some of the events. I also thank Frédéric Laugrand for inviting me to contribute to this *Anthropozoologica* volume and three unnamed reviewers for their comments on the paper.

9. E-P was Evans-Pritchard's sobriquet to those who knew him. In the book's preface he notes this ethnocentric tendency himself, which he thinks unavoidable, commenting that persons like him "who give assent to the religious beliefs of their own people feel and think, and therefore also write" with these in mind and when "I sometimes draw comparisons between Nuer and Hebrew conceptions, it is no mere whim but is because I myself find it helpful, and I think others may do so too, in trying to understand Nuer ideas" (Evans-Pritchard 1956: vi).

REFERENCES

BALDWIN J. A. 1982. — Pig rearing and the domestication process in New Guinea and the Torres Straits region. *National Geographic Society Research Reports* 14: 31-43.

BONNEMÈRE P. 1996. — *Le pandanus rouge : corps, différence des sexes et parenté chez les Ankave-Anga (Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée)*. Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris, 426 p. https://doi.org/10.4000/books.editionsmsh.1149

BOURKE R. M., ALLEN B. J., HIDE R. L., FRITSCH D., GRAN R., HOBSBAWN P., KONABE B., LEVETT M. P., LYON S. & VARVALIU A. 1995. — *Southern Highlands Province: Text Summaries, Maps, Code Lists and Village Identification*. A.N.U., Human Geography Department (coll. Agricultural Systems of Papua New Guinea Working Paper; 11), Canberra, viii + 162 p.

BOYD D. J. 1984. — The production and management of pigs: husbandry options and demographic patterns in an Eastern Highlands herd. *Oceania* 55: 27-49. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1834-4461.1984.tb02033.x

ENGELKE M. 2002. — The problem of belief: Evans-Pritchard and Victor Turner on 'the inner life'. *Anthropology Today* 18 (6): 3-8. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.00146

EVANS-PRITCHARD E. E. 1956. — *Nuer religion*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 336 p.

FEACHAM R. G. A. 1973. — The Raiapu Enga pig herd. *Mankind* 9 (1): 25-31. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1835-9310.1973.tb01370.x

FEACHAM R. G. A. 1975. — Pigs, people and pollution: interactions between men and environment in the Highlands of New Guinea. *South Pacific Bulletin* 25 (3): 41-45.

FEIL D. K. 1978. — Enga women in the *tee* exchange. *Mankind* 11 (3): 220-230. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1835-9310.1978.tb00653.x

FEIL D. K. 1984. — *Ways of Exchange: The Enga Tee of Papua New Guinea*. University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, xvi + 269 p.

FIRTH R. 1963. — Offering and sacrifice: problems of organization. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 93 (1): 12-24. https://doi.org/10.2307/2844331

FRAZER J. G. 1894. — *The Golden Bough. A Study in Comparative Religion*. Vol. 1. Macmillan & Co., London, 409 p.

GLASSE R. M. 1968. — *Huli of Papua: A Cognatic Descent System*. De Gruyter Mouton (coll. Cahiers de l'Homme, nouvelle Série ; 8), Paris, 156 p. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111330143

GODEFROY J. 1936. — *Une tribu tombée de la lune ou Les indigènes de Vao chez eux*. Emmanuel Vitte, Lyon, 208 p.

GODELIER M. 1986. — *The Making of Great Men: Male Domination and Power among the New Guinea Baruya*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 284 p.

HEIDER K. G. 1970. — *The Dugum Dani: A Papuan Culture in the Highlands of West New Guinea*. Aldine (coll. Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology; 49), Chicago, 350 p.

HIDE R. L. 1981. — *Aspects of Pig Production and Use in Colonial Sinasina, Papua New Guinea*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Columbia, 704 p.

HUBERT H. & MAUSS M. 1899. — Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice. *Année sociologique* 2 (1897-1898): 29-138.

JOSEPHIDES L. 1985. — *The Production of Inequality: Gender and Exchange Among the Kewa*. Tavistock, London, 256 p.

KEESING R. 1982. — *Kwaio Religion: The Living and the Dead in a Solomon Island Society*. Columbia University Press, New York, xi + 257 p.

LARSEN T. 2014. — *The Slain God: Anthropologists and the Christian Faith*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 272 p. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199657872.001.0001

LAYARD J. 1942. — *Stone Men of Malekula*. Chatto Windus, London, xxxiii + 816 p.

LAYARD J. 1955a. — Identification with the sacrificial animal. *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 24: 341-406.

LAYARD J. 1955b. — Boar-sacrifice. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 1 (1): 7-31. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-5922.1955.00007.x

LEACH E. 1980. — Cairo essays: review of Evans-Pritchard by Mary Douglas. *London Review of Books* 2 (23): 24-25.

LEDERMAN R. 1986. — *What Gifts Engender: Social Relations and Politics in Mendi, Highland Papua New Guinea*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 304 p. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511753022

LEMONNIER P. 1990. — *Guerres et festins : paix, échanges et compétition dans les Highlands de Nouvelle-Guinée*. Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris, 189 p. https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1992.19.3.02a00270

LEWIS G. 1980. — *Day of Shining Red. An Essay on Understanding Ritual*. Cambridge University Press (coll. Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology; 27), Cambridge, 315 p. https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1981.8.2.02a00220

MALYNICZ G. L. 1973. — The productivity of exotic and indigenous pigs under village conditions. Parts 1 & 2: Papua and New Guinea. *Agricultural Journal* 24 (1): 16-22.

MODJESKA C. N. 1982. — Production and inequality: perspectives from central New Guinea, *in* STRATHERN A. J. (ed.), *Inequality in New Guinea Highlands Societies*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 50-108.

MODJESKA C. N. 1995. — Rethinking women's exploitation: the Duna case and material basis of big man systems, *in* BIERSACK A. (ed.), *Papuan Borderlands: Huli, Duna, and Ipili Perspectives on the Papua New Guinea Highlands*. Michigan University Press, Ann Arbor: 265-285.

POSPISIL L. 1963. — *Kapauku Papuan Economy*. Yale University (coll. Publications in Anthropology; 67), New Haven, 502 p.

PRETTY G. L. 1969. — *Salvage Ethnography in New Guinea: The South Australian Museum Expedition to the Southern Highlands District, Papua, December 1968-January 1969*. Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, New York, 76 p.

RAPPAPORT R. 1984. — *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinea People* [2nd enlarged edition]. Yale University Press, New Haven, xviii + 501 p.

REAY M. 1984. — A high pig culture of the New Guinea highlands. *Canberra Anthropology* 7: 71-77. https://doi.org/10.1080/03149098409508561

REITHOFER H. 2006. — *The Python Spirit and the Cross: Becoming Christian in a Highland Community of Papua New Guinea*. Göttinger Studien zur Ethnologie, Göttingen, 392 p.

RYAN D'A. 1961. — *Gift Exchange in the Mendi Valley: An Examination of the Socio-Political Implications of the Ceremonial Exchange of Wealth among the People of Mendi Valley, Southern Highlands District, Papua*. Ph.D. Thesis, Sydney University, 350 p.

SILLITOE P. 1979a. — *Give and Take: Exchange in Wola Society*. Australian National University Press, Canberra, xiv + 315 p.

SILLITOE P. 1979b. — Man-eating women: fears of sexual pollution in the Papua New Guinea Highlands. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 88 (1): 77-97.

SILLITOE P. 1979c. — Cosmetics from trees, an underrated trade in Papua New Guinea. *Australian Natural History* 19 (9): 292-297.

SILLITOE P. 1983. — *Roots of the Earth : The Cultivation and Classification of Crops in the Papua New Guinea Highlands*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, xvi + 285 p.

SILLITOE P. 1987. — Sorcery divination among the Wola, *in* STEPHEN M. (ed.), *Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick: 121-146.

SILLITOE P. 1996. — *A Place Against Time: Land and Environment in The Papua New Guinea Highlands*. Harwood Academic, Amsterdam, 464 p.

SILLITOE P. 2003. — *Managing Animals in New Guinea: Preying the Game in the Highlands*. Routledge, London, 416 p.

SILLITOE P. 2010. — *From Land to Mouth: The Agricultural "Economy" of the Wola of the New Guinea Highlands*. Yale University Press (coll. Yale Agrarian Studies Series), New Haven, xx + 559 p. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-012-9476-5

SILLITOE P. 2017. — *Built in Niugini: Constructions in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea*. SK Publishing (coll. Royal Anthropological Institute Monograph Series; 1), Canon Pyon, xvi + 348 p.
SILLITOE P. & SILLITOE J. 2009. — *Grass-Clearing Man: A Factional Ethnography of Life in the New Guinea Highlands*. Waveland Press, Long Grove, 200 p.
SMITH W. R. 1889. — *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*. D. Appleton & Co., New York, 488 p.
SPENCER H. 1895. — *The Principles of Sociology*. Vol. 2. D. Appleton & Co., New York, 679 p.
STERLY J. 1979. — Bugla kirai: Schweinemedizin vom oberen Chimbu, Papua New Guinea. *Ethnomedizin* 5 (3-4): 385-405.
STRATHERN A. J. & STEWART P. J. 1999. — *'The Spirit is Coming!' A Photographic-Textual Exposition of the Female Spirit Cult Performance in Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea*. Deixis Publishing (coll. Ritual Studies Monograph Series; 1), Pittsburgh, 100 p.
STRATHERN A. J. & STEWART P. J. 2008a. — Aligning words, aligning worlds, *in* STEWART P. J. & STRATHERN A. J. (eds.), *Exchange and Sacrifice.* Carolina Academic Press, Durham: xi-xxxvi.
STRATHERN A. J. & STEWART P. J. 2008b. — Exchange and sacrifice: examples from Papua New Guinea, *in* STEWART P. J. & STRATHERN A. J. (eds.), *Exchange and Sacrifice.* Carolina Academic Press, Durham: 229-245
STRATHERN A. M. 1972. — *Women in Between. Female Roles in a Male World: Mount Hagen, New Guinea*. Seminar Press, London, 392 p.
STRATHERN A. M. 1988. — *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 437 p.
STRAUSS H. 1990. — *The Mi Culture of the Mount Hagen People, Papua New Guinea*. SHIELDS B. (trans.), STÜRZENHOFECKER G. & STRATHERN A. J. (eds). University of Pittsburgh (coll. Ethnology Monographs; 13), 361 p.
STÜRZENHOFEKER G. 1990. — Introduction, *in* STRAUSS H., *The Mi Culture of the Mount Hagen People, Papua New Guinea*. SHIELDS B. (trans.), STÜRZENHOFECKER G. & STRATHERN A. J. (eds). University of Pittsburgh (coll. Ethnology Monographs; 13): xxiii-xxvii.
SWAIN T. & TROMPF G. 1995. — *The Religions of Oceania*. Routledge, London, 256 p. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203977620
TROMPF G. 1991. — *Melanesian Religion*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, xi + 283 p.
TYLOR E. B. 1871. — *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*. Vol. 2. John Murray, London, 457 p.
VAYDA A. P. 1972. — Pigs, *in* RYAN P. (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Papua and New Guinea*. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne: 905-908.
WIESSNER P. & AKII TUMU 1998. — *Historical Vines: Enga Networks of Exchange, Ritual, and Warfare in Papua New Guinea*. Smithsonian Press, Washington, 528 p.
WILLIAMS F. E. 1939. — Report on the Grasslanders: Augu, Wage, Wela. Appendix. *Annual Report – Territory of Papua* 1938-1939: 39-51.

Submitted on 30 April 2020;
accepted on 12 April 2021;
published on 4 June 2021.