

# Thirty Years in the South Seas



# Dreißig Jahre in der Südsee

Land und Leute, Sitten und Gebräuche im Bismarckarchipel und auf den deutschen Salomoinfeln

Von

R. Parkinson

Herausgegeben von Dr. B. Antermann, Direktorial-Assistent  
am Königlichen Museum für Völkerkunde zu Berlin

Mit 56 Tafeln, 4 Karten und 141 Textabbildungen



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# Thirty Years in the South Seas

Land and People, Customs and Traditions in the  
Bismarck Archipelago and on the German Solomon Islands

by

**R. Parkinson**

Edited by **Dr B. Ankermann**, Assistant Director  
Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin

With 56 plates, 4 maps and 141 figures

Translated by  
John Dennison

Translation edited by  
J. Peter White



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Dedicated to  
His Majesty  
**King Wilhelm II of Württemberg**  
the High Patron of Science  
and the Arts  
with deep respect  
from the author

Subtitle-page photograph: Richard R.H. Parkinson, born  
13 November 1844, died 24 July 1909. Parkinson is buried near  
Kokopo, New Britain, in a forgotten and neglected grave.

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# Preface to the New Edition

The production of an electronic edition of this translation, ten years after its printed version, puts it within reach of anyone with an internet connection. This does not totally remove all barriers to access, but we hope that this free online version will now be available to many more descendants of the people whom Parkinson described.

We thank Sydney University Press and Agata Mrva-Montoya in particular for their help in creating this new version.

*J. Peter White*  
*26 January 2010*



# Editor's Preface

Of the considerable volume of German ethnographic reporting prior to World War I, Richard Parkinson's *Thirty Years in the South Seas* is probably the best known, despite the fact that it has never been fully translated into English. Originally published in 1907, the book now commands a very high price, and Parkinson's work is thus doubly inaccessible to the descendants of the people he described. Translating his work from the German has removed one of these barriers, but the publishers are unfortunately not in a position to remove the cost barrier altogether, although we have considerably reduced it.

In common with Sack and Cusack (1979:xiii), we would like to stress that '... a translation is always an interpretation ... it is essential to go back to the original if an argument turns on a particular word or phrase...'. As John Dennison makes clear, however, this translation tries to adhere as closely to the original as is possible while producing readable English.

We, like Sack and Cusack, have found that German geographic names were a major problem. In general, the names of larger places (for example, Neupommern: New Britain) have been put into English, while the smaller, many of which no longer exist as settlements with English names, have been retained in German. Readers seeking precise locations will find Scheps and Liedtke (1992) helpful, along with Sack and Cusack (1979). But, with the latter, '... we refuse responsibility for sorting out the mess of geographical names...' (1979:383).

In this translation we have retained the figure and plate numbering of the original publication.

Works such as this would be impossible without assistance from many people and organisations. In this case our major acknowledgment must be to John Dennison, who has laboured over the translation for more than five years, and who has been a pleasure to work with throughout. His generosity in undertaking this enormous translation has few parallels. Three others must also be especially thanked: Ann Dennison, who proofread the original translation for its phrasing and spelling; Marta Towe, who checked the entire translation; and Andrew Wilson, who undertook the original formatting of the entire volume. In the spirit of noting that what may seem a small favour to the giver can solve a major problem for the recipient, we thank, in no particular order, Rob Welsch, Robin Torrence, Margaret Clunies Ross, John Clifton-Everest, Mike Gunn, Wulf Schiefenhovel, Deirdre Koller, and the Computer Access Section of Fisher Library.

The project has been partly financed by Oceania Publications, University of Sydney.

*J. Peter White*  
30 November 1998

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# Translator's Preface

The 1907 edition of Parkinson's *Dreißig Jahre in der Südsee* was described in C. R. H. Taylor's *A Pacific Bibliography* (1965) as magnificent.

I started translation of it early in 1982, but translation halted abruptly upon receiving a telex and a following letter from Peter White telling me that a publication of a translation of this 876-page work was imminent. No further action was taken until, in 1991, a chance comment by a colleague engaged in the Lapita Homelands Project jogged my memory.

I contacted Peter, and learned that nothing further had been heard of the other translation. I resumed my task, with the assistance of much-improved word-processing technology – the final draft of these 876 pages plus supplementary text travelled to Sydney on two 1.3 MB diskettes (it was felt that direct line transmission of such a valuable text was too risky).

This translation project has taken a long time, being interleaved with the other projects and duties of a physical anthropologist and teacher, as well as those of a professional translator. Translation is never an easy task, because you are very aware that you are interpreting the thoughts of someone else, in this instance, of someone who arrived on New Britain more than 100 years ago, in 1882. Allowance must be made for changes in the meaning, and therefore translation, of words over time, and so I used the earliest dictionary that I could find, published in 1945. I have retained the text form and have tried to preserve the style of the author. Where place names were German borrowings of English names, I have used the original English form. Otherwise I have preserved Parkinson's spellings of place names (while comparing them with the versions given in the *Pacific Islands Pilot*), as these have historical significance in their own right.

Many long hours were spent on this work. I cannot express gratitude enough to my wife, Ann, who gave up her husband to a computer terminal, and then painstakingly reviewed his draft translation, turning it into readable English. Ann, and our daughter Sarah, endured much while I laboured. I am most grateful to J. Peter White, who gave me the opportunity to carry out this task, waited patiently while I drip-fed him diskettes, and then meticulously amended the drafts, before passing them to Marta Towe, who painstakingly checked the accuracy of the translation. I am also grateful to the staff of the University of Otago Geography Department, which gave me access to maps of the region, to aid my understanding. I thank you all for your support.

To the readers of this translation, Richard Parkinson has left us a legacy in his writing. I hope you enjoy reading his words as much as I have enjoyed translating them. I wish you well in your research.

K. J. Dennison  
Dunedin, December 1997

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# ‘The German Professor’: Richard Parkinson

Ninety years after its first appearance, Richard Parkinson’s classic work *Dreißig Jahre in der Südsee* (1907a) now enters its fourth phase.<sup>1</sup> First published in 1907, it went through an abbreviated reissue in 1926, which was subsequently translated into English (Parkinson n.d.); and now an English translation of the original version is finally available. The book, however, is only part of a bigger story about an unusual man in an unusual time and place. Unlike Nikolai Mikloucho-Maclay, who has had several biographers and many commentators (for example, Greenop 1944; Sentinella 1974; Webster 1984), little has been published about Parkinson. Obtaining reliable facts about some aspects of his early years is surprisingly difficult; even the date of his death is frequently misquoted. There are times when he seems a shadow, and at other times he appears as a person of substance. He was already halfway through his life when he arrived in the Pacific Islands, yet we know little about his years before that time. Even his life in the Pacific was overshadowed by other people and events, and rarely does he emerge as a fully developed character in his own right. This essay is a preliminary and incomplete introduction to the man, and to the people and events surrounding him during his time in the Bismarck Archipelago between 1882 and 1909.<sup>2</sup>

Richard Heinrich Robert Parkinson wrote in German and is usually considered to have been of German origin. He was born on 13 November 1844 in the Duchy of Schleswig, which was then and is now in Denmark. His nationality was questioned in later years when Germany laid claim to the Bismarck Archipelago, in what is now Papua New Guinea. In part this was because throughout the 19th century the Duchy of Schleswig alternated between Danish and Prussian (later German) control, and its position was not finally settled until 1920, when the Danish affiliation of Northern Schleswig was settled by referendum following the Treaty of Versailles. Following Germany’s establishment of its Pacific Islands colonies in the late 19th century, Parkinson was officially recognised by the colonial authorities as being German (Richard Parkinson (RP) to G.R. Le Hunte, 20 March 1886, ML CYA 3141).

Parkinson’s biological father is generally regarded as having been the Duke of Augustenborg, on the island of Als. His mother was Louise Sophie Caroline Brüning, daughter of a local shoemaker and a lady-in-waiting to the duke’s wife. Rather than have to admit to the illegitimate child, the duke is said to have forced the English-born manager of his horse stud, Richard Parkinson, to marry Louise. Parkinson senior did so, but immediately moved on, possibly encouraged by the duke. In due course, the duke took an interest in the upbringing of the young Richard (Mead 1964:183), who attended school in Augustenborg Castle.

Parkinson may have attended a university or received other formal tertiary training. He taught English in Heligoland (Mead 1964:191), and at some stage met Johann S. Kubary, who worked in the Caroline Islands ‘as a collector and naturalist’ (Sack and Clark 1983:94) for the German trading and plantation company Godeffroy und Sohn, which had its own museum and publication series (Schmeltz and Krause 1881). The meeting with Kubary changed Parkinson’s life, because he applied for employment with the company, and was accepted as a plantation manager and surveyor in Samoa. Just when and where he acquired surveying skills is not known, but they proved invaluable later when he moved with his wife, Phebe, to New Britain. Perhaps it was before meeting Kubary that Parkinson visited Africa (Mead 1964:191), but there are no details about when, where or what he did there.

Parkinson arrived in Samoa in 1876 (Andree 1901:239; Thiel 1909:113; Anon. 1909:211). He encountered what can best be described as a colourful scene of political intrigue between Germans, Americans, Samoans and others. (Robson (1965) provides a popular account of the time; Kennedy (1974) provides a more academic view.) Parkinson’s work exposed him to the Polynesian Samoans and the indentured plantation labourers from Melanesia (Andree 1901:239; Thiel 1909:114; cf. Meleisea 1980). He became involved with the local political and social scenes, and in 1879 married Phebe Clotilda Coe, daughter

1. All in-text references to Parkinson’s publications refer to the list of his publications that precedes the main references.

2. This account of Parkinson’s life is based on several sources, particularly letters from Arthur Vaag of Mandø, Denmark, to R.W. Robson in Sydney, dated 24 September and 24 October 1968; and six letters between Christopher Legge, at the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, and Robert Langdon in Canberra from 26 February to 14 April 1970. Vaag published an account of Parkinson’s early life based on the information in these letters in *Senderjyst Manedsskrift* no. 4, 1971, which is cited by Robson (1973:169; 1979:236) but which I have not seen. An English summary of Vaag’s story can be found in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, January 1972. The biographical details contained in Margaret Mead’s interview with





of Jonas Coe and sister to Emma Coe, later known in New Britain as ‘Queen Emma’. At that time, Parkinson was thirty-six years old, and Phebe only sixteen.

In 1879, Emma (now Forsayth) and her lover-cum-business partner, Thomas Farrell, moved to Mioko, in the Duke of York Islands, between New Britain and New Ireland in the Bismarck Archipelago, to recruit labour and trade throughout the islands (Robson 1965:95-8). The area at that time had few European settlers, though survivors from the ill-fated Nouvelle France project of the Marquis de Rays on New Ireland were soon to increase the white population (Niaux 1936). The first trader had tried to set up business at Port Hunter in the Duke of York Islands in 1872, and in 1873 two traders moved on to Matupit Island and the New Britain mainland, but were soon driven out by the local people (Corris 1973:xxv-xxvi, 286). In 1875, George Brown arrived to establish the first missionary station, at Port Hunter on the main Duke of York Island (Brown 1908:88), and later in the same year Eduard HERNSHEIM visited Brown and began a trading station near his mission (Sack and Clark 1983:29-30). It was logical for Emma and Farrell to set up business near these two; Emma had known George Brown well during his time in Samoa (Robson 1965:100), and, no doubt, there was safety in numbers. The main items sought by trade with the islanders were coconuts for processing into copra. At that time the trade depended heavily on village people being willing to collect and process the coconuts. This did not provide as regular or reliable a supply as the traders needed, and it became obvious to Emma and Farrell that the best way to develop the business was to establish their own coconut plantations, along the lines of those in Samoa. Accordingly, they set up the Western Pacific Plantation and Trading Company, which was registered in Sydney (Finsch 1888:22).

Parkinson resigned from the Godeffroy company around 1880-81 after an altercation with one of the company’s principals in Samoa (Robson 1965:117). Emma invited him and Phebe to join her and Farrell in the Duke of York Islands, which they did in late 1882. Emma gave Parkinson responsibility for setting up the first of her plantations on the mainland of New Britain. After a reconnaissance along the coast of the Gazelle Peninsula on New Britain, he selected an area at Ralum, on the south side of Blanche Bay, and set up the first coconut plantation in the New Guinea area (Robson 1965:117, 125). In April 1883, HERNSHEIM, now based on Matupit Island, near present-day Rabaul, offered the wry comment: ‘Parkinson plantation: maize, cotton, very small beginnings; land too dry’ (Sack and Clark 1983:148). Later that month, Farrell and Parkinson visited HERNSHEIM, and Farrell told him that they would stop trading and concentrate on developing plantations.

At this time, HERNSHEIM had a cool relationship with Parkinson, and a poor one with Emma and Farrell (Sack and Clark 1983:155, 157), probably because he perceived their trading and recruiting activities as threats to his business (Firth 1979). These poor relationships and Parkinson’s ancestry came to the surface in May 1884, when Emma and Parkinson discussed with HERNSHEIM, then acting as German consul, their plans for recruiting men to work on the plantations. Farrell could not get a recruiting licence in Sydney, and so Emma wanted to transfer the registration of her ship *Bella Brandon* to Parkinson, under the German flag. HERNSHEIM’s diary comments: ‘naturally refuse, as Parkinson’s nationality is not known to me’. This was probably as much due to HERNSHEIM’s dislike for Farrell as it was against Parkinson, for later that year the animosity between HERNSHEIM and Parkinson was resolved (Sack and Clark 1983:178). Parkinson subsequently acknowledged HERNSHEIM in his foreword to *Dreißig Jahre*, where he thanked HERNSHEIM for providing him with many opportunities to travel and learn about many peoples and places (Parkinson 1907a:xvii).

The small European community in the Duke of York Islands and on New Britain was slowly increasing in numbers (Schnee (1904:353) records that in 1883 the white population was only thirty persons; by 1894 this had risen to 112). The community was a mixed bag of people of different backgrounds and nationalities, with little cohesion and often with conflicting interests, but was a busy centre for visiting vessels – especially government and naval vessels. Among these was Otto Finsch on the Samoa (Finsch 1888), who was visiting various parts of the western Pacific to buy land for possible coaling stations for the German navy while collecting artifacts (Parkinson was later quite scathing in his criticism of Finsch’s anthropological work; see Tschauder and Swadling 1979:36-7). Hugh Romilly, the British deputy high commissioner for the western Pacific, made several official visits to the archipelago from 1881 onwards (Romilly 1886). These visits by Finsch and Romilly were part of the international political manoeuvring in the Pacific at that time, as Britain and Germany vied with each other for control of the various island groups. The German government declared a protectorate over the archipelago in November 1884.

The German takeover of the archipelago once more brought to the surface the question of Parkinson’s nationality. In March 1886, Parkinson wrote to G. Ruthven Le Hunte, the administrator of British New Guinea, who had visited the Parkinsons, that:

Since we became Germanised the authorities all at once claim me as a German subject. A few years ago there was a great blarney about my German citizenship ... all at once they inform me that I am a real good German subject

Parkinson’s widow, Phebe, in 1929 are an invaluable source of information not otherwise available. Other details are derived from Robson’s (1965) account of Queen Emma, Phebe’s sister, though Robson rarely indicates the sources of his information. Dutton (1976) presents a less factual version of Emma and her associates. Other biographical information is drawn from letters between Parkinson and the Field Columbian Museum (later the Field Museum of Natural History), Chicago, and the Australian Museum, Sydney; from a letter from Richard Parkinson to G.R. Le Hunte in the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW; and from Richard Andree’s (1901) appreciation of Parkinson. More sources, undoubtedly, remain to be revealed; I have not been able, for example, to consult the article ‘Erinnerungen an den alten Parkinson’ in *Kolonie und Heimat* (1908-09, 26:11-15).





and citizen and that as such I am entitled to hold office in this new Government ... This is because I am the only one that at present really knows anything about the country and they think they can make use of me. [RP to G.R. Le Hunte, 20 March 1886, ML CYA 3141; quoted in full in Dutton 1976]

Early in 1884 the Parkinsons had moved into a new home at Malapau near Ralum on the New Britain mainland, where they raised their family until their move to nearby Kuradui in 1907 (see an undated photograph in Moore et al. 1984:26). Richard began in earnest to develop the plantation side of Emma's business, as well as his own plantations, particularly trying potential new crops. He had already introduced tobacco from Samoa in 1883, and the Tolai people quickly accepted it into their gardening practices (Salisbury 1970:111). By 1884 he was planning to bring in coffee, and later cocoa as well. Despite Hershheim's comment recorded in 1883, Parkinson stated in his letter to Le Hunte quoted above:

I have around 210 acres under cotton and coconuts each, 30 acres planted with various plants on trial; 5 acres under Coffee, 5 acres under Rice, 10 acres under Millet ... and 10 acres as general botanical garden with all sorts of knick-knacks. [RP to Le Hunte, 20 March 1886, ML CYA 3141]

By 1896 the plantations had about 1200 acres under cotton and 1600 acres under coconuts (Salisbury 1970:80). Parkinson was also interested in experimenting with introduced animals. According to Robson (1965:165), he was responsible for introducing horses, donkeys, cattle (including the Brahman variety), sheep, goats, pigs and poultry (perhaps to improve the local strains), as well as various grasses to grow fodder for them.

Kubary, who had inspired Parkinson to leave Europe and take up a life in the Pacific, arrived on Matupit in late 1885 or early 1886 to work for Hershheim, and renewed his friendship with Parkinson (Sack and Clark 1983:94, 108). After a period with Hershheim, Kubary joined the Deutsch Neu Guinea Compagnie, which managed the colony on behalf of the German government (Sack and Clark 1979:6). In 1890, Parkinson had a disagreement with Emma about the amount of time he spent on collecting natural-history specimens and on ethnological studies instead of concentrating on his plantation work. Parkinson left E.E. Forsayth & Co., the company formed by Emma after Farrell's death in 1887, and joined Kubary in the Deutsch Neu Guinea Compagnie, as a surveyor and collector (Anon. 1890:49; Sack and Clark 1983:108). Phebe took over his role in running the plantations (Robson 1965:168).

The work with the Deutsch Neu Guinea Compagnie provided Parkinson with many opportunities to travel and collect artifacts and information in the Bismarck Archipelago. He also travelled to India and Europe in 1893 (Mead 1964:200), and it was possibly in connection with his employment in the company that he arranged for six Tolai dancers to go to the Colonial Exhibition of 1896 in Berlin (Salisbury 1970:34). But the company did not prosper and in 1900 Parkinson rejoined Emma after the German government took over management of the colony.

It was about this time that Parkinson had a serious illness or accident (Australian Museum Archives AMS6 852/1899), the effects of which remained with him for the rest of his life. In an interview with Mead (1964:193), Phebe referred to his 'lingering illness', which severely affected his work for about a decade: 'it was not malaria but something internal', she said. Parkinson now spent much time on ships, recruiting for Emma's plantations and collecting ethnographical items for museums in Australia, USA and Europe. He accompanied Acting Governor Hahl to the Caroline Islands in 1901 to recuperate and 'to add to his collections and to his ethnological knowledge' (Sack and Clark 1980:80).

Parkinson maintained a long and friendly correspondence with the Australian Museum between 1884 and 1904. He borrowed books from the museum, provided natural-history and artifact collections, and exchanged information with the curator, Edward Ramsay, and his successor, Robert Etheridge Jr. He was also in contact with Charles Hedley, a zoologist at the museum, who, like Parkinson, had broad interests including ethnology. Hedley was clearly impressed by Parkinson, and in 1904 proposed him as president of the Ethnographical Section at the Dunedin meeting of the Australasian Association of Science. Parkinson declined, because he would be in the Caroline Islands at that time, but he told Etheridge that he would be very happy to accept such an invitation if a meeting of the association were to be held in Australia (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P33/1903). The opportunity, however, did not arise again.

The correspondence with the Australian Museum ended soon after this, though why is not known. Parkinson's last letter to Etheridge appears to be that dated 20 December 1903, and in it he states, 'I am only to glad' [sic] to help Etheridge with information about the Tolai *iniet* society (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P3/1904). Whatever had happened terminated the contact between the Australian Museum and Parkinson. Etheridge did not even know about Parkinson's death in 1909, and wrote to him in 1912, receiving the news in a polite and helpful reply from Phebe (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P34/1912).

Parkinson's link with the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago began in 1898 with a sale of fifty-two human skulls. It was renewed in 1905 through an intermediary, Bryan Lathrap of York Harbor, Maine.





Lathrap wrote to F.V. Skiff, the museum director, after a conversation with Linzee Tilden about ‘an English merchant’ in the Pacific who wanted to sell his private collection of artifacts so that he could retire. The asking price was US\$3,500, and Lathrap enclosed a catalogue of it, which was to be returned to Tilden (Lathrap to Skiff, 5 September 1905). Skiff contacted Tilden who told Skiff (25 October 1905) that he had met Parkinson and seen his collection during a visit to New Britain in the northern spring of 1905:

The owner and collector feels he is getting old, and is desirous of clearing up such impedimenta as might cause annoyance to his family, or work for his executor in case he should die, or be free to move to Sydney to live on account of his children.

George Dorsey, chief curator of Anthropology at the Field Columbian Museum, strongly recommended purchase, but Skiff wanted the collection to be inspected first. Parkinson declined to send it to Chicago ‘on refusal’, but sent photographs of selected items and assured Skiff that each item was well-identified to village and function (RP to Skiff, 20 February 1906). The correspondence dragged on, with Parkinson complaining about the lack of response from Chicago (RP to Skiff, 31 August 1906). Skiff eventually replied (14 November 1906) that he wanted to buy the collection, but insisted that the collection first be sent to Chicago for inspection. The matter was finally resolved by Dorsey arranging to visit Parkinson in New Britain. Parkinson welcomed this suggestion, adding that after the end of 1907, he would ‘have a good deal of time to spend in travelling’ and he could buy artifacts on behalf of the Field Museum of Natural History (as it had been renamed in November 1905) (RP to Dorsey, 14 November 1906). This reference to ‘a good deal of time’ referred to Emma’s plans to sell her New Britain interests and move to Sydney, which she did in 1907 (Robson 1965:222).

Parkinson finally gave in to Skiff and sent eight cases of artifacts and one of human skulls to Chicago. He did not send everything, retaining in New Britain enough artifacts to fill at least another four large cases (RP to Fisk, 2 July 1907). Parkinson added that he would write a separate letter with a proposal to act as a buyer for the museum, since ‘many things that today are placed on the marked [sic] are made for sale by the natives and are in fact valueless’.

Dorsey inspected the items sent to Chicago and recommended that the museum acquire them, but only after he had inspected the items retained by Parkinson. Dorsey arrived in New Britain around mid-1908, and wrote to Skiff (7 August 1908) to confirm his recommendation for acquisition. He added that at this time the Hamburg Wissenschaftliche Stiftung’s Südsee Expedition was in the Bismarck Archipelago, and its leader, Dr Friedrich Fülleborn, told Dorsey that they would have bought the entire collection at once. The sale to the Field Museum, however, caused bad feeling among some of the Hamburg group, which considered the price paid by the museum to be extremely low compared to the prices that they had to pay for artifacts, while the fact that the collection had gone to the USA, and not Germany, aroused patriotic passions (Fischer 1981:117). Fischer notes particularly that Wilhelm Müller, the physical anthropologist on the Südsee Expedition, complained that Dorsey left after only a few weeks with at least 10,000 artifacts, whereas the expedition with its ten scholars and two years in the western Pacific went home with far fewer items.

After Dorsey returned to Chicago, Parkinson’s health deteriorated. He wrote to Dorsey (27 October 1908) that Dr Fülleborn ‘stepped in and undertook an operation which seems to have been of great benefit. I am still as limp as an old towel ...’. Parkinson had another four or five cases of artifacts to send to Chicago, and would pack them ‘as soon as I feel my leg serviceable’. An undated photograph of the Parkinson family shows Richard sitting on a *chaise longue* with his right leg extended, though there is no indication from Parkinson, Phebe or Dorsey which leg was causing him trouble (Moore et al. 1984:26).

Parkinson obviously formed a good opinion of Dorsey, and his subsequent letters to him display an intimacy missing from his earlier correspondence with Ramsay, Etheridge and Skiff. He expressed pleasure at hearing that Dorsey had ‘made a good harvest during your trip’ to German New Guinea. He appears to have been less impressed, however, by the two Hamburg expeditions then in the Bismarck Archipelago and along the north coast of New Guinea. The Südsee Expedition, first under Fülleborn and then Augustin Krämer, lasted for two years. It had a steam vessel, the *Peiho*, at its disposal; no fewer than ten scientists with skills in ethnology, zoology, physical anthropology, and linguistics; funding of 600,000 Marks; and specific aims to collect for the Hamburg Museum für Völkerkunde (Fischer 1981). The Deutsche Marine Expedition, from Hamburg and initially under Stefan and, following Stefan’s death, Krämer (Sack and Clark 1979:294), was also in the Bismarck Archipelago at that time. The resources of these two expeditions were no doubt a richness to be envied by Parkinson, who had by this time spent twenty-six years trying to fit his ethnographic studies in between his work responsibilities.

There is little evidence of much professional contact between Parkinson and the expeditioners, other than the use of Fülleborn’s services as a surgeon. At least one of the expeditioners on the Südsee Expedition was known to Parkinson: Franz Hellwig had been a trader in the islands, and had worked for several





trading companies, including E.E. Forsayth & Co. and Hershheim & Co. (Fischer 1981:71; cf. Parkinson 1907a:414). Parkinson may have been disappointed about not being included in the Bismarck Archipelago section of the expeditions, though his own poor health would have prevented this. Similarly, it is not clear what contact Parkinson had with Richard Thurnwald, who spent two years in the colony, including some time at Herbertshöhe (Pullen-Burry 1909:48-9, 51, 134-7; Sack and Clark 1979:295; cf. Thurnwald 1910). Thurnwald also spent time in the Vunakokor-Toma-Paparatava areas inland from Ralum, where he collected 741 stone *imiet* figures for the Berlin museum (Koch 1982:28). One wonders whether there was any jealousy or animosity between Thurnwald the professional ethnographer and Parkinson the planter and amateur ethnographer.

The days of the amateur were under threat, as professionals such as Thurnwald, Albert Buell Lewis, and the members of the Hamburg expeditions and others moved into the field.<sup>3</sup> Parkinson may have been spurned by some of them, for he told Dorsey (27 October 1908), perhaps with a touch of bitterness, that, 'The Hamburgers have had all kinds of troubles that would not have occurred to you or to me but to them seemed to be great obstacles.' Parkinson then proceeded to list health problems encountered by the naval expedition. Schlaginhaufen and his ethnographers 'have had 3 weeks in hospital', and Krämer was soon to arrive to replace Stefan. In a rather sardonic touch of humour, he added:

Sapper gone home. I am afraid that if he had stopped here a month longer he would have been quite mummified. He was a regular wandering skeleton and could without any fear have gone into the worst cannibal country.

But Parkinson had to stop writing the letter, because 'writing troubles me more than I had expected'.

During his visit to Parkinson, Dorsey had organised for him to act as a collector for the Field Museum. Dorsey requested (22 December 1908) 'big collections representative of every phase of culture from the important localities in your territory'. He later advised Parkinson (13 January 1909) that US\$3,000 had been appropriated for Parkinson to collect for the museum. Dorsey specified items from the Roviana group in the Solomon Islands, stone figures from southern New Ireland, *malagan* carvings from the Tabar Islands to the east of New Ireland, masks from the south coast of New Britain and, from the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain, *duk-duk* masks of the Tolai, and various items from the Baining. Even before Dorsey's letter reached Parkinson, Parkinson's illness was worsening (RP to Dorsey, 3 February 1909):

I got a very bad relapse of my illness and was unable to write or to do anything at all. The last lot [of artifacts] Mrs Parkinson managed to get away; none of these things are labelled but as most of them are duplicates [sic] you will find your way through ... In consequence of the relapse, I had suffered very severe pain and the Doctor [Fülleborn?] has performed one more operation. I am therefore still prostrate in bed and helpless as a log of wood. What is still worse is that when I ever get over my illness which I begin to doubt very much, I shall be a cripple for the rest of my life.

Parkinson was obviously not going to do much collecting for the museum, and so he returned an advance that Dorsey had given him. However, he was willing to provide whatever help he could to anyone whom Dorsey might send out to collect. Because of the illness, Parkinson advised Dorsey not to 'send the Kodak and the films, as they will be of no use now to me'. After complaining that he had not yet received payment for the large collection sold to the museum, Parkinson noted that a recent government expedition up the Sepik River reached only 240 miles from the mouth, '40 miles less than I and a party reached in 1887'. Worse still in Parkinson's eyes, no collections were made because of 'a gentleman on board being otherwise occupied during the trip'. The letter ends on a note of despair. His daughter was writing the letter for him, but, he said, 'even dictation irritates my nerves, and I feel, that I have to break off any communication ... All my life I have been accustomed to activity. I am now reduced to utter helplessness.'

Parkinson hoped to get better, or experience 'the great ending up of all our human troubles'. Dorsey replied (12 April 1909), regretting Parkinson's illness and forced withdrawal as a collector. He sought Parkinson's assistance for A.B. Lewis, who was about to undertake a major collecting trip to German New Guinea for the Field Museum. The good news from Dorsey was that the payment for Parkinson's collection was on its way. Parkinson's patience must have been sorely tried, however, for barely one month later Skiff wrote to him (11 May 1909) that 'at this time the Museum has no funds from which an appropriation can be made for the purchase of your collection'. This meant that Parkinson was now free to offer the collection to anyone else, but he would still have to pay US\$110.74 for the freight bill to Chicago. The non-payment put Parkinson in a difficult situation, but despite this and the troubles with his illness, he was still trying to obtain artifacts for the museum. He ordered *tumbuan* and *duk-duk* masks at 50 Marks each, and had

also entered a contract with a trader at Lagunabange, New Ireland, who will deliver to me all what he can get at the next Malagene. This place is at present the one in which the old carving tradition is best preserved ... I hope to get about 200 specimens together, all in good order, and without much European material.

3. Klaus Neumann rightly reminds me (*in litt.* 6 January 1998) that the missionary contributions continued well beyond the takeover of New Guinea by Australia. In many respects, their writings may be more accurate, since most learned their local languages and were thus able to discuss matters directly with the local peoples, rather than through a third language such as pidgin English.





Parkinson, however, was still bedridden, though ‘fortunately the pain has lately been less, but I cannot do without morphine’ (RP to Dorsey, 14 May 1909). Eventually the museum sent the cheque for US\$3,500 (less part of the freight bill) on 14 July 1909, nearly four years after the collection had first been offered. The long-awaited cheque arrived too late. Parkinson died in Hebertshöhe hospital on 24 July 1909 (Thiel 1909:113).<sup>4</sup>

### The Collector

Both Richard and Phebe Parkinson were heavily involved in collecting all kinds of natural-history specimens – land snails, insects, butterflies, mammals, birds, frogs, marine molluscs, plants – as well as artifacts. He was well-known overseas for natural-history collections, and visiting scientists often stayed with the Parkinsons. Yet his interests were focused firmly on the human side.

According to Phebe, Parkinson was less interested in the money that might be gained from selling specimens than in the new knowledge that they might contribute to science (Mead 1964:199). Consequently, he sent many items to museums as gifts or for exchanges (Mead 1964:201). His duties with the Deutsch Neu Guinea Compagnie included collecting artifacts, presumably to enhance German museums. Interestingly, whereas Parkinson occasionally remarks in *Dreißig Jahre* about artifacts that he obtained for the German museums, there is no mention of the Australian Museum. The sale of his personal collection to the Field Museum of Natural History took place after the book was published, and one of the features of the collection that attracted Dorsey was that many items were illustrated in the book (Dorsey to Skiff, 7 August 1908). Some of those illustrated, however, were in mission collections, and in the 1970s the Hilstrup Museum of the Mission of the Sacred Heart sold several of the bark cloths illustrated.

Between 1882 and 1909, Farrell (died 1887), Parkinson (died 1909) and Emma (died 1913) sold or donated thousands of artifacts to the Australian Museum, the Field Museum, and museums in Dresden, Stuttgart, Berlin and elsewhere in Germany (the precise number of artifacts is not known, but must have exceeded 10,000). It is no wonder that artifacts from the Bismarck Archipelago soon became scarce and expensive. Even so, Emma, now Mrs Kolbe, could write to the Australian Museum in 1897 (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 K9/1897) that: ‘A German Professor [sic] named Dahl left us last steamer with a tremendous assortment of specimens of all kinds – he was a government official.’

When the Parkinsons reached the Duke of York Islands in 1882, Farrell and Emma were already exploiting the trade in artifacts. Emma, as Mrs Farrell, sold a collection of 250 items to the Australian Museum in 1881 (Australian Museum Archives, AMS7 C:10:81:10). Farrell himself was a partner in the Sydney trading company Mason Bros, which included artifacts among its wares (Langdon 1968:5). It was to this company that the Australian Museum turned in 1883 to help re-build its Pacific Islands collections after the Garden Palace fire of 1882 destroyed virtually the entire artifact collection of the museum (Specht 1980; Bolton et al. 1979).

At the beginning of January 1884, Farrell wrote to Ramsay, curator of the Australian Museum, advising him that ‘Mr Parkinson is now fairly settled’ (at Ralum), and that from now on any collections that Farrell sent would be jointly with Parkinson (Australian Museum Archives, AMS8 55/84). This meant that henceforth the museum should keep its payment to them separate from the funds paid to Farrell for an 1882 transaction. In the meantime, Parkinson had a collection of birds’ eggs and nests for the museum, but did not yet have the birds. Farrell asked the museum to send equipment to help their collecting; specifically, he wanted small and large collecting jars, preserving fluid, 4 pounds of naphthalene or camphor, and boxes for butterflies and paper for spreading them. The museum met his request, with slight modifications.

Parkinson’s contact with the Australian Museum appears to have begun in middle 1884 (Australian Museum Archives, AMS8 224/1884), when he advised Ramsay that a consignment of zoological and ethnological specimens was on its way to Sydney. Whereas the zoological specimens were in exchange for a book, the museum paid Farrell and Parkinson £19 11s for artifacts from Manus, New Ireland and New Britain (Australian Museum Archives, AMS55 29/1884).

In April 1889, Parkinson wrote to the museum advising that he had despatched a consignment of human skulls from the Ralum area to Sydney (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P13/1889). The skulls were not received until November 1890 because the ship on which they were consigned had been re-routed to Java (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P21/1890). Ramsay wanted more human remains, especially complete skeletons, for Parkinson advised him that:

If it is worthwhile I will take the trouble to procure some. But if it is not I do not like to grope about for Native bones which is not very interesting and as a rule not without great danger. One has to do such work oneself, else the skeletons are not complete.

4. Although Robson correctly cites Parkinson’s date of death on the caption of Parkinson’s portrait (1965: opp. page 160), which is taken from the 1926 edition of *Dreißig Jahre*, his text places it in the wrong year, 1907. Other authors have followed Robson (for example, West 1972:890), and Salisbury (1970:39) sets the date prior to the publication of *Dreißig Jahre*. The cause of Parkinson’s death is not clear, and Parkinson’s letters to Dorsey do not identify the nature of his leg problem.





To this Ramsay replied that he wanted skeletons 'as fresh as possible so that the bones can be whitened. Any history concerning the individuals, their names, tribe, etc will render them more acceptable' (Australian Museum Archives, AMS6 946/1890). Ramsay further asked him to keep sinews on the hands and feet to prevent 'small bones going astray', and to keep the scalp and hair on the skull. Given the freshness of the remains that these conditions would require, it is hardly surprising that Parkinson considered there to be 'great danger' in acquiring skeletons. For this danger, Ramsay offered Parkinson between £5 and £10 for each male and female pair in good, unstained condition. This was a good price, but Parkinson did not take up Ramsay's offer.

Parkinson's involvement with human remains continued. Following the opening of negotiations in 1905 for Parkinson to sell his personal collection of artifacts to the museum, Dorsey wrote to him (11 November 1905) asking about the availability of human skulls and skeletons. Parkinson replied (19 February 1906) that skulls from the Gazelle Peninsula could be obtained 'without delay', and he could probably send fifty skulls from other areas 'within three or four months' (Parkinson (1907a:593-5) noted how easy it was to obtain human skulls). The Gazelle skulls would cost US\$2.50 each, but those from other areas would be more expensive, as they would be harder to get. Complete skeletons could be difficult to obtain, 'as natives could not be trusted with the collecting and a skilled white man would have to be employed [sic]'. Dorsey strongly recommended (19 April 1906) to his director, F.V. Skiff, that they accept Parkinson's offer, and for an unlimited number:

it is only a question of a few years when the skulls of Melanesians can be obtained only at a great price, if at all ... we could easily use to great advantage as many thousand skulls as he could send at that price.

Even Parkinson could not fill such an order, but advised Dorsey (14 November 1906) that he had a case of seventy-five skulls waiting for his visit to New Britain.<sup>5</sup>

As far as artifacts were concerned, Parkinson appears to have acquired them in various ways, though it is usually difficult or impossible to identify how a particular item was obtained. Some he acquired himself while on his travels. In 1901 he accompanied Acting Governor Hahl on a visit to Pohnpei (Ponape) to recuperate from an unspecified problem and 'to add to his collections and knowledge' (Sack and Clark 1980:80). On the Gazelle Peninsula and in New Ireland, he might wait until there was a major ceremony, after which he would attempt to acquire, either himself or through one of the E.E. Forsyth & Co. or Deutsch Neu Guinea Compagnie agents, the masks and other ceremonial items. Etheridge, however, had to wait for a pair of Tolai *duk-duk* masks. Parkinson initially expected to get them in mid-1903, but was still waiting at the end of the year (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P21/1903; AMS9 P43/1903).

In *Dreißig Jahre*, Parkinson describes (1907a:635) how in early 1901 an E.E. Forsyth & Co. schooner brought a large collection of masks from the Sulka area on the south coast of New Britain. Parkinson does not provide any information on how the schooner came to have such a cargo; one can only assume that there had been a major ceremony. Parkinson appears to have depended on local people to bring him specific zoological specimens (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P39/1900), though whether he requested them to make specific kinds of artifacts is uncertain.

Examination of some Parkinson items in the Australian Museum suggests another possible way that he obtained artifacts. In his foreword to *Dreißig Jahre*, Parkinson stated (1907a:xv) that having workers from many different parts of the archipelago and the north Solomons provided opportunities for him to expand and improve his knowledge of their cultures. Among these workers were up to 150 men from Buka Island, an island that appears unusually well-represented in the collections the Australian Museum purchased from him and Farrell. There are more than 300 dance wands and paddles, some of which appear to be unfinished. Spiegel (1967:35) thought that these had a special sepia staining, but their surfaces display charring, possibly to facilitate carving. It seems unusual that Parkinson and Farrell should have purchased items in such an unfinished state on Buka, and it is possible that they were made by some of Parkinson's men at Ralum. Would it be going too far to suggest that Farrell or Parkinson commissioned these men to make them, and then sent them to Sydney without explanation? In this context, it is worth recalling the comments by Farrell, Parkinson and others on the increasing scarcity of artifacts from about 1884 onwards, and yet they were still able to collect thousands for museums around the world. Parkinson assured Skiff (20 February 1906), many years later, that 'I have always collected choice and perfect specimens, a great many of which at the present time are obsolete and extremely rare in ethnological collections'.

Did he keep the best for himself, and occasionally send to some museums not so much the second best, but items which he commissioned especially for them?

### The Author and Ethnographer

Parkinson's writing career started with a slender and less well-known book, *Im Bismarck-Archipel* (Parkinson 1887a), which covers a curious miscellany of diverse topics ranging from the climate and geography of

5. The obsession among museum curators at that time for obtaining human remains may have been a contributing factor to an action taken by the Australian administration after it took over the management of former German New Guinea. The Australian administration banned the disturbing, collecting or excavating of human remains; anyone finding remains was required to report them immediately to the relevant district officer (Australia 1924:40-1). Neumann (1991:75) also points out that in the late 19th century, the skulls of Tolai 'big men' were dug up for ceremonial purposes (Parkinson 1907a:81). In the case of ToKede, however, Neumann's informant, Stanley ToMarita, recalled that it was an associate of Queen Emma (Parkinson?) who proposed digging up ToKede's skull. After the appropriate ceremonies, ToKede's skull was sent to a German museum (Neumann 1991:267, fn 2).





the Gazelle Peninsula to the labour trade, plantations and commerce on New Britain, customs and beliefs of the peoples of the Gazelle Peninsula, missions and missionaries, European colonial politics in the Pacific Islands, and the Ten Commandments translated into vernaculars by missionaries Brown and Danks. It was to this book, rather than to *Dreißig Jahre*, that Richard Salisbury turned, fifty years after Parkinson's death, for basic information about aspects of Tolai life and culture at the time of European colonisation, for his study of Vunamami, the village centred on the plantation area of Queen Emma's 'empire' (Salisbury 1970). *Im Bismarck-Archipel* was the first of more than forty-two publications by Parkinson (sole author of thirty-six papers and two books, two jointly authored papers, two jointly authored/edited/illustrated volumes, and an unknown number of newspaper articles and letters), spanning twenty years and almost all in German (see bibliography at the end of this paper). Several papers dealt with tropical agriculture (Parkinson 1887b, 1897a, 1898a), a topic otherwise of little interest to the early white settlers (Sack 1980:14), but the rest focused on the geography (including sailing directions) and people of the archipelago and northern Solomon Islands. As Sack (1980:17) notes, the late 19th century was a period of colonial exploration and description in this region, and it was to the literature on these themes that Parkinson made his major contributions.

Initially Parkinson planned to write regional overviews of his studies, and in 1899 informed Robert Etheridge Jr, curator of the Australian Museum, that his study on the north-west Solomon Islands (Parkinson 1898d) was 'part of a series of similar works which I have in hand at present' (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P56/1899). Parkinson changed his mind. Rather than the 'series of similar works', he later advised Etheridge (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P20/1903) that:

I am at present trying my hands at a Descriptive Ethnographie [sic] of the Bismarck Archipel but find to my great dismay how really very little we at present know and how much is entirely dark to us. I plot [sic] on as best I can but I am not at all satisfied with my work.

In the foreword to *Dreißig Jahre*, Parkinson (1907a:xv) noted the opportunities he had had to travel and see peoples and places. In 1894 he had accompanied A. Bastian on a trip to the mainland of New Guinea as an employee of the Deutsch Neu Guinea Compagnie. During this trip, Bastian encouraged Parkinson to publish, and the advice did not fall on deaf ears. Parkinson hoped (1907a:xvi) that the critics would not be too harsh on his efforts, but he was conscious of the rapid cultural changes that had taken place throughout the region following white settlement. This theme of rapid change was a longstanding and continuing one, for as early as 1884 Thomas Farrell had advised Etheridge's predecessor, Ramsay (Australian Museum Archives, AMS8 55/1884) that:

ethnographical things begin to get rather scarce on account of new things getting introduced and the original arms and implements taken away by labor vessels and trading vessels to various places.

This situation did not improve, for in 1905 Governor Hahl of German New Guinea wrote to von Luschan, director of the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde, that 'Die Ethnologika werden selten und teuer' (cited by Koch 1982:28). In a letter to Skiff, director of the Field Museum, dated 20 February 1906, Parkinson observed that the artifact collection that he was offering for sale to the museum included 'choice and perfect' objects, 'a great many of which at the present time are obsolete and extremely rare in ethnological collections'. Later, George Dorsey wrote to Skiff (7 August 1908) from Herbertshöhe, during his visit to Parkinson, that:

Native culture in some of the islands represented [in the Parkinson collection offered to the Field Museum] has almost or entirely disappeared – in some cases the natives themselves are gone.

So how well did Parkinson observe and record? This is a difficult question to answer, since he allows us to know little about how he conducted his 'fieldwork'. There is no evidence that he was academically trained in ethnography or related disciplines; indeed, these disciplines were then only in their infancy. His works have little theoretical content, though Richard Feinberg (1986:3) notes 'an unacceptable propensity to account for behavioural variation in terms of biological differences'. Parkinson did not learn local languages or even stay long in any one place (other than the plantation at Ralum), but the nature of his contacts with the Tolai people allowed him to engage in a form of 'participant observation'. Feinberg's advice (1986:3) is 'to take parts of his account with a healthy dose of scepticism', but even he acknowledges that Parkinson was a keen, intelligent observer who 'gained a wealth of information, belying Hogbin's glib dismissal of his ethnographic acumen'.

There is no detailed critique of Parkinson's writings by people from the societies that he placed on record. In part, this is because his works were mostly published in German, some printed in Gothic script, and written in a formal and often complex style. This has made them largely inaccessible to most non-German speakers (to compound the problem, both of his books have been out of print for so long that they are





difficult to find and are priced at the upper end of the market). Only three of his works have been translated into English (1897b, 1900c, 1907a).

Parkinson's study (1897b) of the Aitape-Vanimo coast and adjacent islands of the New Guinea mainland (an area not covered by *Dreißig Jahre*) has been translated into English (Tschauder and Swadling 1979), with commentaries by scholars from two of the societies covered by this work. Woichom (1979) found a number of points where Parkinson's work needed correction or clarification, but both he and Deklin (1979) regarded such points as minor and welcomed the opportunity to gain access to what is essentially an historical document. Both agree that Parkinson's main failings are his generalisations and lack of detail, and on both points they provide useful additional information.

The third work by Parkinson that has been translated into English is his summary study of the Polynesian outlier islands of Nukuria, Nukumanu, Takuu, and Ontong Java (Feinberg 1986). This translation has annotations by Feinberg and A. Howard, both non-indigenous commentators.

The only commentary by a person from the area covered by *Dreißig Jahre* appears to be that of Simet (1977), who discusses aspects of the *tumbuan* society among the Tolai people of the north-east Gazelle Peninsula of East New Britain. Simet's published appreciation of non-Tolai commentators on this society is restrained, without criticism of specific authors. One of Simet's major points, and an important one for understanding the *tumbuan* society, is that the authors generally misunderstood the relationship between the *tumbuan* and its associated *duk-duk* by assigning them gender roles (*tumbuan* = female, *duk-duk* = male). Rather, the *duk-duk* should be seen as the child of the *tumbuan* (Simet 1977:2). Parkinson did not make this mistake. He clearly identified the *tumbuan* as female (1907a:578), and identified the *duk-duk* as her child (1907a:584). Simet's unpublished doctoral thesis (Simet 1991) provides a much longer and more detailed description of the *tumbuan* society, but does not provide a critique of earlier authors, though he notes (Simet 1991:314) Parkinson's 'harsh' appreciation of the society and its activities.

Indigenous commentators from other societies covered by *Dreißig Jahre* would probably echo the criticisms of Woichom and Deklin about the generalisations and lack of detail. This criticism, however, could be levelled at virtually every outside observer, and is not in itself a criticism of Parkinson alone. It leads us, however, to inquire how Parkinson obtained his information. In the absence of clear statements by Parkinson himself, we must piece together a rough and incomplete picture from the various hints and comments available to us. We must acknowledge that he was a self-taught man, without anthropological training, who thought it worthwhile to make a record, however inadequate he felt it was. Even this inadequate record was better than the little that most traders and planters of that era left for posterity (Biskup 1974:4).

Parkinson himself gives a few clues as to how he obtained information. During his visits to the Aitape-Vanimo coast of New Guinea in 1898 and 1899, he noted with approval (Tschauder and Swadling 1979: 36) that:

Here and there one encounters locals who have worked for Europeans and who can now act as interpreters. This means that it is now easier to obtain certain information than was the case in 1895 [his first visit to this area]. At that time the only means of communication was sign language ...

In her interview with Margaret Mead, Parkinson's wife, Phebe, stated that Parkinson did not speak pidgin English, though she did not indicate how he communicated with the local people (Mead 1964:200). Missionaries such as Brown and Danks learned their respective local languages to be able to translate the Bible and to conduct religious teaching, but Parkinson's work brought him into contact with a wide range of languages. The labour force on the New Britain plantations was drawn from throughout the islands of the Bismarck Archipelago and north Solomons, and proved to be a rich source of information (Parkinson 1907a:xv). Given the diversity of languages spoken on the plantations, it is surprising that Parkinson did not find pidgin English useful. It seems unlikely, however, that he relied solely 'on gestures, and the bayonets of his Buka bodyguards to make his wishes known' (Robson 1965:168). Perhaps it was a case of the labourers learning enough English or German for Parkinson to communicate with them. He was able to discuss various topics with them, such as the discussion he had with a man from Ontong Java who had been at Ralum 'for many years' about how to catch the *palu* (*Ruvettus*) fish (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P28/1900).

Parkinson relied heavily on Phebe, who had a good command of pidgin English as well as fluency in the Tolai language (Thiel 1909:114). She spent much time with Tolai people, and helped Parkinson record their names and other information (Mead 1964:184). May Macfarlane (1925:20) later claimed that, 'Much of the actual labour of collecting the information which he used was done by Mrs Parkinson. Mrs Parkinson has frequently acted as guide and safeguard for visiting scientific observers.' Phebe held regular 'markets' with Tolai women to buy food for the plantation workers, and probably as much as anyone helped Parkinson to obtain detailed information about the Tolai people. An undated photograph shows Parkinson writing while Phebe talks to a man, presumably translating for Parkinson (Overell 1923: plate opp. 178;





reproduced in Gash and Whittaker 1975:43, plate 77). His text, however, does not acknowledge this, for in the sections dealing with the Gazelle Peninsula, he frequently observes that he was told the information directly. According to Klaus Neumann (*in litt.* 6 January 1998), Parkinson probably had sufficient command of Kuanua (the Tolai language) to at least understand what was said. While it is questionable whether Phebe assisted much with the obtaining of information about secret and sacred male activities, we can be almost certain that it was through her that Parkinson was able to include in his book so much about Tolai women.

Phebe's contribution went beyond merely acting as an interpreter, for she was heavily involved in organising the collection and stuffing of animals, as well as shipping these and artifacts to overseas museums (Mead 1964:200). She was clearly well-informed about local customs, for when Etheridge wrote to Parkinson in 1912, not knowing he was dead, she was able to provide him with the information he sought about the use of decorated paddles and staffs from Buka (Australian Museum Archives AMS9 P34/1912). Perhaps it was Phebe's influence, and Samoan origins, which contributed to the success of their negotiations with the Tolai for the purchase of use rights to their land through the Tolai practice of *totokom* (a form of reciprocity; cf. Salisbury 1970:72, 77). Parkinson understood many customs, such as *kamara* ('payback' or compensation), sufficiently well to employ them in his dealings with villagers (1907a:60-1). His view on *kamara* differed from that of Hahl, who felt it was too harsh a practice to incorporate into the judicial system then being developed by the German administration (Rowley 1966:36-7; cf. Parkinson 1907a:61).

Parkinson was a Protestant (Mead 1964:193), but this did not stop him from developing a close relationship with the Catholic missionaries operating out of Vunapope, just down the road from Ralum and Kuradui. This contact, however, was more scientific than spiritual, for Parkinson (1907a:xvii) particularly thanked them for sharing with him information about the islanders. Not only were the missionaries living close to the people and learning their languages, but like Parkinson they were observing, recording and publishing aspects of indigenous lifestyles and beliefs. Some are acknowledged directly by Parkinson, particularly in the section of *Dreißig Jahre* dealing with languages (Parkinson 1907a:724), which was written with the help of Fathers Bley and Rascher; it also drew on the language work of the Methodist missionaries Brown, Rickard and Danks (Parkinson 1907a:723). Similarly, the discussion about Sulka masks and rituals was based on information from Brother Hermann Müller (Parkinson 1907a:176), who had learned the Sulka language: 'und nachdem dies nun gelungen, bin ich imstande gewesen, einige Aufschlüsse über die Masken zu erhalten' (Parkinson 1907a:635).

*Dreißig Jahre*, however, is not just a record of what Parkinson saw or was told by others. He was a widely read person, who used the works of others to fill gaps in his information or to place it in a wider context. While his early writings were breaking new ground, by the time Parkinson wrote his major work there was a wide-ranging literature by missionaries, travellers, visiting scholars and government officials. He cites many of these works, mostly as sources of information, but occasionally to correct or amplify their statements. He adopted a comparative approach, and drew upon Codrington, Woodford, Haddon, Fison, and MacGregor (the administrator of British New Guinea) for his broad-ranging discussion about religion and totemism. His reading went beyond the boundaries of the island world to include the works of Spencer and Gillen and Howitt on the Australian Aboriginal peoples (Parkinson 1907a:674-5). Thiel (1909:114) also notes that Parkinson was a corresponding member of scientific societies in Germany, Italy, Sweden, England and Australia.

In short, Parkinson was probably as well read and informed, if not better, than many of his contemporaries in the islands. The 'German Professor', as he was called by Farrell (Robson 1965:167), sought out new literature wherever he could. When he sent a collection of human skulls to the Australian Museum in 1889, he asked that they be exchanged for a copy of the *Pictorial Atlas of Australia*, a book about which he had heard (Australian Museum Archives P13/1889). Later, he asked Etheridge to send him the latest parts of the Australian Museum's *Memoir* series on Funafuti – he already had parts 1 to 7 – and any other Australian Museum publications on the Pacific Islands. He thanked Etheridge for sending a copy of his 'work on the ornamentation of the Dilly Baskets'. Parkinson had already read it, and was considering a similar study of string bags and netting of the New Guinea coast (Australian Museum Archives P56/1899). Etheridge responded by sending parts 8 and 9 of the Funafuti report. Parkinson read them closely and wrote to Etheridge to correct Hedley's (1897:272-6) misunderstanding about a large fishhook used on Funafuti. This was not, said Parkinson, for catching sharks, but for catching the *palu* fish (*Ruvettus*). He added that the drawings by Hedley and 'Mr Waite' (scientific assistant at the museum) showing the way the hook was used 'are excellent but I do not think they are complete' (see Hedley 1897:272-6). He referred Etheridge to a drawing in his own account (Parkinson 1897b), itself 'not shown very clearly', so Parkinson included for Etheridge a better drawing. This is almost identical to that from Nukumanu subsequently included in *Dreißig Jahre*, but in mirror image (Parkinson 1907a:537, fig. 89). Parkinson (1907b) was also able to amplify some observations by Edge-Partington on Polynesian outlier basketry published in *Man*.





Parkinson's access to a wide range of literature is well demonstrated in the final section of *Dreißig Jahre*, in which he provided an overview of European exploration of the Pacific Islands, including the German annexation of the Bismarck Archipelago (Parkinson 1907a:811-58). Some of this information he may have obtained from books in his possession, but the correspondence between Parkinson and Etheridge reveals that he also borrowed books from the Australian Museum (Australian Museum Archives AMS9 P39/1900), such as the accounts of Cook's three voyages in the Pacific. This was the Hawkesworth edition; the museum apologised for not being able to send Dalrymple as well, since it was not held in the museum library (Australian Museum Archives AMS6 190/1900). For Etheridge, such loans yielded a gain in the form of information. Etheridge used Parkinson as a source of information about artifacts in the museum collections, some of them received from Parkinson himself. In 1903, Etheridge sent him a photo of an item from the Duke of York Islands. Parkinson replied (Australian Museum Archives, AMS9 P20/1903) that he had inquired at Port Hunter and at 'other places in the Duke of York Islands', and everyone agreed that it was a float for a large seine net, and not a mark of rank, other than that the owner of such a net 'is generally a person of some importance'. Parkinson goes on to correct Hunter's speculation (1793:215; cf. Calaby 1989: plate 97) that such items were a mark of high rank and were carried in canoes of chiefs.

The above discussion shows Parkinson as generally a meticulous, perhaps punctilious, recorder of facts at a time when anthropological theory and practice were still being developed. He was willing to check a detail with several people, rather than rely on the testimony of one alone; indeed, in his book he occasionally indicates whether a piece of information came from one man or several, or whether the information presented was current or belonged to the past (for example, Parkinson 1907a:66 – 'Alte Leute sagen, dass in früheren Zeiten ...'). His long residence and wide travels in the archipelago allowed many of his statements to be based on repeated observations. This allowed him to use specific examples to illustrate a general point, as in the case of the burial of an *agala*, which he witnessed some years before writing *Dreißig Jahre* (Parkinson 1907a:74-5), rather than to rely solely on generalisation.

It is interesting to compare briefly his approach with that taken by the missionary George Brown in compiling his book. Brown (1910:vi) used the *Anthropological Notes and Queries* first put out by the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1874 as a guide to the kinds of information that he recorded. Parkinson, on the other hand, seems not to have had such a systematic approach, recording what he could without necessarily trying to be comprehensive. As a result, while *Dreißig Jahre* focuses strongly on some matters, such as the use of shell money by the Tolai people and often detailed accounts of male material culture, it has little to offer about other subjects, such as trade or pottery-making.

Inevitably, there are errors or misinterpretations in Parkinson's work. When dealing with the south coast societies from Kandrian westwards, Parkinson states (1907a:212-13) that the wooden bowls seen on the south coast between South Cape and Cape Merkus may have been made in the area, and that the Tami Islanders were eager to obtain them. He also noted that wooden bowls were being made on the islands at Kandrian. In view of later studies, neither statement is likely to be true. The Tami Islanders were the original bowl-makers and traded these to New Britain; in more recent times this role was taken over by some of the Siassi Islanders lying between New Britain and New Guinea (cf. Harding 1967).

Parkinson was very interested in people and their ritual lives, and engaged in a long speculation about the origin of the Polynesians and their relationship to people of the archipelago (1907a:551-64). Yet he omitted several topics that one might have expected him to include. Part XI of the 1907 version of *Dreißig Jahre* deals briefly with the cultivation of plants, domestic animals and hunting, and ends with a curious short section in which pottery-making in the Admiralty Islands and the northern Solomon Islands receive summary mention. This is followed by an equally puzzling commentary on some uses of obsidian, which to some extent duplicates previous references. The entire section is awkwardly positioned, and may have been a late addition when Parkinson realised that he had omitted discussion of these matters. The few words on these topics do no justice to them, and do more to draw attention to the omissions than to resolve them. It is surprising that the man who was so meticulous in describing the correct function and use of the *palu* fishhook should pay so little attention to such important economic and social activities. Perhaps it was because some of these aspects fell into the female domain, whereas Parkinson would have spent most of his time in the company of men. Even so, we could reasonably expect that he might have sought the assistance of Phebe in filling such gaps, had she accompanied him on his travels.

Parkinson's first book (1887a) contained only rather amateurish drawings and lithographs, presumably by Parkinson himself. At some subsequent stage he acquired skills in the new art of photography, and collaborated with A.B. Meyer to produce a magnificent two-volume 'Album' of 'Papuan types' of people and scenes in the New Guinea-Bismarck Archipelago area (Meyer and Parkinson 1894, 1900). His images also appeared in the annual reports for German New Guinea (for example, Anon. 1890), and the 1907 edition of *Dreißig Jahre* is richly illustrated with 197 photographs presumed to be by him. His photos





remained a major source of visual information long after his death, appearing in works such as the New Guinea-Bismarck Archipelago section of Buschan's (1923) worldwide review of tribal peoples.

### Conclusion

In presenting this summary account of Parkinson's anthropological activities in the Bismarck Archipelago, I have ranged widely across several of his fields of interest and his contacts with museums and scholars around the world. What emerges is that although Parkinson spent much of his time in the archipelago working for Queen Emma and the Deutsch Neu Guinea Compagnie, his dedication to learning about the indigenous peoples was the overriding theme of the thirty years referred to in his book title.

*Dreißig Jahre in der Südsee* was the synthesis needed to bring together the detail of his earlier writings into a single comparative study. It was the culmination of his writing career, though three papers appeared after it, one posthumously (Parkinson 1908a, 1908b, 1910).

One of the driving forces behind the book was Parkinson's awareness of the rapid cultural change that had taken place during his time in the archipelago. *Dreißig Jahre* (and Parkinson's other writings) is more than just a description of 'interesting peoples' (1907a:xv) in the Bismarck Archipelago; it is a record of lifestyles that were being abandoned or lost – a recurring theme in his writings. It is about a changing world recorded by an outsider who was never a member of the societies he observed and described, and to whose cultural change he contributed as much as anyone in his role as trader, recruiter and planter.

Compared with the compendious volumes of the Hamburg Südsee Expedition, which focus on a single island or island group, *Dreißig Jahre* is somewhat unbalanced. The Tolai people, among whom he lived, receive the majority of his attention, but his accounts of many other groups are often the first available for them. No other single author could have attempted such an overview, and none has since. The Hamburg teams spent several months in the archipelago, but Parkinson brought years of experience, observation and understanding to his work. In some respects he is less academic as an author than the Hamburg specialists, and despite his matter-of-fact descriptive style and almost obsessive attention to detail, the individuality of his experiences gives his writings a personal touch that is lacking among the Hamburgers and many other writers of that period.

*Dreißig Jahre* is unparalleled in the literature of the Bismarck Archipelago. It is an incomparable picture of a time and place now long past. An English-language review of his book offered little more than a summary of Parkinson's foreword and bits of his text, but its author acknowledged that 'no one is better qualified to write about this *terra incognita* than Herr Parkinson' (A.H.Q. 1908). Similarly, another reviewer saw it as an 'ornament' to the German ethnographic literature (Andree 1907:320). On reading this new English translation, others, it is hoped, will agree that it is 'a magisterial guide to the region' (Firth 1986:164), 'a massive and authoritative ethnography' (Salisbury 1970:39), and 'für alle Zeiten eine reiche Fundgrube, ein Thesaurus für alle sein wird' (Anon. 1909:211).

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None of the above, however, is responsible for specific interpretations, any factual errors or omissions that remain.

### Bibliography of R.H.R. Parkinson

The following list of publications by Parkinson is the most comprehensive yet assembled, and is compiled from several sources, especially Sack (1980) for the German-language items. Sack's list has been compared with, and added to as a result, those provided by Anon. (1968), Edridge (1985), and Hanson and Hanson (1984). Thiel (1909:114) records that Parkinson was a correspondent with newspapers such as *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Hamburger Nachrichten* and *Ostasiatischer Lloyd*. I have not examined these, and list only two, one of which (1894b) is quoted by Neumann (1991:132), who also cites (1991:270, fn 8) several other Parkinson documents. Thiel also notes (1909:114) that Parkinson was a corresponding member of scientific societies in Berlin, Stuttgart, Rome, Stockholm, London and Australia. I have not conducted a search of the publications of these societies, but three of Parkinson's papers in their journals are included below (Parkinson 1904b, 1907b, 1908b).

- 1887a. *Im Bismarck-Archipel. Erlebnisse und Beobachtungen auf der Insel Neu-Pommern (Neu-Britannien)*. F.A. Brockhaus, Leipzig.
- 1887b. Plantagen in Neu-Pommern. *Deutsche kolonialzeitung*. 4(22):693-6.
1888. Ein Ausflug nach dem Kaiserin-Augusta-Strom in Kaiser Wilhelmsland. *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. 179.
- 1889a. Waffe, Signalrohr oder Tabakspfeife? *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. 2:168.
- 1889b. Beiträge zur Kenntniss des deutschen Schutzgebietes in der Südsee. *Geographische Gesellschaft Hamburg, Mitteilungen*. 1887-88:201-81.
1890. Segeldirektion für die König-Albert-Strasse. *Nachrichten über Kaiser Wilhelms-land und den Bismarck-Archipel*. 6:49.
1892. Über Tätowierung der Eingebornen im Distrikt Siarr auf der Ostküste von Neu-Mecklenberg (Neu-Irland). *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. 5:76-8.
- 1894a. Über das Durchbohren von Muschelplatten, behufs Herstellung von Armringen, etc. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. 7:89.
- 1894b. Article in *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. 22 February.
1895. Zur Ethnographie der Matty-Insel. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. 8:248.
- 1896a. Beiträge zur Ethnographie der Matty- und Durour-Inseln. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. 9:195-203.
- 1896b. Bougainville. *Deutsches kolonialblatt*. 46-8.
- 1896c. Bismarck-Archipel. *Globus*. 69:146.
- 1897a. Pflanzungen im Bismarckarchipel. *Der Tropenpflanzer*. 254-5.
- 1897b. Zur Ethnographie der Ontong Java- und Tasman-Inseln, mit Einigen Bemerkungen über die Marquesen- und Abgarris-Inseln. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. 10:104-18, 137-51.
- 1898a. Kaffeekultur im Bismarck-Archipel. *Der Tropenpflanzer*. 335-6.
- 1898b. "Koppensnellen" in der Südsee. *Deutsche kolonialzeitung*. 87-8.
- 1898c. Nachtrage zur Ethnographie der Ontong-Java-Inseln. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. 11:194-209.
- 1898d. Zur Ethnographie der nordwestlichen Salomo-Inseln. *Zoologisches und anthropologisch-ethnographisches Museum, Dresden, Abhandlungen und Berichte*. 7(6):1-35.
1899. Die Ballonmützen auf Bougainville (Salomo-Inseln). *Globus*. 75:243.
- 1900a. Durchfahrt zwischen Buka und Bougainville. *Deutsches kolonialblatt*. 71.
- 1900b. Die Schiffsschnäbel der Salomonen. (Berichtigung). *Globus*. 78:19.
- 1900c. Die Berlinhafen-Section. Ein Beitrag zur Ethnographie der Neu-Guinea-Küste. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. 13:18-54.





- 1901a. Die Einwohner der Insel St. Matthias. *Globus*. 79:229-33, 256.  
1901b. Die Insel St. Matthias. *Globus*. 79:256.  
1901c. Mit der "Möwe" im Bismarck-Archipel. *Berall*. 3:86.  
1904a. Tätowierung der Mogemokinsulaner. *Globus*. 84:15.  
1904b. A rice-sheller from Nusa. *Man*. 4:117.  
1905a. Ein Besuch auf den Admiralitäts-Inseln. *Globus*. 87(13):238.  
1905b. St. Matthias und die Inseln Kerue und Tench. *Globus*. 88(5):69-72.  
1905c. Baumrindenkleidung in Deutsch Neu Guinea. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*. 17:222.  
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*The second edition and the Barry translation*

Noel C. Barry, a resident of Rabaul, was not an anthropologist, and it is unclear why he undertook the translation of *Dreißig Jahre* (Parkinson n.d.). According to Mead (1964:178), who had read the 1907 edition as a graduate student, Barry was starting the translation of the 1926 edition when she visited New Britain in 1928-29. He completed it before the outbreak of the Pacific War and gave it to Phebe. She in turn gave it to a member of the Archbold Expedition, who took it back to the USA (Robson 1965:222). After the war, Robson retrieved the typescript from the USA; presumably, this was the original top copy of the typescript. The Australian Museum holds a carbon copy of a typescript similar to the Barry version, with the exception of only a few minor typing errors; it is uncertain whether this is a copy of Barry's original typed version or from a later version. Robson placed the rescued copy in the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Sydney and, some time later, copies were made and placed in several major libraries, including that of the Australian Museum. For many people, this Barry translation became the sole avenue into Parkinson's book.

The 1926 edition of *Dreißig Jahre* translated by Barry was edited by August Eichhorn of the Staatliche Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin. Some changes to the 1907 edition were necessary, for Parkinson wrote before World War I, in which Germany lost its Pacific possessions. Thus, 'die deutschen Salomoinseln' became 'die früher' or 'die vormals deutschen Salomoninseln'.

Eichhorn's version has the same list of contents as the 1907 original, but he begins with the history of European exploration of the Bismarck Archipelago. In the 1907 version, Parkinson placed this section at the end of the book as section XII. Eichhorn does not explain why he made this switch, nor does he explain why some passages – paragraphs and whole pages – of the 1907 text were omitted. Examination of the 1926 text suggests that Eichhorn may have felt that Parkinson occasionally included material of little or no direct relevance to the main topic of the book. For example, a missing paragraph of page 812 discusses matters relating to Asian and European histories that, strictly speaking, have no relevance to the main text.

Some omissions, then, can be supported on the grounds of irrelevance, but others cannot be so explained, such as Parkinson's pages 857-58 dealing with German mapping of the archipelago, and pages 40-2, which discuss matters such as European traders in the Bismarck Archipelago. Eichhorn also omitted Parkinson's account (1907a:25-6) of a visit to Mōwehafen (Kandrian) in 1896, during which Parkinson walked inland some distance and visited a palisaded settlement of two houses. Eichhorn may have felt that this was redundant, since the incident is referred to again in a later section.

Eichhorn condensed parts of the original, sometimes so badly that the meaning is corrupted. The original pages 24-5 discuss the Willaumez Peninsula on the north coast of New Britain, and then move to consideration of the south coast. Eichhorn's compression of the text, however, loses the critical transition from north to south, so that his text attributes south-coast features to the Willaumez Peninsula. In another condensing exercise, more than two pages of Parkinson's text (1907a:35-7) are condensed into a single paragraph (see Parkinson n.d.:49-50).





The net result of these omissions and compression is that whereas the original 1907 book had 858 pages of text, in the 1926 version the text is reduced to 347 pages, less than half of the original length. The illustrations were also reduced in the 1926 version, from 197 plus four maps, to 158 plus four maps, and their sequence was changed. Photos originally inserted into the 1907 text were sometimes combined in the 1926 edition to make a separate full-page plate (for example, 1907a, plates 129, 132 and 133, were combined onto one page, 1926, plates 1 to 3). Partly in line with the abbreviated text, the index of Eichhorn's version is much shorter than that of 1907. But it is also less complete. The 1907 index lists twenty-two sub-entries under 'Baining', whereas there are only three in the 1926 edition, even though the topics covered by the 1907 entries remain in the 1926 text.

Barry exerted little editorial control over his translation. He added (Parkinson n.d.:34) a footnote to Parkinson's discussion of the circumstances surrounding the German takeover of Kaiser Wilhelmsland and the Bismarck Archipelago (Parkinson 1907a:854-5), pointing out that an alternative interpretation is possible.

While these examples demonstrate how necessary it is for anyone using Barry's translation and the 1926 Eichhorn edition to crosscheck with the original Parkinson text, there is unfortunately another good reason: that of accuracy. Parkinson (1907a:20) speculated on the future of Australia's population, suggesting that in 100 years' time the population could reach about 30 million people. Barry (n.d.:45), however, got his numbers mixed up and attributed to Parkinson the suggestion that the population would reach 100 million! Further on, Barry (n.d.:164) states that the missionary George Brown visited 'Henry Reid Bay' in New Britain in 1873. Since Brown did not even arrive in the Duke of York Islands until 1875, we accept Parkinson's (1907a:175) original attribution of 1878.

These are minor deficiencies, however, and Barry's work has served a useful purpose over several decades. We do not know why he translated the book, or what he intended to do with it on completion. That he gave it to Phebe Parkinson, who passed it on to someone else, can have several explanations. Perhaps Barry hoped that she would check and correct the translation. Perhaps Phebe hoped that the visiting American might help her find a publisher. We do not know, and may never know, what their intentions were. All we can say is that Robson's recovery of the typescript from the USA rescued it from obscurity and possible loss, and allowed several generations of non-German readers to access Richard Parkinson's major work.

By making *Dreißig Jahre* more accessible to non-German readers, however, Barry inadvertently gave Parkinson's book prominence over works by other contemporary German writers, especially those of the Catholic missionaries. For many non-German readers, Barry's version of Parkinson became the standard reference, and discouraged them from reading and appraising independently the writings of Parkinson's contemporaries. It is hoped that this new translation will not reinforce this situation, but will encourage exploration of those other writers, many of whom provide more detailed appreciations and interpretations of topics covered only briefly by Parkinson's book.

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# Author's Foreword

A thirty-year stay on various South Sea islands has made me familiar with the land and people. From 1875 to 1882, I became acquainted with Samoa through the Polynesians living around me, and after I had settled on the Gazelle Peninsula in the latter year and been surrounded on all sides by Melanesians, I endeavoured to study this interesting people also, during the course of numerous longer journeys and short excursions.

I was able to complete my observations not only through repeated visits to individual places, but also from questioning the natives working on the plantations in all parts of the Bismarck Archipelago and the Solomon Islands. A wealth of material was available, which enabled me to control and expand my observations. Thus, over the years my records have accumulated, from which individual sections have occasionally been revised and published.

From many quarters I have been called upon to begin the revision of my entire observations and experiences. The late Geheimrat Bastian, with whom I was accustomed to having frequent, long discussions on the usages and customs of the Melanesians, during a visit to Germany in 1894, persuaded me at that time to undertake the work. While this has not seen the light of day until now, it so happened that the more I progressed with the revision, the more aware I became of how fragmentary and incomplete my records largely were. Gaps that could not be filled in were discovered everywhere; throughout, doubts persisted whether this or that record was entirely accurate. Thus for a time the work became loathsome to me, and the manuscript lay for months in a drawer, to appear once more, largely due to the exhortations of my friends in Europe. However, nobody knows better than the author how much is still to be retrieved before we are totally familiar with the natives, their customs and traditions, and their spiritual life.

Nevertheless, I hope that the critics will not judge me too harshly. I would all too happily have given a rounded whole instead of a defective sketch, but despite everything, what I offer to the reader will contain many a new thing and will lay aside

old errors. Many customs and traditions are rapidly vanishing through the influence of the Europeans, whether they be missionaries, assistant judges or other colonists. Tools and weapons find their way into national museums, and modern European items take their place. Already natives are coming to me with their sons, to show their descendants the old objects preserved in my collection. When a further twenty-five years pass, in the ethnological museums of Europe one will be able to show the astonished natives of New Britain or New Ireland objects that their forefathers used in war and peace, which will appear just as strange to their descendants as the stone axes and spear tips of their ancestors do to present Europeans. The numerous gaps will only be filled in after we have made closer contact with the individual tribes with which we have only cursorily become acquainted until now; especially after becoming competent in their language. There are still, as much on New Britain as on New Ireland and Bougainville, tribes of whose language we do not know a single word, with whom we have never come into contact. It remains for later researchers to fill in all these gaps.

I do not need to say much about the figures accompanying the text. They are reproduced from individual photographs and will contribute much to the illustration of the contents. Those who desire further pictorial material will find this in the two-volume *Papua Album* that I have published in conjunction with my friend Geheimrat A.B. Meyer of Dresden.

In conclusion, I must express my gratitude to those who made their observations available to me, thereby placing me in a position to complete the description of the natives, their customs and traditions. First in line are the missionaries of the Mission of the Sacred Heart, who so very willingly gave me information and records for perusal. Also I must thank the commanders of visiting German warships for the courtesy of offering me, from time to time, the opportunity during their cruises to visit such parts of the archipelago as otherwise lie beyond the usual trade routes. I must likewise





thank the firms E.E. Forsayth and Hershheim & Co. for the many opportunities they gave me to get to know the land and people of the archipelago on the voyages of their ships to the various islands.

*Bismarck Archipelago, 1906*  
*R. Parkinson*



# Editor's Foreword

This book would not have required an editor had not the great distance of the author from his homeland made it impossible for him to undertake the tasks involved with the printing. The manuscript that Herr Parkinson submitted was ready for press; it certainly appeared, as one may still perceive in the text, that it was not written in one piece but originated piecemeal as the investigations of the author progressed and expanded. It might have been more convenient to arrange the material more pertinently and systematically; but the editor too could not justify what the author had not deemed necessary. Thus everything has remained essentially as the author wrote it; only stylistic unevenness and repetitions, explicable by the nature of the origin of the book, have been removed, as far as possible. Nowhere have I undertaken factual changes, not even in those instances where I have not been in agreement with the author. This is particularly so in theoretical discussions. Situations have another perspective when one is personally confronted with them in real life, rather than when one critically examines them in one's study. Advantages and disadvantages are found on both sides. Whoever lives in the open among the children of nature knows the conditions better than the scholar at home; but he judges the origin and development of these conditions one-sidedly, because the possibility of comparison with related phenomena is lacking, which only an extensive knowledge of the literature would provide. Thus Herr Parkinson's theories – for example, on the origin of the secret societies – do not find overall agreement with the experts. Despite this, I have let everything remain unaltered, even the daring hypothesis that argues its way back to a manifesto of anthropological similarities between the inhabitants of New Britain and the Australians, from an apparent connection of both regions at the beginning of the Tertiary Period. One can at the very least call the hypothesis courageous, since until now even the most highly fanciful anthropologist has not once attempted to date the existence of mankind generally, not to mention a mankind already differentiated into

racés, further back than the beginning of the Tertiary Period. Whether mankind existed even at the end of this period is still disputed by the experts.

However, such hypotheses should not form an absolute in knowledge; they are only there to bring together for the first time an entangled mass of evidence into a provisional form. By their subjective nature they have more value to their authors than to others, and like all hypotheses, are judged accordingly, to be cast off by others as knowledge progresses. Similarly, in this book also, they are only non-essential parts, the chief value lying in the large amount of factual material that it contains, which forms a veritable mine of information for ethnologists. Certainly the book is not intended to give a scientific, exhaustive presentation of the ethnology of the Bismarck Archipelago – specialist works of the author published earlier contain more details on their defined areas – it is not directed exclusively to scholars but predominantly to a broader circle that has an interest in our colonies and their inhabitants. We have only few such books; the earlier, vigorous interest in land and ethnological reading has sunk markedly since the end of the period of the great journeys of discovery, and only arises anew in direct connection with colonial politics.

The new colonial-political era has not been without influence on the character of this literature. With the now completed partitioning of the earth among the civilised states of Europe and America, the scientific investigation of the earth also has become more and more nationalised, so to speak. The states had primarily the intention only of securing the economic exploitation of certain regions; but after the division of economic and commercial zones there soon followed the division of scientific work. It was, of course, also natural that the scholars whose interests had previously indiscriminately covered the entire earth, now turned in preference to the overseas colonies of their own fatherlands. The time of great world journeys, the traversing of entire continents – the crossings of Africa have already been reduced to sports – have passed, on the one hand because the earth is largely





known, and there is no longer anything major to discover, but also because each of the great civilised nations have secured a portion of the earth's surface for themselves and confined themselves to it. They are beginning to look around their property and establish themselves domestically.

In the process, the scientific study of land and people has remained firmly in the background; practical needs, the demands of merchants and planters had to be considered first. Above all, the security and convenience of commerce, improvement of sanitary conditions, the supply of a labour force, and so on, had to be taken care of. Naturally, there was much profit for science in this. Good maps were a first requirement, and we know how excellently many officers of our protectorate forces have performed in this area; no less important were the exploration of the soil and mineral treasures, and the knowledge of useful plants. These investigations have brought rich gains to geography, geology and botany. However, this scientific exploitation resulted more fortuitously and incidentally; the dominant feature was immediate, practical usefulness. Thus it came about that the sciences that promised no direct benefit were neglected, primarily the science of mankind and his culture, anthropology and ethnology.

It has certainly been stressed often enough that successful colonial politics, which are yet based to a great extent on a proper, purposeful treatment of the natives, are only possible on the basis of thorough ethnological knowledge. One must first of all get to know a people that one wishes to rule; one cannot expect that a primitive people become familiar with the complicated structures of our civilisation, with our fine understanding of completely foreign perceptions of justice or moral concepts, rather we must endeavour to understand their culture, their thoughts and their sentiments. However, despite the various activities that are often the ultimate cause of native revolts, through the violation of customs or perceptions that appear laughable or absurd to us but are sacred to them, one has mostly preached to deaf ears. Ethnology is still an unappreciated, but for the first time growing, science, which is studied neither in schools nor in universities, and therefore even among the educated only seldom finds real understanding. The ethnographic museums are still collections of curiosities to lay people; that the stored rarities might have another purpose than the pleasure of passing curiosity, comes least to mind.

This lack of interest and understanding can not, of course, be remedied overnight. However, nothing is more appropriate for dragging meaningful participation in ethnological problems out of the narrow circle of specialists into the broader popular circle than the universally understandable books of this present type. Nobody who is aware with loving zeal he has studied the life of the natives during the entire thirty years of his stay in the South Seas is in any doubt that Herr Parkinson was the appropriate person to write such a book on the Bismarck Archipelago and its inhabitants. Witnesses to this are his numerous scientific essays, and no less so the many beautiful artifacts for which the German museums, particularly those of Dresden and Berlin, are obliged to his collecting zeal.

One can therefore only wish that the book finds its merited success with the German public, and that the opportunity will soon be given to the author to remove the deficiencies adherent to a first attempt, in a second edition.

The illustrations that adorn the book are for the most part taken from the author's original photographs; some of them, however, are from photographs of objects in the Berliner Museum für Völkerkunde. These are illustrations numbers 61 to 64, 66, 70, 82, 102, 117 to 119, and 123 to 125.

The pen drawings in the Berlin Museum were similarly produced, partly from Parkinson's pencil sketches, partly from illustrations in the author's earlier publications, and partly from originals in the Berlin Museum.

Table 49 and the text illustrations numbers 120 to 122 are reproduced from the splendid tables in the *Publikationen aus dem Königlichen Ethnographischen Museum zu Dresden*, volumes 10 and 13, with kind permission of the publishers, von Stengel & Co. in Dresden, and of the editor, Geheimrat A.B. Meyer, to whom at this point I express my deep gratitude.

The maps were drawn by Dr M. Groll in Berlin, from the map of the Bismarck Archipelago in the *Großer Deutscher kolonialatlas*, which was provided by Herr Parkinson with amendments and modifications.

Finally I must state my thanks to the publishers, Herren Strecker & Schröder, for the willing cooperation they have given me in the editing, and particularly, in the production of the book.

Berlin, September 1907  
B. Ankermann







**Plate I** Gorge at Möwehafen. Fissure in a raised coral reef, widened by erosion