"The body of my enemy": Armed conflicts in societies without wealth
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"It's the arrow's fault!" The Anga war and its correlates (Papua New Guinea)

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Abstract: In New Guinea, understanding collective violence against others—brawls, vendettas, war—means describing and analyzing its relationship with other aspects of social organization and ways of thinking. Whether considering the gradation of forms of violence according to their locally recognized causes, the weapons, tactics or defense mechanisms used, what the ethnography of the Anga groups shows is the homogeneity of the phenomenon of "war". On the other hand, very contrasting situations emerge as soon as we turn to the making of warriors during initiations, to the involvement of invisible powers in the fights or to the ways of suspending them and compensating for the losses.
Both the political status of the agents concerned and the use of wealth (particularly that of pigs) in all kinds of transactions—life cycle and compensation for homicide—Thus reveal a combinatorics that is potentially instructive for understanding the relationship between war and the institution of wealth exchanges leading to the exploitation of the labor of others in the island.
Keywords: Anga, Papua New Guinea, Ankave, Baruya, fights, initiation, chamanism, wealth, inequalitie.

"They cut off his arms, his legs, his head. They went home, singing. They cooked him and ate him."
(Blackwood 1978, p. 120.)

INTRODUCTION

Rather than with war in New Guinea in general, this text deals with the fighting of a limited group of mountain peoples from the big island, the Anga of Papua New Guinea, and, above all, with the central place these confrontations held in the daily life, social organization and systems of thought of these forest farmers.

The information mobilized here was provided by actors for whom armed violence of all kinds (brawls, vendettas, war) has remained and continues to remain, a constant concern. For example, it was with widespread enthusiasm that the Baruya of Wonenara replenished their stock of shields and arrows in 1983, when fighting resumed with their Yewarenaasa neighbors (fig. 1). Among the Ankave, a five days' walk away and at the end of the 1990s, an initiate of the third stage of the male rites was always told: "Now that you have seen this, will you abandon your wife and children when the enemy arrives?" The last skirmishes with former adversaries had occurred some thirty years previously, but the fear of seeing them cross the wall of mountains bordering their territory remained in everyone's mind. Even those of the Anga who were plunged into irrepressible hilarity at the mention of the battles of the past—"Can you imagine: they were our game! We were their prey!" I was told in 1980 among the Kapau—had direct experience of the fighting. It was among the Kapau that B. Blackwood heard many times the phrase quoted at the top of this text, and it was among them that the last major massacre (twenty-six killed) took place, in Yaba, in September 1961 (Carey, 1961-1962).

In short, my interlocutors knew that a simple stone adze would instantly kill anyone hit on the temple and gave a detailed account of the ambushes and a thousand and one acts of treachery that make up local history: "At the given signal, when So-and-so grabbed a water-filled bamboo internode, they slaughtered them all!"

I should also point out that the Anga world had nothing to do with those New Guinea societies where dozens or

Fig. 1 – Shields are brought out of the men's house in Wuyabo in preparation for war with the Yewarenaasa, which has just resumed (Wonenara, 1983; photo P. Lemonnier).

even hundreds of men would fire arrows and throw spears at each other all day long; they did not wage war to avenge dead ancestors, nor did they hunt heads. Nor was there any shift from a "ritualized" phase of war to an unlimited outburst of violence. Finally, aside from the instance in which a distinguished Yewarenaasa warrior was killed in 1983 by a 12-gauge buckshot, the last war of the Baruya was a matter of bows and arrows. There were none of the out-of-control assault rifle confrontations shown on television today, but everyone recalled that the success of the Baruya illustrated how recent male initiations (1979) had produced effective warrior apprentices (Lemonnier, 2023).

This point is essential and what I propose to explain is this type of link, namely the relationship between armed violence and several institutions and practices that constitute Anga cultures, including practices that prevent the emergence of a permanent hierarchy among men or that de facto limit the establishment of social distinctions based on material wealth (pigs and shells).

THE ANGA

Speaking twelve related but mostly mutually unintelligible languages and divided into around 50 local groups, some 150,000 Anga occupy an area of 18,000 km2 straddling three provinces of Papua New Guinea: Eastern Highlands, Gulf and Morobe (fig. 2). All cultivate small fields (0.1 to 2.5 ha) most often cleared in the tropical forest. Tubers (taros and sweet potatoes) provide the bulk of the diet, but sugar cane, bananas and greens are also consumed in large quantities. All are also pig farmers (*Sus scrofa papuensis*, similar to domesticated wild boar). Game (marsupials, wild pigs, birds) is of marginal importance for food, but it plays a fundamental role in initiation rituals and in exchanges (particularly among affines). An anthropic savannah occupies to a greater or lesser extent part of the valley bottoms, particularly around Menyamya, in the heart of Anga country, close to the sites where each group places the origin of Humanity. A few trees on the surrounding ridges are a reminder that the forest was once nearby, but this landscape alone evokes the ancient history of the Anga, made up of very old migrations (of a clan or tribe routed or seeking to conquer less occupied lands).

The aforementioned languages each represent distinct "cultures", or more precisely, ways of being Anga: the members of what I refer to here as a "group" share kinship systems, mythologies, residence rules, rituals, and forms of cooperation. These shared features are globally different from what the members of another linguistic-cultural group do and experience. Speakers of a given language are usually divided into several local groups (occupying one or more valleys) referred to here as "tribes": groups of people who live in their own way in a given territory and are ready to fight to defend their land and their way of life.

All Anga societies are said to be "Great Men" societies (Godelier, 1986): war and male initiations were the main collective activities and, unlike other New Guinea societies, there were no ceremonial exchanges that temporarily replaced war and linked peace procedures to marriages. The affirmation of the equality of men among themselves had as a corollary the supposed superiority of men over women. The male ritual cycle was seen locally as a factory for producing warriors, and anthropologists have emphasized its role in the reproduction of male domination and in the establishment of temporary hierarchies between men: ritual experts, exceptional warriors and shamans were a little "greater" than other men, respectively during ceremonies, during wars or in the event of epidemics. The reproduction of a social order claimed to be unique was delegated to a master of initiation with the right of life and death over the boys; on the battlefield, a great warrior was given the right to dispose of his "dogs" (Baruya formulation) as he saw fit; and nothing less than one's health was entrusted to the shamans, who were obeyed in the event of an epidemic.

I will illustrate later how the relationships between these three contexts, which saw some men rise above other men, distinguish between them the Anga societies, directly or indirectly because of their links with war, including magic, but it is essential first to consider, even briefly, what was understood by the term "war" (generally "great combat").

The almost constant state of war meant that everyone lived in fear of attack: fear of hearing the warriors surrounding a house slam their hands on their thighs at dawn, as a way of saying that the inhabitants had no chance of escaping; fear of being shot in the stomach while going to relieve oneself. No one, man or woman, was safe from an ambush when he or she went to a remote garden or forest. I remember several arrivals at the homes of former enemies of those who were with me at the time: "Pierre, you go ahead and make sure to point out that the strings have been removed from our bows!"

The purpose of my nearly grotesque account is not to assess the miseries of the Anga in comparison with those of other populations facing the endless de facto wars that are ravaging the planet, but to provide the reader with an understanding of the context of violence that is under study. It is also important to realize that the hostilities meant that the local culture made it possible

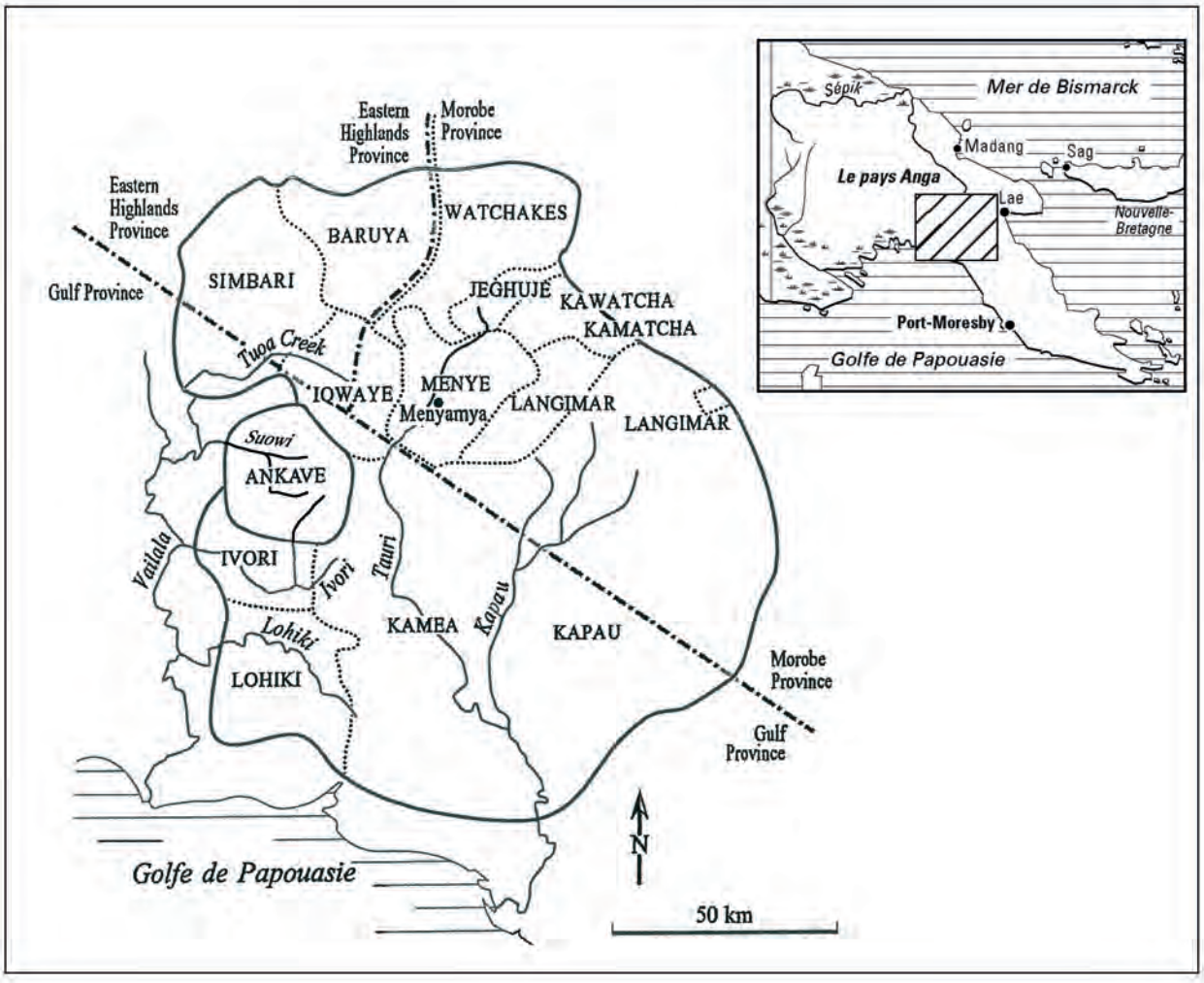

Fig. 2 – Map of the Anga country..

to live unscrupulously alongside relatives—father, brother, husband, son—who were known to have no hesitation in using clubs to smash in the skulls of women and young children. Such a vision of the world, of his loved ones, of his enemies and, more generally, of relationships between human beings, involved a cultural construct that was implemented most notably through the initiation machinery.

MOTIVES AND GRADATION OF FORMS OF VIOLENCE

The Anga distinguish various levels of armed combat—brawl, vendetta, war—which overlap our categories and are accompanied by norms determining both the intensity of the conflict(s), i.e. the gradation of weapons and forms of combat corresponding to each case, as well as the identity of those supposed to participate in it. For this reason alone, these distinctions are worth considering, even if their boundaries were partly blurred in practice.

A brawl is an altercation between two or more men[1] from the same group (hamlet, valley) that results in blows. Those who talk about it do not focus on the reasons for the dispute, but on the form it takes: as in French, it is a "quarrel accompanied by insults, threats and sometimes blows"—never punches, unknown to the Anga, no doubt because even unintentionally touching a person's nose is an absolute offense—but blows with hard wooden sticks (about 1.30 m long) intended for this sole purpose. Bows and arrows can be used, but then one only shoots into the shields brought out for the occasion. If, as may happen, someone is injured, it is "the arrow's fault!" and that is the end of it. These fights, which do not seek to kill[2], involve shooting on the fly from a distance of approximately fifty meters. During a brawl, it is not "normal" to threaten each other with a war club. The idea of an ambush or an attack at dawn is out of the question, and if blood should flow, there is no compensation payment.

The multiple reasons for such an internal confrontation within a local group are those which, throughout New Guinea, trigger hostilities of varying degrees, including interminable wars. In this case, it is primarily a matter of taking possession of the "property" of others: wives, domestic pigs, fruit and nuts from semi-domesticated forest trees (mostly pandanus), wild fowl eggs, and ficus bark (used to make tapa). Trapping or hunting without authorization in the forest of a clan (or lineage) that is not one's own or setting eel traps in a reach where one has nothing to do, emptying the small reservoir where *Pangium edule* kernels undergo anaerobic fermentation are other situations that give rise to protests that can degenerate. The appearance of a domestic pig in a garden is also the subject of potentially dangerous controversy (was it the garden fence that was faulty or is the blame to be laid at the door of the owner of the pig, wandering off and poorly watched? And no one knows where a mockery can lead.

Tensions between in-laws are other potential causes of exchanges of blows. Abused (beaten, insulted) by her husband—which is common—a woman takes refuge with her brothers, who demand explanations from her husband and his family. If the quarrel and the insults persist, the husband's lineage considers that a wife—rightfully acquired according to proper custom—has been taken back from him, and they assume responsibility for the dispute, opposing the lineage to which the woman has returned. This leads to the use of arrows and, therefore, to the vendetta, which can be defined as a brawl that quickly involved a larger number of people and, above all, caused casualties. With no other consultation than "our brother or cousin is threatened!", men face each other, arrows are shot to wound or kill and blood flows. Sometimes the adversaries of the day are relatives of people who had fought each other years or decades before, but the idea of a cycle of tension and revenge is absent. Here as elsewhere, there would always be unavenged deaths, but during such fights, the norm, always respected, is to restrict the fighting to the clans concerned within a valley or portion of a valley and to seek to restore peaceful relations as soon as possible, but the deadly skirmishes can continue for several years.

In practice, vendettas were more long-lasting in groups that were very sparsely populated, such as the Ankave (less than two inhabitants/km2). Their hamlets comprised up to fifteen houses, the owners of which spent most of their lives in camps in the forest, a few hours' walk away, where gardens had been cleared. People only gathered in their permanent habitat for funerals, during male initiations and in the event of war, so that between two rounds of arrow shooting, opponents and their relatives could avoid meeting. Since the 1920s, the vendettas have resulted in twelve deaths in the valley where P. Bonnemère and I are conducting our research, but the inhabitants of the other two valleys did not take part, even though everyone generally has relatives there.[3]

In areas where several hundred, or even up to a thousand, individuals inhabit a valley stretching some ten kilometers in length—such as the Wonenara and Marawaka valleys among the Baruya—it can be observed (including in contemporary times) that brawls (*a'mwe'mala*, "fight over a woman", regardless of the underlying motive) rarely escalate into vendettas. And if a "stick brawl" accompanied by volleys of arrows fatally injures a participant, the opponents are quickly compensated with gifts of bars of vegetable salt, cowrie shells or money (fig. 3).[4] The period during which arrows are shot "to scare"—the stage of fighting with sticks has been abandoned—lasts no more than two or three days. These are literally "days" because shooting stops as soon as the arrows become invisible against the background of the forest, darkened by the setting sun. The opponents are quickly reconciled and a meal is organized at which compensation is exchanged. The intervention of a third party (especially women who have relatives on both sides of the conflict) is common, at least when the skirmishes are considered to be in line with what is expected

Fig. 3 – Amidst tensions (archers drawing their bows), PNG currency is offered to the parents of a murdered Baruya girl in order to put an end to the vendetta that ensued (Wonenara, 1979; photo P. Lemonnier).

in such cases.[5] In the same way that care is taken to only shoot at shields in the case of a brawl, an Anga vendetta is not supposed to spread… unless one of the camps seeks help from relatives who happen to be former enemies (the case of Ankave in the 1960s); needless to say, without any consideration for the clear-cut categories of anthropologists.

If peace must usually prevail among the occupants of the same Baruya valley (or generally among Northern Angans), it is first and foremost because one cannot take the risk of serious internal dissension when the enemies, also very numerous and always threatening, live on the other side of a simple torrent. Populations that gathered to initiate their boys in unique ceremonies, performed in the same place, did not fight each other, the higher interest that mobilized them as a tribe being none other than the making of young warriors capable of confronting a common enemy. But what were the motives and the modalities of these wars, the centrality of which I am seeking to emphasize in the way of life and thinking as well as in the history of the Anga?

For them, war—generally referred to as “the big fight” or simply “the fight”—was a conflict with a population living beyond a natural barrier that was difficult to cross (a river , mountain or ravine), which had its own name (and even its own language), its own history as an autonomous local group, and its own enemies. They also have their own reasons for measuring themselves against others, risking their lives and those of their loved ones, and even the annihilation of their society: among the Ankave alone, I was told of some forty clans “of which only the name remained”, constantly pushed back and decimated in the lowlands by malaria, or even by vendettas following accusations of witchcraft, themselves fueled by deaths due to malaria.

Regarding the reasons for these wars, it should first be noted that the observation according to which many of the New Guinea wars were not aimed at conquering land does not apply here (Lemonnier, 1990, pp. 9–194). Most often, the Anga fought to settle on new lands, then, much later, because those they had ended up driving out wanted to take them back. In the long run, and with the exception of those whose territory ends to the west in a no man’s land in the Gulf of Papua, every Anga group is literally surrounded by neighbors who are either hereditary allies or hereditary enemies; more rarely neutral tribes with whom they trade. Sometimes defeat would lead to two families, sometimes dozens of members of an entire clan fleeing a massacre to occupy a new valley.

The ancestors of the two Ankave clans that are now the most numerous entered, around 1850, a narrow and elongated valley (30 km long) that was sparsely populated, the valley of the Suowi River, which flows towards the Gulf of Papua. Its northern shore marked the outermost territory of a population whose language differed from their own, the Iweto, who lived (and still live) a full day’s walk away, on the other side of a mountain range (2,000 m altitude). Nevertheless, some of them some-

times came to the slopes overlooking the torrent to hunt, and more rarely to clear a garden in the forest.

The newcomers were well received and married two Iweto women, not to strengthen peace at the end of a war as is common in New Guinea (Lemonnier, 1990, pp. 137–138, for example), but simply to establish good relations between new neighbors. The time came when an abused Iweto wife took refuge with her brothers, creating altercations between relatives that resulted in arrows being shot and, one thing leading to another, involved the whole valley, all clans combined. Between 1925 and 1965, these sporadic fights caused the death of nineteen men, four women and four children, in other words a tenth of the population at the time! Apparently not supported by the majority of their tribe, the Iweto left the area, but along with other former enemies (to the east) they remain the ones who are still feared. When an Ankave ventures to the ridge line that serves as a border to hunt or pick pandanus nut fruits, he is careful not to hang around in the spot.

Today's Baruya were also "invading refugees" when, around the middle of the 18th century, "Baragayé" members of the Yoyué tribe (Yagwoia language) living not far from Menyamya, arrived in the great Marawaka valley, a two-day walk from their home, to seek asylum with the Andjé tribe. They were welcomed by the Ndélié (one of the Andjé clans), with whom they intermarried and whose language they quickly adopted (a common occurrence in New Guinea). Much later, with the help of the Ndélié who betrayed their own tribe, these Baragayé took the Andjé by surprise when they were invited to a feast (a classic Anga custom). Defeated, the Andjé abandoned their lands to the Baragayé and the Ndélié, who together formed a new tribe called the Baruya (named after a Baragayé clan; Godelier, 1988, pp. 250–255). At the beginning of the 20th century, some of the Baruya left Marawaka and crossed a high mountain (3,300 m) to invade the Wonenara valley, from which they drove out the Yewarenaasa.

To this day, the Andjé remain the enemies of the Baruya, as do the Yewarenaasa, with whom the war resumed from 1983 to 1987; the peace ceremony is still pending, but a rough balance of the dead has been reached. I will discuss the procedures for stopping the fighting that are inseparable from Anga wars later, but first let's look at the means used to wage war and protect oneself from it.

WEAPONS, TACTICS, PROTECTION

Of round or quadrangular section, equipped with a barbed (or non-barbed) or even lanceolate point, Anga arrows each have a specific use: birds, marsupials, pigs, thieves (Lemonnier, 1987). In practice, with the exception of the arrow with a conical tip, which stuns birds without damaging their feathers, the first arrow that comes to hand will suffice should an enemy appear. In times of conflict, the fighters of certain groups employ variously barbed arrows, sometimes adorned with orchid stem ligatures with no other function than to leave plant debris in a wound (fig. 4, arrows 2, 5 and 6). These arrows, which cannot be extracted from the body of an injured person without tearing the flesh, are the most dangerous, but they take a long time to make or to obtain from a neighboring group. Thus, it is primarily those equipped with a simple tapered point, but featuring incipient breakage notches, that are carried to the site of combat; sometimes several dozen for a single man. The idea is that the arrow head breaks and remains fixed in the victim's body. It is also understood that the splinters of wood produced on contact with a bone will trigger a fatal infection. These simple round-section arrows are used at all distances: for shooting at point-blank range; at fifteen or twenty meters, between two groups of opponents who are constantly jumping to avoid them; or from a distance (50 m and more), with no hope of injuring anyone, but not without mocking the efforts of the enemy gamboling under the deadly shower.

In addition to the bow they held in their hands, the Anga slipped one of the fearsome war clubs that earned them a reputation as "killers in bark-cape" into their rattan or braided orchid stalk belt. Found in all the groups, these weapons are either made of stone (in the shape of a ball, a beveled disk or a star) or wood (ball or star made of sharp roots, head carved "like a pineapple", gnarled root forming a club). A wooden hook was used both to trip an opponent by grabbing his leg and then to strike him on the head. I have already mentioned that the stone adze that every traveler carried balanced on his shoulder was also a formidable weapon. Some of the combatants would wear a shield on one shoulder, with a small net containing approximately twenty arrows (fig. 5 and fig. 6). Some had a small V-shaped slit at the top, through which the warrior could crouch and observe the enemy after taking a moment to draw his bow.

The fighting tactics were broadly the same for all the Anga: ambush near a bridge or any suitable location (including to shoot the opponent at point-blank range); attack on a hamlet at dawn; pitched battle between half a dozen or several dozen men, ideally on either side of an open area (nowadays, an airstrip, for example). It is said that those who surrounded a house would burn a piece of bark-cape under its floor to smoke it out or throw a tree trunk at the sleepers before attacking them. The occupants of the hut were shot at if they tried to escape. The forest camp or the houses were then set on fire. When guests were treacherously massacred, it was with blows from a war club. It should be noted that any Anga would read episodes of their own history in this brief description. I would add that while rape is an issue today, it does not appear in the accounts gathered by anthropologists for the "before" period, the one prior to the discovery of White people. The wounded were finished off. Women and children were among the victims and capturing future wives seems to have been very rare.

The use of shields, dodging arrows or … running away were not the only ways to protect oneself from an enemy. It was known—and repeated to the initiates—that in the forest one should sleep with one eye open and that,

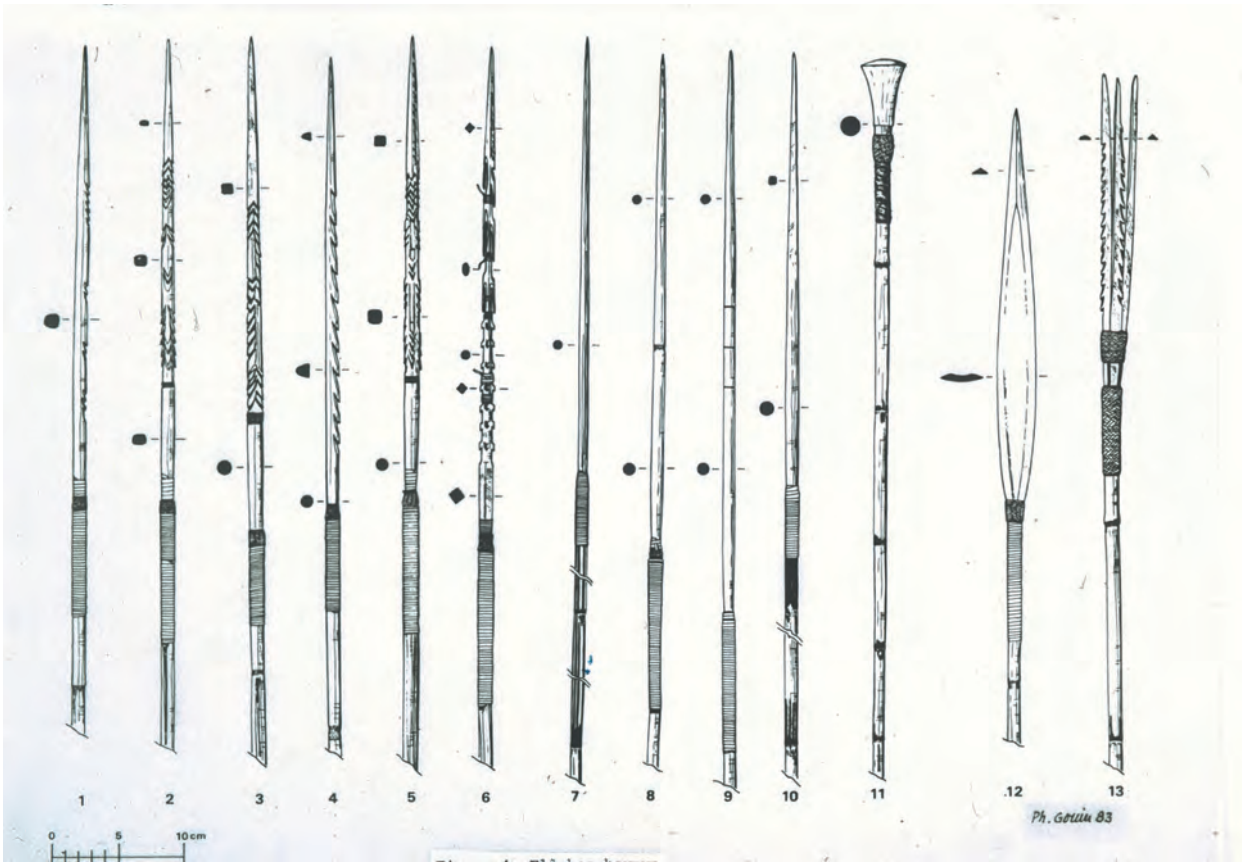

Fig. 4 – Baruya arrows, late 1970’s (drawing by P. Gouin).

seen from the other side of a valley, the slightest smoke signals a presence. Above all, as soon as any encounter with the adversary resulted in a fight, people took refuge in or near permanent hamlets or villages. Or they would move away from the scene of the daily fighting, by camping in the high forest at night.

Both where the forest dominates and in the valleys whose flanks are covered with anthropic savannah, “solid” huts are established—the present is true for the Baruya village shown here (fig. 7)—on ridges, if possible barely wider than a house and flanked by steep slopes on all sides. Where the population density is highest, the hamlet is surrounded by a high palisade of planks overlooking the path leading to it. This high (3 m) belt, which would only be dismantled with rather non discreet axe blows, is itself bordered by a tangle of “wild” canes that is difficult to cross. On either side of the fortified square, very steep gardens provided supplies, while water came from springs located much higher up in the forest. The only weakness in the system is the narrow passage through which one leaves the enclosure to relieve oneself, especially if one forgets to close it or if the sentinel has fallen asleep. In one of the Yagwoia valleys, a narrow plateau that was once fortified could be descended by ropes.

In the absence of a suitable ridge or mountain spur overlooking the valley, the population gathered in a vast undergrowth of “wild bamboo”, as can still be seen in two places in the Ankave valley of the Suowi. Lower down Ayakupna’wa, between the hamlet and the steep path leading to the stream at the bottom of the valley, such a clearing where these thin bamboo stems have been allowed to proliferate and intertwine still extends over a width of about fifty meters and a length of 300 m. Camps were set up in the center in case of attack, and even when following the narrow, low tunnel through which they could be reached, the enemy could only approach in single file and by being spotted. One dares not imagine what would have happened if a fire had been started deliberately during a period of drought. In any case, no attacks on these plant fortresses have been reported.

MAKING WARRIORS: WHEN WAR PERVADES SOCIAL PRACTICES

These insights into the forms and modalities of armed violence among the Anga reveal nuances. Although clearly defined by the Anga themselves[6], the categories of combat are porous. We have seen (Ankave) that sometimes a dispute within the valley (brawl) leads one of the parties to gradually involve a handful of former enemies, at the risk of transforming what was only a local conflict into a war. Elsewhere (Baruya) war broke out both between tribes (Bargayé and Andjé) and within a tribe (Andjé) when splits and betrayals led to the birth of a new autonomous territorial group.

Fig. 5 – Baruya shield and quiver net (Wuyabo, Wonenara, 1983; photo P. Lemonnier).

Fig. 6 – Pissangwe during the Baruya-Yewarenaasa war. Touching one’s nasal ornament is a way of expressing one’s determination to fight by remembering one’s initiation (Yanyi, Wonenara, 1983; photo P. Lemonnier).

Fig. 7 – Fortified villages of the Baruya (in the foreground) and Yewarenaasa (Wonenara, 1983; photo P. Lemonnier).

The very practice of violence was not without nuances. "Normally", here, people (parents or neighbors) fighting in a vendetta did not have their heads broken; elsewhere, the hamlets whose inhabitants were being exterminated were not set on fire (Ankave, Langimar); elsewhere still, among the cannibalistic groups—all of them were, with the exception of the Ankave and the Simbari, among whom collectively acting man-eaters were (for us) imaginary beings—, it was the young men of the house who ate (a small piece of) the enemy (Baruya), while among others (Langimar), these were only the old men and a few young women; still others even ate the children: "Not us!"

Everywhere, however, the most minor of disputes could lead to armed conflict resulting in deaths and war between local groups, whose entire membership was affected, even if distantly, by the issue of access to land. Similarly, unlimited violence could be employed everywhere, sparing neither women nor children. And in all places, a distinction was made between temporary and eternal enemies, who were confronted with a same array of deadly weapons and a range of identical forms of combat.

In other words, each of the Anga groups probably had its own way of interweaving fights of the same theoretical gradation, but the opportunities to physically attack others were broadly similar. The same was true of the means and methods of fighting or protecting oneself, which were identical in every respect. There are differences, but the general model is the one I have just described, in which any Anga would recognize themselves. "War" is not a criterion for differentiating ways of life within this small group of societies.

Being omnipresent, that is to say, present on a daily basis and at the heart of systems of thought, it was, on the other hand, linked to a whole series of institutions and practices (initiations, shamanism, gender relations, etc.) whose combinations are studied by Anga anthropology, including those that make it possible to situate their socio-economic organizations in the Melanesian world. What is decisive, then, are the ways of preparing for war and putting an end to it, but also the types of agents engaged in combat. In turn, this points to sometimes radically different ways of conceptualizing a social world and make it possible to contrast several Anga societies in a way that advances reflection on themes such as the establishment of inequalities or the limitation of political power.

The institutions inextricably linked to war—to the treatment of enemies and the survival of a threatened group—were (now the past tense is required) the male initiations[7] (fig. 8). The Anga (men and women[8]) considered that a boy born of a female womb could not become an effective fighter, and even if post-modern writings sometimes cast doubt on this evidence (Strathern, 1988, p. 212, for example), these male rites were in particular a warrior factory, transforming all little boys into strong and fearless fighters despite their previous and future contact with women (Lemonnier, 2023, pp. 40–52). The male ritual cycle, which always involved several stages and lasted for almost ten years, from the moment the boys were taken from the female world of their childhood until the birth of their first child, modeled conception and birth, but outside the world of women and, often, without their help.[9]

At the same time, the initiations reproduced the pervasive male domination as well as a political order unique in Melanesia by fragmenting and keeping power positions under close control. In all cases, a male secret society was formed. Not in the sense that it conceled its existence, but rather in the sense that it was founded on the sharing of secrets: specifically of the unfolding of male rites, to be kept hidden from women under penalty of death.[10]

I have already said that these rituals were one of the mechanisms set up to make it acceptable to live among killers. Enemies were constantly talked about: "They're coming!", one would say to the terrorized novices; a wild boar or ferocious marsupial was a figure of the enemy; when the boys, septum was pierced, songs celebrating the death of an enemy were sung; and they would hear about the conditions under which his life should be spared; they would told about the raw liver of a killed adversary; etc. The enemies saw the columns of warriors and initiates climbing towards the forest, thus gauging the strength of the group organizing the rituals. It is often said that a de facto truce was observed during these, and among the Simbari and the Yagwoia (two Anga groups close to the Baruya), the initiations were followed by a raid.

The mechanism that promoted certain men while at the same time prohibiting any permanent position of power was generally the same in all Anga groups. Each initiation stage took place under the responsibility of particular experts (never just one) who held sacred objects containing superhuman powers: *kwaimatnié* given by the Sun for the Baruya (Godelier, 1986; Lemonnier, 2023); *kwolyi-mutnyi* Simbari (Herdt, 1981, pp. 229–230) born from the blood of an ancestor; *oremere* ankave containing the bones of a primordial human whose blood was present in the juice of the red pandanus and in the cordylines that grew in his blood (Lemonnier, 2012, pp. 83–84). The expert directed operations, but he kept saying that other masters of the rituals also had a role in the transformation of the boys; that he was acting on behalf of all of them, etc. (fig. 9). In short, the power to create warriors and reproduce the local way of life was dispersed among several men, none of whom rose permanently above the others. In a Melanesian world of chiefs, big men and ranked societies, Anga initiations were a remarkable way of keeping the inequalities between men under wraps.

In addition to this common general pattern, here and there, these rituals had important additional "functions": the creation of a paradoxical injunction such as "you are all equal and must cooperate but be stronger in everything than your co-initiates! among the Baruya (who are therefore a society of "ostentation", but without the slightest display of wealth); the slow creation of a maternal uncle, an eminent figure among the Ankave (Bonnemère, 2018). These differences are significant and everything indicates that the male rites of the Anga are variants of one another and include elements that are combined differently from

Fig. 8 – Ankave *ipane* initiates at the end of the first stage of initiation (Ikundi, Suowi Valley, 1994; photo P. Lemonnier).

Fig. 9 – Four Baruya experts at work during the Muka initiation ceremony (Nungwasan, 1979; photo P. Lemonnier).

one group to another (Lemonnier, 2023, pp. 347–354), but the link between war and initiations was central to all the rituals. However, this combinatorics centred on the war-initiation pairing concerned other central aspects of Anga lifestyles which it is important to clarify because, although they are not consequences of war, they are closely related to it. Above all, they place it back into what the anthropologist strives to understand: lifestyles and their transformations.

WHEN CANNIBAL SHAMANS THROW DISEASE INTO THE BATTLE... OR NOT

Among the major variations observed among the Anga is the involvement of shamans (diviners and healers assisted by invisible auxiliary spirits) in warfare and initiations. The most contrasting situations are again illustrated by the Baruya and the Ankave – in this case, the societies where I did fieldwork, but this (the contrasts) explains that (the choice of my fieldworks).

In addition to the usual good (Anga) reasons for always having a war to wage—not exterminating the weak enemy "because our descendants must have someone to fight"—and providing an opportunity for the most famous "great men", the exceptional *aulatta* warriors, to shine – the Baruya added a decisive feature: their shamans sent all the diseases (the deadly vectors) that they extracted from the bodies of the sick to the enemy (Lory, 1981-1982).

At the same time, these shamans held specific and irreplaceable roles in the initiations (Lemonnier, 2023): putting the boys' spirits in contact with the munificence of the Sun; providing invisible protection for the ceremonial hut housing the novices; standing guard against possible attacks by various spirits (fig. 10). They also took part in magical warfare. At night, male shamans transformed themselves into eagles and kept watch at the borders of Baruya territory. In times of war, their double devoured the livers of enemy shamans. In the form of frogs, their female counterparts kept watch over waterways. The shamans were also responsible for the magic on arrows and shields and intervened directly during combat, for example by making a rock appear at the right moment to conceal the advance of an *aulatta* (Descola and Lory, 1982). The *aulatta* also had a magical effect on the eve of a fight: that of stupefying their enemy counterparts, who would be ineffective in battle. Here again, the breakdown of power positions (masters of initiation, shamans, *aulatta*) was clear. If we add that the experts of the male cycle intervened during the specific ceremony (*kulakita*) during which the shamans received power spirits complementing those they had acquired during the first stage of

Fig. 10 – Baruya shamans magically protect the body adornments of young initiates of the Muka (Nungwasan, Wonenara, 1979; photo P. Lemonnier).

the rituals (Lemonnier, 2023, pp. 156–160 and 424–425), we can see that the dispersal of powers among various Baruya ritual experts was coupled with an intermingling of the ceremonies for which they were responsible.

Remarkably, the situation was radically different among the Ankave, whose shamans played no role in male rituals and were not initiated collectively, but following individual experiences (Lemonnier, 2006, pp. 120–128). Magical warfare was not their business at all, but that of special great warriors with the ability to act in the invisible. These *kwi’je* and *toaexwa* would mentally soften the minds and bodies of enemy combatants in advance, in particular by damaging their livers.

Among the Simbari, the Anga who are geographically and culturally closest to the Baruya, the participation of shamans in war was more indirect: they showed a band of spirits of the dead the way to go to the enemies and transmit diseases to them. This is an important point for understanding the combinatorics at work among the Anga, because in this case it was an “anonymous” collective of ancient dead (Herdt, 1977), in other words the exact equivalent of another detestable gang of cannibals who, as far as they are concerned, do not take part in the war: the ankave’s *ombo’* (Lemonnier, 2006).

To sum up, I remember that where shamans took part in the war, they also played an indispensable role during initiations, alongside the specialists of these rituals. Conversely, where they took part neither in initiations nor in war, the magical dimension of the latter fell to the great warriors endowed with the appropriate auxiliary spirits. In all cases, the invisible intervention was of the same order: to stun and weaken the enemy who “fell like ripe fruit”. Describing and trying to understand Anga warfare therefore implies not only taking into account the auxiliaries of particular warriors whose doubles act in the invisible, but also, where they intervene, the collectives of spirits of the dead who take part in the fighting. Whether they are made of flesh and blood or indiscernible to ordinary mortals, the means and actions of anga warrior agents are the same everywhere. Only the agents involved in the invisible dimensions of the struggle change: great warriors and their magic, shamans, and the collective of the dead guided by the shamans.

What the anthropologist observes within the Anga societies is therefore a combination in which various characters (shamans, great warriors, spirits of the ancient dead), various contexts (war, the treatment of the dead), cannibalistic practices that are sometimes real, sometimes imaginary, and variable targets (enemy bodies, ordinary corpses) are brought into play (Lemonnier, 2006). War is not the primary factor in this game of musical chairs, which could also be shown to include the role of maternal substances in the animation of humans, the treatment of the deceased, the inhabitants of the afterlife, illness or the types of tasks entrusted to experts. On the other hand, it is linked to procedures of peace and compensation for the wounded and killed that are intertwined with these other distinct aspects of Anga lifestyles. They are so contrasting that accounting for them adds to our understanding of the establishment, in Melanesia, of exchanges of wealth creating social inequalities.

TRUCE, PEACE AND COMPENSATION

The Anga illustrate in their own way a finding (Lemonnier, 1993): in New Guinea, where the material means exist—essentially pigs (alive or dead) and shells, which I will henceforth refer to as “wealth”—to compensate those who have lost one of their own in a homicide or a fight, there are also forms of compensation for life (marriage and the life cycle of children, initiations). “In their own way”, because both the importance—in terms of quantity in exchanges—and the nature of the things given to compensate for these losses appear among the Anga as a stratagem, obviously involuntary, to avoid entering the world of large-scale exchanges, competitive or otherwise, organized by big men (Strathern, 1971). However, it has long been known that anthropologists are passionate about the status of these characters who derive their politico-economic role from their ability to organize and fuel the exchange of wealth, including by using the labor of dependents by force (to raise the pigs they will offer).

This circulation of goods and this exploitation are unknown to the Anga (Lemonnier, 1990) who were also unaware of the systematic exchange of wives to establish good relations between enemies, central to big men societies, as well as the establishment of competitive exchanges of wealth to compete in ways other than war (in addition to Lemonnier, 1990, see Wissner and Tumu, 1998). Let’s continue.

In all the Anga groups, two principles underpinned the cessation of fighting, even temporarily. First, every death aroused a desire for revenge, notably to satisfy the spirits of the victims, and the attempt to kill in turn only ceased if the losses were equal, or almost equal. This also involved extending to armed struggles a worldview that permeates the entire Anga universe: with the exception of male-female relations, which largely favor the former (prestige, exercise of violence), in various contexts and in varying forms from one Anga group to another, efforts were made to balance exchanges. This raises the question of how the Anga “paid blood”, as the Ankave say. The use of wealth was limited everywhere, but not without presenting, once again, strong contrasts that are not without heuristic value, which the Baruya and Ankave practices once again bring to light.

In Baruya, there are terms meaning “peace” (*aala’nanya*) and “peace ceremony” (*narya*), but as far back as anyone can remember, this peace only concerned occasional enemies, such as distant ones, with whom arrows were exchanged during an unexpected encounter in the immense no man’s land that separates two tribal territories. With “permanent” enemies, such as the Andjé or the Yewarenaasa, de facto truces were sufficient once the number of deaths was roughly equal. Almost as rare

and highly formalized, *nerya* also came about only once an equilibrium of losses had been reached. In Wonenara, for example, in the absence of a peace ceremony, the only road serving the valley has been closed for forty years because it crosses Yewarenaasa country. Except for that of a great warrior, who was cut into pieces and eaten by the young men of the men's house, the corpse or corpses were returned to their kin before the peace ceremony.

After agreeing on a location equidistant from the enemy villages, the warriors from both sides would gather face to face, then each would step forward to place one of their arrows on the space separating them (Lory, personal communication). A piece of ginger was added to the pile of arrows, and each member of both groups took turns biting off a piece before spitting the juice on the weapons to cleanse their mouths of the blood that had flowed. Each person then took their arrow to fire it, together with the warriors of their camp, over the enemies (fig. 11), then the *aulatta* directing the ceremony greeted each other by clicking their fingers on each other's phalanx. Wealth (lengths of cowrie shells surrounding long poles, tapa cloths, vegetable salt) was exchanged to compensate for the dead (the available accounts do not specify during which part of the *nerya*; fig. 12).

It should be noted that the wealth just mentioned was sometimes offered by the Baruya to a tribe with which they wished to establish friendly relations, particularly commercial ones (Godelier, 1986, p. 24). What was lacking, therefore, was not the means to re-establish peaceful relations, but 1) the will to stop the war and 2) the possibility of replacing human lives with wealth—called *a'mwaenegwia* (person-compensation-money).

The Ankave mainly report cases where fighting with an enemy tribe had ceased following a de facto truce, without further ado. Peace procedures ("making ginger") mainly concerned vendettas and were aimed as much at appeasing the spirit of the victims as at re-establishing peaceful relations between the adversaries (Lemonnier, 2006, pp. 79–82). On the appointed day, the two parties would meet at an agreed location with their weapons and shields. Each would sit in silence, then a discussion would ensue on the number of lengths of cowrie shells and large shells (porcelain, *Ovula ovum*) to be offered for each death. For fear of aggravating the debate, great care was taken to speak only in turn. Once an agreement had been reached, the opponents exchanged long bamboo poles to which this shell money had been attached, as well as stone adze blades and ginger roots. Those who had killed an adversary would chew a piece of this ginger and spit it out, then offer the closest relatives of their victim a betel nut threaded on the tip of a war arrow. The murderer would in turn receive the areca nuts offered to him

Fig. 11 – There was no truce in 1983, but the Baruya warriors celebrated the death of a great Yewarenaasa warrior by firing a volley of arrows—between two shots by the photographer (Yanyi, Wonenara; photo P. Lemonnier)!

Fig. 12 – This mother-of-pearl, armfuls of cowrie shells, and bars of vegetable salt displayed before the Baruya initiates give an idea of how they were presented as compensation to temporary enemies (Nungwasan, Wonenara 1979; photo P. Lemonnier).

by his former enemy, and each could chew on his side, sometimes after shaking hands with the former adversary. The wealth gained from the deaths was distributed to the relatives of the victims. "No one was happy" and everyone quickly went home. It was only much later, once their "stomachs had cooled" (their anger had abated) that they gathered around an earth-oven (known as a "Polynesian oven"), where pieces of pork brought by both parties were cooked.

In short, the formal cessation of fighting and the compensation for losses among the Anga only took place after an approximate balance had been achieved in terms of those killed, which means that revenge was contained. Admittedly, this is an admirable practice in the history of humanity, but the ethnography of these populations shows, above all, in an incipient form, the possibility of giving wealth to compensate for lives. Wealth (seashells, vegetal salt) which never includes pork, even though it is present in other types of exchanges. We must look to these to better understand the role of wealth in ending the war. This brings us back to the classic (and unresolved) question of substitutes for human life.

PIG FOR SOCIABILITY / PIG AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR LIFE: A MAJOR SHIFT?

The Baruya once used to practice mainly sister-exchange marriage—a man marries another man's real or classificatory sister, to whom he "gives" such a "sister". But just as they sometimes used salt bars to make peace with temporary enemies, they sometimes practiced marriage with matrimonial compensation with these "distant, foreign tribes with whom they wished to establish or consolidate trading or peaceful relations" (Godelier, 1986, p. 22) that I mentioned earlier.

Nonetheless, wealth was involved in these marriages devoid of bride-wealth. First, when it came to bringing two families together for the purpose of an engagement, the Baruya established a "bridge" between them by offering each other half a pig, but not simultaneously. At the same time, each family invited the other to cultivate a plot of the new garden they were clearing in the forest, which provided an opportunity to "cook and eat together" and strengthen the new bonds. Although not a frequent occurrence, it did happen, a long time (two or three generations) after a marriage in which no wife had been returned, even though many daughters and granddaughters resulted from it, the descendants of the paternal and maternal parents of the woman given in the past demanded wealth from the lineage that took her, by way of compensation ("head-pay" *menyagwia*, from *menyagenya*, "head" and *negwia*, cowrie shells)—made up of lengths of cowrie shells, vegetal salt, pieces of beaten bark and, nowadays, PNG currency (Lemonnier, 2002). Crucially, the Baruya considered that wealth could and should be used to compensate for such an imbalance in the number of children born from a sister exchange, as well as for a gift of wife not reciprocated, or a lack of cooperation between relatives, working together being itself inseparable from the regular sharing of food and good relations, which constitutes a varied use of wealth at the margin of all kinds of exchanges. I will come back to this.

Note that in cases where the marriage did not result from a sister exchange—abduction marriage; marriage where the groom works for his future in-laws; rare marriages with marital compensation (Godelier, 1986, pp. 20–23)—this type of *menyagwia* payment was also due to the maternal parents of a person at the time of his or her death, i.e. to parents who had not received anything when a "bridge" had been established between the families.

Among the Ankave, the use of wealth was more extensive than among the Baruya, but it was largely compartmentalized and subject to intangible rules. The only two occasions on which a (domestic) pig was involved were the payment of a bride-wealth (the exchange of wives was considered an abomination)—consisting exclusively of fathoms of cowrie shells placed on cooked pork—and the initiation of a boy, when a live pig was given to the maternal uncle who accompanied him in his ordeals (much later, this uncle would offer him a piece of mother-of-pearl). As we know, pigs were not included in the compensation for homicide, and while all types of shell money could be used in the latter case, only a handful of cowrie shells could be placed on the pork in the case of the bridewealth just mentioned; only a live pig could be offered to the maternal uncle who accompanied his nephew through the trials of initiation and he had to "give back" a mother-of-pearl shell to this nephew, and nothing else; no wealth celebrated the birth of a child, but only large gifts of game (especially marsupials). As for game, it was never part of a compensation for homicide, but the gifts offered to the maternal parents of a deceased several years after his death were eels, never shells (Lemonnier, 2006, pp. 259–269). In each case, the circumstances of the gift, its direction and the nature of the object offered were therefore very precisely defined. The "objects" exchanged were multiple and, more often than not, not interchangeable: a gift of game could not be replaced by a gift of shell(s), and a shell could not replace a piece of pork.

Each in their own way, the other Anga groups illustrated several of these uses of wealth, in combinations that are too varied to compare here. But, unlike what was observed in big men societies, nowhere was there a single sphere of exchange in which interchangeable goods (pork, shells, feathers, cosmetic oil) were used in all circumstances of life, particularly around the establishment of peace. All this is well known.

On the other hand, it is worth returning to the use of wealth among the Anga themselves, because their way of (de facto) avoiding the runaway use of wealth and the spiral of competitive exchanges involving the exploitation of the labor of others and the beginnings of inequalities based on wealth, allows us to glimpse the circumstances

in which things (including game) become possible substitutes for human life. So it is the Anga's marginal practices that we should look at to try to understand how several of the particularities that I have no hesitation in listing again are implicated: the absence of a link between peace procedures and marriage; the parity sought in all forms of exchange (a kill for a kill, a wife for a wife, cooperation with the obligation of revenge); the absence of pig among the goods compensating for a homicide; the compartmentalization of types of exchange. So many characteristics of the Anga world potentially related to war and, above all, peace.

An initial observation concerns, as we have seen, the potentially changing place of the pig. Never present to compensate for a life, it does so in connection with exchanges concerning people, and in a remarkable way: as a social pig. Its meat was not given to compensate for deaths, but to re-establish a semblance of good relations, of commensality between participants in a fight (Ankave). Similarly, the pieces of pork that established a "bridge" between two Baruya families initiated new relationships, based on mutual aid (the boy or girl assists his or her future in-laws) and future meals taken together. The new question, which remains open, is then that of understanding when and how an object conceived as a bearer of social harmony ("socializing pig") becomes an equivalent or a bearer of human life.

The Ankave illustrate such a partial shift, since the animal used to restore good relations between adversaries in a vendetta was also given to "pay" for the care given to the young woman whose marriage is being celebrated, from the time when she was a girl (Bonnemère, 1996, p. 166). Marriage by sister exchange was locally seen as an abomination and the pig included in the matrimonial compensation explicitly compensated for life, but the Ankave did not extend this custom to homicides. The reason for this impossibility remains mysterious, but the circumstances in which other Anga made exceptions to the compartmentalization of exchanges may point to the issues that should be addressed.

Among the Kapau, sister exchange was not unknown but was accompanied by the payment of a marriage compensation, as with most marriages (Bamford, 1997, p. 61). This bride-wealth once consisted exclusively of game (marsupials, cassowary), but from the 1930s (Blackwood, 1978, pp. 110–113), pigs (and tapa, coins) were added. However, during my own investigation (1980), a man who remembered the details of the benefits received at 78 weddings told me that, if there was no domestic pig to offer as payment, ten marsupials, i.e. wild game, could be given instead. Conversely, five wild pigs could be replaced by three domestic pigs. Among the Menye, when a live piglet had to be given as part of a wedding, those who did not have one could buy one with cowries (which were extremely rare until the 1950s).

These examples show as many circumstances in which the compartmentalization of wealth disappeared. These are marginal cases, but they are the ones through which wealth is introduced into the life of societies where no status was based on its manipulation or possession. Neither the Anga nor the headhunters of the south coast of New Guinea had read Clastres, but instead of being "against the State", about which they knew nothing before having to suffer the connivence of the policeman, the missionary, the labor recruiter and the teacher, they endeavored to minimize the differences between people. Irony of History—which lends interest to the comparative study of anga situations—it is most often with the aim of maintaining, foreseeing or re-establishing a rigorous parity between individuals and groups that the New Guinea societies practicing sister exchange or striving for a strict balance of kills introduced, in the form of goods substitutable for human life, the instruments which, elsewhere on the island, among the big men, are the basis of an outline of inequality between men (Lemonnier, 2002). It should be noted in passing that these societies of South Coast New Guinea had developed original forms of compartmentalization: in peace procedures, once the number of deaths was more or less balanced and once children had been exchanged for adoption (or women), objects (shells, dog teeth, canoes) were given that were not the same as those (plant products) with which they competed in competitive exchanges (Lemonnier, 1993 and 1999).

AND WHAT ABOUT WAR?

The world of the Anga illustrates the incipient stages of the cultural trap of rebalancing with the use of wealth of exchanges that one instinctively wants to be egalitarian. War is not the starting point of this process, since marriage is where wealth is used, including, marginally, the pig. But whether the issue is exchanging wives to strengthen neutral relations with another tribe, quarrels between relatives that turn into conflicts between tribes, or compensating for losses in the case of a "close-range" homicide, the issue of armed violence is never far away.

War—as a means of killing an adversary by weapon or fire—was globally identical among all the Anga, but it constituted the homogeneous common ground of significantly differentiated social practices. These often responded to the almost permanent state of war among the Anga, but not to different reasons or ways of waging war.

Within this population, describing the phenomenon of "war" means understanding the relationship of this type of violence with various aspects of social life, listed here in no particular order or comprehensively: other forms of violence (including in the realm of the invisible), the history of local groups, the place of combat in the range of misfortunes, illness, obligations to ancestors, the procedures of peace and compensation for homicide, the forms of marriage, the management of hunting and collecting territories, the making of warriors during initiations, the place of cannibalism, the use of wealth, the fear of the spirits of murdered persons, the status of various experts, etc.

All these social practices must be taken into consideration to understand the place of the phenomenon of "war" in people's lives, but also the place of the complex of practices and representations related to it in the relationship between men and women, in the control of political power, or in the use of wealth and the emergence of inequalities.

NOTES

1 There is no shortage of altercations between women, which can involve beating each other with sticks. In some groups, one can see a group of women, sometimes about twenty, brandishing fighting sticks—the only male weapon they can handle (an Anga woman does not touch a bow).

2 The arrival of steel tools (machetes and axes) introduced a new stage of violence, between the use of sticks and the use of arrows: the desire to "cut" the opponent, potentially fatally.

3 Relationships between valleys are often strained (Bonnemère and Lemonnier, 2009), but the only visible aspect of the violence at the time is what it resulted in: many people fell ill and died so quickly that people fled elsewhere, without even giving them a proper burial. These are considered witchcraft attacks (for us, flu and measles epidemics) without the shadow of a face-to-face confrontation (Lemonnier, 2006).

4 For the ethnology of the Baruya, including their "salt money", refer to the works of M. Godelier (1969 and 1986 for example). Before the massive arrival of cowrie shells as payment for the carriers of Australian civil servants (from 1950 onwards), cowrie shells were not used in lengths, but individually: three or four were enough to obtain a wife.

5 In Baruya, one verb (*yekeremo*) means "to stop a fight before it starts or at the very beginning"; another (*medaaalemo*) means "to stand in the middle to stop a fight".

6 To the ethnography of the Ankave and the Baruya, we can add information on an identical gradation of combat among the Yagwoia (Fischer, 1968, pp. 208–210) and the Simbari (Herdt, 1981, pp. 47–48 and 51).

7 According to the Baruya, it was because initiations took place in 1979 that they "won" their war against the Yewarenaasa (1983–1987).

8 In several groups, boys are taken by their mothers to the first initiation ordeals: "You have to go, my little one!"

9 The attention to the involvement of women in these rituals, sometimes explicitly recognized by the men, was drawn by P. Bonnemère (2004). For their part, male anthropologists had reduced these rituals to men's business.

10 To the young initiates, it is said that the sweet potato vine visible on the last illustration (fig. 12) represents the intestines of the one who would have the bad idea of talking to women.

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DISCUSSION LEMONNIER

Sylvain Lemoine: I just wanted to know how they welcomed you, as a foreigner.

Pierre Lemonnier: I was very lucky. I wrote a thesis on the Guérande salt marshes and wrote a book about the Atlantic coast. And then I met M. Godelier and so I went to New Guinea as soon as I could. I learned my profession as an ethnologist of New Guinea with M. Godelier. I learned how to talk to people; I learned that you have to invite them to your place, to your table. I learned how to set up a "patrol"—patrol! Pediatricians organize patrols, the police organize patrols, ethnologists have patrols… so we just turn up. There were times when a plane would drop me off and I'd say to the pilot, "See you on the other side of the mountain in a month and a half!"—and then I'd think to myself: "Damn, what am I doing here?" Afterwards, we try to explain to people (who pretend to believe us) that of course everything is being lost, including the ways of the ancestors, and that we are going to try to write a book about it. For example, after seeing the Baruya initiations in 1979, when I arrived in 1980, it was easy. There were two guys, I said to them: "But you haven't done initiations for thirty years, right?" So the guys told me about the initiations, and then they said to me:

"At one point, we arrive with leaves.

— With leaves, or with nettles?

— Nettles."

So there you have it: people who take a while to realize that we're not pediatricians, we're not cops, we're not missionaries— the worst kind, in fact. P. Bonnemère and I have something to do with the fact that the Ankave have started to learn to read and write fifteen or twenty years late:

"We are the families of New Tribes Mission…

— No thanks, we already have Pierre and Pascale, that will do!"

So I've never had any problems. We were always welcomed with an incredible amount of trust (but that comes from M. Godelier) and then we just followed their ways of doing things. To give you an idea, there was a time when people wrote books claiming that anthropologists spent all their time being fooled. Take the case of the objects given by the sun (given by the sun!), without which there is no way to initiate new members, to make little warriors, without which there are no longer social hierarchies based on the role of ritual experts. Well, when the war broke out in 1983, the village was empty—because we had a radio on which we had heard that the police were arriving by helicopter the following morning, and we had warned the inhabitants. So the pregnant women, the elderly, everyone took refuge in the forest. And the guys came at dusk. They would knock on our door and entrust us with their belongings. You will never see a kwaimatnié in a museum, but we had them on our bed. As J.-L. Lory pointed out the other day, we didn't open them to look at what they had inside, because the trust is mutual. That's huge. As I said earlier, the people asked me to write a little note for the Queen of England, which I improved a little. It was "Mama Queen, Elizabeth is not your real name. That's what they call you, hurry up and come here." I asked M. Strathern how to write it ("Please, your Majesty…"), and I sent another book that I didn't bring, which is illustrated and called *Les Tambours de l'oubli*, with lots of photos, to explain to her that they needed her. She passed it on to her cooperation service, which did not follow up. But that's what people ask you! Another anecdote, which dates from 1987—it was a while ago. We arrive in a village, and the people tell us: "Pierre, you go ahead, and you show to everyone that we have removed the strings from our bows." Then there are things we don't know. We got a bit involved with the people. There is an airstrip in the Ankave area. It took 23 years of battling with bureaucracies to get a plane to land there—I would spend day and night to phone in New Guinea. "Hello, is there a nurse?" I forgot to mention that infant mortality among the Anga people is 350 per thousand. One in three babies does not reach the age of one and it is not getting any better. Because the civil servants are not doing their job; the teachers are not there, nor are the nurses, and saying "it's corruption" does not explain anything. They are not there because it is worth bribing the MP for this or that… It takes thirty years of anthropology—I'm thinking about this because my colleague Jadram Mimica has written a great report on the 2022 elections. Saying that corruption is the reason why public services in rural Papua, which is still the majority, have collapsed, does not explain anything. You have to do fieldwork to understand why this is the case. I was scared the day a man came at me with his axe raised, shouting, "Now that you've seen this, we're going to bury you here!" I admit it… But it didn't last more than 20 seconds. Once again, M. Godelier taught me my job, otherwise I would have arrived without toilet paper, matches or sugar either. When you arrive in the middle of nowhere, and you bring your own gear…Your lean the ropes! And just to finish on that note—since I like talking about M. Godelier: you are two days' walk from Marawaka, already far from the Baruya country, and you see a guy with his arrows who comes charging at you shouting "Morisi! Morisi!". We have been to places where a white man is called a "Morisi", which means something after all. M. Godelier's charisma and reputation go far beyond France. Sorry for taking so long on this question...