

these linguistic links help give rise to the important third hypothesis. Nonetheless, while the linguistic links are important, the interpretation put forward here seems to be valid simply on the aesthetic evidence.⁷

The individual evidence of the native explanation will be examined in turn, starting with the top half of the design (Fig. 1). The collected shields show that the upper half of the design represents, on some shields quite clearly, an ejaculating penis (Figs. 3, 4). The mythological-totemic elements *ubwala* are described as stars of lesser importance visible in the morning hours (Fig. 1f). The Trobriand word for testicles is *puwala* (Malinowski 1929: 141). The sounds *p* and *b* in the language are never interchangeable (Malinowski 1935/2: 303). *Ubwala*

and *puwala* constitute a play on words. On some shields the testicles, *ubwala*, are represented as excluded from the unseen vagina (Finsch 1888: 56; Glass 1978: illustrations 12, 15, 16, 26).⁸



Fig. 3: Trobriand decorated war shield, British Museum.

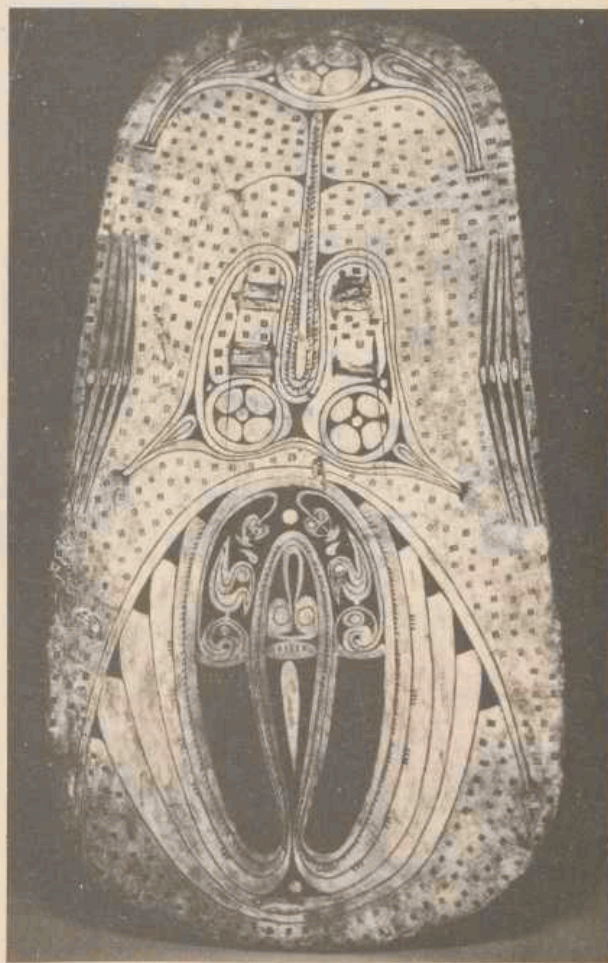


Fig. 4: Trobriand decorated war shield, National Museum of Victoria, Melbourne.

If an ejaculating penis is symbolized then this indicates the penis is inside a vagina and that *kubwana*, Venus or the morning star, represents the womb (Fig. 1a). The X-ray nature of the design is upheld by other features.

⁷ Trobriand vowels are pronounced as in Italian and the consonants as in English (Malinowski 1922: xx).

⁸ The shield in Finsch (1888) is unlocated; one shield is in the South Australian Museum, Adelaide, and two others are in the British Museum.