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### The Wallace Edwin Armstrong Papers in the National Library of Australia, Canberra, Australia (Ms 6507)

James Urry

SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

I. THE WALLACE EDWIN ARMSTRONG PAPERS IN THE NATIONAL  
LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA, (Ms 6507)

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In 1981 the National Library of Australia acquired the anthropological papers of the late Wallace Edwin Armstrong. Armstrong was born in 1896 and won an exhibition to Cambridge shortly before the First World War. In 1914 he enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps, but lost a leg after being wounded in action. In 1915 he returned to Cambridge to complete his degree. By then a confirmed pacifist, Armstrong joined the Union of Democratic Control and with Bertrand Russell and others was active in the peace movement throughout the war. In 1918 Armstrong took his degree in the Moral Sciences Tripos, and after completing some courses in anthropology was awarded the Anthony Wilkin Studentship in 1919 for fieldwork research in Papua New Guinea. Armstrong also carried out research for the Papuan government and in 1921 received appointment as its Assistant [Government] Anthropologist. Resigning in 1922, Armstrong returned to Cambridge where, following the sudden and unexpected death of W. H. R. Rivers in that same year, he was appointed Lecturer in Social Anthropology, a post he held until 1926. Among his students were Camilla Wedgewood, A. B. Deacon and Gregory Bateson. Armstrong published government reports on his fieldwork in New Guinea, a major monograph on the Rossel Islanders, and a few minor articles and reviews on anthropology. After 1926, however, he appears to have abandoned anthropology for a new career in economics. He was Supervisor and Occasional Lecturer in Economics at Cambridge from 1926 to 1939, when he became Lecturer in Economics at Southampton University College (later the University of Southampton). Armstrong received steady promotion there, eventually becoming Professor of Economic Theory in 1959. He retired in 1961 and died in 1980.<sup>1</sup>

Armstrong's papers consist of seven boxes of material which for the purposes of this survey have been divided into three categories: lecture notes, field notes and miscellaneous items.

There are three series of typed lectures; one is a set of Rivers' lectures Armstrong seems to have inherited to assist him in constructing his own, which follow Rivers' in a number of places. All of the lectures are complete texts, but Armstrong's are accompanied by some typed summaries and handwritten notes and what appear to be earlier full versions of lectures in his hand.

Rivers' lectures consist of eleven lectures on social organization delivered at Cambridge in 1921-1922. They are typescript top-copies and all but three are numbered, thus preserving the original order in which

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<sup>1</sup>This account of Armstrong's life is based on his entry in Who Was Who 1971-1980, p. 27, and his obituary in The Times (London), March 26, 1980, p. 19.

they were delivered. These lectures were edited and published by W. J. Perry in 1924 (Rivers 1924). Though most of the lectures are identical with the published versions, Perry altered the order of the series, omitting some sections and the whole lecture on Totemism. Armstrong, who reviewed the book (Armstrong 1925), commented on these alterations with reference to the original lectures.

Armstrong's lectures, typed in the same format as Rivers', consist of a series on social organization and a series on magico-religion (Armstrong's term). The typed lectures appear to be the final courses Armstrong gave; a list of lectures which presumably belong to an earlier series indicate that Armstrong first lectured on both subjects together.

The twenty-six lectures on social organization begin with a discussion of psychology and its relation to social life. The lectures continue with a discussion of social structure, totemism, property, inheritance, exchange and political institutions of social significance. Although the lectures reveal a concern with the evolution and development of social groups, Armstrong was a strong supporter of the later Rivers, and the series ends with a discussion of the cultural migration and diffusion in which he follows Elliot Smith. This sympathy with the hyper-diffusionists is not apparent in any of Armstrong's published anthropological writings.

The second set of lectures on magic and religion are less complete than those on social organization and consist of thirteen carbon copies of the typed texts. Again the lectures reveal a developmental sequence from magic to animism to gods. The list of earlier lectures indicate that lectures on mythology were included, but there are detailed lectures on mortuary rituals and ancestor and hero cults. A set of handwritten notes show that Armstrong also discussed the religious life of specific ethnographic groups, and one lecture is concerned with new religious movements in North America and Melanesia.

The field notes are concerned mainly with the two major areas of Armstrong's ethnographic research, the Suau and Towala language areas of eastern Papua New Guinea and Rossel Island, a major focus of his investigations. The notes consist of notebooks and loose-leaf handwritten details, some of which have been separately typed-up. There are accounts of rituals, myths, details of social life and material culture, genealogies, maps and tables of physical anthropology measurements. Most of the material was incorporated into Armstrong's monographs, but some material was apparently never published. This is especially true of the language material, which for Rossel includes both word-lists and details of grammar.

The miscellaneous material includes a number of papers and photographs. Some of the papers are not Armstrong's, and include a two leaf manuscript entitled 'Cross Cousin Marriage & Dual Org<sup>n</sup>.' in what appears to be A. R. Radcliffe-Brown's hand, and the typescript of Rivers' Fitzpatrick Lectures (Rivers 1916) corrected in his own hand. Armstrong's papers include the draft of his reports to the Papuan government, his advice on various policy matters and his official correspondence with the government. There are drafts and copies of a number of books on economic

anthropology, mostly published in Economica in the 1930s and 1940s. Cuttings of various reviews of Armstrong's Rossel Island book are included. There are also typescripts of articles Armstrong wrote for the 14th edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1929) on clan, family, marriage classes, totemism, tribes, New Guinea and Oceanis (all published except the one on marriage classes).

The extensive photographic collection consists of prints, albums of photographs, negatives and glass slides, all of them documented. There is also a folder of rubbings of carvings on items of material culture.

It is unfortunate that there is little correspondence in the collection, as Armstrong had extensive contact with most of the leading figures in British anthropology during the 1920s. Armstrong's field notes should interest anthropologists and historians working in New Guinea, while his lecture series throw an interesting light on the teaching of social anthropology at Cambridge during the 1920s.

Armstrong, W. E. 1925. Review of W. H. R. Rivers Social Organization. Man 25:43-45.

Rivers, W. H. R. 1916. Medicine, magic, and religion (The Fitzpatrick Lectures). The Lancet, January 8:59-65, January 15:117-123.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1924. Social Organization, ed. W. J. Perry. London: Kegan Paul.

## II. REGISTER TO THE PAPERS OF NEIL MERTON JUDD

As part of a series of "Finding Aids to the National Anthropological Archives" (of which he will serve as General Editor), James R. Glenn has authored a twenty-three page Register to the Papers of Neil Merton Judd (1887-1976), archeologist and curator in the former United States National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. The Register includes a five page chronology of Judd's life, and a listing of the contents of the thirty-seven boxes in the Judd collection, twenty-two of which contain photographs relating to Judd's archeological work in the American Southwest.

## FOOTNOTES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

### THE "SOCIÉTÉ DES OBSERVATEURS DE L'HOMME" AND GERMAN ETHNO-ANTHROPOLOGY AT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY

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Anyone familiar with the literary remains of the French "Man-observing Society" knows that brief mentions of German sources indicate that the Society's members made some use of them, without telling precisely what these relationships were.