THE JOURNAL OF

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Roberto Costa is a doctoral candidate in anthropology at Macquarie University, Sydney (Australia) under Jaap Timmer's supervision. His doctoral thesis draws on six months of fieldwork conducted among several carving communities of central Asmat (West Papua, Indonesia). It focuses on Asmat woodcarvers' search for the prestige and life power they used to obtain through now abandoned ritual practices and explores the impact of local Christian theology on artistic practices; their quest for self-representation in the West; new paradigms of leadership and talent; local ruminations about history and nostalgia. Roberto Costa has recently been awarded a fellowship of the Research Center for Material Culture in Leiden (RCMC) to study both the local religious and the Christian items of the Asmat collection held at the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam.