What is here called the 'paradigm method' has been used to identify and interpret some of the spatula types. For example, some spatulas have a vaguely canoe-shaped handle. These can be grouped together as a type because there are other spatulas whose handles represent a canoe with total clarity (the paradigms) and because it is clear that the representation of things in Massim art ranges from the near naturalistic to the highly stylised. According to Shack (1985, pages 54-5), Malinowski collected spatulas that represent cooking spoons and dance paddles. These types have not been included here because no paradigm spatulas have been located. The spatulas illustrated in Shack, as representing a cooking spoon and a dance paddle (illustrations 34 and 36), may indeed represent these objects, but they do not do so clearly enough.

A great number of types of spatula have been distinguished. During the history of the Massim, new types of spatula must have been invented and others abandoned. However, the period during which spatulas were collected, before their production declined because of the impact of the West, is too short for much evidence of such changes. As noted, design type 16 seems to be one that was invented in Kiriwina in the 1930s and which has spread to Kitava and the Marshall Bennetts. There is also considerable scope for artistic creativity within a type of design. The spatulas in plates 49, 51 and 52, which seem to be variations on the canoe-tip theme, illustrate this. Plate 14 shows another delightful instance of originality. Normally, two addorsed figures forming a spatula handle are carved squatting on the same kind of platform found below the figures in plates 12 and 13. The carver of the spatula in plate 14, however, has turned the uninteresting platform into a miniature canoe.

The typology presented here, like most typologies, is not totally exhaustive, makes some arbitrary distinctions and oversimplifies and distorts reality to some extent. In addition to spatulas with long, flat, oblong handles (type 36) and those with long, flat handles with a rounded end (type 37), there are also a few with flat, square handles (plate 96). Perhaps these should be added as an extra type. Some of the spatulas of type 24, which represent a wild yam, also represent the morning star. So an extra category of types could be listed: natural phenomena motifs. And there is, of course, the very large mixed motif type 15, that is, spatulas with a snake facing into open jaws. This motif is common to them all, but their finials vary a great deal, showing human, bird and plant motifs. They could therefore be listed under a broad category of mixed motif spatulas. Moreover, the concept of representation has been stretched to that of mere imitation in the case of type 30.

The main centres for the manufacture of traditional types of spatula and mortar are the Trobriands, the Marshall Bennetts, Rossel Island, the Milne Bay area, Tagula and Suau Island. Clearly, these items were also made elsewhere in smaller numbers and this is reflected above. Surprisingly,
Woodlark and the D'Entrecasteaux have not been identified as the origin of any types of spatula. This could be due to the fact that no substantial collection made in these islands has been located.

Ebony is the preferred wood for spatulas, mortars and pestles. It is durable, carves well and acquires a beautiful patina with use. Blackpalm and other unidentified woods are used less often. Turtleshell, human, cassowary, dugong and whale bone are also regularly used for spatulas, stone occasionally for pestles. One Suau man has been using a dugong tooth as a pestle for most of the twentieth century. Limepots are made from gourds, less often from coconuts. Coconut palm and pandanus leaf is used for baskets.

What has been written above suggests that the following features make a lime spatula valuable: the rarity of its material, the attachments it carries, the quality of its carving, its age and history, including past owners, and the power it has displayed in use with magic.

The above also shows the features characteristic of Massim art. The motifs which occur most frequently on betel-chewing equipment are human or spirit figures, birds, fish, snakes, lizards, flowers and canoes. Some Massim art is two-dimensional, for example, dance paddles and canoe boards. Here, flat, thin boards are covered on one or both sides with low relief carving. Betel-chewing equipment shows that the Massim also have a genius for three-dimensional, sculptural carving. Most representational carving is stylised but a minority of pieces, including some of the finest, are naturalistic. The carvings carry much curvilinear decoration involving many different types of interlocking scrolls. Bands of zigzags are used as dividers and to decorate borders. The older pieces tend to be less decorated than the more recent ones. Usually the incisions on the ebony and blackpalm utensils are filled in with lime which highlights the designs and produces an attractive black and white contrast. The spatulas used by chiefs, people of rank and village leaders carry shell discs, small white cowries or tassels made from shell discs, sections of mother-of-pearl shell and wild banana seeds, but these embellishments have disappeared from most museum pieces.

When Trobrianders meet they chew betel-nuts. Kasaipwalova suggests that the spatulas they
display on these occasions symbolise their rank in society and reveal their personality. Properly carved clappers (type 14) and spatulas like that shown in plate 28 are restricted to chiefs and are therefore a sign of their status. Other types of spatula (for example type 23) can be used by anyone. Kasaipwalova suggests someone who uses a spatula with a mortar on its handle may wish to show how practical he is and someone who has a spatula with a complete canoe may be seeking admiration. Narubutau and Kasaipwalova laughed when they saw a photograph of the spatula in plate 96. They said that it displays its owner's ignorance (he does not know how to carve a better one), impatience (he wants one quickly) and pretentiousness (the spatula is too plain to be used by a person of high rank, yet carries chiefly tassels).

Although the production of most types of spatula ceased in the early decades of the twentieth century, there remains much knowledge about them among the Massim. Attempts need to be made to establish what ideological significance the things represented on betel-chewing equipment have. In some cases things may be represented just because they are pretty (for example sea-urchins, spatula type 16). However, Kasaipwalova reports that the handle of the steering oar is a symbol of tenacity and this may account for the carving of some spatulas in-imitation of such oars (type 28). It seems clear that other things represented also have an important symbolic significance. What is the significance in Massim culture of the morning star, of snakes, praying mantis, lizards, various types of bird and of the pervasive fish and bird combination? What is the significance of the small being in front of the bigger one in plate 12 and of the long, protruding tongue of the figure in plate 17? We would understand much better how the Massim see themselves, if we had answers to these questions.