

Chapter One

MAKING A LIVING

MAKING A LIVING

"The barren land of hungry,
attractive, beautiful women.
What a pity."

Such was the chant of an Elema man on a trading voyage to Port Moresby as he sailed down the Yule Island - Nara coastline (Kakare nd:10). Perhaps reflecting a similar sentiment, in 1885 William Macleay wrote that Yule Islanders were unwilling to sell "even a coconut" (MacMillan 1957:124).

Less poetically than the Elema chant, Mabbutt et al described the Port Moresby-Kairuku area as "one of the driest parts" of Papua New Guinea (1965:8), but add their opinion that "rainfall has never been so inadequate that it could result in early termination of crops sown in late December" (1965:13).

Despite this easy assurance it is clear that seasonal food shortages were common in some areas, particularly between January and late April or early May while crops were growing. More serious crises also took place from time to time. Mosko identified five periods between 1885 and 1906 during which serious drought and famine occurred (1973:66-67). As recently as the mid-1970s Manumanu village in Galley Reach lost its crops in flooding and was forced to rely on assistance from neighbours and the government for several months. In 1969 Tairia village on Yule Island found it necessary to collect sage from the Gulf District in a modern version of the old Hiri expeditions (Vanderwal 1973:22); and elderly men and women in Nabuapaka recall eating the shoots of mangrove

trees and the fruit of the bahoro, a species of cycas, during seasonal shortages. They assert that the latter, when cooked, smells like excrement but does not taste objectionable.

The Roro Language.

The 7000 or so ¹Waima-Roro people live in 15 villages along a thin 70 km strip of the south east Papuan coast about 35 km north west and south east of Yule Island, 100 km n.w. of Port Moresby. The majority of villages lie to the north of Yule, with only four communities (Poukama, Delena, Nabuapaka, and Hisiu) south of the Island. Three of these are within eight kilometres of Kairuku, on Yule, while the fourth, Hisiu, is over 30 km to the south, separated from its fellows by several Nara-speaking communities.

Roro, an Austronesian language, is bounded to the north west by non-Austronesian Elema (Toaripi), and to the north-east and south-east by its close Austronesian relatives Mekeo, Kaopo, Kuni, Nara, Doura, Gabadi and Motu. Pawley's (nd) preliminary survey of these languages (including Sinaugoro and Vula'a to the south east of Port Moresby) shows them to be very closely related as a single language family, the Central Papuan, which both Dyen (1965) and Pawley (1969) classify as belonging to the Eastern Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian.

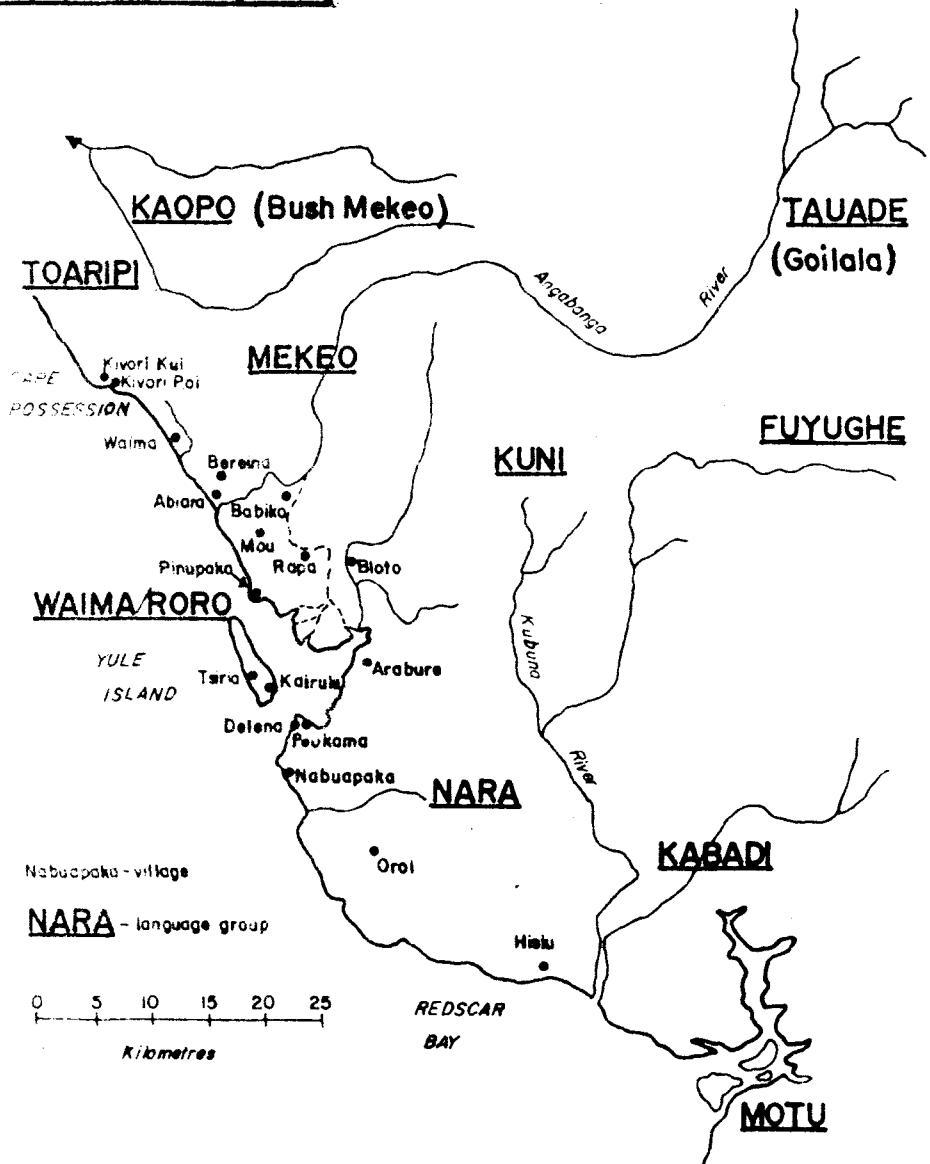
Writing in 1910, Seligmann (pp195-6) divided the Roro language into two dialects: Roro and Waima. The former is spoken in Tsiria, Pinupaka, Poukama and Delena, and in the so-called Paitana villages of Mou, Rapa, Bioto, and Babiko. The Waima dialect is spoken in Kivori, Waima, Bereina, Nabuapaka, and Hisiu. I am not sure of the status of Arabure but believe its dialect to be Roro.

1. Village Directory, 1966, Dept of the Administrator, TPNG.



Map 1

**KAIRUKU/BEREINA
SUB-DISTRICT**



It is possible to sub-divide the language further into four dialects, which, in another paper, I have referred to as Roro, Paitana, Western and Waima (Monsell-Davis 1974:12). The people themselves recognise the differences, but beyond the broad Waima/Roro division, which they refer to as Moihana/Moitana, I found no consensus over precise boundaries. For example, some individuals link Hisiu and Nabuapaka but assert that Bereina, Kivori and Waima are all different (Davis 1974:6).

Geomorphology and Climate.

Roro territory is divided by the Angabunga River, which flows into the sea north of Yule Island, with its broad meander estuary. In 1965 the C S I R O identified six land systems in the Kairuku - Port Moresby region (Mabbutt et al). Three of these affect the Roro people: the Coastal Hill zone immediately behind the Waima/Kivori village complexes, and behind Delena, Poukama and Nabuapaka; the Littoral Plains zone, on which most Roro communities are built; and the Fluvial Plains zone through which the Angabunga River flows.

The Coastal Hill zone is composed of limestone ridges and large areas of sandstone overlaid with "dark cracking clay soils with sticky consistence, which are too wet to cultivate in the wet season and too dry in the dry season" (Mabbutt et al 1965:178). The dominant vegetation is eucalypt savannah, strongly influenced by frequent burning, and including areas of semi-deciduous thicket. Soil water levels are "inadequate for several months per annum" (1965:171).

The Littoral Plains zone in the Angabunga delta, and on the coastal strips north and south of Yule Island, is dominated by mangrove forest and sandy beach soils which are "liable to be droughty and saline and to have low fertility" (1965:175).

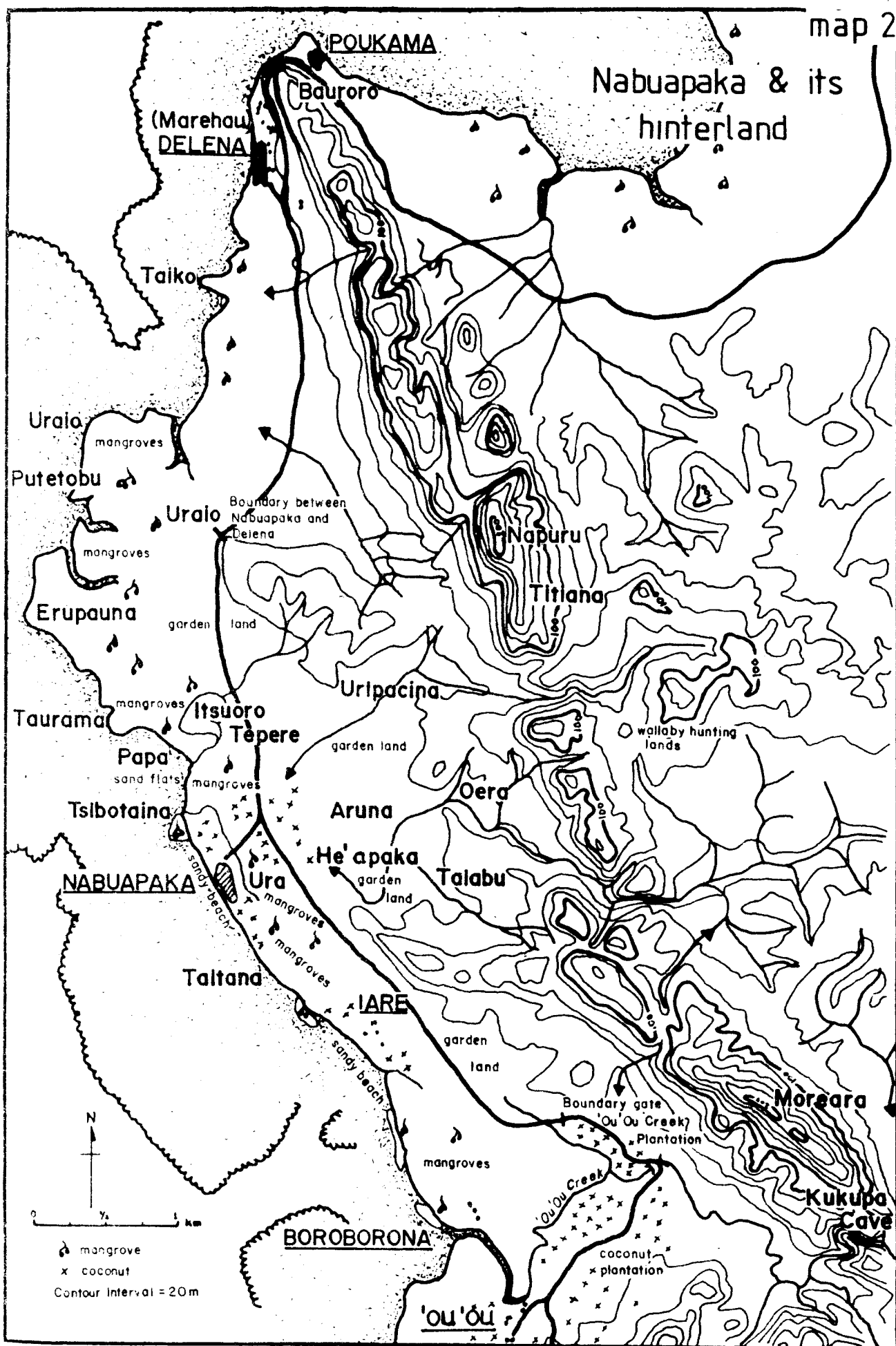
This gloomy assessment of the soils in the two zones is, admitted the CSIRO, "based on modern agricultural methods and does not apply to shifting cultivation" (1965:175). In fact the soil is sufficiently fertile to grow bananas, the staple food, for the greater part of the year, and provide most of the people's needs in other crops. These are supplemented by regular trade with the Mekeo who occupy the Fluvial Plains zone through which the Angabunga River flows with "a fan-shaped tract up to nine miles wide" (Mabutt et al 1965:121).

Yule Island and the coast to the south also have a fringing reef within which people can garner shellfish, crabs, fish and crayfish.

The climate is tropical savannah with limited seasonal and daily temperature ranges. The mean monthly maximum ranges from 82° F in August to 90° F in December, the minimum is 73° F to 76° F in the same months. Mean rainfall ranges from 10.5 inches in February to 0.4 inches in August with an annual mean of 48.4 inches, though annual and monthly figures vary considerably from year to year - at Port Moresby by as much as 18% (Mabbutt et al 1965:89).

The Village

Nabuapaka, the focus of this study, is a small community of about 180 people on the coast 8 km south of Yule Island. The village, surrounded by coconut palms, is built on a sandbank that forms a break in the narrow coastal fringe of mangroves. In 1890 MacGregor noted "about a dozen houses" (BNG 1890:83), but by 1973 it had 31, occupied full time by one or more nuclear families, ranging from dilapidated bush material buildings (thatched roof and bamboo or sago palm rib walls) to spacious dwellings with flat-iron walls and corrugated



iron roofing. All houses are built on piles just under two metres off the ground.

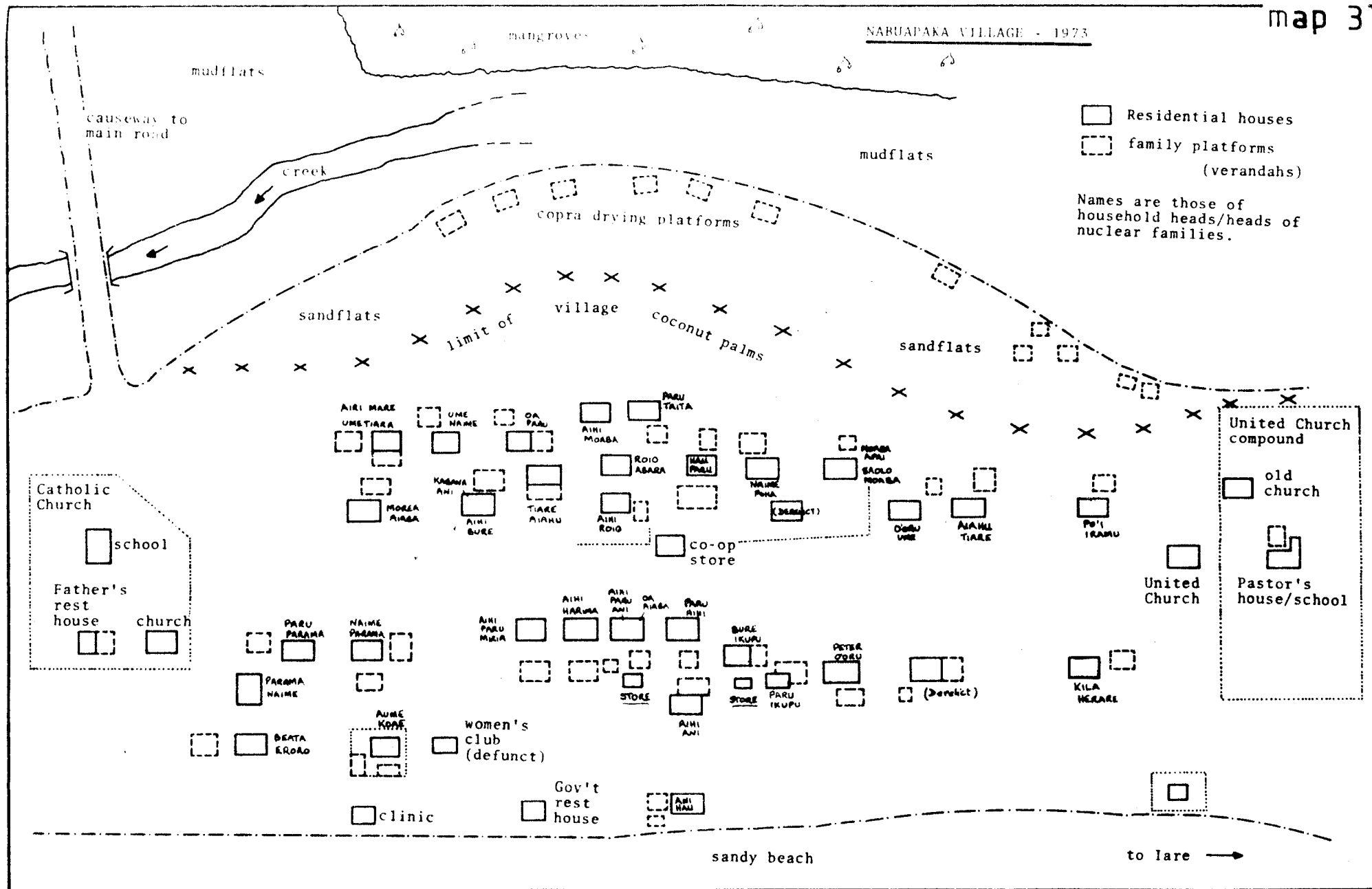
The village faces west, out over the reef. A sandy beach, lined with canoes and fishing nets, stretches north and south, its line broken by several small stands of mangroves. To the north (tsibotaina) are tidal sand-flats where villagers often take their nets and, pulling them by hand on the evening flood tide, catch large quantities of delicious small fish. The reef itself, almost exposed at low tide, yields a rich harvest of fish and crayfish, while the sandflats and mudflats provide shellfish and crabs.

To the south east, the beach passes a small community called Iare, $1\frac{1}{2}$ km from Nabua, and then gradually gives way to mangroves, finally ending at the mouth of 'Ou'ou Creek.

Behind the village, to the east, a rapidly deteriorating causeway crosses 100 metres of mudflats cleared of mangroves, to link the community to the road. To the east of the road lie the garden lands and the main water supply, a well and hand-pump almost one kilometre from the village. Up to 1976 the women and girls carried most of the water used for cooking and drinking from the well in large buckets, pots and four-gallon drums. In that year the Public Health Department assisted villagers to install a tank in the village, with a mechanical pump maintained by Bainao Aihi, a man with a number of years experience running outboard motors and other engines. The chore of carrying water is thus largely a thing of the past.

East of the garden lands, nearly three kilometres from the village, is a ridge of low limestone hills 200 metres high, covered with thick scrub. East of these again is a dry, savannah-covered plateau about 80 metres above sea level. It is here that Nabua men come when hunting for wallaby.

NABUAPAKA VILLAGE - 1973



The houses of Nabuapaka are grouped together on either side of an open space (ibuanai - the middle) running the length of the village, parallel to the beach. At one end is the Catholic Church compound, and at the other the United Church (formerly London Missionary Society), while right in the centre, intruding into the open space, is the cooperative store.

The village is built on sand, which is firm underfoot after rain, but extremely hot and soft in dry weather. Around the houses grow a variety of shrubs, some of pure decorative value, like the croton, others used in medicinal potions, and various fruit trees including the coconut, breadfruit, mango, pawpaw, malay apple and starfruit (carambola).

Economy

The economy is based on subsistence cultivation of the banana, the staple food, with yams, taro, maize and manioc as important additions to the diet. A few green vegetables, pumpkin, tomatoes and onions are also grown.

Fish, shellfish, crayfish and crabs are the principal sources of protein, supplemented by occasional hunting for birds and small game. Wallaby is normally sought only prior to feasts, and pigs also are normally eaten only at celebrations, funerals etc.

The principal crops are planted about October and November, and are harvested from May onwards the following year. The wettest time of the year is from December to April. It is during this period that garden food is scarce, and the villagers rely heavily on fortnightly markets at which they exchange the harvest of the sea for the produce of their inland Mekeo neighbours.

Marking the seasons.

The people of Nabuapaka note a variety of signs including the swarming of butterflies and the flowering and fruiting of the Kapok, to plan their cycle of planting and harvesting. Around June-July the dry season is into its second or third month, and the Kapok is coming to life. This period is ihau. The corn, yams and bananas are ready for harvesting. There is plenty of food and it is the time of the year that was deemed in the past most suitable for singing and dancing. Today Christmas is the festive season, when children and people working away from the village, are home for the holiday.

By late August/September, ihau (which is also the term for 'year') has been succeeded by kurope: the flowers are blooming on the kapok, and men are stirring themselves cutting grass and clearing and burning bush, planning their new gardens.

As the pods swell and begin to split, the season is puame (about October). Men are digging their gardens, women are planting water melon, corn, bananas, yams and so on. At this time mangoes are ripening. For a brief week or ten days butterflies (peropero) swarm through the village in thousands and men prepare their canoes and special spears (ikaira'a) to hunt garfish, while women know that they will soon be busy collecting mud crabs (kopara).

Digging should be over by the end of October, and planting complete by the end of November, for December heralds kupa niro'u, thunder, and the start of the wet season.

February and March are Hiribou. The rain pours down. Garden crops are young. The ground may be waterlogged, with snakes on the surface. Bananas are small, and men wrap them with dry banana leaves to help them mature and keep the birds away. The women harvest some corn and watermelon planted the previous October, and keep the gardens weeded. In the sea men go out day and night in search of crayfish, while their wives and daughters collect crabs and shellfish for the fortnightly market.

In general this is the time when food is in short supply. Chalmers commented "from Yule Island in the west, to East Cape in the east...there are many seasons when there is not much more food to be had than suffices to keep body and soul together" (1895:191). Oram noted the frequency of failed harvests and deaths from starvation among the very young and very old in the Motu area (1980:2). It is the time when Roro occasionally resorted to eating mangrove shoots (ioro) and the fruit of the cycas (bahoro) (Cf: Groves 1972b:30). Today they turn to rice and tinned fish.

April and May see the crops beginning to ripen. This period is iaia, after a type of grass that grows profusely at this time. Cassava (maniota) is ready for harvest; young yams (haihu) are eaten, and bananas are beginning to swell.

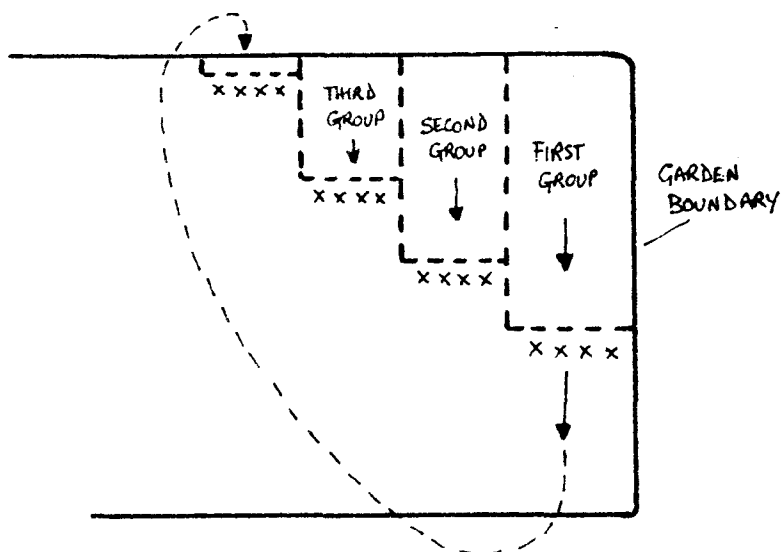
Iaia gives way once more to ihau. The cycle is complete and the gardens are ready for harvesting.

Digging gardens.

Digging gardens is a community affair. Once a man and his sons have cleared the grass and bush, they ask for assistance with digging from the other men of the village. Depending on the size of the area, they appeal first to their kin and affines, then to non-relatives.

Early in the morning on the appointed day all gather at the garden site with their digging implements. (Today the majority use long-bladed shovels, but one or two of the older men still prefer the digging stick). The owner of the garden distributes areca nut, and the men divide themselves into groups of four, each man with two shovels.

The first four stand side by side and, working in unison, begin digging. Each plunges his pair of spades into the ground, lifts the soil and turns it over, then they step back and repeat the process. When they have turned several rows, another four men begin digging, and then another four. When the first group reaches the end of their section, they begin a new section, and so on until the work is complete.



Every hour or so they stop to chew betel and talk a while. About half way through the work the owner's wife, daughters and other female members of his sub-clan appear with a meal. Sometimes they provide only a snack, with the main meal waiting in the village for their return. On occasion, the owner laces the coffee or tea with whiskey or rum to aid the diggers' enthusiasm and lighten their task.

A poor man, unable to call on resources, is likely to have to dig his garden by himself, or with only a brother or son for assistance. In these circumstances the job degenerates into a sweaty, thankless chore.

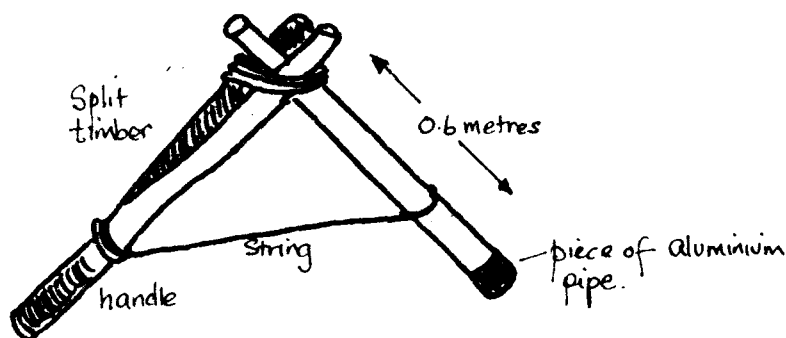
Sago

There are only two or three small stands of sago (pare'o) in the Nabuapaka area, and all have been deliberately cultivated. The starch is not an important item in the villagers' diet, but they enjoy it when they can get it.

Preparing sago is a laborious task. I saw two men and their wives take two full days to process one trunk about four metres long by 0.7 m in diameter (compare Schieffelin who said two Kaluli people take three days to process a trunk just over two metres - 1976:74).

The men fell the tree, remove the spikey fronds and strip the bark from half the trunk. Then sitting down, they slowly beat the internal fibres into a pulp which is taken by the women and strained with water through coconut gauze. The edible part passes through the

strainer into bowls. The sago settles to the bottom, and the water poured off (See Ruddle et al 1978 for a comparative study of sago production).



Sago-pounding implement

Figs.

Most households have a few pigs available for ceremonial occasions. In the past they were permitted to wander freely through the village and garden areas, so that villagers had to fence their gardens. Over the years successive District officials and councillors have insisted that pigs, rather than gardens, should be fenced, and Nabuapaka, in 1974, had 21 pig-pens among the coconuts just outside the boundaries of the village - fifteen to the north, and six to the south. I counted 76 beasts inside the pens, and while the mathematical average is thus 3.6 to a pen, several contained no animals, while one had as many as twelve. The average per household ranges from three to six. Sometimes two households share a pig-fence, and the responsibility for feeding the animals therefore devolves on the women of both.

I was not able to count all the animals owned by Nabuapaka, as three pens were in poor repair and their occupants foraging free in the bush. This inevitably leads to trouble as men no longer fence their gardens and a loose pig can wreak extraordinary damage in a single night.

On one occasion in 1974 an old man and his dogs flushed two beasts belonging to a family in another sub-clan. The dogs attacked the pigs, killing one and injuring the other, while the old man made only half-hearted attempts to control them.

A second man, whose gardens were nearby, appeared. He was chief of the first man's sub-clan. He commented that the incident was of little consequence: "It is their own fault if they cannot control their pigs." While he began disembowelling the dead animal, the first man sent for the pig's owners. "They were very happy," he said to me afterwards, "happy to eat pig and take some to Moresby to sell!"

Other incidents where gardens are ravaged do not end so calmly and lead to angry recriminations and tears in the centre of the village.

Fishing

Broadly it is the men's job to go fishing and dive for crayfish, while the women look for shellfish, crabs and prawns. However, men sometimes take their wives and daughters to assist them, and certainly would not ignore the opportunity to bring back a crab or two, while the women, in looking for crabs, might spear a fish or catch a cray.

Techniques range from the use of spears with multiple prongs (almost every boy owns a fishing spear, auri, by the time he is old enough to run freely by himself), through line fishing with hooks (naku), to nets (re'e) of various sizes - small ones with a fine mesh for dragging by hand near the beach, to large meshed nets for setting in deep water.

Fishing takes place throughout the year, but interest quickens during the garfish season, beginning about October, and more especially when the crayfish are running between February and April. There is also a flurry of activity prior to the fortnightly markets at Irebo and Arabure (see below).

Hunting and gathering

Foraging for small game such as bandicoots and birds, or for wild fruits, is of little importance to the diet, and is a pastime enjoyed at irregular intervals by youths and small boys, more for fun than necessity. Only in the latter part of the year do the youths and girls organise gathering parties for a rather dry-tasting crimson berry called upo, which grows on the slopes of the surrounding hills.

Otherwise hunting is nowadays largely restricted to individuals or pairs of men who take shot-guns to the hunting lands (pure'o) in search of wallaby or, less often, wild pig. In the old days cassowary abounded in the area but has now disappeared. Modern weapons have also brought about drastic depletion of the Bird-of-Paradise population, bush fowls, and some species of parrot and pigeon, as well as, more happily, crocodiles which once were common. I have not seen a crocodile in the area, although a young one was caught on Yule Island in about 1966, and a large beast left its spoor for several weeks around a waterhole less than a kilometre from Nabupaka

during the 1977/78 New Year period.

From time to time, before an important function, or in response to a request by people in Waima, the men of Nabua organise a large-scale hunt lasting two or three days.

On one such occasion, in September 1973, twelve of us (nine men and three women) camped overnight at a waterless spot on the plateau to the east of the hills.

The previous day, the leader of our party, Camillo Aihi, had presented areca nut to Ani Harima, the hunting magician, asking him to ensure a good catch for us. Most of the party set off soon after dawn. Camillo and I followed about mid-morning, arriving at the camp at noon to the news that several wallaby had already been shot, and to the characteristic smell of singed fur filling the air.

Camillo showed me how to build the platforms (bara) on which to smoke the meat. He began instructing me how to butcher the animals when a cockatoo squawked loudly, and in came Peter O'oru and Aihi Moaba with more wallaby.

Those without guns stayed in the camp singeing fur (to kill ticks and fleas), butchering and smoking the meat - a messy, smelly task with insufficient water to wash one's hands, while the women fetched water and firewood and cooked food.

At night some men continued shooting by torchlight, whilst the remainder slept fitfully - waking when mosquitoes became intolerable, or as others stirred to talk, greet hunters, smoke or break into snatches of song.

We returned to the village the following afternoon with the meat of about fifteen wallaby for Aihi Here of Waima 'Ere'ere to take back for a feast he was organising.

Manufacturing

Apart from houses, the largest items in the village are probably canoes. Most households possess at least one outrigger canoe for fishing and transport, and many own a carefully built racing canoe for sporting purposes. Hollowed out of logs, they take several months of exacting work.

With care, a canoe will last several years, but borers and high winds and seas eventually take their toll.

In the evenings and during idle moments men may make fishing nets, new handles for knives and axes, lime pots out of gourds, lime spatulas, or combs. The last are today made out of the ribs of discarded umbrellas held together by a piece of flattened copper pipe.

Women no longer make clay pots, but they weave several types of basket from coconut fronds as well as finely coloured fans from cane and raffia, beautiful grass-skirts for dancing, plain ones for wearing while working in the gardens, and string bags woven from string made from the fibres of the banana plant.

Children occupy themselves making a variety of whistles and clappers, toy sailing canoes, wheels from discarded tins, and play marbles on the beach, or a version of skittles with conus shells set upright in the sand.

Youths spend much of their evenings, when they are not fishing, playing guitars and singing love songs or planning their next assignation, while their sisters and girl-friends wash dishes, look after children or sit under the watchful eyes of their mothers.

Trade and exchange

The Roro, in common with most peoples in Papua New Guinea, engaged in a wide variety of trading transactions. Apart from the daily interchange between relatives and neighbours in the same community, there were, and still are, regular markets for the exchange of everyday foodstuffs; there were formerly annual journeys into the Gulf to obtain sago; and less regularly, but no less important, there was constant trade and exchange on ceremonial occasions and through trading expeditions, in Bird-of-Paradise plumes, clay pots, shell necklaces, axe blades, salt, fish, smoked wallaby and so on.

Writing in 1901, Haddon commented "probably in no part of British New Guinea are markets so numerous as in the Mekeo District" (1901:265).¹

Kowald, Government Agent in the Mekeo District, wrote in 1884 that markets were usually on the boundary between two communities (Kowald used the word 'tribes'):

With each party of women there are as a rule a few men armed with bows and arrows. They have a drum which is beaten as a signal to begin the market, and end it again when bartering is concluded.

The men stand outside, a little way off. All trading is done by the women (Kowald - BNG Annual Report 1884).

1. It is sometimes difficult, in early reports, to decide whether writers were referring specifically to Mekeo or to Roro as the whole area was known as the Mekeo District. In addition, some writers themselves did not know the distinction: as recently as 1965 Gore referred to Bioto as "a Mekeo village" (1965:48).

By the 1930s regular markets took place on alternate Saturdays at several sites in the district. Men no longer needed to carry their weapons, and while the actual marketing process remained women's business, men were still included in the preparations. Chatterton, writing of the '30s and '40s, said

To a large extent this market controlled the tempo of [Delena] village life.... During the week which preceded it the men went fishing and returned to smoke their catch, while women folk were flat out making pots and pots and more pots ...

The canoes, generally crewed entirely by women, set out late on Friday night, with their cargoes of pots, smoked fish and other items of barter stowed in their hulls. They were sailed or rowed across the sound and anchored in the River mouth. At dawn the long pull up the river began, and by nine or ten o'clock the riverbank rendezvous was reached. Here the Mekeo women were assembled with their garden produce.

The bartering process was austere. There was little conversation and no chaffing. If an offer was unacceptable, the woman to whom it was made turned away without a word (Chatterton 1974:55-56).

Chatterton did not say where the "riverbank rendezvous" was, but it was probably at Bioto. Clune suggested that it was up the Bioto River and described a "roaring trade" in bananas, lobsters, clay pots, betel nut etc. He added that at night there was a feast with dancing until dawn, after which the Roro return to the coast "and trade their betelnuts for cash to the Motus of Hanuabada" (Clune 1942:38-39).

In the mid-1970s the most important market place for villagers from Pinupaka, Tsiria, Delena, Poukama and Nabuapaka was at Irobo landing, up the Mou river, nearly 20 km by canoe from Nabua. Another important site was at Bereina township where coastal Roro from Kivori, Waima and Bereina met Mekeo women.

The pattern remains much the same as Chatterton described, with fortnightly markets for which people begin to prepare several days in advance. In Nabuapaka, the men go fishing for three or four days before market day, while the women and girls collect shellfish and crabs or busy themselves smoking the fish caught by the men.

The principal changes are that the women no longer make pots for exchange, and they travel by motorised double-hulled canoes, which means they can leave the village at dawn on market-day and be home in the mid afternoon.

On one day in February 1974 we took two double-hulled canoes from Nabua, collecting passengers from Yule Island and Delena on the way. The nine women and girls from Nabuapaka on the canoe I was travelling in carried about 250 crabs, about seven small coconut leaf baskets of shellfish, six large coconut leaf baskets of dried fish, three watermelons and six crayfish. On other occasions I have seen people carry sticks of black tobacco, tinned fish and tinned meat with which to make their purchases.

The Mekeo women, who were already at the site when we arrived, brought large quantities of bananas, taro, yams, oranges, maize, pineapples, sweet potatoes, areca nut, pepper-fruit and lime.

At the landing that day I counted twelve motor vehicles, including a tractor and trailer, several utilities, and a two-ton truck; there were five large double-hulled canoes - two from Nabuapaka, one from Tsiria, one from Pinupaka, and one from Arabure (Nikura); and there were ten or more outrigger canoes, some with small outboard motors.

The market site itself is a bleak and unpleasant patch carved out of the mangroves on the river bank. When it rains the ground is mud; when the sun shines it is dusty and hot and without the relief of wind. There is no fresh water, there are no shelters, and no trestles to put produce on. Instead the women spread banana leaves on the ground to provide some protection from the mud, and raise umbrellas to keep off the rain and sunshine alike.

Arriving first the Mekeo women seat themselves with their produce spread before them on the ground, leaving the coastal women to do the energetic work of milling through the crowd looking for a bargain, while men and boys remain at the periphery smoking, chewing betel and gossiping.

There is much calling for barter - "bring your fish" - but no haggling. Mekeo women carefully inspect any fish they are offered, and spurn dead crabs or crayfish. As in Chatterton's day, rejection is to look away without a word.

I did not make a systematic study of exchange rates, but observed several transactions. Typically a Roro woman exchanged two fish for 15 areca nut and pepper fruit; three fish for six hands of bananas; two crabs for three large sweet potatoes. I list some transactions in figure 1.

The road from Port Moresby to Bereina was opened in 1973, and by 1977 the significant market for Delena and Nabuapaka had shifted to Arabure, 40 minutes or so away by truck, where an austere site, as unprotected from the elements as the Irobo landing, had been established in the savannah outside the village. The advantages of Arabure were its ease of access and a trade store nearby where one could buy cold drinks, including beer.

At the turn of the century, the Roro and their neighbours traded in a wide range of goods. Stone axe blades, dogs' teeth and Bird-of-Paradise plumes reached the coast from the mountain peoples of Goilala (Tauade), Fuyughe, and Kuni in exchange for salt, fish, shell jewellery, clay pots and bowls, coconuts and betel mixture. Mekeo took wild pig and cassowary from the swamp-dwelling Kaopo to the north west, giving in return areca nuts, coconuts, shell artefacts and clay pots, some of which they had previously received from the Roro, and to whom they gave agricultural produce, cassowary-bone forks and lime spatulae, gourds, axe blades and plumes. Hau'ofa describes the Mekeo as "intermediaries through whom the products of the sea and the mountains passed both ways" (1975:12).

Along the coast D'Albertis, from his perch on Yule Island, noted Waima canoes passing on their way to Nara loaded with coconuts and returning later loaded with smoked wallaby (1881:324/330; see also Chalmers 1885:194).

I have tried to depict the movement of some of these goods on map 4.

**DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS AND PRODUCE IN THE KAIRUKU
(BEREINA) SUB-DISTRICT, CENTRAL PROVINCE**

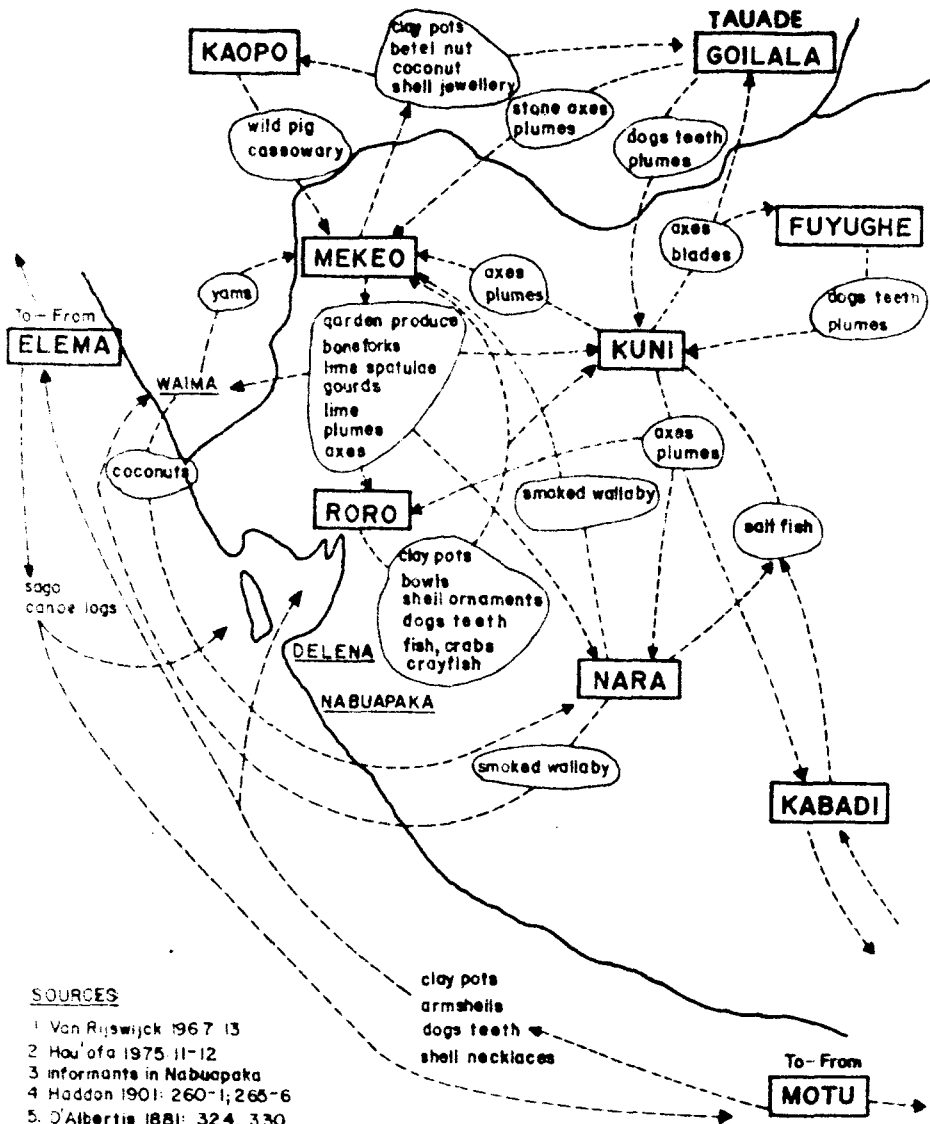


Figure 1.

IROBO MARKET

Items carried by Nabua Women, 16th February, 1974.

	crabs (Kopara)	crabs (Ebe)	shell fish (Iabe)	smoked fish (Maia)	Water Melons	Crayfish	other items
1. Bei Aki Bure	30		$\frac{1}{2}$ rice bag		1	6	
2. Aiba Ume	60				2		
3. Taita Paru	30		1 small basket	20			
4. Abia Apai				60			
5.	6	5	1 small basket	lge bkt			
6. Therese Beata	30			lge bkt			
7. Aiba Ani	20		1 small basket				2 tin fish
8. Taita Bure	20						
9. Tcuaro Paru	50		1 small basket	lge bkt			

Transactions noted:ItemExchanged for (approx)29th September 1973

2 crabs (Kopara)
1 large tinfish
1 stick tobacco
30 shellfish
\$1.00

30 areca nut & pepper fruit
30 areca nut & pepper fruit
3 tablespoons lime
1 small bunch bananas
10-14 hands sweet bananas

16th February 1974

2 smoked fish
3 crabs (kopara)
2 crabs (ebe)
2 crabs (kopara)
2 smoked fish
3 smoked fish

15 areca and pepper fruit
1 pint bottle lime
3 large sweet potato
3 dry corn
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pint bottle lime
6 hand bananas.

Haddon listed four Mekeo and one Roro village ('Mohu' - Mou) at which these exchanges took place, sometimes as often as every five days. He included Mou as Mekeo community and commented that "Roro has no regular market, but there is a great market at the mouth of the little river of Oriki" (1901:265). Presumably he meant the site of Maia'era, which was damaged when the Angabunga River changed its course in 1956, and took the Oreke River as a new outlet to the sea.

Where there were no regular markets it is not easy to reconstruct how such exchanges were organised. Camillo Aihī Paru of Nabuapaka, in his 50s told me in 1974 that men who wished to trade would take areca nut to the chief of the people with whom they wanted to conduct business. They arranged the date and the place and explained the items they were seeking.

He said that the two main sites were at Maia'era and Bioto, with Nabua people most commonly going to the latter, and added (as Clune did) that markets were occasions for dancing and feasting, but on the night preceding the exchange.

Despite the dancing, quarrels and fighting often occurred (Haddon 1901:265), and there are tales of trickery that suggest market arrangements were at times used as a pretext to lure an enemy community to a vulnerable position where they could be set upon and massacred.

It seems that some exchange with mountain people took the form of small groups of men taking items and travelling from community to community seeking partners. Such expeditions were fraught with danger, as Damiano, a Kuni man, found to his cost as recently as the 1930's: he

and two companions were selling Bird-of-Paradise plumes in Rorovillages when they were murdered on the coast not far from the now deserted village of Vailala by men from Delena (Monsell-Davis 1977).

The other important trade of the Rorotook the form of long canoe voyages north into the Gulf for sago and south to the Motu for shell necklaces and armlets.

Haddon called the Roro "these adventurous and trafficking mariners" (1901:260), and wrote

In the Papuan spring, October and November, they repair to Toaripi for sago ... Here they exchange the thin pots of Ziria [Tsiria] ... which are celebrated all along the coast, for bundles of sago. ...

In March or April, after the heavy rains, the annual visit is paid to the Jewellers of Taurama and Pari, who excel in the manufacture of necklaces of small shells ... and of polished shell armlets (1901:260-261).

Chalmers referred to a Waima chief, "Oa of Maiva," visiting Port Moresby to acquire armlets and shell beads (1895:159), but nobody in Nabuapaka told me of journeys to Taurama and Pari. Camillo Aihi Paru and others described the trading trips to Toaripi called Biri. They sailed on multi-hulled canoes (aunohi) carrying pots, armshells, necklaces, string bags and dogs' teeth to exchange for sago and new logs for canoes.

All coastal Roro/Waima communities took part in the expeditions except the inland Paitana Roro in the Angabunga estuary. They raced annually with the Motu to be the first into the Gulf for the pick of the sago and canoe logs. On their return, they traded some of the sago inland to the Paitana Roro and Nara in exchange for garden produce and smoked wallaby.

Leo Aisi Parau, of Tsiria village, who worked for the government as clerk and interpreter at Kairuku from the 1920s until his retirement in about 1966 (he died in 1970), recorded in his personal journal the return from the Gulf of six Roro and two other canoes during an eleven-day period in February, 1930:

Sunday 16/2/30: "Pinupaka lakatoi [Motuan name for their trading canoes] back from Gulf District with plenty of sago. Churia [Tsiria] people went to meet them. Captain Arua Apere and Captain Tea'au Oa. It was called the sorcerers lakatoi as Arua Apere and Tea'au Oa are socery men.

"The Pinupaka women were dancing on the beach with glee as the husbands and fathers and brothers were now come home safe."

17/2: "Kaile [Gaire - a Motuan community] lakatoi passed eastwards"

20/2: "Delena lakatoi from west with plenty of sago. Captain Ume Nou."

24/2: "A Churia lakatoi back from Gulf with 10 canoes and plenty of sago, betel nuts. Captains Miria Aitsi and Aitsi Araha."

25/2: "A Gulf lakatoi passed station."

27/2: "Two Churia lakatoi just in sight only cannot come in as the wind was against them, only Puapua [the name of one vessel] (double canoe) came home in the wind and report. Everybody is very pleased to see friends." (Parau 1930).

Chatterton, who was LMS Minister at Delena between 1939 and 1956, believed pottery manufacturing at Yule Island to be very recent (1969;1974:40), thus implicitly questioning the antiquity of Roro trading voyages to the Gulf. Oram, too, felt that Tsiria villagers did not begin making pots until the time of first European contact (1977:85).

Vanderwal, in his study of the prehistory of Yule Island, considered that the balance of evidence favoured an older knowledge of the art. He wrote "it is reasonably certain, I think, that the Roro were manufacturing pottery at the time of and before European contact" (1973:20). However, in a later paper, he appears to have changed his opinion, suggesting the Tsiria people did not settle in their present site until the early 1880s, and did not learn to make pottery until after European arrival (1975).

In 1890 MacGregor reported that he encountered some Motuans in Mou village, "From time immemorial certain families from this part of the country have traded with Mou, taking them pottery in exchange for food" (BNG 1890:76). However, nine years earlier while on his way to the Gulf, Chalmers met a canoe from that area near Waima. There was a scarcity of pots in the Gulf and they were seeking supplies. "They will go on to Lolo [Roro] in quest of [pots]" he wrote (1885:196).

This appears to suggest that the Roro had begun to manufacture pots by 1881, or else were acting as middle-men in their trade at that time.

Whatever, it seems likely that pot-making and perhaps the trading voyages were not long established skills among the Tsiria at least, even though "at various times over a period of roughly 2000 years, pottery was certainly locally made in the Yule Island area, and suitable clays are available on the island as well as at various localities on the Papuan mainland" (Vanderwal 1975:12).

The last major expedition from Yule was in 1938, but following a drought in 1969 the Koae Kupuna sub-clan in Tsiria village revived the trade. The women made

about 350 clay pots, and the men then loaded them on the Verius, a large double-hulled canoe with outboard motors, and spent a week in the Gulf exchanging pots for sago (Aitsi 1970, cited in Vanderwal 1973:22-23).

The principal hazards faced by the expeditions were bad weather and piracy. The BNG Annual Report for 1890 recorded canoes from Vabukori, Boera, Moresby and Borebada suffering heavy losses of cargo as a result of bad weather; a Pari canoe foundered near Waima with the loss of all cargo; and a Waima trading canoe was totally wrecked with the loss of the crew of eight (Lawes BNG 1890:102).

Aihi Ani of Nabuapaka, in his late 70s or 80s, told me of young Roro men plundering passing Motuan canoes; Oram (1977:88) cited Chalmers as recording that 177 members of Boera lakatoi crews were killed by Roro people; and elsewhere Chalmers asserted that Motuans themselves attacked the vessels of rival villages. He wrote that as Motuans

had a warrior chief, and a hunter chief,
so they had a robber chief

whose job it was to organise the plunder of passing canoes and inland parties coming to the coast to trade.

In a letter written in February 1883, he said,

only two months ago, canoes belonging to
villages on either side of the harbour
returned from the west with sago, and waited
for the night to pass this place because
they feared a revival of the past (Stuart Ross
1903:50)

Today the only regular trading engaged in by Nabuapaka is at the fortnightly Arabure market exchanging marine products for garden produce. Many items such as necklaces of shell, dogs' teeth, boars' tusks, armshells and Bird-of-Paradise plumes still circulate on ceremonial occasions such as bride price and mortuary ceremonies.

Recent developments

The people's diet is still largely based on the banana and fish, but it is supplemented throughout the year with rice, canned fish and meat, flour, sugar and tea and to supply these goods, there were in mid-1973, two privately owned stores in the village, a cooperative store in Delena, and on Yule Island a Roman Catholic Mission store and a large trade store/post office owned by an Australian couple, Ron and Maureen Slaughter. The cooperative store in Nabua itself was closed at that time.

Villagers have earned money through a number of sources: Copra-drying was a steady source of income for some years. The village cooperative society bought the copra and resold it to the Copra Marketing Board in Port Moresby. When the Co-op store closed, copra ceased to be an income earner. The road to Moresby opened in 1973 and by 1976 some men were again drying copra and taking it direct to town themselves.

Individuals occasionally take goods such as areca nut and pepper fruit, coconuts, limes, water melons, breadfruit and smoked fish to sell in the markets of Port Moresby; and some households sell pigs from time to time, as long as they have a beast which has not been earmarked for ceremonial purposes.

There is little regular local employment, though some people have in the past worked on the plantation nearby at Ou'ou Creek making copra; building fences, roads and bridges; tractor driving and child-minding. A regular income therefore is the prerogative of those who leave the village to work in Port Moresby and other centres throughout the country. Such people often send a good deal of money home, and since the road opened, help to supplement the income of parents and relatives in the village by sending home bags of rice and flour and saving

their money to buy water-tanks and corrugated-iron for roofing.

In mid-1973, two households ran private trade-stores, and two men operated large twin-hulled canoes with 40hp outboard motors. These two canoes provided the main means of local transport, other than outrigger canoes, and along with coastal cargo vessels and the airstrip at Yule Island, were the means of getting to and from Port Moresby.

Another major source of income was freezers on Yule Island owned by the Kairuku Fishing Society Ltd (built in 1962) and Morr Pty Ltd, a European owned venture formed in 1964. For various reasons including those of economy, the companies agreed to pool part of their resources, and at the end of 1965 they formed the first Papua New Guinea Joint Venture between a local enterprise and a European-owned-business - the Yule Lobster Enterprise, whose principal business was the processing and export of the Yule Island crayfish.

However, although crayfish are seasonal, running during the wet, their abundance varied from year to year. Some years several thousand kina entered the village during the crayfish season, while in other years the income was not significant. For example, during the 1965/6 season K7,500 was paid to local fishermen from several villages in the area, and in 1966/7 K16,400 was paid out (Kent Wilson 1968:57-8).

Up to the middle of 1973 then, Nabuapaka villagers living at home had limited opportunities for a regular cash income, and the majority of people under 35 or so lived away from the village for most of the year - either at school or at work, visiting home only during vacations or long public holidays such as Christmas and Easter.

Even those living in Port Moresby could only make rare visits, as a one-way trip by motorized canoe or trading vessel took a minimum of nine hours.

In 1973 the coastal route linking Port Moresby and Bereina was opened, and with it came the young people back to the village for regular week-end visits with their news, ideas, and money. With the road also came new opportunities for trucking ventures; expansion of local trade-stores; the new market site at Arabure; as well as the demise of motorized canoe businesses and an increased consumption of alcohol.

Chapter 8 of this thesis examines the difficulties faced by men who attempt to take advantage of the opportunities by establishing small entrepreneurial ventures.

Chapter Two.

Part 1

"WE FOLLOWED THE LAND OUT"

Oral Tradition and Pre-history to the first Europeans

Oral Tradition

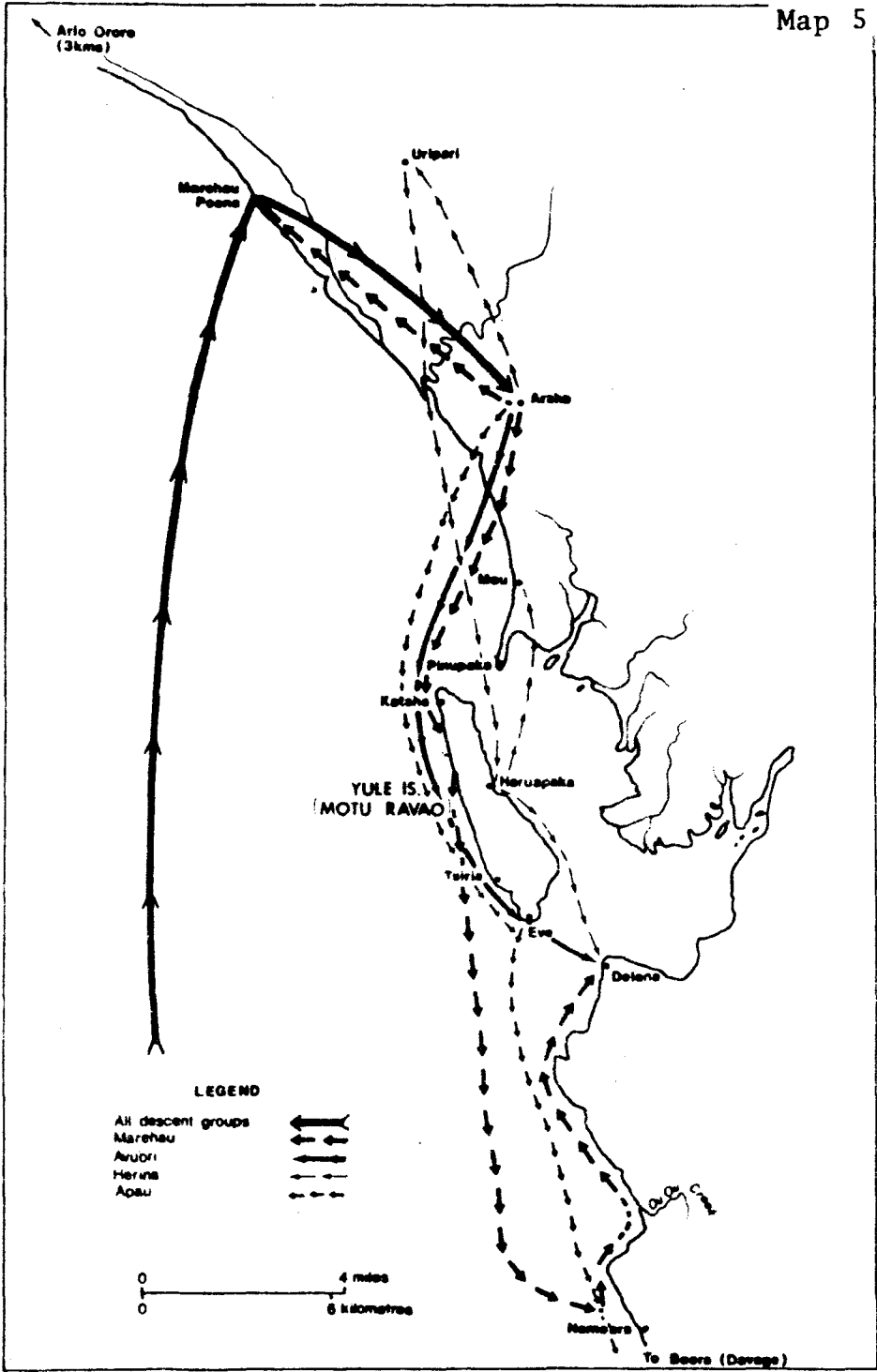
The quotation used for the heading of this chapter is a part of the explanation of the origin of the Roro peoples told to me by Leo Aisi Parau of Tsiria village in 1967.

His tale was a long recital of movement from site to site, precipitated by wars, quarrels, sorcery and opportunities to move onto unoccupied lands. At the time I found his story difficult to follow, as I was unfamiliar with the village sites he referred to and rather naively believed he was either telling me of the movements of all Roro/Waima speaking communities, culminating in their arrival at Tsiria, or alternatively that his account was mythological, with little basis in fact.

Since then I have heard many similar stories and understand that essentially Aisi was telling me the history of his own sub-clan (Koae Kupuna). This illustrates a major difficulty in reconstructing the migrations of the Roro people: their history prior to the arrival of Europeans was characterised by constant movement, so that every community has its own oral history, and a comprehensive account would require a detailed study of each sub-clan tale. (See for example, A. Aitsi 1972; L. Aitsi 1972; Miria 1974; Ikupu 1976; Meauri 1976)

MacGregor noted these migrations in the last century. He wrote "certain tribes frequently shift the place of their abode from one part of their land to another" (BNG Annual Report 1888/89:70). Oram, who cites MacGregor's observation summed up many years of his own research into the oral history of Central Papuan peoples by commenting

from many examples of settlement along this coast, it is possible to discern a pattern in which, after an initial settlement has been made, the settlers are joined by either



Marshau-Apau migrations (in part based on maps by Vanderwal 1973 and Chatterton 1969)

Map reproduced from Oram 1977:77

members of their own tribal or village groups, or by members of other groups who later adopt their language and culture (Oram 1977 :90).

This is consistent with what we know of other parts of Melanesia. (For example, Fiji - Frazer 1973:82; France 1969:11-13)

Chatterton (1969, 1974:39-41), Vanderwal (1973: 9-11, 1975) and Oram (1977) discussed the oral traditions of Tsiria and Delena indicating that the present Roro inhabitants of Yule Island probably arrived in the early 1880s pushing out a Motuan community, Marehau, which eventually settled at Boera and Delena. Oram depicts the Marehau migrations in his map (1977:77) which I reproduce here on page 31.

The Tsiria villagers did not arrive together. Extracts from a popular song written (I believe) by Bishop Sorren, reflects the story as he heard it some years ago

Obia Pokina te mai
Marehau ohi te baiyata
arawae te bamuena
te oko'uai, eka te a'ina

Obia Pokina came
and quarrelled with Marehau,
they chased them away
and took the land.

Parama Kupuna te mai
itsu te a'ina, uma te babai
te aiara, te miaho,
ewa erama, te asanamo

Parama Kupuna came
made houses and gardens,
made a village and stayed.
They danced and were happy.

Koae Kupuna te mai
...
Roro e rama, 'orina weia!

Koae Kupuna came
...
So Roro began. That's the story!

The migrations of the present Yule Islanders appear to have been in part a result of harassment by Waima, which was in turn warring with Kivori. Kivori accounts suggest that Waima started as a fishing settlement and that rivalry between the two communities began once the settlement became permanent (Ikupu 1976:4).

In general the recent movements of people along this stretch of coast seem to have been from west to east (cf: Chatterton 1969; Bulmer 1971:35) Archaeological studies indicate that Austronesian speakers lived in the Gulf to the north-west before the present non-Austronesian speakers (Allen 1973:30), and people may have moved eastwards following pressure from non-Austronesian Toaripi, who raided Roro and Mekeo villages as recently as the late 19th Century. L.Aitsi (1972:17-18) gave an account of warfare between Rapa and Kaema (the Roro name for Elema/Toaripi) that was only brought to an end by the arrival of Europeans. Further, a man from Lese village, 70 km north west of Yule, at the mouth of the Biarua River, told me of a tradition that Lese was once a Mekeo village, and that it was one of his forbears who had led the raid that expelled the Mekeo (cf: Oram 1980:5).

Aisi Parau's remark that they "followed the land out" reflects a tradition that the Waima hills were once islands (whether this means surrounded by open water or backed by mangrove swamps is not entirely clear), and that the sea went inland as far as the foothills of the Owen Stanley Ranges (Ikupu 1976:2). Hau'ofa recorded the same assertion among the Mekeo (1975:28), and their belief that they "came from the sea in big canoes," settled on the foothills of the Central Range, and moved onto the Plains as the sea retreated and the land drained.

Coupled with the draining of the Mekeo Plains has been the drying out of some mangrove swamps, and the extension of new mangrove forests into Hall Sound. A comparison of early charts with the present Hall Sound shows a continual expansion of mangrove forest over the last century (L. Hill, Office of Environment, Waigani, pers comm.) This process appears to be linked with the repeated changing of course by the Angabunga River (Labbutt et al 1965; Swadling 1977) and to have been of

considerable significance to Austronesian migration and settlement patterns. S. Bulmer (pers comm 1977) argued for the Motuans that "the inland early plains settlement was related to the coastline being much further inland in the Galley Reach area. The mangrove expanding is probably sedimentation, and certainly very important as regards location of settlement and shifts in such."¹

The Mekeo believe that once they descended onto the Plains, they established two villages, Isoisovina and Isoisovapu, where they lived for several generations before internal disputes led to the abandoning of these sites and the creation of numerous smaller communities (Hau'ofa 1975:28).

Roro, too, refer to Isoisovapu as their ancestral village, and some assert that they also first arrived by sea and settled the inland ranges before migrating to the plains (L. Aitsi 1972:15). A widely known story explains that the dispute which led to the breakup of the community stemmed from a light-hearted argument over whether a laughing jackass was making a noise with its beak or its tail. The quarrel led to serious fighting and the abandoning of Isoisovapu (Hau'ofa 1975:29; A. Aitsi 1972:12).

The Roro, Nara, Gabadi, and Doura use the story to account for the divergence of languages in the area (Swadling et al 1977:56-59), and while Roro see it as marking the breach between Mekeo and Roro, the former assert that as they moved onto the plains from the foothills, the Bereina and Waima (both Roro communities) were moving in from the coast, leading to considerable hostility between the two (Hau'ofa 1975:31-32).

1. A further complication arises with what Vanderwal called "a westward land depression inundating village sites" (1973:11). He was referring to Yule Island, but the same process is taking place at Waima, Pinupaka, and Nabuapaka where villagers insist that earlier village sites have been washed into the sea (cf: Mabbutt et al 1965:126).

It is clear that whatever the origins of the present Austronesian speaking peoples of the area, their history since first settlement has been one of considerable small scale movement by individuals and sub-clans. Their communities today are composed of groups of diverse origin which have been absorbed, exiled and reabsorbed over numerous generations. One section of Beipa'a village is of Kuni descent (Hau'efa 1975:32); various Kaepo groups have been absorbed (or massacred) by the Mekeo (Hau'efa 1975:32) and Kaema (Swadling et al 1977); several Motuan sub-clans are virtually indistinguishable from the Roro at Delena (Chatterton 1969); and Roro sub-clans are represented in Kido and Pari, which are both Motuan villages.

Nabuapaka itself is made up of people who can trace their recent ancestry to Kiveri, Waima, Orei, Tubu, Oreke, and Bereina, while in the last half century or so men from Elema and Goilala (Tanade) have been adopted into the community.

In Chapter 4 I give a detailed account of the ancestry of the sub-clans of Nabuapaka. Here it is sufficient to note that the Community was formed towards the end of the 19th century by three brothers from the Waima hamlet of Abiara, following an invitation by the Nara people who wanted assistance in their wars against a Mekeo village.

We can date the settlement to the latter part of the last century, because it was Koloka Naine of Orei who negotiated the settlement and who received the wealth from the founding brothers as payment for the land. Koloka was known as "Queen" Koloka by the early European administrative officers.

Later arrivals to Nabuapaka left their natal villages for reasons including warfare (at Bereina), disease (at Kiveri), and private quarrels leading to flight (at Waima).

Archaeological Evidence

Although archaeologists and other prehistorians disagree over the interpretation of some of their evidence, and about the exact relationship between environmental and cultural factors, there appears to be general consensus on the broad outline of the pre-history of the Central Papuan coast: that is, a pre-ceramic people occupied parts of the coast at least 4000 years ago;¹ that the first Austronesian speakers arrived about 2000 years later; that there was some kind of discontinuity about 1000 years BP; and that the ancestors of today's Central District Austronesian speakers were clearly present 700 years ago.

The earliest evidence for population on the south coast is from Kukuba cave on 'Ou'ou Creek, about five km south east of Nabupaka. The remains have been dated to around 4000^{BP}, which Allen described as "by far the oldest yet for the region" (1973:30). The characteristics of the stone flakes show resemblances to the lithic industries of the New Guinea Highlands (Vanderwal 1973:232).

By 2000 years ago there were a number of settled communities along the coast, and Allen felt that the

evidence can only be interpreted as a widespread migration into the southern Papuan coast of pottery manufacturing people. From Amason Bay in the east, moving through Marshall Lagoon (Irwin pers comm.), the Port Moresby region (Allen 1972), the Yule Island area (Vanderwal 1973) and the Papuan Gulf (Bowdler, pers comm), sites which are consistently dated in their lower levels to around 2000 years ago are producing distinctive and highly similar ceramic materials (Allen 1973:30)

1. By contrast, confirmed dates for the Highlands show settlement at least 27,000 years ago (Bulmer 1975:29)

Bulmer agreed that there were a number of culturally related communities along the central Papuan coast around 2000 BP (1975:48), and added that on ceramic styles "they may derive from a group of pottery making traders, similar to or descended from the Lapita traders, who probably originated in the islands of Indonesia" (Bulmer 1975:66. On page 48 she cited Heekeren 1972: 177-81 in this connection).

Vanderwal also interpreted the ceramic style as closely related to Lapita pottery but added that adze style and maritime technology show a clear link with the Lapita potters of the Western Pacific (1973:233).

There is general agreement that these people were probably the first representatives of Austronesian speakers along the coast (Bulmer 1975:48; Vanderwal 1973:233).

Around 1000 years ago, changes in pottery style and in the stone industry may indicate the intrusion of new groups of people, possibly from islands to the east (Bulmer 1975:66), but certainly in the Port Moresby region specialised trader/potters appear to have entered the area about 800 years ago. Living on the coastal fringe and off-shore islands, their economy was oriented to the export of pottery and shell jewellery to the Gulf in exchange for sage and canoe hulls. They were the ancestors of the present day Motu (Bulmer 1975:67).

More specifically for Yule Island, the heart of present day Rore territory, Vanderwal divided his evidence into four phases: Preceramic, Initial Ceramic, Developmental and Intrusive.

The Preceramic phase is represented solely by the limited evidence from Kukuba cave, dated to around 4000 years ago. Vanderwal suggested only transitory occupation of the site, possibly by hunters and/or perhaps gardeners (1973:195-6). Bulmer is more positive that the remains are "likely to reflect an agricultural economy" (1975:66). In any case, it is improbable that they knew pottery (Vanderwal 1973:196).

The artefacts of the Initial Ceramic phase (around 2000 BP) suggest the arrival of a new group of people who appear to have introduced betel chewing to the area, and whom Vanderwal calls "Oposisi" after the Roro name of one of his excavation sites. The general cultural complex makes it probable that they represent the arrival of Austronesian speakers on the south coast of Papua. This accords reasonably well with Pawley's (1969) proposed time depth for Austronesian languages in the area.

Clearly related to the Lapita potters of the western Pacific, the Oposisi people may have maintained trading links with settlements to the east for items such as obsidian and adzes (cf: Allen 1973:42). They were possibly gardeners, but wallaby remains and flake tools similar to those of Kukuba cave suggest that they may have entered into a relationship with the existing population similar to that later established between Motu and Koita (Vanderwal 1973:232-234).

During the Developmental phase the culture of the Oposisi people disappears. The bone industry and adzes of the initial ceramic are succeeded by a different style of adze and stone club heads which display a more "New Guinea" character. While betel-chewing artefacts show a continuity, the style of pottery changes: it

"appears well developed though it has no close parallel beyond the Port Moresby area ... its general character is such that its makers were almost certainly Austronesian speakers" (Vanderwal 1973:235). Vanderwal felt that it was not yet possible to say whether this represented migration of another group who forced out the Oposisi people, the arrival and fusion of another group, or simply the introduction of new ideas by way of trade.

Swadling et al proposed that changes in the lithic industry may be the result of a search by the people for alternative sources owing to limited supplies from the east. "Contact with Papuan mountain dwellers would explain why their adzes and clubs are found in subsequent occupation layers" (1977:63-65). (But Vanderwal had merely said that the lithic industry shared resemblances to the highlands - 1973:232).

The Intrusive phase began around 700 years ago, with changes in pottery style and in the flaked-stone technology, the use of dog for food, and a shift in the pattern of settlement from hilltop residence to coastal dwelling indicating the arrival of another group of people whose culture closely resembles that of contemporary Motupore Island in the Port Moresby region.

This culture "seems to set the stage for developments towards the situation discovered by 19th Century visitors who found the Motu and linguistically related Roro in the area" (Vanderwal 1973:236-7). Clearly they were Austronesian speakers.

Archaeological excavations have yet to be conducted on the foothills of the Central Ranges for evidence of Austronesian settlement that may accord with oral traditions.

Early contacts: Explorers to sandalwood traders:

One of the earliest recorded comments by Europeans about Melanesians was made by members of Hernando de Grijalva's crew who in 1537 mutinied and killed him while on their way from Peru to the Moluccas. The mutineers wrecked the ship on an island

where people are black with curled hair, called Papuas. They eat human flesh, are great witches, and so given to devilishness that the devils go among them as companions (cited by Clune 1942:52).

Clune did not say where he took this quotation from, nor where the ship was wrecked. The fact that the crew members were not themselves eaten makes one wonder about their assertions of cannibalism and devilishness.

One hundred years later, a Dutch description of Papuans of the south-east coast dismissed them as "coal-black, stark-naked savages, and man-eaters, in appearance more like monsters than human beings" (cited by Prendergast 1968:71).

Other Portugese, Dutch and Spanish ships reported seeing the islands of New Guinea a number of times during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Torres landed at several places on the south coast in 1606. At Mailu, in response to an attack, he and his men killed a number of Mailuans and kidnapped fourteen children to be taken to Manila for conversion to the Roman Catholic faith (Roe 1961:36-38; Nelson 1972:60).

The earliest descriptions of an encounter between Europeans and Roro are those in connection with the voyage of HMS Bramble and HMS Castlereagh in April 1846.

John Sweatman, a clerk aboard the Bramble, left a journal of the trip. He wrote that Lieutenant Charles Yule selected a headland on which to land for survey operations.

Once ashore, Yule decided to annex the country for Queen Victoria, but, Sweatman continued,

we found the Union Jack had been forgotten and made a substitute by pencilling a flag on the leaf of a notebook. This being attached to a tree, Mr. Yule took possession in the name of Her Majesty, the people giving three very low cheers lest too much noise should attract the natives (cited in Clune 1942:83-84).

Later, when they tried to return to the Bramble, their boat was swamped. A cutter, attempting a rescue, was also swamped and "forty natives" appeared "armed with spears, clubs, bows and axes." At first friendly, the Papuans became more aggressive when they realized that Yule and his men were unable to get away. As the sun set, the surf went down and one of Bramble's boats was able to rescue the men - but not before the Papuans had dispossessed the Lieutenant and another man of their clothes, instruments, and survey observations (Clune 1942: 82-85).

The headland, now aptly named Cape Possession, is just west of Kivori village, and is known to the Roro as Waima Itsuna. It seems likely that the explorers met Roro-speaking men from Kivori rather than from Elema-speaking villages which are further to the west.

Three years later Lieutenant Yule and the Bramble were again exploring the Papuan coast, this time under Captain Owen Stanley in HMS Rattlesnake. In September, 1849 they anchored near a large island which they named Yule. It is still known to the Roro by its ancient name Rabao.

Contacts such as these were brief and intermittent.

Their principal result appears to have been the introduction of exotic diseases that had a devastating effect on the population. It is not possible to state when the first serious non-indigenous epidemic swept the coast, and equally impossible to know which ship brought it. Oram reported that as early as 1852 a disease struck Woodlark Island and killed a quarter of the population in three months. (1977:92, citing French missionaries who were there between 1847 and 1855). Again we do not know how far this sickness spread beyond Woodlark Island.

The earliest reports of serious illness among the Roro suggest that there was a major epidemic in the latter part of the 1860s. Chalmers referred to it as mallpox (Mosko 1973:66), but Oram noted that some medical authorities believe it could have been chickenpox (Oram 1977:92). In any case, it killed large numbers of people: in Kivori village "it is remembered that up to three corpses were put into one grave" (Ikupu 1976:4), and even "the dogs and pigs died" (Guis 1936:93). The villagers attributed the deaths to sorcery, and many fled to other communities. Some Kivori people migrated as far as Pari, just east of Port Moresby (Ikupu 1976:4).

In 1974, Morea Hau of Arabu Kupuna sub-clan, Kivori village, gave me a version of the epidemic. In Kivori at that time, there were, among others, four warrior sub-clans: Arabu Kupuna, Huai Kupuna, Herua Kupuna and Raria Kupuna. The sister of a Huai Kupuna man married into a sorcerer's family. Soon afterwards a number of people died, and the victims' families laid the blame on the alleged sorcerer.

The Huai Kupuna man, unable to gain support from the other warrior sub-clans for fear of chiefly wrath, decided to kill him. Through his sister, he learned of the sorcerer's movements, laid in wait for him one day, and speared him. The dying man asked for his son and instructed the youth to take his sorcery items, and to

count every hair on his head when he died.

This the young man did, and then demanded five pigs from each chief for a feast for his father (Morea Hau asserted that this would amount to about 200 pigs). He built a club-house and a canoe and then made magic in every Kivori hamlet. He went to Pari with his family, and after the feast people died by the thousand. That is when the Kivori village complex broke up and people migrated elsewhere. "Now there are no Huai Kupuna people left. They caused the trouble" concluded Morea Hau.

It is likely that the same epidemic resulted in the dispersal of Araha village complex, west of Pinupaka, and the colonisation of Yule Island by Roro speakers. Chatterton believed the departure from Araha was prompted by pressure from Waima and Mekeo, with "savage and treacherous" warfare (1969:94). Mosko, following Dupeyrat, concluded that it was the 1874 pneumonia epidemic that led to the abandonment of Araha (1973:68), while Oram, after discussing a number of reports of disease along the coast, appears to agree with Seligmann (1910:196) that the dispersal was earlier than 1874, implicitly dating it at about the time of the Kivori epidemic.

Over the following forty years, a number of serious illnesses were reported. Mosko estimated that there were eight periods in which diseases such as smallpox, bronchitis, whooping cough and dysentery swept the central south-east Papuan coast (See table 2).

The precise effect of these epidemics on the population is a matter for conjecture. We do not know the size of pre-contact populations, nor do we know the basis on which early estimates were made. For example, following a very short visit to Waima in 1884, Gill wrote

Figure 2

EPIDEMICS IN SOUTH EAST PAPUA

(Adapted from Mosko 1973:66)

1867/70	Smallpox (Chickenpox?) (Chalmers 1887c:318; Ikupu 1976:4; Oram 1975:92)
1874/5	Pneumonia & Bronchitis (D'Albertis 1881:286; Dupeyrat 1935:118; Seligmann 1910:196)
1875	Measles (Lawes 1875; Oram 1975:91)
1886/7	Pneumonia (BNG 1889:78; 1890:40)
1897/8	Bronchitis, Dysentery (BNG 1899:75; 90)
1899	Whooping Cough (BNG 1904:16)
1902	Measles (BNG 1904:16)
1910	Dysentery (West 1968:133-4)

"the population of the Maiva district cannot be less than 5000" (Chalmers and Gill 1885:273). The tenor of his remarks suggests a guess based on observations as "we walked through the different villages constituting the district of Maiva" (1885:273). He does not say whether they consulted the three Rarotongan teachers who had been located there for eighteen months.

The point here is that six years later, in 1890, MacGregor estimated the Waima population as "over 1500" (BNG Report 1890:85). In other words, a decrease of perhaps as much as 70% in only six years, yet we have a record only of pneumonia during that period, despite the presence of the LMS teachers, and the Catholic Mission on Yule Island.¹

Any major drop in population, then, probably occurred during the 1860s and 1870s, and Gill's figure of over 5000 in 1884 must remain suspect.²

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1. We do have reports, however, of "serious mortality" in 1886, in the Hula area, east of Port Moresby, 200 km from Yule Island. A "pulmonary epidemic" took 26 lives at Hula in two months; left 100 dead in Kalo, and three or four dying daily at Papaka (BNG Report 1886:31).
 2. Despite his being accompanied by Chalmers, Gill was not always an accurate recorder. For example, on page 270 he notes that James and Thorngren were murdered on the mainland just a mile from D'Albertis's camp. Chalmers knew as early as 1881 that the murders took place in Hall Sound, on board their cutter. In addition, D'Albertis's camp was on the island, not the mainland. Other population figures are listed in the Appendix.

The first sustained contacts between the Roro and Europeans followed the epidemic of the late 1860s. In March 1875 Italian naturalist Luigi D'Albertis landed on Yule Island, and established a camp site on a headland on the south-east corner of the island that is officially named D'Albertis Point by the Government and Koana by the Roro.

For several months he explored the rivers of the area using tricks with burning methylated spirits, dynamite and fireworks to keep the people at bay. Initially on fairly amicable terms with the Roro, he became disenchanted when his house was ransacked while he was on an expedition, and decided to frighten them into submission: "make them believe you are something more than they" he wrote, "make them as much afraid of you sleeping as waking; in a word, inspire them with a wholesome dread of approaching you at all" (1881:397).

While D'Albertis was based at Yule, the Chevert arrived under the command of Captain Edwards, with the Australian naturalist William Macleay. D'Albertis resented the new arrivals, first because their expedition was well equipped: he wrote "it seems to me that they can perform in five days what I could not do in five months; and I cannot be expected to be pleased to see them working in the field which I have prepared at the risk of my life." Secondly he disliked Macleay's friendly manner towards the islanders. He wanted the expedition to "show a little severity towards the natives" (1881:362), and to demonstrate the power of Chevert's guns.

As a result of D'Albertis's attitudes and behaviour, Edwards and Macleay initially had some difficulty in communicating with the Roro people, but eventually "the keen desire of the natives for knives and axes drove them

to trade" (MacMillan 1957:124). The Chevert does not seem to have received much in return for the knives and axes. In his "narrative" of the expedition written for the Town and Country Journal, Captain Edwards wrote of scarcity:

these natives have no merchantable articles to trade, and scarcely any food to sell. A few bananas was all we got from them. They have pigs, but they will not sell them. Whilst lying at Hall Sound we speculated on the chances a shipwrecked crew would have in getting food, and we concluded they would have to take it by force or starve (Cited in MacMillan 1957:146)

One lasting effect of the Chevert's journey is the presence of limes in the Yule Island area. Nine years later, while visiting an inland Roro village, Chalmers and Gill were given a quantity of the fruit. They wrote that it had originally been planted at Yule by Macleay, and then distributed to other communities by the Roro themselves (Chalmers and Gill 1885:278-9).

D'Albertis left Yule in November 1875, and Clune (1942:94-95) suggested that his pyrotechnical tricks had given him a reputation for invulnerability that the Roro ascribed to all white men, including fauna collectors Dr. James and Carl Thorngren who had arrived on the LMS steamer Ellengowan a few days before D'Albertis's departure.

James and Thorngren were murdered the following August, and Clune considered that this was because the Roro had realised in April that Europeans could "be injured just the same as a black" (1942:95) when Captain Redlich of the pearling cutter *Ida*¹ set off after a school of fish, misjudged the timing of the explosion of a stick of dynamite, and lost his arm. Clune continued

1. Captain Redlich had originally brought D'Albertis to Yule Island.

his histrionic build-up to the attack on James and Thorngren by imagining the story of Redlich's accident spreading "far and wide among the savages ... and in many a hutted village the sorcerers [pointed to the vulnerability of Europeans while the botanists] continued their collecting unaware of the rising tide of hatred" (Clune 1942:95).

Lovett, an early historian of the LMS, similarly concluded that the murders were "in reprisal for previous outrages by white men" (1899:452). The truth, however, appears to be more prosaic. In 1881, and again in 1884, the Roro gave James Chalmers their version of events, and he and Gill concluded that D'Albertis's departure was a "timely retreat" that saved his life (Chalmers and Gill 1885:270). Chalmers wrote that the "Lolo" by which he meant the Yule Island villagers,

speak very well of Dr. James, but of another naturalist and collector who lived on the island they use the strongest expressions of dislike, and hope he may never return. They say he was always threatening, and did fire on more than one occasion on natives. I asked them why he was not murdered, and they said he left before a plot laid was carried out;¹ but had he remained much longer, he would have gone. Such men do an amazing amount of harm, and endanger the lives of many (Chalmers & Gill 1885:181-2).

Further questioning reassured Chalmers that despite their plot against D'Albertis, it was not the Yule Islanders who murdered James and Thorngren, but "Paitana natives, a village near Lolo, up one of the creeks, and no great distance from the coast" (Chalmers and Gill 1885:181).

1. This may be the same plot that D'Albertis heard about on 28/9/1875 (1881:374); also on 19/10/1875 he heard that villagers from Mou, Rapa and Roro (Yule) planned to kill him (1881:378-9).

Chalmers clearly did not like to speak ill of people: in his criticism of D'Albertis he failed to mention the naturalist by name, and the only hint he gave about the community from which the killers came is that in visiting the village, he and his party had to leave their boats two miles upstream and walk through swamp and long grass (Chalmers & Gill 1885: 220-223). On the strength of this, the offenders may have come from Arabure (Nikura), Bioto or the now abandoned village of Vailala.

During his visit Chalmers learned that James and Thorngren were killed because a youth from the village had feathers for sale, but would not accept the pearl-shell offered by Dr. James. He wanted an axe. James terminated negotiations, and he and Waunaea (an LMS teacher on Yule) ordered the youth to leave.

The next day the young man took a canoe with nine other men to the vessel ostensibly to trade yams. They had weapons hidden under their cargo, and while Dr. James was counting the beads to pay for the yams he was struck with a club and speared. Before dying he shot his attacker. Mr. Thorngren was hit, fell overboard, and never seen again.

The crew of the cutter drove off the killers and sailed to the LMS station at Yule Island. The following month the Ellengowan found the boat there, and took off the two Samoan teachers, Waunaea and Anederea, who feared they might be killed as a reprisal for the death of James's attacker.

Chalmers reported that the murderer's community was distressed because neighbouring villages perceived them as the cause of keeping Europeans away with their tobacco, beads and steel axes. While there he accepted

a pig and other gifts, presumably as compensation for the deaths, and felt that in doing so he reduced the tension (1885:220-3).

In fact the murders do appear to have been an aberration on the part of the people of the area (even though they had planned the death of D'Albertis). Despite the long history of violence and pay-back deaths between their own sub-clans, when they wished to harass Europeans they seem more usually to have stripped them of their possessions, as in the case of Lieutenant Yule thirty years earlier. The BNG Annual Report for 1886 notes sailors stripped of their goods but not harmed (1887:39); and in 1888 Romilly investigated an incident in which "natives ... up the St. Joseph's River" (Angabunga) had molested a Mr. Cameron and his party and stolen their goods. They had not intended harm, and "as a proof of their good will sent bags of rice and other trade which they had stolen, down to a coast village" for the owners to collect (BNG Report 1889:17).

The 1901 murder of Resident Magistrate Amadeo Guilianetti at Delena, like the threatened killing of RM Bramell in the 1890s, was at the instigation of the district police detachment rather than villagers (Monckton 1921:127-9), though the official report into the former incident concluded that the motive had been personal revenge (Stephen 1974:82; 99). During the Second World War, another police detachment similarly plotted to kill the local District Officer at Yule Island (Parau & Davis 1972:34).

Following the deaths of James and Thorngren, and the consequent removal of the LMS teachers from Yule Island in September 1876 after a stay of only ten months, there is no record of a foreigner living among the Roro until the LMS placed Henere of Aitutaki at Delena in 1882

(Chatterton 1969b:285). Thereafter, in quick succession, the LMS stationed teachers at Waima in the same year, (Chatterton 1969b:285-6); two at Kivori in 1884 (Chalmers 1885), one of whom was Rarua, the first Papuan to be trained by the LMS (Williams 1972:22); and Ikupu at Nabuapaka (Keabada) in 1892 (Chalmers 1895:236).

In the meantime the French Catholic Sacred Heart Mission (Mission de la Sacré Coeur) established its headquarters on Yule Island in 1885. Five years later Government Agent for the "Mekeo District" Mr. C. Kowald settled near Beipa'a, and by 1894 he was able to report that the Sacred Heart Mission had ten stations, and the LMS eighteen teachers in the district.

The records are unclear as to precisely how many members of what Roe (1961) has termed the "unofficial population" (mainly traders) were active in the Yule Island area. Nor is it clear how early these men established themselves. In 1892 Chalmers expressed his dissatisfaction with the progress made by Ikupu, the teacher at Nabuapaka, and wrote

I fear the backwardness of the school arises from the great demand for sandalwood by traders, this being the district where it is chiefly found. Before daybreak, old and young have been away cutting the wood and carrying it in (Chalmers 1895:236).

In May 1893 MacGreger commented that the people of Delena, Nabuapaka, Nara (Oroi) and Hisiu were quiet, settled and orderly,

but they are being somewhat demoralised by the sandalwood trade, in which many of them are engaged. An evil system has been pursued by traders of making advances of trade goods to natives on the promise of their procuring sandalwood for them. Some of the more intelligent natives begin to

become dissatisfied with this arrangement, and wish to know whether they cannot sell it for themselves at Port Moresby (BNG Report 1894:38).

MacGregor felt that it would be better for the people if a system were established whereby they could sell direct to Moresby. He thought this would benefit the trade, though "the traders would lose by it" and would have to buy at a fixed rate per ton. MacGregor did not explain precisely the iniquities he saw in the trade, but Roe has described how traders in other areas of Papua paid less than proper prices for produce such as copra (1961:476-7).

In his own report a month later, Kowald, the Government Agent, took a slightly different line, and pointed to the benefits of the trade. The people in the coastal villages were orderly and industrious, he wrote, and as a result of the sandalwood trade, had procured most useful articles for their labour. "Blankets, mosquito nets, clothing and cutlery form the principal payment, both for wood and other services," and Nara and Delena had acquired two fairly serviceable boats with masts and sails complete (BNG 1894:51).

By 1896 there were about a dozen traders in the district engaged in buying copra, rubber and sandalwood (BNG Report 1896/7:62). The records are largely silent on who they were or where they were living. For the most part they "are insubstantial figures: grey ghosts but vaguely defined" (Roe 1961:138). They left almost no personal journals or letters, and only the occasional reference appears in travellers tales. For example, Pratt refers to a Mr. Russell, a trader in whose house he stayed for several days at "Arupaka" (probably Harupaka) on Yule Island. He also mentions a Papuan

woman named "Cave", widow of Captain Williams, a trader, living at Poukama near Delena. She owned a bungalow, a small store and "a small light-draught cutter, which brings sandalwood down from Bioto Creek" (Pratt 1906:185-6).

Chapter Two

Part II

Mission and Government

Missions:

The arrival of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) at Yule Island in 1885 under Archbishop Navarre and Father Verjus, led to considerable resentment on the part of LMS personnel. Both Chalmers and Macfarlane, recognising the vast size of New Guinea and their own limited resources, were prepared to allow other mission societies into the field "if only the New Guineans are benefitted and blessed" (Chalmers, cited by Prendergast 1968:349). Their ecumenical spirit, however, was tested with the arrival of the MSC: they were much less willing to cooperate with Roman Catholics than fellow Protestants, particularly as they believed they had a prior claim on Yule Island.

Special Commissioner Sir Peter Scratchley thought that it was politically unwise to allow different Christian sects to operate in the same area as this "is not infrequently the cause of political disturbances, or even civil war." Believing that the LMS had "in equity, a prescriptive right in certain districts," and hearing that the MSC had established a station on Yule Island, he wrote to the Catholic head at Thursday Island suggesting that their settlement at Yule "was undesirable, and that other areas were available for their efforts," and he offered them the Government launch to take them to any other island they chose (BNG Report 1886:18).

Scratchley died some months later, to be succeeded by John Douglas who had "no dread of any seriously prejudicial rivalry between missions." (BNG Report 1887:7). He expected the MSC to reaffirm their right to Yule Island and felt there ought to be no difficulty in reaching a fair understanding.

Both Navarre and Lawes, respectively in charge of the MSC and LMS missions, wrote long letters presenting their cases to Douglas who encouraged them to come to an agreement. Eventually Lawes wrote to Father Verjus regretting that the Catholics had established themselves at Yule, when they could have begun in an entirely new field. However he felt the different sections of the Christian Church should work harmoniously, wished them success, and removed Ratu, the LMS teacher, from Yule "in the interests of peace and goodwill" (BNG 1887:46-48; BNG 1888:20-27).

Thereafter the LMS continued its efforts in the coastal villages, while the MSC, from its base on Yule Island, pushed inland to the Paitana Boro and the Mekeo communities.

Douglas was succeeded in 1888 by Sir William MacGregor who was anxious that Christian rivalries should not disrupt the stability and functioning of government. In 1890 he invited the various missions operating in the country to discussions in Port Moresby. The LMS, Anglicans and Methodists attended, but the MSC declined as they rejected attempts to restrict mission work. The "spheres of influence" policy agreed to by the participants stated that no society could send representatives into a community or area already occupied by members of another mission.

Competition between the MSC and the LMS continued as the former, while concentrating its efforts on the communities on either side of the Angabunga River, and expanding into the mountains, also watched for opportunities to extend its influence in Waima and Kivori. Resident Magistrate Monckton complained that in the latter part of the 1890s one of the troubles facing the Mekeo Government officer was periodic friction between the Sacred Heart and LMS (1921:139-40).

Clearly, Roro leaders were able to manipulate this rivalry for personal ends. Mosko has shown how the entry of both the LMS and the MSC to communities in the Yule Island area was facilitated by important members of Roro clans. Chalmers' first visit to Waima followed his meeting in Moresby with Oa, one of the Waima Chiefs (Chalmers 1895); and the MSC established its station at Mou in 1889 through friendship with the oldest chief there, Matsiu, despite the reluctance of other chiefs. Eight years later, in 1897, the MSC sent its first priest to Waima after several requests by Beata Kou of Hauramiri sub-clan. Beata Kou was a highly influential chief and sorcerer, strongly opposed to Chalmers' friend Oa and his son, Meauri. (Mosko 1973: 87-89).

Mission rivalry was, therefore, manipulated by Roro chiefs and sorcerers in the pursuit of power in their own communities, and in turn the MSC was able to exploit the oppositions to gain a foothold in areas that the LMS considered its own preserve.

In 1901 Dauncey, in charge of the LMS circuit at Delena, reported that both missions were having difficulties in winning converts in Waima. Chatterton believed that apart from the "naturally tough and highly conservative temperament of the people", a major cause was the tension between the missions that

enabled these not sincerely committed to either to play off one against the other and both against the government to their personal advantage. In addition, rivalry between the two missions could be exploited as a means of perpetuating ancient feuds which the establishment of the Pax Britannica had made more difficult to maintain. As a result, hamlets became Catholic or Protestant as the case may be, for reasons which had nothing to do with the rights or wrongs of the Reformation (Chatterton 1969b:288).

A complete understanding of the differing manner in which the two missions have affected Roro society, in particular the extent of indigenous mission teacher influence, requires a full study of its own of the kind that R.M. Smith is currently undertaking in Lutheran areas of the Eastern Highlands.

Hau'ofa considered that the Mekeo were fortunate

in that they were not evangelized by the zealous London Missionary Society ... It appears certain that [the MSC] was more broadminded and tolerant than its Protestant counterpart. Thus, for example, unlike the LMS missionaries who banned the traditional dances of the Motu and replaced them with Polynesian ones which were deemed inoffensive, the Sacred Heart missionaries did not interfere with the dances of the Mekeo and Roro peoples (Hau'ofa 1975:17; compare Mosko 1973:72).

While this difference is undoubtedly the result of mission policies, it may also partly reflect the differing use and supervision of indigenous personnel. Smith points out (1979:91) that because native Lutheran pastors in the Eastern Highlands were from other areas of New Guinea, they had little or no stake in the existing political and economic structure of the people they were working amongst, and being married, they were not able to establish affinal ties in the area, thus they were freer to act independently than if they had been working in their own communities. Similarly the LMS generally posted its teachers away from their natal areas so that they "would not be corrupted by kinship and other kinds of obligations" (Mosko 1973:74).

MSC catechists, however, normally worked in their own or neighbouring villages and were able to maintain

contact with kin, and remain subject to various traditional economic and political pressures that must have effectively curtailed their independence.

The Catholics were scandalized by the reported behaviour of the LMS Polynesian and indigenous teachers: Stephen cites Fr Navarre writing of the seven LMS teachers stationed at Waima and Kiveri in the 1890s:

Their behaviour was little different from that of the savages, they were perhaps worse. Europeans who wish to satisfy their passions find in these catechists a servile willingness. Today these tribes are entirely corrupted. One catechist encouraged natives to have many wives. Another obliged women and young girls to go entirely naked, himself cutting from them the only clothing they wear for decency: a skirt of grass which hangs just to their knees. He himself engaged in the infamous business of providing, for whitemen, women against their own wishes (Navarre, cited by Stephen 1974:173).¹

It is not clear just who reported these happenings to Fr Navarre, nor what kind of independent evidence was available to support the allegations. Healy noted, however, that "LMS teachers gave constant trouble by arrogating temporal authority, or attempting to do so", and that their "anti-custom bias ... provoked a good deal of trouble" (Healy 1962:596).

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1. Leurs mœurs différaient peu de celles des sauvages, elles étaient peut-être pires. Les Européens qui voulaient satisfaire leurs passions trouvaient dans ces catéchistes une complaisance servile. Aujourd'hui ces tribus sont entièrement corrompues. Un catéchiste conseillait aux indigènes d'avoir plusieurs femmes. Un autre obligeait les femmes et les jeunes filles à aller entièrement nues coupant lui-même le seul vêtement qu'elles portent par décence: un jupon d'herbes qui tombe jusqu'aux genoux. Lui-même faisait l'infâme métier de procurer aux blancs des femmes contre la volonté de celles-ci (Navarre, notes et Journal:128. Cited by Stephen 1974:173).

However, as Griffin et al noted, they worked under considerable hardship: "supervised by few English missionaries, the Polynesians suffered long periods without receiving stores or guidance from district mission headquarters. By 1889 half of the 187 Polynesian teachers and their wives had died of sickness or been killed" (1979:6).

Partly as a result of this the MSC was reluctant to devolve responsibility to Papuan teachers (Stephen 1974:173), and with its staff of more than fifty Europeans from the early 1900s onwards, maintained close supervision over its catechists (Healy 1962:596).

Stephen pointed out that in theory the Catholic teachers had considerable responsibility: "in the absence of the priest they held prayers, church services, baptized the dying ... buried the dead" and reported village events to the priest. On the other hand, "though their position seemed to offer considerable scope for the ambitious individual to make himself a powerful figure within the village heirarchy, very few teachers succeeded in doing so. ... few ... had any influence at all beyond the four walls of their classrooms" (Stephen 1974:174).

By contrast, Oram (1971) has shown how LMS teachers in some areas of coastal Papua, notably Hula and Motu, were able effectively to supplant the traditional leadership (cf: Mosko 1973:74-5). This may partly reflect the greater independence of LMS pastors, already referred to, but it may also result from the traditional political heirarchy of the various areas: as Hau'ofa (1975) and Stephen (1974) demonstrate for Mekeo, and this thesis for Waima/Roro society, the communities in the vicinity of Yule Island traditionally possessed a far stronger structure of inherited leadership than other communities under LMS influence.

In Nabuapaka, both the LMS and the MSC established churches and schools: the former in 1892, and the latter early this century. Both churches were initially on the periphery of the village, one at each end, but during the 1970s first the LMS (now the United Church) and then the Catholic communities rebuilt their churches in more commanding positions: still at each end of the village, but closer to and between the two principal rows of houses.

The traditional chiefly meeting houses (marea) that once were central to every Boro/Waina community, have disappeared from Nabuapaka, as they have from other LMS-dominated villages in the area. It is doubtful whether we can assert that this is solely the result of LMS influence, as some Catholic villages have also replaced their meeting houses with simple roofed platforms alongside their chief's dwelling.

What is noticeable in Nabuapaka, however, is that the LMS Church building has been erected on the site of the clubhouse of the most important sub-clan in the community, Barai Kupuna, and that LMS members sometimes speak of it as the Marea. By contrast, Catholics speak of their church as itsu robe, or "sacred house".

A second difference between the two congregations becomes obvious during occasions such as Christmas and New Year festivities: older members of the Catholic community sing and dance in a traditional style called aroba, while LMS members prefer to perform "prophet songs" (perobeta), a type of song, generally with a religious theme, introduced by the early Polynesian pastors. Young people of both churches usually prefer dancing to guitars and modern songs, although they also enjoy aroba or perobeta.

There is not normally great rivalry between the two congregations, but during the late 1960s and early 70s when the National education system was re-organized so that all Mission schools were brought under the aegis of the Department of Education, officials attempted to amalgamate the two schools in Nabuapaka. Neither community was willing to send its children to the "other" school, fearing continued sectarian education. The result has been that both schools were closed, and the children either walk the five kilometres daily to the former LMS school at Delena, or board with relatives in Tairia, on Yule Island, or at Waima to attend former Catholic schools in those communities.

In the latter half of the 1970s young teachers from Nabuapaka initiated discussions amongst themselves and within the village, aimed at opening a new school to cater for all their children of Primary school age.

Government:

In 1884, following pressure from its Australian colonies and German annexation of the north eastern part of New Guinea and the adjacent islands (Kaiser Wilhelmaland), Britain reluctantly declared a protectorate over British New Guinea, and appointed Sir Peter Scratchley as Special Commissioner. The first years under Scratchley and then John Douglas were a period of opening "communications with the natives" (BNG 1886:7).

Sir William MacGregor, who had previously worked in Fiji under Sir Arthur Gordon, was appointed in 1888. He established an administration whose essential features were to last until the Second World War. In an attempt to govern through the people themselves, MacGregor and his

successors prepared numerous regulations affecting Papuan lives, and appointed native officials, such as village constables and village councillors, and Courts for Native Matters, through whom the regulations were to be enforced.

The result was a government that has been variously described as "benevolent despotism" (Roe 1961:229), "benevolent police rule" (Lord Hailey, cited by Wolfers 1975:28), "structured dependence" (Wolfers 1975:7) and "benevolent autocracy" (Healy 1962:612). The Native Regulations themselves were so pervasive that Rowley considered them to be "pointless interference" in villagers' lives (Rowley 1965:72.)

The basic tools of native administration "for their own good" (Murray, cited by Mair 1970:66) were the series of Native Regulations introduced by MacGregor in 1889, and continued and expanded by Murray following his appointment in 1907. They were used to control theft and adultery; to prevent burial of the dead in villages; to order the cutting of grass; the clearing of roads; the repair or rebuilding of houses; to control the wearing of clothes; to improve village sanitation and to enforce coconut planting or other agricultural ventures (Mair 1970:66-69; Wolfers 1975:28-40).

The Regulations, eventually touching almost every aspect of villagers' lives, were imposed with threats of fines or imprisonment for breach. Some officials undoubtedly used other forms of compulsion from time to time, and their successors have used similar methods: in 1969 a young Papuan official told me he had burned a house in the Milne Bay Province when its occupants refused to carry out one of his instructions; and in 1974 a Papuan health inspector visited Nabuapaka and threatened

to burn down villagers' houses unless they built toilets at the end of the village. In response the people began building latrines, but never completed them.

The instruments through whom the Regulations were enforced were the Native Officials: Village Constables, introduced by MacGregor in 1892, and Village Councillors, introduced by Murray in 1925. Village Constables were largely selected by local white officials such as Government Agents and Resident Magistrates, on the basis of the official's estimate of the man's capacity for the job. As Government employees, constables received a uniform and a salary of ten shillings per year. They were responsible for enforcing the Regulations, the cleanliness of villages, for organising carriers for government patrols and for reporting offenders.

To assist them in this task, the government issued constables with a pair of handcuffs, but without the key, in order to circumvent possible abuse of office (Wolfers 1975:35). Another measure of some government officers' attitudes towards native officials is summed up in one patrol officer's report of his arrival in a village:

The VC showed up in the evening and coolly approached me with hand outstretched and his face wreathed in smiles. I spoke sharply to him and got one of the [armed constables] to show him how to approach an officer. During the evening he came to me and told me that he did not want to be VC, so I paid him off and gave his clothes to Ledimo an ex-armed constable (Cited by Roe 1961:297).

This incident took place in south-east Papua, but Monckton recorded his own behaviour in the Mekeo district when, in a fit of rage, he stripped all but one of his VCs of their uniforms and threw them in jail (1921:126-7).

Roe rightly raised the question of how such behaviour must have rankled in the deposed VCs' minds, to perhaps nurture a sense of outrage and humiliation and to colour their future attitudes to the Administration (Roe 1961:298).

In areas such as Mekeo/Roro where officials commonly appointed VCs from the ranks of traditional chiefs, such treatment would be particularly humiliating. Healy shows that the official return for 1897/8 indicates that of fifty village constables in the Mekeo area, thirty were also traditional chiefs (Healy 1962:595). Stephen recorded that in Inawi village all VCs were chiefs or close relatives of chiefs (1974:178), and pointed out that where a non-traditional leader was appointed to a government position he was usually chosen by the chiefs. If he later tried to step too high, to usurp the role of the chiefs themselves, the latter employed their sorcerers to dispose of him.

Stephen feels that Healy (1962:606) implied that the Administration deliberately avoided appointing VCs from Chiefly ranks, since their authority depended on sorcery. However, "what little evidence there is on this point suggests not that the chiefs were intentionally passed over, but rather that scant attention was paid to the status of the appointee" (Stephen 1974:179 fn26). It is, in any case, unlikely that many officers had accurate information on the rank of prominent individuals. In most of the instances that Stephen was able to check, attributions of status in patrol reports proved unreliable.

While Stephen is likely to be correct about government officers' poor knowledge of traditional ranking, the Administration probably also had a general policy of not appointing men whose authority depended on sorcery:

West pointed out that in the mountain areas of the Mafalu and Mondo peoples, inland of Mekeo/Roro, Murray rejected the appointment of one influential man as VC because his influence depended on sorcery (West 1968:221-222).

Whatever the policy, it seems clear that in the Yule Island area Native Officials were generally chiefs or their close relatives. Van Rijswijk observed that among the Kuni, eastern neighbours of the Mekeo/Roro, chiefs occupied all government appointments: war chiefs controlled Village Constable positions, and, later, peace chiefs appropriated the task of Village Constables (van Rijswijk 1967).

In Nabupaka similarly, men of chiefly rank have generally held government appointments. The Chief-of-the-Right of Hohorupaka sub-clan, Bure Paru, was the last Village Constable (known as Habuni, or habuni hauna 'government man' because of the uniform: habuni means "clothing" or "a covering"). More recently Aihl Paru Anina, Chief-of-the-Right of Kiveri sub-clan, was appointed Village Councillor.

The Administration professed to view the Village Constable as the "mouthpiece of the Magistrate, and the medium through which the people approach the magistrate," who considered himself to be the benevolent father and chief to the people of his division (BNG Report, cited in Healy 1962:600-601). Wolfers summarized VCs as "men appointed to obey the central government, rather than selected to initiate, or organize local group action" (1975:33). He added that by the time Murray saw the desirability of greater "consultation between the government and the governed, an aggressive and articulate indigenous leadership was no longer available" (Wolfers 1975:33-34).

To resolve this problem, in 1925 Murray introduced Village Councillors who were intended to interpret and explain administration policy to villagers, to represent the village people, and to enable government to keep in touch with village opinion. Murray expected Councillors to assist Constables but without executive functions or authority. Both Mair (1970:71-72) and Wolfers (1975:34-35) note the confusion among villagers and government officers alike as to the precise tasks of councillors, with the result that in some areas councillors and constables interpreted their jobs in similar terms (Mair 1970:72). Mekeo villagers, with no clear idea of the duties of the councillor, felt he was less important than the constable since the latter received a uniform and salary (Stephen 1974:189-90).

Stephen (1974:133) and Healy (1962:605-7) both show how government officials, particularly during the 1920s and 30s, considered the Mekeo district difficult to handle believing that village constables neglected their duties for fear of offending their communities. "In 1928 the ARM reported that the VCs appeared to have very little authority" and he had to send the Armed Native Constabulary to enforce his instructions (Papua Report 1928-9, cited by Healy 1962:607), and in 1930 VCs "were said to be afraid to keep roads and village in order" for fear of sorcery (Healy 1962:607).

If we accept Rowley's characterization of Native Regulations as "pointless interference" (1965:72), and the chief means of implementing them the threat of jail, then it is not surprising that "the agents of coercion, the village constables, were therefore involved in a complex form of role conflict" (Healy 1962:606).

The government even found it necessary to use compulsion to encourage the planting of coconuts and other useful trees, and to mete out prison sentences to those who later neglected to weed the plantations (Mair 1970:118), not understanding the resentment of villagers who believed, as men told me in Waima in 1974, that it would be the government and not themselves who reaped the harvest.

The role conflict Healy refers to is reminiscent of Bulmer's discussion of post-contact leadership among the Kyaka Enga of the Western Highlands, where the government appointed headmen (Luluai and Tultul) as the New Guinea counterparts of the Papuan Village Constable. Bulmer wrote

In most New Guinea societies the notion of a headman or a hierarchy of headmen with authority to give orders which must be obeyed by the whole community is quite foreign. Many of the orders which the headman has to relay from the European administration to his followers are most unwelcome ones, and he is likely to be hard put to obtain sufficient response to these orders to satisfy his administrative superiors, and, at the same time, retain the goodwill of his group (Bulmer 1961:1).

Bulmer continued that the system managed to work reasonably well because "of certain modifications or elaborations which the Kyaka themselves have made to it" (1961:1). He showed how the first native officials among the Kyaka came almost entirely from the ranks of traditional bigmen, or potential bigman.

Owing to the conflicting demands made on them as traditional leaders and as government appointees, native officials found it necessary to appoint assistants (termed bosboi), the majority of whom were young men who commanded some respect from their groups, but were without status in the eyes of administration personnel. "Their appointment satisfied ambition on the part of the

appointees and also made life easier for the native official who could thus leave much of the organization of, for example, road work, to the younger men" (Bulmer 1961:4).

The appointment of secondary officials has continued with the establishment of local government councils - elected councillors commonly appoint assistants who are styled "Committee" (Bulmer 1961:7 fn8; Strathern 1970;)

Although Bulmer does not spell it out, the tenor of his argument implies that the unofficial bosboi or kemdi might be appointed from settlement groups other than the official's own. In a situation where a leader's traditional authority is limited largely to his own settlement group or sub-clan, yet the government expects him to exert wider authority, the creation of secondary officials enables him to delegate some of his duties and gain support for decisions, while simultaneously allowing ambitious men a certain measure of responsibility and prestige.

In Nabuapaka the elected local government councillor conducts village affairs through his committee. In the 1960s the councillor, Aihi Paru Anina, who was also Chief-of-the-Right of Kivori sub-clan, was supported in decisions by his committee of three composed of leading members of the remaining three sub-clans. When he stepped down, to be succeeded by Aihi Roio, a non-chiefly member of Kuro Pokina sub-clan, the latter also conducted business through his committee - again composed of leading members of the remaining clans which chose them.

Carriers:

Throughout the MacGregor and Murray eras, government personnel considered the Mekeo District difficult to handle

(West 1968:150). Reminiscing about the 1890s

Monckton wrote:

the Mekeo natives were a cowardly, treacherous and cruel lot, much under the influence of sorcerers, and averse to control by the government (Monckton 1921:113).

Stephen (1974:133 and passim) and Healy (1962: 605) cite numerous examples of official attitudes of the 1920s and 30s characterizing the Mekeo and Roro as truculent and hard to deal with. In 1923, following a patrol to Waima and Kiveri, the ARM complained that the people "do not understand that an order is an order as the Northern [District] man does, and it requires continuous telling and driving to get anything out of them" (cited by Stephen 1974:134). Almost ten years later, another District Officer expressed his opinion that

the Waima natives ... constitute one of the worst problems of the district. They are the most idle, thieving, lying and superstitious in regard to sorcery ... that I have had the misfortune to come into contact with (cited by Stephen 1974:187 fn39).

McAuley considered that one of the major factors affecting relations between Mekeo/Roro and the government was the compulsory use of carriers (1953/4:815-819). Following McAuley, Healy suggested that owing to the Catholic Mission's rapid expansion through Mekeo/Roro territory into the mountains at the headwaters of the Angabunga River, this area constituted "the major administrative problem in the Central Division" (Healy 1962:601). Where the mission went, the government felt obliged to follow in order to quell tribal fighting, safeguard mission personnel and enforce native regulations.

It was impractical to patrol the mountain communities from a base at Kairuku on Yule Island (whence the government station had been moved from Mekeo in 1905), but for reasons including the intervention of the Great War, the Kambisi Police Camp in the mountains was not established until 1925.

Whether patrolling from Yule Island, or from a base in the mountains (a walking distance of 100 miles), the major problem was the supply of government and mission camps. McAuley outlined the initial difficulties:

A road, that is to say, a track negotiable by pack animals or human carriers, was built from the coast to the mountains. Such a road is no light undertaking without mechanical equipment. It has to be cut wide in order to let the sun onto the track, which even so is foul and greasy, and maintenance must be constant because of landslides and general deterioration under tropical conditions. The very rugged and precipitous terrain increased the difficulties. (McAuley 1953/4:816).

The first twenty miles, suitable for wheeled vehicles, was built and maintained by labourers compulsorily drafted from Roro and Mekeo villages. McAuley pointed out that as the road did not pass through their country, and did not service them, "there was, strictly speaking, no legal power to compel them" to work on it. (1953/4:816).

Once the road had been built, the mission resolved the problem of reluctant carriers by using horses to develop an efficient pack-transport system. The government however, continued to rely largely on carriers, using its legal powers to compel villagers to this task, the main burden of which fell to the Mekeo and Roro (McAuley 1953/4:817). More specifically, sifting the evidence of government reports, Mosko considered that the Waima and Kivori communities had to supply most carriers for patrols of exploration and inspection into the interior (Mosko 1973:79).

Monckton described his use of carriers in the 1890s:

The carriers ... were men recruited from Mekeo; their time had expired and they were keenly anxious to return to their homes. It was only by a vigorous use of cleaning rod that we could "induce" them to work, and we had to keep them under perpetual guard, lest they should desert (1921:156).

Later during the same patrol he commented that with another group of worn-out time-expired carriers whom he needed to continue his patrol:

Much "moral" suasion had to be used by the police before they would "volunteer" some did succeed in sneaking away and making a bolt for the coast, but our watch was so strict that few of the volunteers escaped (1921:158).

Monckton did express his secret sympathy with the men, and wrote that as flat-country men, they were "singularly ill-adapted for the work in which they were engaged" (1921:158).

It is not surprising then, that to recruit carriers, officials had to resort almost to trickery:

The native clerk at Yule Island would make out a list of men wanted and the native constables would descend on the villages at night to read out the names, so that no man could slip away in the morning to avoid being notified. The penalty for failure to appear was thirty days' gaol (McAuley 1953/4:817).

This fifty-year period of compulsory carrying, which came to an end in 1949, reached its peak during the Second World War when "the burden of forced labour for military purposes fell longest and hardest on these very people, the Mekeo and Roro" (McAuley 1953/4:818),

and in 1947 the government officer believed that "they were being driven by forced labour into a state of passive resistance from which it would be hard to dislodge them" (McAuley 1953/4:818).

Stephen considered that there was little justification for the view that the Roro and Mekeo were hard to handle. She wrote:

One looks in vain for any 'incidents' or rebellion against the government. Villagers never refused in a body to pay tax ... villages as a whole never attempted to stand in the patrol officer's way ... the only resistance ... was passive and unorganized (Stephen 1974:133).

Clearly there were tensions within Mekeo/Roro society and in their relations with the government, and the passive resistance noted by McAuley, Stephen and other writers was only one manifestation. A more overt reaction showed itself in outbreaks of the "Vailala Madness" in 1929 and 1941.

The 1929 cult was led by Here Ikupu of Waima who toured Roro and Mekeo villages preaching that Europeans had intercepted goods sent by the ancestors and intended for villagers. Outbreaks of trances and hysteria occurred in some Roro and Waima villages. The government officer at Yule Island promptly arrested Here Ikupu and two of his principal supporters, Arawai Aihi of Kivori and Auki of Inawi village, Mekeo, putting all three in jail for spreading lying reports (Stephen 1974: 150-154; Healy 1962:611). Government anthropologist F.E. Williams suggested that a spell in "hospital" might be a cure for further trances (Healy 1962:611; Williams 1969:91-92).

The 1941 cult coincided with an influenza epidemic that killed 66 people in four villages between January

and April of that year (Stephen 1974:157). It was centered in Mekeo rather than Roro on this occasion and included an attack on the mission station at Inawaia during which one of the Fathers was almost killed.

Channelled through a young girl named Philo, the natives were instructed to stop gardening, to kill their pigs, and to pray; they would be provided for by God, who would send food from heaven. Arms would also be sent with which to expel the mission and the government (Healy 1962:622).

The Administration jailed Philo and her supporters, again for spreading lying reports.

A third, undated, incident took place at Hisiu, a Waima colony, where villagers buried alive an Orokaiva man with considerable ritual after he had proclaimed that he would rise again in three days (Rowley 1965:176).

Healy implies that these incidents served to increase official suspicion that "there was something inherently wrong and potentially dangerous amongst the Roro/Mekeo peoples" and that this attitude continued after the war "and played no small part in denying them statutory local government" (Healy 1962:622).

War:

The events of the Second World War were of crucial importance in the recent history of Papua New Guinea (Wolfers 1975:108; Hau'ofa 1975:20). Indeed, Stephen suggested that Mekeo date all change with reference to the war (Stephen 1974:206).

For the most part the Roro and Mekeo were only indirectly affected by the war in the sense that there was no battle front in the region, and the Australian

Administration maintained a continuity in the person of ARM Thompson who became Major Thompson under ANGAU. Japanese planes machine-gunned the Yule Island mission on one occasion (Parau & Davis 1972:32-33), and American troops were stationed on the island for a while (Parau & Davis 1972:36).

The military administration (ANGAU) placed considerable emphasis on the conscription of men for work as carriers and plantation labourers, and enforced recruitment was commonplace. Robinson (1979:32 et seq) notes numerous complaints about the high-handed methods of ANGAU personnel as they marched into villages with their police, handcuffed all available men and marched them off to the government station to sign on as labourers for the army. One of Stephen's informants told how the police surrounded his village at night, went to each house and pulling out every man, handcuffed them in the centre of the village till daybreak, when they were taken to Kairuku and forced to sign on for two years (Stephen 1974:215).

Paru Aihi of Nabuapaka told me that ANGAU compelled men to sign on and paid them in tobacco, matches and food. Any refusal to go, he said, meant a thorough beating by ANGAU officers. Some men from the village were sent to Kokoda and Wau as carriers, while others worked on the copra plantations at 'Ou'ou Creek and the rubber plantations at Kanosea, between Kairuku and Moresby.

From time to time labourers deserted en masse and made their way to their homes, where the police arrested them and returned them to their wartime duties. When deserters attempted to hide in the bush, the police intimidated their families, killing pigs, destroying property, and hitting women and children until the men gave themselves

up (Stephen 1974:216). Such behaviour is reminiscent of MacGregor's tactics half a century earlier when he seized a half-score men of Waima village and held them hostage until a murderer gave himself up (BNG 1893:18).

Deserters were flogged and sent back to the labour lines. Stephen suggests that the floggings took place at the labour camps (1974:236), but the testimony of the government clerk at Yule Island indicates that some at least of the beatings were administered at Kairuku (Parau and Davis 1972).

Several Nabuapaka men told me that they changed their Church affiliation from LMS to Catholic during this period as the latter seemed better able to protect them from the predations of ANGAU. I failed to follow this point through, but it seems that some men worked as plantation labourers or carriers for the MSC, and thus were not obliged to leave their homes for long periods at a time.

The old men and the women carried the full brunt of work in the gardens and clearing roads. When ships berthed at Kairuku it was again the women and old men who sailed across from Nabuapaka and Delena to unload them. They could not, however, cope fully in the absence of all the able-bodied men, and by mid-1943 the effects were noticeable, with roads and tracks overgrown and fences and houses badly in need of repair. Stephen noted that during a patrol in 1943, some Mekeo and nearly all the Waima and Kivori women had asked "that their menfolk be sent back to help them make new gardens" (1974:211; cf Robinson 1979:88).

Hau'ofa and Stephen sum up the war years in similar terms: "the men returned to their villages ... with new insights, new horizons, new hopes ... reluctantly 'flushed

out of their ethnic backwater' (White: 1967:137) ... the wider world had at last engaged their interests and ambitions" (Stephen 1974:244). "After the excitement of these years the return to village life was a disappointment to many, who took the first opportunity to go to Port Moresby" (Hau'ofa 1975:20).

Local Government:

The 1949 Native Village Councils Ordinance, and the 1963 Local Government Ordinance paved the way for more formal political and economic cooperation between villages than had hitherto been possible.

The aims of these ordinances were to encourage villagers to assume responsibility for local affairs in accordance with democratic procedures; to provide machinery and funds to coordinate services; to win the support of the population and make them understand that progress required good order, industrious habits, and must be paid for; and to prepare the way for native people to take their place in the National political system (Mair 1970:87).

Under the 1949 ordinance, elected councillors were to have duties reminiscent of those of the village constables and village councillors of the past. They were responsible for peace and good order, and the prosecution of crime. In addition they were authorized to "carry out works for the benefit of the community, finance or engage in any business and cooperate with government departments in providing services" (Mair 1970: 82-83). Mair commented that reading the ordinance "one cannot be sure whether the intention was that the councils should be considered primarily as agents of government authority, or as representatives of the people's wishes" (Mair 1970:83). In Mair's view, the 1963

Ordinance, which dropped the word "native," brought the council's functions "more in accordance with what is expected of a modern local authority" (1970:89).

It was not until 1961 that the Makeo Local Government Council and the Kairuku LGC (covering the Waima/Roro people) were promulgated. Healy believed that the delay stemmed from the people's reputation which made the Administration hesitant to grant local government: "the past history of compulsion and abortive cooperation" made the government keen to obtain the clear consent and willing support of the people (Healy 1962:373:380).

Hau'ofa and Stephen considered that the councils have been largely ineffective as developmental bodies, and people became discouraged as councils rarely met ambitious programmes of community and rural development. Stephen felt that poor business management stemmed from the constant changing of advisors: as many as five different officers filled the post in one year. She concluded "the administration must take most of the blame for the council's failure to provide taxpayers with satisfying community services" (Stephen 1974:313-316; Hau'ofa 1975:20). A permanent adviser was appointed in 1968, and prestigious council chambers, shared by both councils, were built at Bereina in 1969.

Stephen did not say anything about the attitude of the council advisers, but if the behaviour of any of them was at all similar to that of some government officials in other parts of the country, then it is not surprising that the councils failed to function as intended: Reay noted that on one Highland council "kiaps had discouraged initiative among the councillors by rejecting every spontaneous suggestion regarding the expenditure of council funds" (Reay 1967:214). Crocombe similarly

noted the dominating, paternalist behaviour of white officials on a Northern District council (Crocombe 1968:131-4; see also Reay 1970:538 et seq).

The people of Nabuapaka expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the Kairuku council (but not with their councillor). In 1973 and again in 1974 they talked of refusing as a body to pay their council tax (\$8.00 a head at the time) on the grounds that in twelve years the council had done nothing for them. The Public Works Department had built the road with private contractors; and the Public Health Department erected the Health Centre, and installed the village water supply, while council continually prevaricated on the one thing the community had been requesting: repairs to the causeway across 100 metres of mangrove swamp joining the village to the main road.

Hau'ofa (1975:20) and Stephen (1974:326-330) noted that elected Mekeo councillors have virtually assumed the functions of the earlier village officials, but possessing very limited powers, rely heavily on the support of chiefs. The same is true for the councillor in Nabuapaka whose most regular tasks are to assemble people one day per week for council work: every Tuesday he directs villagers, young and old, on communal clearing of roads, cleaning the village, repairing the government rest house and so on.

In the eyes of the Administration, perhaps the most contentious task taken on by councillors is that of holding "courts" and mediating disputes. In this they are again following the unofficial example of their predecessors. Villagers prefer to handle disputes and petty offences themselves rather than go to official

courts (Hau'ofa 1975:20-21; see also Young 1971: 139-140), but government officers with legal training, including Murray himself in the pre-war years, were most unhappy at the notion of non-lawyers holding courts and ordering fines or compensation, and tried to prevent councillors functioning in this manner (Healy 1962: 281-304. See Fenbury 1978 for a discussion of the history of village courts).

However, as Healy noted (1962:302) "where there is no official provision for customary law, the unofficial application of sanctions is inevitable", and councillors continued to act as arbiters. In this task, the Nabuapaka councillor is firmly supported by the chiefs, one of whom is himself a former councillor (I discuss this further in chapter 7 on dispute settlement.)

Economic Development:

The history of economic development in the Mekeo/Roro area is not encouraging. Early on the government found it necessary to use compulsion to make people plant coconuts, and later to plant rice in ambitious projects that failed. Post-war cooperatives to encourage the drying of copra, planting of rice, and the expansion of the fishing industry have had limited success, I review these developments in chapter 8 of this thesis.

Conclusion:

Wolfers commented that even when ostensibly encouraging Papuan political advancement, the Australian government was "more concerned with securing support for its policies than with fostering indigenous initiative" (1975:8).

Through the pervasive Native Regulations; the threat of coercion to enforce its decisions; the appointment of native officials in the ambiguous position of having to serve both the government and their fellow villagers, and later the election of Local Government Councils some of whose advisers helped them create over-ambitious works programmes, and tended to be more concerned with their own ideas than those of the villagers, the Administration unwittingly developed in villagers a passivity and indifference to government ideas that only occasionally erupted in cult-like behaviour and open hostility.

Coupled with this there grew a feeling of inferiority among Papuans, expressed in questions such as the one a sixteen-year old asked me: "why are we Papuans so stupid?" and in the explanation a 55-year old gave me for the Papuan lack of modern technological achievement: "a long time ago our ancestors threw away the books. Yours kept them."

These factors, coupled with aspects of the peoples' own social system such as the chieftainship structure, fears of sorcery, and the relationship between affines, may help to account for the faltering nature of Roro economic advancement, and the problems of rural entrepreneurs.

After a discussion of the ethnography of the Roro, I take up these issues again in chapter 8.

Chapter Three

Part One

LIFE CYCLE

CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE.

Introduction:

The two parts of this chapter take the Roro through the rituals of birth, adolescence and marriage and on to the final mortuary ceremonies that mark the end of mourning. The major theme, which comes out most clearly in part 2 where I discuss marriage and death, is the potential hostility between affines, and the threat of violence underlying their relationship. The rivalry is allayed only by the constant exchange of gifts of food and valuables. The theme is further underscored in chapter 4 where I discuss recruitment to sub-clans, the relationship between them, and the inheritance of rights to land and status.

Throughout the two parts to this chapter, I try to describe events as they took place in former times, and as I witnessed them in the mid-seventies in Nabuapaka. For information on the past I have relied heavily on the writing of Father Guis (1936), one of the earliest Catholic priests to live among the Roro, whose work was first published in the 1890s in the Mission Catholiques. Unfortunately I did not come across Guis's writing until I had completed fieldwork, thus I was not able to follow up some of his interesting leads.

Status Terms:

The community classifies individuals according to both age and marital status, although there are no age sets such as those Williams (1969:74-81) described among the neighbouring Elema. Children, regardless of sex, are mieri. If it is necessary to distinguish between boys and girls, then the former are hau 'man', or hau papana 'little man', and the latter babi'e 'woman'.

People may sometimes also refer to girls as uaho, the term normally reserved for adolescent unmarried girls.

About puberty boys become hibito'i - 'bachelors', and girls are uaho - 'unmarried women'. They remain in these categories until marriage, at which time the hibito'i takes the status of a man - hau, while the uaho becomes a woman - babi'a.

In Nabuapaka today a recently married man is sometimes referred to as 'aru'aru, or hau 'aru'aruna - 'young' (literally meaning 'blood'), and older hibito'i are from time to time called by the same term.

Seligmann noted that at puberty a boy became ibitoe, was aruaru as he went through initiation seclusion (in the Waima village complex), after which he was bui'apu. (Seligmann 1910:257-263).

Father Coluccia's Roro-French dictionary (1939) translated hibito'i as 'young man'; bui'apu as a young married man with a big head of hair (jeune marié - qui a une grande chevelure); and 'aru'aru as 'young' or 'blood'.

Seligmann may have been correct in his use of the term 'aru'aru for adolescent boys during seclusion. He stated that initiation was restricted to Waima, thus this particular sense of the term was probably restricted to the one community. I have not discussed it with the old men of Waima.

Bui'apu, on the other hand, appears to have changed in its meaning, at least in present-day Nabuapaka where it refers to a divorced man. This is not necessarily as major a change as might appear: Seligmann asserted that at Waima the young men's seclusion terminated "as soon as one of their number has had connection" with a girl who would probably later become his wife (1910:263). Marriage in its early stages is often unstable: it is not

uncommon to find both men and women who tried living with several partners before beginning to raise a family. Bui'apu, therefore, may once have been used in reference to young men who were known, or believed to have experienced intercourse and were in the process of seeking out girls with whom they could settle down. In Nabuapaka today the term refers exclusively to young men who have separated from their wives.

Widows are wapu, widowers haukoae, and those over about 35 who have never married, and appear unlikely to get married, are referred to contemptuously as koaekoae (bachelors: Fr Coluccia translated it as 'old boy' - vieux garcon), or wapuwapu (spinsters).

Villagers commonly suggest that an angry person must have performed magic against such men and women to 'close their face' (wairana te kaiabuna) as a result of some youthful escapade. In 1973 two bachelors in their thirties in a neighbouring village were said to have stolen fowls once too often as adolescents from an old man who became annoyed and 'closed their faces'; and the father of a girl similarly bewitched another youth whom he had caught with his daughter. In fact two of these men found wives within the next three years, and permanent bachelorhood is rare among the able-bodied.

The full range of terms by which others may refer to members of the community are:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Children	miori	miori
('little ...')	(hau papana)	(uaho papana)
after puberty	hibito'i	uaho
at marriage	hau 'aru'aruna	babi'e 'aru'aruna
	hau	babi'e
when children are born	hau	babi'e
in old age	hanepaka ¹	hanepaka
widowed	hau koae	wapu
divorced	bui'apu	ibaubo
elderly bachelors/ spinsters	koaekoae	wapuwapu

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1. I have heard variations on this word: hanepaka, hanekapa, anepaka, anekapa. Father Coluccia's dictionary lists only anepaka.

Childhood:

A pregnant woman should abstain from a variety of foods believed to cause idiocy, illness or death to the child. Guis noted that if the child should be ill or die in infancy, villagers assume its mother to have been negligent ("that is the fault of the mother, without doubt") and punish her (1936:66), although he did not state how. Such a notion is in keeping with a belief that almost all sickness and death results from someone else's negligence or malice, although in another place Guis asserted that Roro accepted the idea of natural death in infancy, before the soul had taken a hold on life (1936:119).

There are today no special rituals to mark birth, but formerly at the birth of a young mother's first child, all the married women of the community performed a ceremony from which they excluded men, women without children, and young girls. They heaped coconuts, taro, yams, bananas and a pig in front of the house, and then sang and danced around the dwelling, turning and swinging their hips so that their grass skirts flared outwards. They sang about the baby, stopping every now and then to admire it, present small gifts (that had to be reciprocated at a later time) and offer advice to the mother.

After dancing they feasted and went home. If, however, the child was a boy, in the early hours of the following morning the women armed themselves with sticks and stormed the men's clubhouse. The men defended themselves and "sometimes the game became dangerous" (Guis 1936:67). It is not clear whether the women actually entered the clubhouse, which they were normally forbidden to do.

Guis considered that the women were expressing their discontent at the birth of another male. The boy becomes a man and will be master, and the master is the enemy (il sera le maître, et le maître, c'est l'ennemi). When the ritual hostilities are over, dancing continues as on the previous day (Guis 1936:66-68).

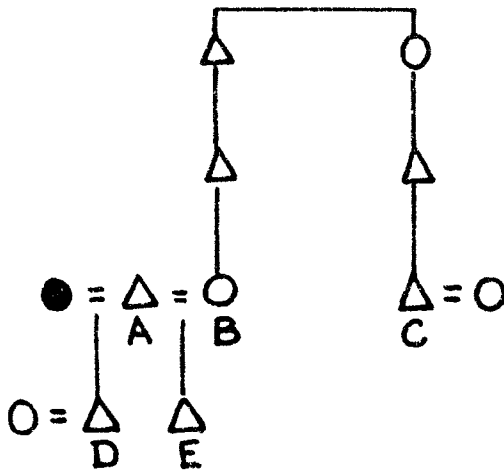
Williamson reported a similar ceremony among the Mafulu, mountain neighbours of the Mekeo/Roro, but only at the birth of a chief's first-born. Women of neighbouring communities come in full dancing regalia carrying weapons. They rush the village making mock attacks on the chief's house and the clubhouse (emone), hurling spears at the buildings. Afterwards the new father makes a distribution of food and orders the killing of at least one pig at the site of a chiefly burial platform. The visitors take the food back home (Williamson 1912:157).

Following the birth, as is commonly the practise in many areas of Melanesia, the baby and its mother remain isolated in a special enclosure beneath their house for up to two months. During this period the mother must continue to follow a number of restrictions intended as a protection both for the child and herself. She may not eat meat or fish, as they are too strong and might affect her milk; she must scratch herself only with a stick and eat her food, chopped very small, with a fork: birth fluids and other impurities are dangerous (opu - 'dirt'), and cause premature old age should she fail to adhere to the taboos.

Her own mother, her husband's mother, her sisters or other female relatives attend her during this time and cook for her. Men, including her husband, may not enter the enclosure as their presence might affect the milk.

One man in his mid-fifties told me that at one time he had had a garden house about thirty minutes walk from the village, in which he and his wife often lived for weeks at a time. One day it mysteriously caught fire.

He laughed as he said that he thought it had been his own father who had burned it. He explained that his father's second wife had given birth to a son and was living under her house in the village with no-one to attend her, while he and his wife were living in their garden shelter. He added that another man's house had also burned at the same time: that of his father's wife's classificatory brother.



B gave birth to E, and had no-one to assist her. D and C were living with their wives in their garden houses, so A burned their houses to force them to return to the village.

At the end of her seclusion, the woman bathes in the sea or in running water: as she dives beneath the surface her female attendants beat the water above her with sticks, so that the cold water, which destroys the potency of dirt (opu), carries it away from her body. At this time she also throws the stick with which she scratched herself into the water.

Some people suggest that the woman then washes with fresh water in which aromatic herbs have been soaked, before returning to everyday life.

The first childhood ritual noted by Guis was the naming ceremony a few months after birth, at which relatives and friends gather to suggest possible names. If it is a boy, only men offer their opinions, if a girl, only women. The father has in fact already chosen a name, but does not speak it for fear the spirits might hear it and carry away the infant's life. After everyone has spoken, the child's father pronounces its name quietly to the meeting.

Meanwhile, the women who danced at the child's birth have gathered outside. They dig a hole and beside it light a small fire around which they dance and sing. The father steps out of his house, passes between the dancers and sits in the hole. They stop, whisper the child's name from ear to ear and wait, hushed, as a man (Guis does not say who) steps forward with a husked coconut and a stout stick. In front of the child's father he holds out the coconut and strikes it hard with the stick.

If he has to hit it several times, it is a sign the child will be weak and sickly. If on the other hand he opens it cleanly and evenly at the first blow, the child will be robust, and good fortune will always accompany him.

When the nut is opened, the man lets the juice flow into the hole at the father's feet, and immediately the women shout the child's name and continue dancing until food is ready for feasting. Unfortunately Guis did not say who sponsored the feast, nor who were the principal guests (1936:74-77). I would speculate, for reasons which should become clear during this chapter, that the child's agnatic kin sponsored the ritual, and the main guests were its matrilinear kin.

Once the child is six or seven its father pierces its ears without ceremony, and a year or two later its nose (Guis 1936:79; Seligmann 1910:256).

A girl put on her first grass-skirt (kiba) without ceremony at whatever age took "the fancy of the child's mother" (Seligmann 1910:264), but it was always at an earlier age than that at which a boy first wore a perineal band (ihaburi) made of beaten bark of the breadfruit tree.

The latter event took place when the boy was about ten years old. The boy's father killed a dog which he hung in front of his house for a short time as an announcement that his son was to don his first pubic covering. He then presented the dog to his wife's brother, who first shared the meat with other members of his family (ie: the boy's matrilinear kin), and then sent for the boy. In his own house he put the covering on his sister's son, none of whose paternal relatives was present (Seligmann 1910:256-257; Williamson 1914:116). In this Seligmann contradicts Guis who asserted that the boy's father put on the covering at a ceremony from which women were excluded (Guis 1936: 80-81).

Today no child has its ears or nose pierced, and a girl puts on her skirt and a boy his pair of shorts as early as their parents choose. There are, however, two events which may perhaps be seen as partially replacing the naming ceremony and that at which a boy assumed his perineal band. These are the birthday party and the haircutting ceremony, neither of which are performed for every child, nor necessarily by every couple for even one of their children.

Birthday parties appear to be celebrated most usually for a first-born child, especially a son, at any age up to about seven. The choice of date depends on both the whim and the financial situation of the parents. Once the child's father has made the decision, six months or a year beforehand, he begins to save money and to lobby friends and relatives for financial and practical assistance but does not publicly announce the event until he is sure he has sufficient backing.

The majority of young men whose children are of a suitable age to have a party work in Port Moresby or other centres. I have not seen a village-based man hold such a celebration for his child, but I hesitate to suggest that he would not host one simply because he is living at home.

I attended two such events. The first was in Port Moresby hosted by a man from another area of Papua who had married a Nabua girl. Among the guests were many of his wife's relatives, including her parents, and a number of other Nabua people who were working or going to school in the Moresby area. None of the man's relatives was present.

The celebration, which ended about midnight, included beer drinking and dancing to guitars played by young people. At one stage the host distributed a large

quantity of cooked food - pork, bananas, yam, taro and chicken. After the guests had eaten, the boy's parents put a plate on a small table to one side of the party enclosure, and the visitors understood that anyone who so wished could place money in the plate "for the child." I did not count it, but I believe that about K30 was collected - the amount partially offsetting the parents expenses in staging the party. No food was formally distributed.

The second birthday celebration took place in Nabuapaka hosted by a young man teaching in a primary school about 55 km away. In a small community such as Nabuapaka, sponsors of festivities commonly invite everybody, so the guests included all the home-based Nabuas and those who chose to come home for the weekend.

The visitors separated themselves into two groups, those who preferred to sit on the host's platform and sing traditional songs called aroba, and those who chose to dance to the music of guitars. The organisers had announced beforehand that these would be the two forms of music, and as might be expected, the villagers divided themselves broadly along generational lines with the middle-aged and elderly singing aroba, and the rest with the guitar players. There is some overlap as several men and women in their forties prefer to dance with the guitars, while a number of twenty and thirty-year olds often join in the aroba.

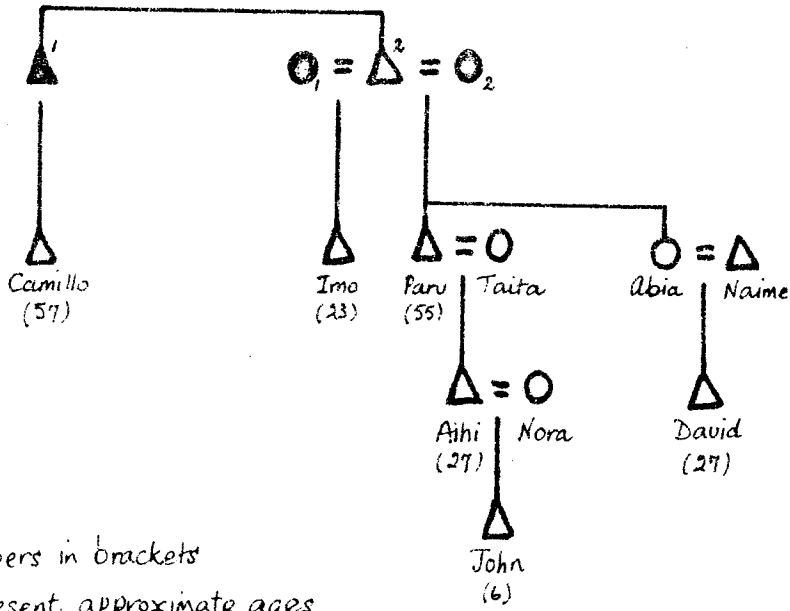
The hosts participated in the dancing and singing to only a limited extent as their principal concern was to ensure that their guests were supplied with food and drink. Several times during the night they carried large pots of tea and plates of sandwiches and scones to the singers and dancers.

Soon after dawn the organisers called a halt to proceedings in order formally to distribute pork and vegetable food. They had arranged four piles of bananas, yams, uncooked pig-meat, rice, flour and sugar. Two heaps were substantially larger than the others, and of these the child's father presented one to his wife's kin, and the other to his own kin. Of the two smaller piles he gave one to the guests who had sung aroba all night, and the other to those who had danced to the guitars.

A fifth stack of yams, rice and bananas, equal in size to the larger heaps had been arranged on the sand by the child's mother's kin. This they presented to their daughter's husband's kin.

The recipients carried the food away for further distribution and cooking. Clearly some individuals benefitted twice, once as guests at the celebration, and again as a member of the child's maternal or paternal kin.

The haircutting feast for a firstborn son may perhaps be seen more clearly as substituting for the earlier ceremony of dressing a boy in his first perineal band. Although several men talked of haircutting feasts for their sons, only one such ceremony took place while I was in the village. It was sponsored by the lad's paternal grandfather's half-brother. Several men told me that someone has to 'promise' such a party for a small boy. The father should not do it.



numbers in brackets
 represent approximate ages.

Soon after Aihi's son John was born, Aihi's FB, Imo, told him that he would sponsor John's haircutting ceremony. The boy, therefore did not have his hair cut until early 1974 when he was about six.

Three forms of entertainment occupied guests at the party. The older people sang aroba, the young danced to guitar music, and the members of the United Church (formerly the London Missionary Society) sang and danced 'Prophet Songs' (perobeta), a style of song, often with a Biblical theme, introduced at the end of the last century by Polynesian pastors of the L.M.S. This last activity cut across the boundary of the generations and included both young and old.

The organisers, Aihi, Imo, Camillo and Paru, deliberately included the three forms of singing and dancing so that all sections of the community could be catered for. Guests included everyong in the village, many of the Moresby-based Nabuas, and a man from Rapa who had married a Nabua girl. He was a relative of John's mother and represented the boy's matrilateral kin. I did not discover the precise relationship, nor could I learn why Nora's parents and other kin did not attend the celebration: Aihi told me they had been invited, but neither he nor anyone else was willing to suggest why they failed to come.

Aihi, as father of the boy, was master-of-ceremonies, but under the tight control and supervision of his father Paru, and his FFBS, Camillo, who is chief (Obia) of the sub-clan. The latter concentrated his attentions on those singing aroba, carefully rationing out the alcohol (beer laced with gin) so that it would last through the night and keep people satisfied without anyone losing control of himself.

Paru and Camillo suggested that David, Aihi's FZS, should be in charge of the guitar-dancing section of the party. This meant that he was responsible for inviting the young people of the village, other than those who wished to sing perobeta, gather them at his house and bring them as a group to the party. He did this by handing a bunch of areca nut to me and his younger brother (I was living in Paru's household and thus became seen as classificatory brother to Aihi during my stay in the village). David instructed us to visit each house in the community, a process called beaubeau, and to give one nut to each of the young people and to those middle-aged men and women known to prefer guitars to aroba instructing them to gather at his house at nightfall.

Dancing and singing continued until dawn, punctuated by refreshments of tea, biscuits and scones. Soon after dawn we shot one of Paru's pigs and carried it back to the village where David's father supervised the butchering. He, Paru and Camillo then set aside the meat to be used in prestations, and divided the remainder into portions which the women carried, with bananas, yams, flour and rice, to houses throughout the community to be cooked.

About midday the youths brought out their guitars, and thus encouraged, the hibito'i and uaho began dancing again. The girls left every so often to attend to culinary duties, and in the late afternoon they brought all the cooked food to Camillo's platform, where he and Paru supervised its division into six portions:

1. for the old people singing aroba
2. for those singing perobeta
3. the children, as this was a celebration for John.
4. the married people who danced to guitars.
5. the bachelors (hibito'i)
6. the girls (uaho)

The women and girls carried the plates and dishes to six different platforms in the village and sent messages out calling the villagers to the appropriate place to eat.

After eating, the young men and women gathered again at David's house, made their way to the party enclosure and began dancing again. Meanwhile Camillo, Aihī, Paru and Imo carefully divided the pig-meat which had earlier been set aside, plus some bananas and food from tradestores, into three heaps (ton).

At 8 p.m. proceedings came to a halt and Imo played a more overt role as he formally made the presentations. The first pile, consisting of one pig foreleg and two large stems of bananas, he gave to David. This was an exact repayment of a gift David had made to Imo some weeks earlier.

The second, Imo announced, was for Victor Koae, the Rapa man who was accepting on behalf of John's mother's people. This heap was of pork, three bags of flour, one bag of sugar, two bags of rice and twelve stems of bananas. Beside this food also stood John, decorated with Bird of Paradise plumes and K20 in notes pinned in his hair.

At this point Imo stepped back and Aihī, John's father, came forward to say that the third pile, of a pig-leg, two stems of bananas and a bag of flour, was a gift to Imo to thank him for the time and money he had spent as sponsor of the feast.

The recipients carried their food away, the Moresby workers set off for town, and those young people left in the village took up their guitars again and danced till 4 a.m.

The following day Paru, Aihi, Nora and David took John to Rapa village and presented the food to Nora's people (Victor had had to return to his job in town). They came back in the evening, and several days later Aihi cut his son's hair.

Clearly such ceremonies are primarily to do with the relations between the two sets of affines, and are concerned in some way with the status of the child. The normal sequence of bride-price payments includes gifts of food and valuables to the bride's relatives soon after the couple begin to live with each other, with the major prestation a number of years later after children have been born. While I do not think the birthday and haircutting feasts should be seen as part of the sequence of brideprice payments as such, I think it is possible to speculate that the gift of food made to the child's matrilineal kin is in part to confirm the child as a member of its father's sub-clan. In addition it may be that such a feast is of greatest significance to the man who has not yet completed his major bride payment.

I leave further discussion to later in this chapter when I take up the issue of bride price. It is worth noting that one elderly man, normally a reliable informant, said the haircutting was sometimes also a feast for publicising the child's name (hobehobo atana keaparina, 'he will call the first-born's name'). I could get no confirmation of this, and I know of no family in the community today that is keeping its children's name a secret. It may be that the old man was confusing it with the former ritual, or else haircutting was formerly held at a much earlier stage in a child's life and did include the naming ceremony.

Apart from such rituals centered on a few children of the community, the young child has nothing to do but play and learn. As a baby it is indulged, cuddled and fed when it cries. There is always someone - the grandmother, mother, sister, or other relative - ready to offer comfort at any time.

As they get older and learn to walk, children spend hours each day playing on the beach, or otherwise accompany parents and grandparents to the gardens or out fishing. Girls spend more time with their mothers than boys spend with their fathers, gradually accepting greater responsibility for domestic chores, often, in their adolescence, taking over almost all cooking duties from their mothers.

Boys spend a great deal of time fishing with small spears or bows and arrows, otherwise they occupy themselves in games of marbles, playing skittles with cone shells, hunting birds, making horns, windmills and balls out of leaves, nailing round tins to poles and pushing them about as 'cars,' racing model canoes, and numerous other games in which adolescent boys often join. Haddon (1901:272; 274-6) describes some other children's games, noting with approval those which imitated adult hunting parties and other "important social functions."

As the mood takes them, young boys go with their fathers or grandfathers to the gardens or out fishing, at which time the older man takes the opportunity to teach some skill to the youngster: I once came upon a six-year old out in the gardens with his grandfather. The old man was wrapping bananas to prevent flying-fox eating them before they ripened, and at the same time singing songs in the aroba style. He was teaching the songs to the boy who ran in and out among the bananas, played with lizards and sang snatches of aroba interspersed

with a few bars of the current pop favourite in the village. (A Motuan man told Groves that there is power in songs: they make the bananas grow plump and firm (Groves 1956)).

Old people indulge their grandchildren, allowing the youngsters to take liberties and defy instructions with impunity. One man ordered his six-year old grandson, who was making a nuisance of himself, to shut up and go to the beach. The boy took not the slightest notice, and the order was not repeated. Another five-year old swore constantly in both Roro and English at his father's mother and sister, often threatening them with a spear or axe, and throwing things about in angry tantrums.

One afternoon they responded in irritation and thoroughly scolded the boy, who promptly began to cry. When his grandfather returned he accused the women of not looking after the child properly and encouraged him to continue swearing and to throw spears at the women.

After the ensuing quarrel, the old man slept under the house, while his wife slept inside with the door locked. She confided the next day that she was not going to cook any food for her husband that day. The boy's parents were away at the time, and later complained to me that the old people were spoiling their son.

At seven or eight all boys and the majority of girls begin primary school. There is no longer a school in the village, so some youngsters walk the five kilometres to Delena every morning, returning home about mid afternoon. There are often days when the children as a body play truant - slipping off the road to enjoy games in the bush, eating pawpaw and stolen water melon, and watching the sun for the appropriate time to return home.

From time to time the schoolteacher complains to the parents who chastize their children and seek out the ringleader whose father gives him an additional thrashing.

Some parents of very young children feel it is too far for them to walk everyday, and send them to stay with relatives on Yule Island or at Waima. This is particularly true of Roman Catholic parents who prefer their children to attend former Mission schools. Other children go away to different parts of the country and live with older siblings, especially in cases where their brothers or sisters are themselves teachers.

Adolescence:

Teenage boys and young unmarried adult men live in a world of freedom and lack of responsibility. Because of this perhaps, they are at times the objects of suspicion and distrust, tinged with jealousy, from the adults.

It is the youths (hibito'i) who steal fowls in the night, who take fishing nets from drying racks, entice daughters into the bush, and keep the village awake at night with strumming guitars. It is the youths who, imitating the cock's crow, encourage real roosters to cry out at odd hours of the night, waking the village again, and who cause dogs to bark as they come home in the early morning darkness (raurani wapurana'i) from a variety of tasks and assignments.

The middle-aged and elderly complain about the young people "They don't know anything", "They never work" are typical of the remarks made to me. "In the old days young fellows used to be up with the dawn and straight to the gardens or off fishing. They were not worried about drinking tea before working. They went early (raurani amarina, 'while the morning is still cold'), came back about midday and then prepared to dance. They used to begin dancing in late afternoon and continue into the night. Today boys sleep till nine or ten in

the morning after playing all night, and then demand tea to drink when they wake up."

"Today's boys never make gardens" the old people continue, "They don't know how to tie bananas properly. What are they going to show their wives when they get married?".

However, the same men who grumble about the boys today, when reminiscing nostalgically about the old days, tell listeners how the hibito'i of the past did not go gardening or fishing, but spent their time in the village preening themselves, preparing for the next dance and planning which girl to try to seduce.

The truth seems to be that youth has long been a period during which young men faced few overt demands for work, but at the same time had to prove their responsibility by being available for tasks when needed. Williamson noted that the young unmarried man was obliged to observe certain food restrictions, and he "must always show himself oiled and smart, and be ready and able to help the older men in shooting, fishing, housebuilding and other matters" (Williamson 1914:127). Seligmann similarly noted youth's responsibility to obey their chief and assist in various tasks, and added that in theory they should fend for themselves obtaining their food in the bush and from the sea by their own efforts" (Seligmann 1910:258).

Despite the complaints of older folk, I observed today's youngsters in fact undertaking a good deal of work. It is true that youths roam about the village or play guitars on the beach until two or three o'clock in the morning, and often lie asleep until the sun is high. But they also spend a good deal of time fishing

particularly during the garfish and crayfish seasons, they work hard in their family's gardens, and a number in their mid to late teens also have their own gardens. They assist at all stages of housebuilding, some have made their own canoes, and all normally participate in regular weekly communal tasks of clearing roads or the village.

Those who are away at school much of the year are slower at learning some tasks. On one occasion when we were building a platform preparatory to a minor celebration, I found to my surprise that it was my job to instruct three boys aged fifteen and sixteen how to lash vines to split bamboo in securing the floor of the platform. This caused much merriment to the chagrin of the boys. In general, however, there is little difference in their handling of village work between boys at school, and those who have 'dropped-out'. The latter ironically style themselves 'home scholars'.

There is no clear point today at which a boy becomes hibito'i (translated simply as 'young man' by Fr Coluccia). It is a combination of his own behaviour, acceptance by older youths, and adult recognition. When he is about twelve, adults mock-seriously begin to refer to him on occasion as hibito'i; simultaneously he starts to spend more time with older boys: to sit with them at feast instead of with the children, and to join them on fishing trips or fowl-stealing exploits at night. The young men do not fully accept him immediately and at times send him away. I recall watching one fourteen-year old reluctantly leave with tears of humiliation clearly sparkling in his eyes when three older youths (about seventeen to nineteen) dismissed him while they discussed their sexual conquests.

Seligmann's description (1910:257) tallies with mine, but Haddon who appears to have closely followed Guis's writings (Guis 1936:19) suggested a more formal recognition of hibito'i status in the past. He wrote

when a boy is about twelve years of age, the family council decides he must be ibitoe, that is, of an age fit to marry, and he is conducted to the marea of the ibitoes, or clubhouse of the young men. (Haddon 1901:256-257).

Thereafter he slept in the clubhouse, rather than in his father's home, with older youths, older bachelors, widowers and men who were temporarily sleeping apart from their wives for ritual reasons. Williamson stated (1914:119) "youths who have reached the age of puberty are forbidden the paternal roof until they marry".

Seligmann commented that "dancing and preparations for the dance are important factors in the life" of youths (1910:258), and that many made drums for themselves. For this purpose several boys secluded themselves in the bush and imposed upon themselves various dietary restrictions while making their drums. It is clear that during this period they were robe (sacred, set apart), a concept which I discuss in chapter six.

Seligmann was unable to "elicit anything in the nature of a definite initiation ceremony" for youths at Yule Island, but he added

it is obvious that the restrictions to which the ibitoe are supposed to submit would, if rigorously enforced, produce a great deal of bodily discomfort and, to a certain extent be the equivalent of the physical training so often given when boys enter manhood (Seligmann 1910:258).

While this is broadly true, it is also a fact that such restrictions are not limited to youths. All Waima/Roro men are subject to a variety of ritual privations on various occasions throughout their lives, particularly prior to important events such as trading expeditions, competitive dance festivities, or during mourning and so on. The restrictions imposed on boys, therefore, cannot be considered initiation ceremonies per se. I have suggested elsewhere (1976:46) that initiation ceremonies for all youths are more likely to be found in those Melanesian societies in which important ritual is the property of all adult (ie:initiated) men, whereas in societies where such knowledge is inherited by individuals, as in Mekeo and Roro, it may be only the inheritor who can be described as undergoing any form of initiation ritual. The full argument is beyond the purview of this thesis, but in Nabuapaka a young man who is inheriting wallaby-hunting ritual from his grandfather, will not fully succeed the old man and take possession of the magical objects containing the hunting power, until he has undergone a rigorous three-month fast which is over and above the restrictions placed on other youths of the same age. It might be argued that this will be his initiation and for the rest of his life he will at times face more serious privations than other men. (See Chapter six.)

Only in Waima and Kivori did Seligmann discover anything resembling formal initiation ceremonies for all boys, and these appear to have been truncated versions of ritual adopted from their Elema neighbours to the west. During the ceremonies, boys between about ten and fifteen were secluded in a special clubhouse for several periods of up to two months at a time over about one year. During this time they learned how to make decorations and ornaments for dancing, such as belts, armlets and masks. They could leave the clubhouse at night, but only if covered to prevent their being recognised. The

final period of seclusion came to an end when one of them "had had connection with a girl who afterwards would become this boy's wife" (Seligmann 1910:258-264).

Youths today may not cross the centre of the village during daylight, but reach their parent's dwelling by walking behind the rows of houses. If they wish to visit someone on the opposite side of the main street, unmarried men should go right around the periphery of the village. The same restrictions apply to widowers and divorcees, as it is only married men who are fully adult with all the privileges of manhood (see Hau'ofa 1975:115-166). The unmarried are entitled only to the least desirable of food, and in any case should not be seen eating, particularly by girls eligible to become their wives. They say that to be seen eating implies greed and constant hunger, and girls would not wish to marry them for fear of the hard work necessary to feed them.

Girls:

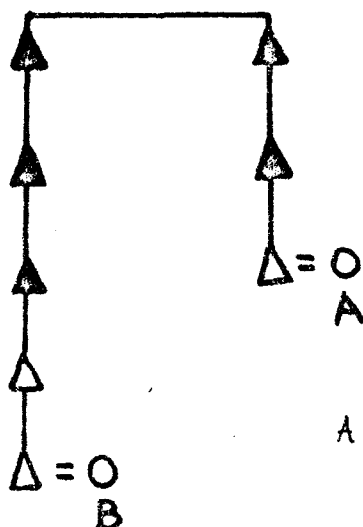
Adolescent girls and young unmarried women (uahe or waho) are far less free than boys. From an early age they accompany their mothers to the gardens and to the shore to collect crabs or shell fish, and assist in household tasks. By the time of their mid to late teens they have taken over many domestic chores, such as cooking, particularly if the mothers are elderly. It is incumbent upon them to show themselves as hard and willing workers to make a good impression on the parents of prospective husbands.

In the past the major coming-of-age ceremonies for a girl centred on her tattooing. She was not considered ready for marriage until she had been tattooed from head to foot. Seligmann noted that the process began when

she was between five and ten years old with the tattooing of her hands and arms. Later her belly, chest and back were done, with work undertaken on her buttocks, legs and finally her face following her first menstrual period.

A few days after completing work on her face the girl's kin sponsored a feast during which they ceremonially paraded her through the village. Several months of relatively easy daytime tasks followed, and in the late afternoon she dressed in her finery, sauntered about the village, and joined all the dances that took place. After four or five months her family considered her to be ready for marriage. (Seligmann: 1910:264-266).

Seligmann did not state specifically who did the tattooing, beyond noting that it was "some old woman, skilled in the art, and generally a relative" (1910:265), nor do we know exactly which group of relatives sponsored her feast. Today it is generally only the elderly and some middle-aged women who one sees with tattoos. The youngest woman in Nabuapaka to be tattooed is in her late thirties. She is from Bereina. She had not been tattooed by the time of her marriage in the early 1960s, and her father instructed her that if she was to be a properly married woman she should be tattooed, otherwise he would not come to visit her, nor would he welcome her home. She complied with his wishes, and was tattooed in Nabuapaka after her marriage by an affinal relative of her husband (her husband's FFFFBSSW).



Men do not normally sport tattoos. Haddon (1901:260) has a drawing of an Inawi (Mekeo) chief with tattoos on his chest, and Williamson stated that they indicated that he had taken human life (1914:121-2).

Games and courting:

When youths are not out fishing or assisting with gardens or some other task they might be out racing canoes, playing marbles on the beach with smaller boys, gambling for areca nut or one-and two-cent pieces, hanging around near the road to see who goes past, or planning the next party or soccer match. Soccer was popular whilst I was there, and all our neighbouring villages formed soccer teams. The Nabua Home Scholars petitioned the chiefs and adult men who gave them a piece of flat bushland about half a mile from the village for a soccer field. There followed three weeks of hard work as we razed the bush, dug out roots and flattened bumps to turn it into a passable pitch on which we could challenge the youths of other villages, or the Nabua youths who worked in Port Moresby.

The girls' counterpart was a basketball team, and the Nabua Brothers string band, playing in Moresby hotels and taverns, contributed money to assist the girls in buying uprights and rings for the baskets.

All-night parties commonly followed matches, and naturally afforded the boys opportunities to seek out girlfriends and spirit them off down the beach. A favourite pasttime, particularly during the Christmas school holidays, is for youths to gang together and go to neighbouring communities for dances. We would sail by canoe to Tsiria village on Yule Island, hire the village truck to go to Hisiu, Rapa or further afield, or walk to Iare and Delena.

On one occasion when a group of youths sailed home about mid-morning after a dance in Tsiria, the girls refused to let them ashore. They lined the beach and threatened the boys with sticks, forcing them to sail up and down the coast for the rest of the day. This was their punishment for having gone off to Tsiria and not making a party in Nabuapaka. At the least, thought the girls, they could have accompanied them to a party in Delena, which is where the rest of us had gone.

It is not unusual for night time excursions to other villages to include fighting as the home youths defend the honour of their girls against visitors, or attempt to avenge an insult. Inevitably the chances of a fight increase when the youths have been drinking liquor. During 1973 and 1974 Nabua boys had several fights with Delena youths, once in Nabua itself after a drunken Delena had been shouting insults. The battle was short and sharp

and as the Delenas left the village, the Nabua boys returned to their guitars and sang and danced a victory chant with great exhuberance.

It would be wrong to describe relations between the young men of the two communities as enmity, as they get on extremely well with each other on other occasions. There is, however, an underlying rivalry which stems in part from an old dispute, settled in the last generation, over land boundaries between the two, and continued today in that both villages formed guitar bands that were popular in Port Moresby and on radio request programmes. The youths from Delena and Poukama formed the Delepou Band, under Samual Willie, while the Nabua boys began the Nabua Brothers under John Paru Naime.

There is a good deal of intermarriage between the two places, thus there is always a suspicion that dances might end with an elopement, and boys watch their rivals closely.

In the village at night, if the youths are not out fishing or chasing birds on the sand flats, they put strong pressure on each other to stay and tell stories, play guitars or join pranks such as stealing watermelon or encouraging one of their number to "climb the house" in search of his girlfriend. If a boy wants to go home to sleep, another is sure to taunt him with a remark such as "Your baby is crying, so you must go and feed it", or "Your wife is waiting and angry, so you must go to the house", or "You're a widower, so you're staying in the house."

One Christmas holiday several years ago, the older people in the village became so incensed at the youths disturbing their sleep night after night with guitar playing, that they punished them by making all the boys and girls stay on the beach playing guitars and dancing for three full days, almost non-stop.

As might be expected, the dominant thought in most boys' minds is girls (cf: Guis 1936:37; Hau'ofa 1975: 123). While there is considerable discretion, especially among adults, there is no secrecy about sexual functioning. At an early age children are aware of the facts of intercourse and may begin experimenting. One wet morning I was walking on the beach with a group of young men, and we decided to shelter a while near the clinic. Hearing a noise inside, one of the youths pushed open the door and stumbled over a six-year old boy lying naked on top of a girl of the same age. Asked what he thought he was doing, he replied that he was having intercourse with his girlfriend. His older brother (seventeen), who was with us, cuffed him over the ear, told him "That's your sister" (his FBD), and sent him home in tears.

Youngsters like this commonly learn by waiting for an opportunity to quietly follow an older couple as they sneak away from a party, and trying to observe them in action.

Active sex after puberty probably begins for most boys around their mid-teens. It is probable that experienced girls take the initiative with younger boys, just as knowledgeable older youths initiate girls.

One young man told me of his first experiences when he was about sixteen as he and his older brother

were visiting Waima. One evening they were listening to people singing aroba when the elder disappeared with a girl. The boy found one of his schoolmates who led him off to two girls he had lined up without telling the boy:

He says "we'll go and look for girls."
 Boy: "Ah! I don't know anything about girls." "Anyway, just come with me!" As they walk they see two girls in the distance. Boy: "who is that?" "Oh, just some village people walking about." Boy hangs back as they get closer, his mate urges him on. They get to the girls, begin talking, walking together. His mate disappears with one, and boy's girl asks "where shall we go?" He replies that he wants to go and sleep, but she leads him in the direction of the bush. He protests that he wants to sleep, "I don't know anything." "You don't know how to make so'iso'i?"¹ "No, we're not like that in Nabua." "You really don't know?" "I told you already, I don't know anything about girls." "I'm going to teach you now!" She removes her panties and lies down. She takes hold of him and guides him into action.

By his account, his initiation was followed by a three week orgy of love-making, broken only when his brother insisted on their return to Nabuapaka.

1. So'i: a semi-humorous slang expression for girlfriend or boyfriend apparently introduced to Waima in the early '60s, and since then adopted by all Roro/Waima communities. Previously boys referred to their girlfriends as e'u waho (my girl), and girls to their boyfriends as e'u hau. Today e'u so'i may be used by either sex to refer to their partner. Reduplication: so'iso'i means 'to make love'

After their first experiences, girls are as likely as boys to take the lead in amorous escapades: One evening a girl came to our house to ask a seventeen-year old living with us to accompany her to collect areca nut the next morning. The youth's uncle and aunt told him he was not to go. She did not need an escort as several people were going with her. Early the following morning she was under the house knocking and calling for the youth whose aunt sent her away: "Go. He's not coming with you!" I was never entirely sure whether she was after the youth for herself, or acting as a messenger for one of her friends. Either is possible as he was a personable young man, much sought after.

It is not unusual for youths to go to a girl's house late at night and try to entice her out without waking her parents or young siblings who might report matters. On occasion boys may enter the girl's house, make love to her while the family sleeps, and slip away well before dawn. Groups of men commonly encourage one of their number in his affairs: After one party in the village, two men in their early thirties dragged their younger companion to his girl friend's house, insisting that he climb in and sleep with her, but he slipped away. They hauled him back. He entered the house and touched the wrong girl, who whispered where his girl friend was lying. He crept across the room and touched her, but she woke with a shout, and he fled from the house as the conspirators collapsed with laughter.

An important task of a youth's fellow hibito'i today is to assist him and his girl friend in elopement, as I shall show in the next section.

Chapter Three

Part Two

LIFE CYCLE

MARRIAGE AND DEATH.

Marriage:

Early one January morning in 1977, as women chatted over fires and boiling rice and yams, as men busied themselves with a variety of tasks while waiting for breakfast - one repairing his fishing net, another preparing a new outrigger - and as small children woke, cried and rummaged in grandfather's bag for lollies or other treats, the news filtered through the village:

Last night Tsinahu and Aiba Ume ran away.

But we saw him go to Port Moresby.

Ah Yes! But he got off the truck again at Iare and came back in the night, and the two of them ran away. They're at Iare now.

Theirs was a quiet elopement, accomplished without assistance, and lacking any overt reaction from the girl's family, although they were upset.

The majority of elopements are carefully planned, with the youth's companions providing diversionary cover for the couple: when Peto Aume eloped with Epi Arua of Tsiria village in 1974, two other young men brought her back to Nabua on their canoe, while he remained in Tsiria until the following day. In 1975, following a mortuary feast in Delena, Aihi Tcuaro ran off with a girl from Arabure. Most of us had already returned from Delena, leaving a small group of Nabua youths who hustled Aihi and his bride to a secluded spot to await the Nabua truck.

On arriving at Nabua, Aihi's mother borrowed a dress for the girl from our house, and the couple hid in a house just outside the village. The incident led to much excitement as her brothers and other young men from

Arabure searched Delena and then came to Nabua to seek her out. Nabuas all professed ignorance and passed the youths from house to house, while a messenger went to warn the couple who disappeared into the bush until the search was over.

In former times marriage included child betrothal, arrangements made by the parents of the youth and maiden, and the occasional elopement. Arranged marriages were the most usual, although by 1910 elopements were common and Seligmann predicted that they would become more frequent "since the members of the Sacred Heart Mission having found out that such love matches commonly turn out well, exert themselves to conciliate the offended parents" (1910:271). Less than twenty years earlier Guis had commented harshly that there was not much he could say concerning elopement since it was "little more than rape accompanied by violence which, far from being simulated, causes war between villages and entire tribes" (1936:57).

Today elopements are the norm. Between 1973 and 1977 about sixteen young men of Nabuapaka acquired brides. Eleven were elopements and three represented a gradual acceptance of a long-term relationship between the boy and girl. I am not sure of the status of the other two.

During the same period there were no marriages in Church (known as matrimoni) and only two attempts at betrothal, both failures. In the first the youth's parents, at his instigation, visited the girl's parents to arrange a marriage but were rejected, partly because the latter feared a member of the young man's family as a sorcerer, but also because the boy had been married before and his wife had left him. The failure of the negotiations in this instance did not discourage the couple as they eloped the following night.

The notion of elopement as normal is supported by current ideology among the youths who asserted on several occasions that it is better to steal (bainao) a girl than to have an engagement. This, they said, forstalls the possibility, in any later dispute, of the girl accusing her husband of not being a man because he did not have the courage to steal her, but merely went quietly to her parents with money and goods.

Despite the pleasures of bachelorhood, lyrically described by Guis (1936:ch 1), almost all men eventually get married, for, as Mead said of Balinese society "a man who does not marry is denied full social status. He remains forever at the foot of the ladder, the oldest of the youths; he is an old young man" (1967:213). (cf: Hau'ofa 1975:119-123 for a discussion of the importance of marriage in Mekeo.)

The unmarried man may not participate fully in the adult life of the community. At village meetings he is not normally expected to contribute to discussions, on ceremonial occasions he remains with the youths and shares only the food that is set aside for them, and he is forever forbidden to walk in the centre of the village during daylight hours.

Guis noted some bachelors, of whom he said "they are growing old. At 23, 24, 25 years of age they are too old, nobody wants them any longer. It is finished. For the rest of their lives they will be hibito'i: their grey heads will still be covered with flowers, their folded lips will still caress the flute ..." (1936:41). Some of these men, said Guis, eventually settle down with widows whose mourning has ended, and the missionary "does all he can to get everyone married as soon as possible. It is a guarantee and safeguard for the soul and bodily health, for the good order of villages and the prosperity of families" (1936:41-2).

Today no-one believes a young man of 25 to be too old for marriage, and in several villages there are bachelors in their early thirties who are considered eligible, and who still anticipate marriage. Although by 35 one begins to hear older people refer to them on occasion as koakoe, a slightly contemptuous term translated by Fr Coluccia (1939) as 'old boy' (vieux garçon).

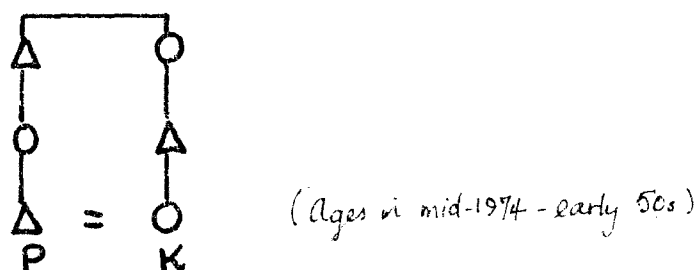
Marriage Rules:

As in Mekeo (Hau'ofa 1975:155), Roro ideally prohibit marriage within the sub-clan and the mother's sub-clan. The proscription usually extends to include sub-clans of the same name in other villages, as these are by implication related. Guis expressed his satisfaction that Roro do not marry relatives, commenting that "on this point ... our Papuans are more advanced than Europeans" (1936:40).

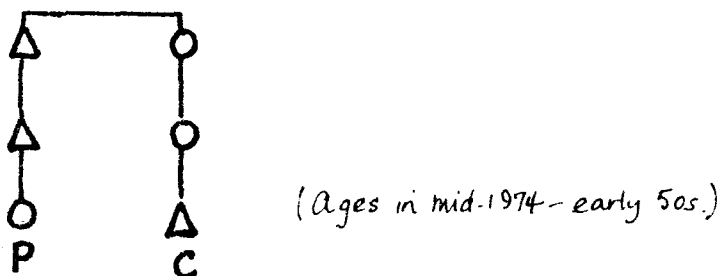
Guis (1936:39), and following him Haddon (1910:258), briefly discussed an institution which he called aro-abira (Haddon used the term aruabira). He translated it as "part of our blood", and stated that it referred to an ally village, one which is "of a half with another." People in Nabuapaka looked at me blankly when I asked about this, which is perhaps not surprising as Guis noted in the 1890s that "this custom has almost disappeared completely" in Roro (1936:40). He used a Mekeo example to illustrate it. Beipa'a nourish pigs and dogs, but for their ufu'apie (the Mekeo term) village of Amo-amo, and vice-versa. When there is a death in Beipa'a, they give a feast to which Amo-amo comes and eats, and reciprocally, on lifting the mourning, the ufu'apie come and dance.

In reference to marriage, Guis asserted that according to the rules spouses come only from one's ally village, and woe-betide the youth who seeks a wife elsewhere.

Unfortunately he did not explain how the system worked, as it would seem obvious that continued intermarriage between two allied villages would soon see people marrying relatives. It may have been that some kind of cross-cousin marriage was in fact permitted, although kin-terms do not separate cross-cousins from parallel-cousins. One man in his fifties commented "Before, people were very strict. Now they marry their families," and he pointed to one couple whom my analysis shows to be children of cross-cousins:

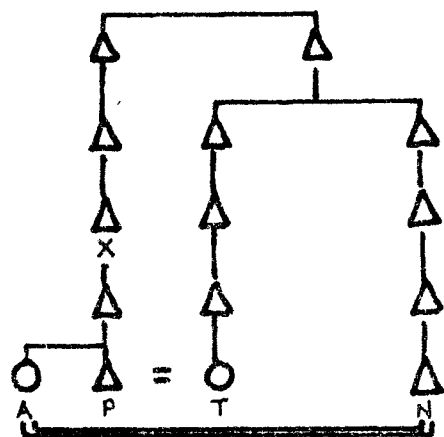


However, in the same generation as P and K, a pair with a similar relationship were forbidden to marry on the grounds that they were family:



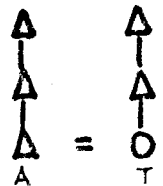
P and C wanted to marry, but P's father forbade the match because they were relatives. Whether or not he had other factors in mind and was able to invoke their close relationship as a pretext to block the marriage is not clear, but I can show several examples of marriages between close relatives in Nabuapaka.

The same man who remarked that today people marry their families can be shown to have direct male links with his wife only four generations previously, as his sister has with her husband:

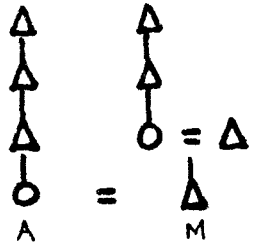


In this case the couples do not belong to the same sub-clan because P's grandfather, X, broke with his natal group and formed a new sub-clan in partnership with another man (not shown here), but despite the rule of sub-clan exogamy, there are at least two instances of couples marrying within their own sub-clan. In neither can I trace any close consanguineal relationship between husband and wife.

In the first, their grandfathers were co-founders of the sub-clan: The couple therefore belong to different lineages within it:



and in the second, the young man's father is living uxorilocally, while his mother is from a different lineage to his wife:



A & M are members of the same sub-clan. M's father living uxorilocally.

Even though cross - and parallel - cousins are not differentiated in the kinship terminology, it is likely that other factors are also relevant, one of which is a preference for local group endogamy: parents prefer their children to live in their own or a village nearby (cf. Groves 1972:14). It may be that a certain degree of cross-cousin marriage has always been permitted as a result of such preferences, but it may equally be that the epidemics towards the end of the last century so depleted the population that a relaxation of formal rules became necessary.

A detailed analysis of marriages over several generations since the arrival of the missionaries is needed to identify any trend towards change. In any case, a study of relationships in Nabuapaka would show that almost everybody is related to almost everybody else, making it very difficult to avoid "marrying relatives."

Bridal exchanges

There are several occasions on which a girl's relatives take or receive food and valuables as a direct consequence of her marriage. The first is at her betrothal; then comes wanawana, which follows almost immediately she leaves her father's house. Translated as "laying waste" by Fr Coluccia, it takes the form of a raid by members of the girl's sub-clan on the homes and gardens of her husband's sub-clan. Two to six months later the young man's relatives present gifts of food and wealth to the bride's family in a ceremony called bahao'au that formally heals the breach between the two sub-clans. Finally there is the payment of bride-price proper, hehe, that takes place several years later, normally after one or two healthy children have been born.

Before discussing these in detail, I shall outline the sequence of events in marriage, first the arranged marriages of former times, as described by Father Guis (1936:43-57), and then the elopements of today as I have seen them.

Arranged marriages: (abi a'ina lit: to acquire by talking)

According to Guis, once a youth's parents have decided he is old enough to marry, they choose a girl for him largely on the basis of their own self-interest. He did not enlarge on this, and noted that they may inform the boy, but do not require his consent.

The boy's father collects pearlshells, armshells, Bird-of-Paradise plumes and other items from members of his sub-clan (also presumably from the boy's mother's people, but Guis does not mention this) and carries them at night with a large bunch of areca nuts to the girl's house where he lays them on the floor of the verandah. He waits silently while the girl's family emerge from their house to inspect the wealth, but without touching it, for that would signify consent.

The boy's father gradually adds items to the display while the girl's family discuss the issue among themselves. Once they are satisfied, the girl's father collects the items one-by-one, then takes an areca nut from the bundle, opens it with his teeth and offers half to the youth's father. The sharing of betel is, in effect, the signing of the contract.

If he is not interested in the proposal, he and his family simply withdraw from the verandah and shut themselves inside their house without a word and without touching any of the items.

Once there is agreement, they smoke tobacco and chew betel together while making arrangements. The girl's father then takes the gifts and distributes them to distant relatives. Guis did not explain this in any detail (1936:46).¹

On the appointed day the boy's people symbolically capture the girl by force. They surround her house and assault it. They allow her to escape through their ranks, and then chase her through the bush, across gardens and among houses. When she is captured she fights, screams, bites, kicks and scratches anyone she can reach. Meanwhile her enraged mother, brandishing a cudgel, strikes it against trees, houses, or on the ground but not against people. She "vomits torrents of insults; imprecations rain down upon the ravishers" (Guis 1936:47) as she tries in vain to rescue her daughter.

Eventually her rage gives way to paroxysms of tears, while her daughter's abductors, having subdued their captive, return her to the house to prepare for the evening.

That night her female relatives oil her skin and decorate her with long strings of shells, dogs' teeth and a choice pearlshell on her chest. She wears carved turtle-shell earrings and rows of armshells. Her parents exhort her to be a good wife and lead her to the centre of the village where all her relatives are waiting to accompany her in procession. Only her mother remains in the house, crying again.

1. Il ne doit, rien en garder pour sa femme, ni ses autres enfants, tout doit être distribué aux parents éloignés. (Guis 1936:46).

The boy's relatives, awaiting events just outside the village, now silently approach to receive the bride. As soon as they enter the village the girl's relatives set upon them with threats to kill and maim them. Guis commented that the uproar is appalling, but that the flashing of torches makes it spectacular. The girl's kin strip their new affines of any ornaments they are wearing, and attempt to drive them from the village. The boy's people, meanwhile, may offer no resistance. They advance as they can, gradually getting closer to the bride.

Once the two families reach each other the fighting ceases, and both groups accompany the bride to the end of the village where her father hands her to the boy's father, who leads her to his own house. Presumably the boy's relatives keep the valuables with which the girl is decorated, but Guis made no mention of this.

Through all these events the bridegroom has apparently played no overt part. Now, when he sees his father returning with his bride, he flees to the clubhouse to hide. His unmarried companions, however, capture him, and telling him he is a fool (po'o), they bathe him, comb his hair, oil and paint his body and decorate him from his head to his feet, before leading him to his father's house and make him sit beside his bride, where the whole community may see them and acknowledge them as a couple.

The bride sits expressionless, with not a look nor a gesture towards her husband, while he turns his back on her to laugh and joke with his companions. When he is ready he rises without a word and goes to sleep in the clubhouse. His bride spends the night with any relatives she may have in the village.

The next day the bride's family descend upon their son-in-law's village and, in Guis's words, "are masters of the place" (1936:52). They have licence to plunder, to steal and to destroy, although they limit their predations to the young man's relatives. This is wanawana, and the prudent have hidden their wealth and kitchen utensils. The invaders search the houses and take what pleases them; smash, or pretend to smash pots, and decorate themselves with any ornaments they find. They then turn to the gardens where they chop down bananas, uproot taro, and strip the areca palms. Guis commented "it looks like dogs at a quarry. It is the same rage, the same insatiable appetite, the same wild joy" (1936:52), and as before, the boy's people may make no resistance.

When they are satisfied, the bride's father returns to his son-in-law's home, enters the clubhouse and hauls the boy to the front of the verandah where, in the sight of all the people, he cuts the youth's tightly-laced bark belt from him, symbolising the end of youth and dance and idleness, and the beginning of manhood.

That evening, and again the next day, the couple continue to ignore each other as they sit back-to-back on his father's verandah. The third day the bride passes betel mixture to her husband, and from that moment, as Guis said, "they begin housekeeping" (1936:53), although for the next two months or more they remain together only during the day, the young man sleeping at night in the clubhouse.

During this period the bride does little work. Every afternoon her sisters-in-law oil and decorate her and she walks the village visiting friends. Guis

suggested that this is the time when the couple get to know each other. If they find each other incompatible, or if the girl's parents should change their minds, the gifts are returned and the couple separate (1935:53). If things are satisfactory, after two or three months the bride's father kills a pig and invites his daughter's father-in-law to a feast. The youth's father calls upon his relatives once again, gathers some more valuables, and together they attend the bride's father's feast, first presenting him with the new gifts which he later distributes: on this occasion to his close relatives (ses proches parents Guis 1936:55).

Guis ended his description at about this point. This last ceremony he described appears to be the equivalent of a ritual called bahao'au which today follows elopements, and which I shall discuss shortly. He made no mention of hehe, the major bride-price payment which takes place two or three years after the marriage.

The extent to which youngsters could force their parents to change their minds is unclear. I know of one case where the parents of a Nabua girl accepted betrothal gifts from a Delena family in 1970. The girl was not interested in the young man, and sometime before the wedding she eloped with a youth from Waima. Her parents brought her back to Nabua where she threatened to hang herself. (One version of the story says she actually made the attempt, but her brothers cut the rope.) Her parents relented, allowed her to marry the Waima boy, and returned the betrothal gifts to Delena.

Elopement:

The sequence of events following an elopement bears some resemblance to parts of Guis's description. On the morning after a girl's disappearance villagers

anticipate that her kin may raid the homes and gardens of her "abductor's" relatives (such a marriage is always spoken of as "stealing," bainae, whatever the complicity of the girl), and take what they wish.

In practise I have not seen it happen, although in about 1970 people from Iare raided a Nabua family's property and shot two pigs after their daughter had eloped; and in 1976 a man from the inland village of Rapa warned a Nabua youth that if he wanted a Rapa girl he should ask his parents to arrange the marriage properly. If he stole the girl, Rapa people would lay Nabua waste (wanawana) with a vengeance, sweeping through the village killing any pigs they found and laying claim to any goods they wished: fishing nets, household items, clothing, bicycles, tools, guitars and radios. Any canoes they found on the beach they would also take, unless the owners had already poled them into deep water.

A question that arises in relation to wanawana is the extent to which people actually devastated the youth's family's home and gardens following either the arranged marriage or the elopement. Guis's description and the comment of the Rapa man imply wholesale destruction and theft. Although Guis pointed out that the raiding would be balanced when a marriage took place in the opposite direction (1936:52), it seems hard to believe that people would really impoverish their daughter's new family if they wanted her to be fed properly, and if they expected a reasonable quantity of food and valuables at the feast two or three months later.

Guis gave a hint the vandalism may have been carefully selective when he noted that people "smash, or pretend to smash pots" (1936:52), and we may speculate that the extent of damage varies according to the depth

of genuine anger felt at an elopement, and from community to community. Wanawana did not follow any of the elopements that I witnessed. Indeed, in one that I note at the beginning of this section, the girl's parents arrived in Nabua the following day, not to take her back, nor to create a scene, but simply to "find out who she had married."

As in the arranged match, the young bride does no work for several weeks after her marriage. Her sisters-in-law rub her skin everyday with oil and aromatic herbs, and decorate her with flowers and beautiful grass-skirts. Then she sits on her husband's verandah or platform in front of the house for everyone to see. This comes to an end after four to eight weeks, and her husband and her family contemplate what to take to her people as a peace offering. The girl is estranged from her family as a result of the elopement and in theory may not speak to them, even if their home is only yards down the village street.

The ceremony which ends the estrangement is called bahao'au. Fr Coluccia did not include this expression in his dictionary, but a literal translation could be "to cause suppression of the fight" (ba - "to cause;" hao - "to suppress, press down;" 'au - "fight"). However, when I suggested this to people they smiled and said no, it just means to bring the sides together again and allow them to talk.

I participated in several bahao'au. The procedure was always basically the same: some weeks after an elopement the boy's parents quietly visit the girl's people and ask whether they're yet willing to receive their daughter and son-in-law. One reconciliation was delayed five months owing to the

girl's parents' unhappiness over the elopement. Once they agree on a date and an approximate amount for the prestation, the preparations begin.

On the appointed day the young man's maternal and paternal relatives gather to contribute food, money and other items. Under normal circumstances his uterine kin had received food and wealth at his parents' marriage, and now that their daughter's/sister's son is getting married, they begin to make their return. They expect to contribute larger amounts to the major prestation in a few more years when children are born.

During the mid-1970s the amounts of money raised for this ceremony ranged between about K250 and K400. To this the youth's kin normally added garden food, store-bought food, a live pig and a limited quantity of armshells and necklaces. In 1975 one youth's family collected the following:

cash		K350
4 bags rice @ K9	K36	
4 bags flour @ K5	20	
2 bales sugar @ K15	30	
1 carton tinned meat	38	
1 carton tinned fish	<u>9.60</u>	
		133.60
garden food (bananas, yams)		50
1 pig		<u>100</u>
		<u>K633.60</u>

My notes do not mention traditional wealth items in this instance, but in 1973 another youth's bahao'au had included nine Bird-of-Paradise plumes (inehe), several yards of dogs' teeth (tauana), and several string bags (mahca). In any case, items such as these are of greatest significance at the later major exchange (hehe).

While the collection is continuing, various individuals take the opportunity to make speeches. On one occasion the bridegroom's senior paternal relative reminded him and his younger brother, "You are both earning money in Port Moresby. When your brothers and fathers come to town you close your eyes and do not see them. Now see what they've done for you. In the future open your eyes and think of them."

When all is ready the young man's sisters and mother oil and decorate his wife with aromatic herbs. They dress her in a fine grass-skirt and shell jewellery, and pin some of the money into her hair. Planked by her sisters-in-law she leads her husband's relatives, who carry the gifts, to her father's home where her kin are waiting. In front of the house they stop, and the senior member of the boy's party speaks, addressing the bride's people: "These two young people got married. They are living well together. Now we are bringing this girl to you. Whether she is your daughter, your grand-daughter or your sister, be sorry for her and speak with her. You can feel free to visit them. Give them leave to visit you freely."

Her relatives then mingle with the visitors, relieving them of the food and gifts they are carrying, and, in a pale shadow of the scenes described by Guis, strip their new affines of their shirts, blouses, hats, darkglasses, trousers, footwear and anything else they are wearing. The degree to which this takes place varies from community to community, and people prepare for it by avoiding wearing anything that they especially value. Once when we were presenting bahao'au in Kivori village, the Nabuas made a comedy of it by deliberately wearing old and ragged clothing, and some men wore women's skirts and dresses over their trousers. Our Kivori hosts did not seem perturbed and appeared to enjoy the joke.

The bride then goes forward for an emotional meeting with her family, and the groom's people retire to their home, where they wait for an hour or so until the bride, still decorated with flowers, returns to them accompanied by members of her family carrying a quantity of cooked food. Most Roro communities appear to return only cooked food, but Nabuapaka always makes a point of including a slightly smaller live pig than the one they received, some money, and perhaps other items such as a bag of rice or a few armshells.

The explanation Nabuas give for this return prestation, which is the more significant when the groom is from another community, is that he can call together his friends and relatives in his own village, feed them pork, and tell them how well the ceremony went and how well Nabua treated him.

I asked the elder brother of one bride in Nabuapaka how they would distribute the pig they had received. He replied that the jaw would go to the hardest working woman, usually the grandmother of the bride: the woman who most looked after her as a baby, who cleaned her, suffered the indignity of having her urinate on her and so on, while her mother was away in the gardens. The stomach and liver go with the jaw to the old woman. The head is halved, with the right half going to the bride's paternal relatives, and the left to her maternal kin. The legs are used to pay debts incurred during earlier bridal payments, and the remainder is cooked with the other food and distributed to the village people.

He stressed that care has to be taken to avoid offending people, but added that as this is not the actual bride-price, they could counter dissatisfaction with the assurance that everything would be balanced out at the main ceremony in a year or so.

The most important prestation, called simply hehe,¹ usually follows the birth of one or two healthy children two to six years after the marriage. In one instance it did not take place until some ten years later, by which time six children had been born, only one of whom, the second, was a boy.

The actual procedure for hehe is much the same as for the bahao'au, so I shall not describe it, but it is interesting to compare a payment made in 1963 with one made in 1974:

	<u>1963</u> Made by Nabua man to wife's people in Bereina.	<u>1974</u> Made by Kivori man to wife's people in Nabua.
Dogs' teeth: canines (<u>tauana</u>)	934 (counted individually)	14 yards (approx: 2000)
incisors (<u>bubuhi</u>)	4 "	-
Armshells (<u>hoea</u>)	106	70
Small shells strung on cane (<u>mobio</u>)	20 "	6 yards (approx: 1000)
Bird-of-Paradise plumes (<u>inehe</u>)	38	17
Parrot plumes (<u>ikikara</u> ; <u>upiupi</u>)	35	-
Half-moon pearlshell on necklace (<u>mairi</u>)	3	-
Cash	K168	K416

1. Fr. Coluccia translated hehe as 'to indemnify, compensate, make amends' (dédommager). Nabua people simply said 'buying' when I asked them to explain. The normal word for 'buying' and 'selling', as in the market, is Kawa.

These are the only hehe figures I have,¹ and it is not a strictly fair comparison, in part because the gifts were made by men of different communities, therefore may not accurately reflect changes, but also because the first man aspired to chiefly status, while the second did not. The former's prestation may therefore be inflated over the norm for the period.

Discussion:

In 1974 I was discussing bride-price with five women from Nabuapaka. Two were unmarried in their early twenties, two were in their fifties, and the fifth in her late sixties. All agreed that bride-price was paid because the woman was leaving her own family to work and bear children for her husband and his kin "until she dies. She'll not go back again," said one. They asserted that if it was not paid they would feel upset, improperly married, and might in consequence return to their own people until their husbands had made the prestation.

Men insist that payment gives them autonomy over their wives. One Waima youth whose Nabua father-in-law had said he did not want to receive bride-price, averred to me that whatever the wishes of the older man, he would pay bride-price as soon as he was able. Only by proper payment, he said, would he be able to retain control over his wife and his marriage.

There is some validity in both points of view. This is illustrated in the case of a Nabua woman married in about 1963 to a western Motuan man who had never paid bride-price. Feeling herself mistreated after giving birth to six children, she left her husband and returned

1. Leaving aside the instance of a Motuan who brought bride-price for his Nabua wife (see below), there was only one full hehe while I was in the village. For earlier years, if individuals did not volunteer details I did not feel I could press them.

with them to her father's house in August, 1973. In December her husband arrived with a small, scrawny, sickly-looking pig, K51 and 62 small armshells. Without ceremony he delivered these items directly to his father-in-law's platform, clearly hoping to take his wife and children back to his own village.

His mother-in-law expressed righteous indignation at the size and state of the pig, and told him he could take it away again. The chief of the sub-clan (the wife's FBS) intervened at this point and informed the Motuan that decisions would have to await the arrival of his wife's brother, and in any case he had brought no bananas or other food. He was allowed to take only his two eldest children with him.

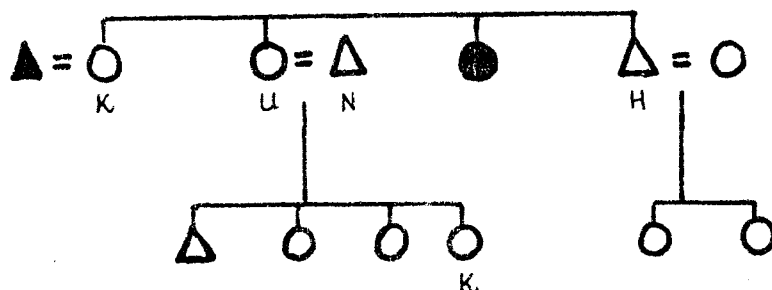
Nearly two months later, at the end of January, the woman's paternal and maternal kin assembled on her father's platform. They counted and displayed the money and armshells to much muttered comment. Her senior matrilineal kinsman expressed his displeasure at the limited size and quantity of armshells and announced that they should be put back in the suitcase and returned to the Motuan. "My sister married a Motuan man, and the same thing," he said, "I sent the armshells back."

After further discussion the chief, her senior agnate, presided over the division of the money, and the armshells were locked into the suitcase to await the Motuan.

When he arrived the following week, by now almost six months since his wife had returned to the village, her two senior matrilineal kinsmen spoke with him. They told me afterwards that they had informed him

It is not unusual to find that men who are living uxorilocally have not paid bride-price. The Nabua man who offered to waive his Waima son-in-law's bride-price hoped that the young man would leave his job in town and come to live in Nabuapaka. I note several such cases in relation to land-rights and sub-clan membership in the next chapter.

In these instances the children become full members of their mother's sub-clan rather than their father's, and there is little doubt that an important underlying theme in bride-price concerns the status of the children. The very fact that the major prestation is not made until after the birth of children would seem to illustrate this. Two cases may add weight to this point:



N did not pay bride-price for U, so when their fourth child, K, was born they gave her to her namesake, the childless older K, N's wife's sister, instead of bride-price. H and his sister K were the only other representatives of their lineage in Nabuapaka and had limited access to land, thus when U and N both died suddenly they allowed N's sister (not shown here) to adopt the remaining three children.

The second case centres on a youth of seventeen, Hamu, who died at Port Moresby hospital in February, 1977. His father, Kare, is from Rapa village, and his mother

from Tsiria. Although they had been married for well over twenty years, Kare had not paid bride-price. Their first child, born in Rapa, died in infancy, and fearing sorcery Kare and his wife sent their next two sons, Aisi and Hamu, to their mother's brother in Tsiria where they grew to young manhood.

At about fifteen, as is the way with young men, Aisi began visiting other places. He spent some time in Port Moresby and in Rapa before settling in Nabuapaka for several years, where he courted a Nabua girl and lived with his father's sister who had married a Nabua man. At about the same age, Hamu too, began travelling. He stayed with us in Nabua for a while and at the time of his death had been living at Rapa for about a year.

It was while in Rapa that he became ill and was flown urgently to Port Moresby. It is not clear what his sickness was: he seems to have become semi-paralysed. The doctors in town apparently suggested that it was some form of blood-poisoning, and there is the possibility that he was bitten by a snake whilst climbing a coconut palm. The hospital performed no post-mortem as his father took the body straight out of the hospital.

Kare brought his son back to Rapa for burial. The villagers were preparing to bury him at about midday when his maternal kin arrived from Tsiria, so they delayed proceedings until the Tsirias had cried. Aisi told me of the later events. He said that that evening the Tsirias began complaining. First his mother's brother stood up and said, "These boys grew up with us in Tsiria. We fed them. We looked after them. Nothing was wrong. They went to Moresby, they did not get sick. Now Hamu came to his father's place, and what happens? He gets sick and dies. Now you people must get one pig for me."

Kare and his relatives produced a pig and an unspecified amount of money which they presented to the Tsirias, but the following morning they began again, this time talking of Aisi and of bride-price for his mother.

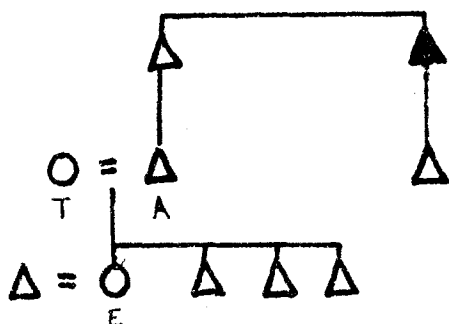
Aisi's paternal relatives found another pig and collected over K400 which they gave to the Tsiria people. Significantly he began by saying to me that the pig was in payment for him, but later said it was his mother's bride-price. Although in formal terms the pig and the money were for his mother, I think in reality they were for Aisi himself, even though he was already adult, married and expecting his first child.

Although I have no evidence in support, I suspect that if Aisi had continued to live in Tsiria his mother's kin may not have demanded a second pig. Certainly they would have made no demands if Hamu had died in Tsiria. Aisi implied that he now felt he belonged fully to his father's sub-clan in Rapa, although he still felt obligated to his mother's kin who had nurtured him as a child.

It is in this context then that the gifts of food a man presents to his wife's kin at the time of his son's first birthday or haircutting ceremony, may perhaps be seen as acknowledging responsibility for the bride-price yet to come.

Apart from uxori-local residence, through which a man's children become members of his wife's sub-clan, and the distressing circumstances in which Kare was obliged to find resources, there are other ways in which a man may discharge his bride-price obligations. One

opportunity occurs when his own daughter gets married:



A did not pay bride-price for T. When their daughter E got married they received K350 and a quantity of food at her bahao'au. Under the guidance of their chief, A's senior agnate, embarrassed that bride-price had never been paid, A and his brothers decided that the whole of the K350 should be given to T's relatives, while the food would be divided equally. At the full bride-price payment sometime in the future, they would distribute everything equally.

Bride-price, then, gives a man a degree of autonomy in his marriage, but more important it affects the status of his children and reflects the continuing obligation he has towards his wife's kin. I take up this point again in my discussion of the relationship between affines in the next chapter.

Death:

7.30 am on a hot Good Friday morning in 1974. The dead man is carried into the village and placed under the house of one of his paternal kin. People accept the news reluctantly and as reluctantly move towards Naime's house and the body. The wailing begins. Crying reaches a crescendo and fades again. A new voice enters, high-pitched, strained, full of tears and memories. Friends and relatives repeat the dead man's name again and again. Some invoke his father's name, some call his mother's. The wailing is an amalgam of

a dozen different voices crying their memories of the deceased, often crying their thoughts to the traditional rythmn of aroaba.

Most of the people around the coffin are women. Their crying is prolonged, continuous, falling off, then reaching new heights of grief. Only men who had been particularly close to the deceased remain any length of time. The others sit around the village, eventually coming up in ones and twos to sit for a while a few feet from the criers talking quietly with other men. Then, choosing their time, they move forward to sit close to the coffin, to hold some of the weeping people in turn, to cry, place hands and forehead on the coffin, to briefly sing his memories and withdraw again to sit quietly, talk quietly, comment on the crying, on the visitors, reminisce about the dead man, and about other deaths, "Remember when Mary-Carmen died and the boys played their guitars until she was in the grave, and then smashed their guitars and dropped them in on top of her?"

People withdraw, but throughout the morning are drawn back again to the body, magnetically.

The women continue to cry, wipe the lid of the coffin with their hands and bring them slapping back to their foreheads or chests. One woman uses her hands as if to draw everyone's mourning to herself. Her hands reach out, touch someone, pull back to her breast, flow to another person and draw back to herself again.

Young children laugh and play, but teenagers do not know what to do. They do not want to cry, they are not part of the dead man, he spent so many years away, coming home only in death, yet they dare not

display insensitivity. They come for a short time, then go, leave the village to loiter on the beach or in the bush.

And the same women continue to wail and hold each other and sing their memories to aroba rhythms as new voices join in loud for a while, then fall to the level of the others.

About 10.30 in the morning the chief of the dead man's mother's sub-clan stands and says "I think we should bury him soon. He's been dead three days. He was on the ice in Moresby, but not here." One of his paternal kin responds "He was my brother [actually his FBSS] , we must make him happy." The first speaker's father's brother compromises, "We must make sure he is happy. Cry properly, and we'll bury him soon."

At 11.30 someone begins to toll the church bell, and at noon he is carried quickly, almost at a run, through the village, the lament following his coffin, and the earth covers him forever.

In the past, according to Guis, the deceased's kin dressed him in full dancing regalia and sat him in a special death chair (aiyaiyai) in the centre of the village if he were an ordinary man, but on the verandah of his own clubhouse if he were a chief (Guis 1936:119).

Women mourners gashed their arms, legs, belly and breasts with sharp-edged shells until the blood ran, and if a widow did not hit herself hard enough, the dead man's kin set upon her, hitting her and accusing her of intending to remarry. After the wailing, they stripped the corpse of its finery, and two married men

carried it to the grave site, formerly under the dead man's house, which was then abandoned as a dwelling.

At the burial site, two men armed with stems of an aromatic herb called teruna (wild basil) brushed the corpse from head to foot to sweep away the spirit, and then chased it to the edge of the village and into the bush shouting and brandishing the branches, which they hurled into the scrub after it.

As soon as their work was done, those who touched the dead, or dug the grave, ran to the nearest pool to plunge in and scrub themselves energetically with leaves to remove spiritual and other impurities ('opu) from their bodies. They fasted and isolated themselves for two or three days before resuming ordinary life.

Following the burial, relatives and close friends of the deceased built a small shelter over the grave (once the practice of cemetery burial was introduced) where they stayed for some days to guard the corpse from the predations of dogs and pigs, and sorcerers who might wish to acquire various bones for use in their magic. The guard was also necessary to maintain the fire, lit to keep the dead man's spirit warm as it wandered lost, trying to orient itself, and in the hope that the ghost would reveal who had brought about their kinsman's death.

As Guis pointed out (1936:119), in common with the rest of Melanesia, the Roro believe that the majority of deaths are the result of sorcery. Natural deaths occur only in infancy, before the soul has had time to get a hold on life, and in extreme old age when the spirit is threadbare and worn. Thus after a death there is commonly a certain amount of unrest in the community as villagers debate how and upon whom vengeance should be taken. Seligmann noted that it was not

unusual to meet men in an excited state carrying spears (1910:273-4), and in Nabuapaka early in 1973 following the death of a newly wedded girl when a coconut palm fell on her, the man accused of causing her death fled in fear for his life as youths roamed the village armed with cudgels and fishing spears.

Today people in Nabuapaka do not normally build a shelter on the grave, and they have replaced the fire with a hurricane lamp. From the day of death until the lamp is extinguished, three to six weeks later at a feast called iruba ba'ao ("to put the fire out"), the village is silent. There should be no dancing, no guitar playing, no loud noise. Even small children must play quietly. There should be no work on canoes or housebuilding, and people slip unobtrusively to their gardens to collect only the minimum produce for day-to-day living. The village is "cold" (aiara ne amari).

Extinguishing the fire permits the community to return to normal, except for the spouse and other close kin of the deceased who may mourn for as long as two years or more depending on factors such as the status of the dead. In instances where the individual was highly influential, or endowed with special talents, iruba ba'ao might be followed by a lengthy taboo (rauhubu) enjoined on the whole community proscribing a particular activity. For example, after the 1971 death in Nabua of Ume Heneha, his relatives imposed a taboo on a style of dancing with drums known as ewa. Apparently Ume had been a leading exponent of this dance form, and the ban was still in force at the beginning of 1978.

The ending of mourning is marked by a ceremony called arikepana or tou te baekarahi, literally meaning "coming-out feast", for the surviving spouse has in theory been a virtual prisoner in his or her house since

the death.

The potential hostility between affines, expressed in ritual abduction and raiding at the time of marriage, takes another form at death. Again it is necessary to turn to Guis's description of events as he witnessed them in the 1880s and 1890s for, as with so much else, what we see today in the communities I am most familiar with is only a shadow of the overt antagonism that he described. For example, when a woman died, her kin assaulted, swore at, and criticised her husband for not caring for her properly, and not protecting her from the sorcerers. They entered his house and took everything that belonged to her - pots, string bags, utensils and pigs, although sometimes the bereaved man forestalled them by taking her things to the centre of the village and ostentatiously breaking the pots and slashing the string bags (Guis 1936:128). They ravaged his gardens and lopped the crowns off his coconut palms.

The widower, blackened, unwashed, with tight belts around his waist, and tight braids around his legs, retired to the clubhouse by day and slept at night on his wife's grave, usually with some relatives for company. He ate the poorest food and drank only hot water, or what Guis described as an abominable concoction of heated ginger (1936:130).

Guis continued:

at the same time that a man loses his wife he loses all his rights: it is a social death in all its horror. Old or young, chief or commoner, he is nothing. He was someone when his wife was alive, now he is nothing, he is only a widower. For him there is no hunting, no fishing with the others: his presence would bring ill-luck and his wife's spirit would frighten the fish and game.

He has no voice at meetings. If there is feasting or dancing he just smells the flavours or listens to the drums from afar. ...if his children want to get married during this time, he has no right to intervene whatsoever ... he becomes a nocturnal animal: unseen in daylight, he must walk like a wild pig in the grass and bush, and meet people only in secret, whispering as if he has lost his voice (Guis 1936:130-131).

Guis stated that widowers commonly acquire reputations as sorcerers (1936:132) and that villagers therefore fear and shun them. Hau'ofa has shown how Mekeo widowers, expelled from the companionship of ordinary men, and enjoined to avenge their wives' deaths, often seek the company of sorcerers, sometimes learning some of their secrets (Hau'ofa 1975: 262-3).

Guis also suggested that it was not unusual for widowers to commit suicide, "especially at Roro" (1936: 133), and as a consequence a relative or close friend stays to watch them, particularly in the early stages of widowhood.

The children of the deceased and other close cognates of the surviving spouse sponsor all mortuary ceremonial, but the paternal and maternal kinsfolk of the dead, together known as the huria haukia (literally: "bone people"), decide how harsh a mourning process they should impose on the surviving spouse, their affine. They make the decision at the feast to end the grave watch and extinguish the lamp, iruba ba'ao.

When old Parama Naime died in 1975 after a long illness, his huria haukia, who arrived from Waima and Oreke, told his elderly widow that they knew how well she had cared for their brother during his illness, and as a consequence there was no need for her to be incarcerated in her house. She was to wear widow's

black but otherwise was free to come and go as she pleased.

Similarly, in 1976 when a middle-aged man died suddenly leaving six children aged from their early twenties to under ten, his huria haukia insisted that the feast to extinguish the lamp should be held on the day following the burial, and chose not to impose any restrictions on his widow. His eldest son, then aged seventeen, told me that this was "because they did not want us to be hungry. So my mother can go to the garden and get food for us and feed us."

I think this is significant. The widow's two closest cognatic kin in Nabua had twelve young children between them, and the dead man's kin would have had to take some responsibility, but they lived in a neighbouring community and possessed limited resources. Thus it seems likely that they were content to allow her to continue looking after her own children to avoid having to do so themselves. Her son agreed that this was probable.

By contrast, the huria haukia of a woman who died in her late middle age were reluctant to lift mourning restrictions on her widower. At the ceremony to extinguish the lamp, three weeks after her burial, one of the deceased's senior paternal kin hesitated a long while before accepting his food. Later he and others argued against permitting the dead woman's husband to leave his house where he had been isolated since his wife's death.

Their anger resulted from a feeling that they had been neglected in recent months by their kinswoman's children, and from reports that her husband had got

drunk on a number of occasions during her illness instead of concerning himself about her impending death.¹ At about 4 am, after some eight hours of discussion, the differences were resolved. They called the widower and gave him permission to leave his house but not to leave the village. For the time being he was not to visit the gardens nor other communities.

These longer restrictions may only be lifted at the later mortuary ceremonies held perhaps as long as two years or more after the death. At the same time other people, whether relatives or close friends, who have observed some abstinence in memory of the dead are free to resume normal life. One man may give up smoking, another may grow his beard, a third cease to eat yams or a particular species of banana, or crabs, and so on. To do this is called maura (a fast for the dead).

Timing of the ceremony, which I have heard variously called arikepana (death fast ?²), tou te baekarahi (coming-out feast), and maura 'ani (to eat the fast), depends upon the huria haukia, the cognates of the dead. If the mourners feel their abstinence has become unduely prolonged, they or their own cognates may send a small gift to their affines asking permission to stage the appropriate feast. Guis noted that in instances where the whole community is subject to some form of taboo, eventually a whisper goes round the village, "The place is too cold: there is no dancing and drumming to give joy to the spirit and make the body move." If it continues too long villagers may threaten the bereaved with violence, or offer them gifts to induce them to lift the mourning (Guis 1936:135).

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1. Another factor that clouds the issue in this particular case was rivalry within the ranks of the huria haukia themselves over a long disputed chieftainship, and accusations of sorcery.
 2. Ari = death. Fr Coluccia translated kepa as "Sert de nourriture en temps de disette."

Once the decision is made, again the children and/or relatives of the surviving spouse sponsor the ceremony. When Taita Aihi's husband was killed in Port Moresby in 1969, her father, after consultation with her husband's cognatic kin, hosted the feast which released Taita, and set her free to re-marry.

In 1975 I attended a mortuary ceremony in Delena at which two widows were released simultaneously. One had apparently been in seclusion for about a year, the other for about three months.

In the centre of the village the women's kin had set out four large heaps (tou) of pork, garden produce, and store-bought food, and ten smaller heaps. The widows' kinsfolk distributed the latter to the various groups of people who had helped to prepare the feast, and then a long wait occurred during which nothing seemed to be happening. About 11.00 that night a relative of one of the women complained loudly about the delay, whereupon a cognate of the first woman's dead husband stood up and asserted that she had not been inside long enough. She should not be brought out yet.

About an hour later two Nabuapaka youths, affines of the first widow, helped her from her house and led her painfully slowly through the village. She cried the whole time and paused for long moments every few steps. Eventually they reached the four large heaps of food and the second widow was then similarly escorted to the piles amid absolute silence from the assembled villagers.

Another long pause was broken when the second widow's father's brother stood up and said that these two were good women who had looked after their husband's

well. They should be released from mourning and allowed to chew betel mixture and eat normally again. He then announced that of the four heaps of food one each was to go to the agnates of the two dead men, while the other two were for their matrilineal kin.

After another pause someone from the first widow's husband's side (I could not find out who) stood and said that the two women were free. They could take off their widow's clothes, and as they were young they could now go and look for new husbands if they wished.

The first woman's father's brother came forward and gave her some betel mixture while someone else pulled a white blouse over the top of her widow's dress symbolising her new freedom. The recipients took away the food piles and the young men began strumming their guitars to introduce the dancing. It was 2 am.

A person who chafes under the restrictions and behaves as if he or she were freed, receives short shrift from the deceased's kin. When one widower married again before the final mortuary ceremony, his former wife's brother and sister set upon him, ripping his black clothes from him, and assaulting him with a cudgel (pura'a). He and his new wife fled the village and when they returned two or three years later he killed a pig and made peace (maino) with his former wife's family. But they never consented to a widower's feast for him, and his eldest son by his second wife is now about twenty.

Similarly a widow, perhaps in her late thirties or early forties whose Nabua husband died in 1971, was rumoured in 1974 to be casting her eyes at the men in a neighbouring village. Her husband's kin delayed her ceremony of release, and when, two years later she was caught on the beach with a man, they beat her, stripped her widow's clothes from her, and vowed never to permit a feast for her.

Discussion:

"The two most important things in Roro society are marriage and death," said two Roro men in conversation with me in Port Moresby one day. "Even the most distant relatives have claims."

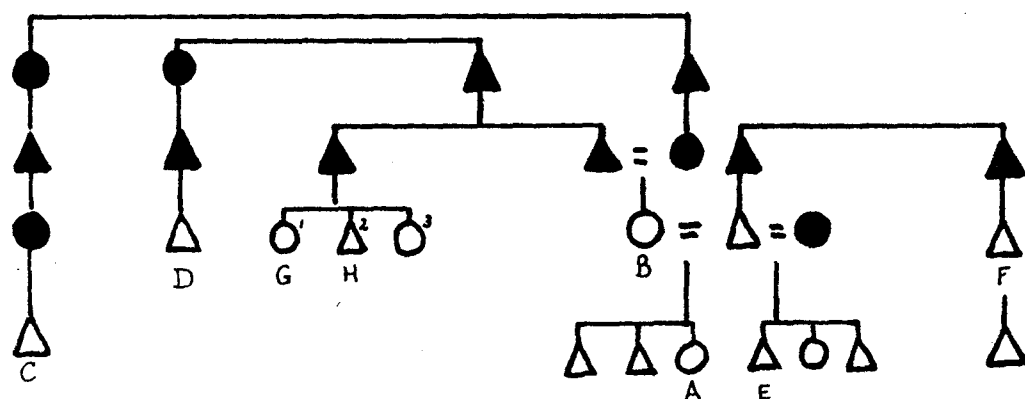
When my mother died", added one, "some very distant relatives on my mother's side came and demanded that I kill a pig for them. I have never in my life received even one small fish from them, so I told them to get lost."

I do not know that I have even begun, in this chapter, to do justice to that importance and to the close relationship between affines, but this discussion should be read in conjunction with that following chapter 4 concerning recruitment to sub-clans, the relationships between them and the organisation of labour and land. I have tried here to show something of the formal underlying theme of mutual obligation between the two sets of kin, but particularly the responsibility of a man and his kin to his wife's people, expressed in ritual hostility at times of marriage and death, ameliorated by gifts of food and other valuables from the moment of betrothal, through the birth of children, the marriages of those children and on to the final mortuary ceremony marking the end of mourning - and even beyond and on into the next generation.

A man spends a great deal of time in both work and play with his wife's close kin, just as he expects his sister's husband to work with him. There is a constant exchange of plates of cooked food, fish and mutual assistance, although a man's obligations to supply labour is greater towards his brothers than vice-versa. I discuss this in the next chapter.

In most life-crisis rituals the dominant formal flow of goods is from the male to the female side. A youth's agnatic and matrilineal kin assist him in his bride-price prestations, and they help him again after his children are born in making gifts to his child's mother's people, who in return maintain a strong interest in the welfare of their daughter/sister and her children. At her son's marriage they contribute to his bride-price; at her daughter's marriage they receive a part of the prestation but try to ensure that her husband treats her properly.

More specifically, a woman's matrilineal kin play the dominant part at her marriage, while both her agnatic and matrilineal kin are co-principals at her death:



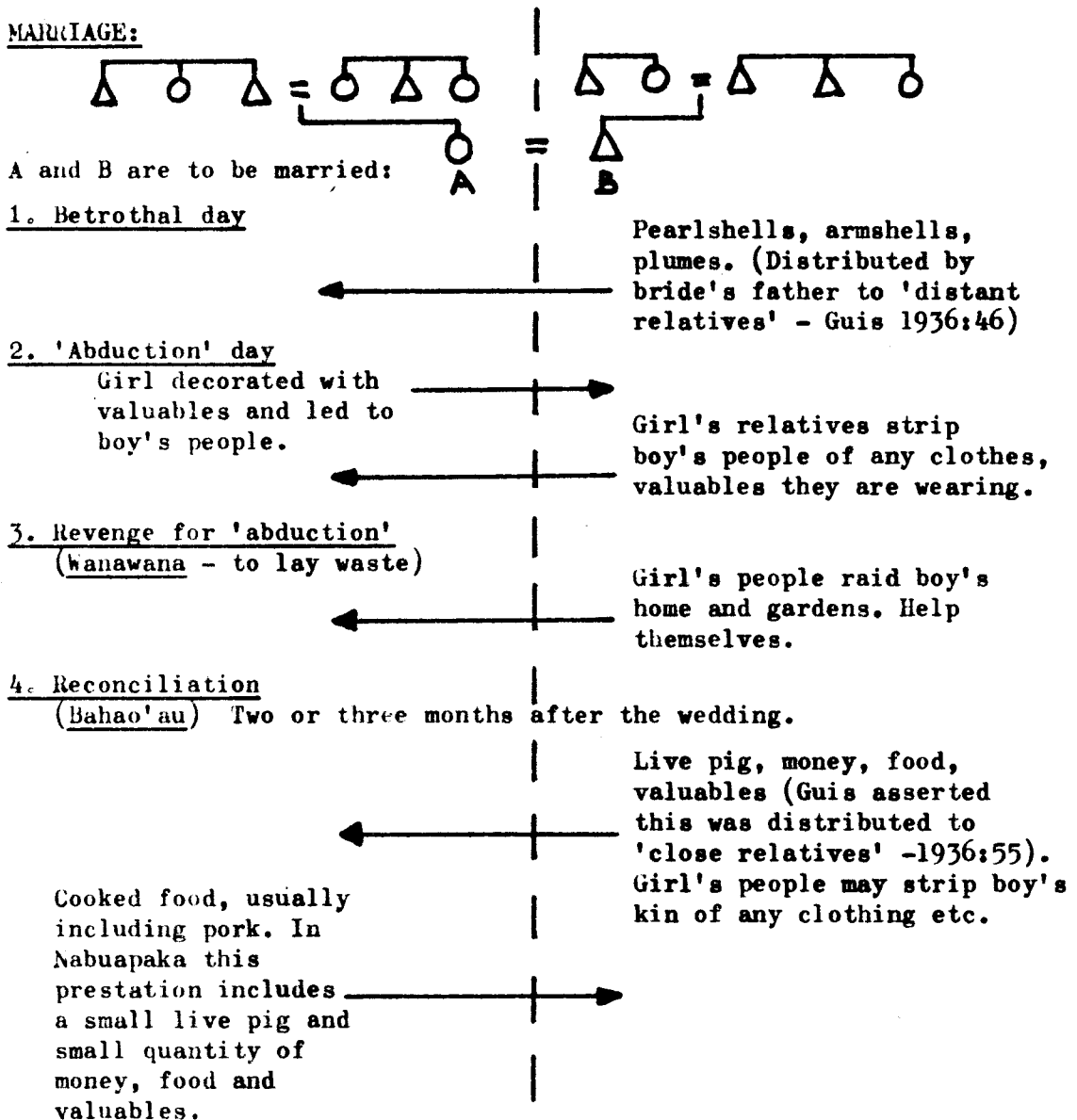
When A's husband brought inadequate bride-price, it was two of her senior matrilineal kin, C and D who, after consulting her agnates, took the responsibility for upbraiding him and warning him to treat her properly.

When B died, her children together with her husband's kin sponsored her mortuary ritual, but while E and F officiated at the ceremony they deferred constantly to B's senior cognates - in this case C and G. The latter was representing both her brother H, who was away, and her cousin D, who was by this time a widower and therefore unable to participate.

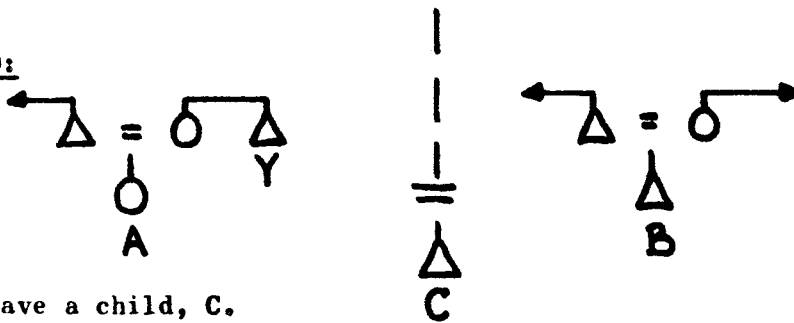
Among the formal prestations of food made by E and F, one went to G representing B's agnates, and another to C, representing her matrilineal kin.

Formal flow of food and valuables:

In the following diagram I have attempted to summarise the formal flow of goods during life-crisis ceremonies, but this chart ignores the mutual help and exchanges that characterise everyday behaviour.

MARRIAGE:

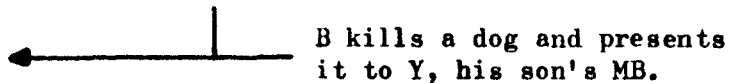
Today, as most marriages start with elopements, exchanges begin at Revenge, or even at this point, Reconciliation. The girl's father thus normally distributes this prestation equally to his daughter's matri- and patrilineal kin. Bride price proper is not presented until after the birth of children.

CHILDHOOD:

A and B have a child, C.

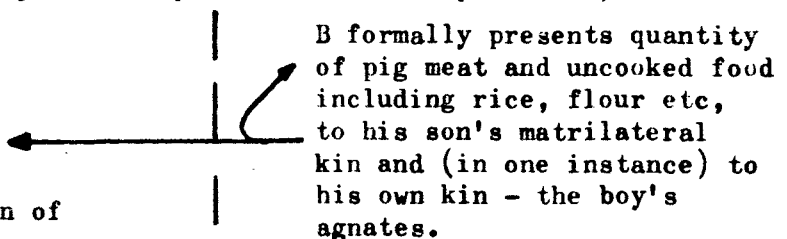
(I do not include birth and naming ceremonies mentioned by Guis as he did not state who sponsored them. It seems that events 6 and 7 have partially replaced these.)

5. On a boy's donning his first pubic covering (according to Seligmann)
Not practised today.



B kills a dog and presents it to Y, his son's MB.

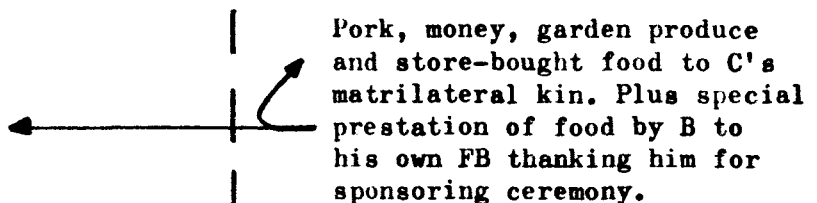
6. First birthday party (Not held for every child. May be of greatest significance where major bride price still to be presented)



B formally presents quantity of pig meat and uncooked food including rice, flour etc, to his son's matrilineal kin and (in one instance) to his own kin - the boy's agnates.

Reciprocal prestation of uncooked yams, rice, bananas etc to B's kin.

7. Haircutting (not held for every child)

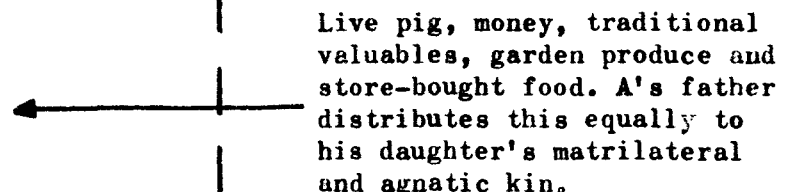


Pork, money, garden produce and store-bought food to C's matrilineal kin. Plus special prestation of food by B to his own FB thanking him for sponsoring ceremony.

(No reciprocity at ceremony I saw. A's kin invited, but did not attend)

8. Major bride price

(Hehe) Several years after 4, Reconciliation. Normally following birth of children.



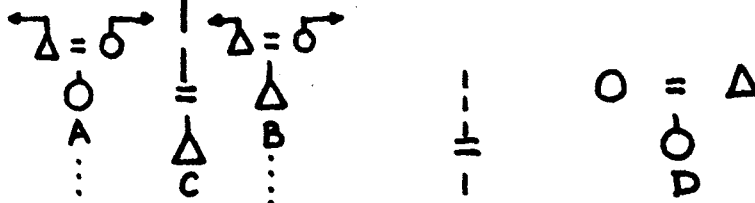
Live pig, money, traditional valuables, garden produce and store-bought food. A's father distributes this equally to his daughter's matrilineal and agnatic kin.

Cooked food and, in Nabuapaka, small live pig, small quantity of money, valuables, uncooked food.

Girl's people may again strip boy's kin of clothing etc.

CHILD'S MARRIAGE:

C grows up and gets married, and his matrilineal kin, who have been the major recipients of food and valuables to this stage, now, as cognates of C, begin to make their return by helping him through stages 1 to 8



9. A's kin, major recipients to this point, now assist C in his own bride price, birthday for his children etc.

DEATH:

10. Extinguishing the fire
(iruba ba'ao) three to six weeks after death.

A dies, and in a ritual sponsored by C, his siblings and his agnatic kin, they present pork and uncooked food to A's kin.

C's wife's kin also assist.

11. Coming-out/ Ending the death fast
(tou te baekarahi/ maura ani) up to two years after the death.

The same as 10.

If B had died, then C, his siblings and his matrilineal kin would sponsor the ceremonies. The prestations would thus be reversed, although C's wife's kin continue to assist.