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**We, of the Banyan Tree**  
**Traditions of Origin of the Alune of West Seram**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of  
The Australian National University

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Except where otherwise acknowledged,  
this thesis is the result of my original research.

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## ABSTRACT

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Several small communities of Alune and Wemale shifting cultivators are established in the upland region of 'Wele Telu, the 'Three Large Rivers' of West Seram in eastern Indonesia. Although the centralised state regards these peripheral *desa* as marginal, this is not the view of the people themselves. Comparatively more isolated than the coastal communities, the mountain 'domains' (**hena, inama, anakota**) claim to have preserved a traditional relationship to their land and their ancient mode of affiliation and marriage alliances. Each domain forms a social, territorial, religious and political unit which is still relatively autonomous. In the past, mountain and coastal domains participated in a larger federative ceremonial order which did not bar them from also competing for hegemony and taking part in conflicting alliances, warfare, or head-hunting raids against one another.

In the middle of the 17th century, to secure total control of the clove growing industry, the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) dismantled the ruling system of Luhu, the largest political ally of Ternate on west Seram, and entirely depopulated the peninsula. For two centuries thereafter inland Seram did not attract much foreign attention. When outsiders began recording the history of 'Wele Telu a century ago, the region had already changed drastically. Colonial policies, whose aims were full administrative control and subordination of the population, were forcefully implemented. The ceremonial and political federative orders of the Kakehan and the Saniri were banned and mountain settlements subjected to a complete re-configuration. Focusing on the Alune mountain domain of Manusa Manuwey (**Hena Ma'saman.uey**), this thesis explores how contemporary highland communities have preserved their traditional knowledge and adapted their socio-cultural practices to successive tumultuous historical change.

The history of groups and domains is recounted in topogenies. The social knowledge embedded in these ordered sequences of sacred places/events is the warrant of the origin of these groups and the chronicle of all matters of renown in which they take pride. Topogenies also establish peoples' codes of social behaviour and their relation to the environment. They are the records of groups' rights, precedence and duties and a living register of the intricate network of relations between them. The origin structures of Manusa Manuwey examined in this thesis, situate the domain in an inner and central position in its region. It is a female centre, the 'source'/core' (**uweï**) which 'distributed' (**sama**) the heirlooms generating wealth and fecundity, to the coastal groups as they 'departed' or came to settle at the domain's periphery.

Non-localised named origin groups among both Alune and Wemale are called **nuru**. Alune **nuru** perpetuate themselves by reference to a genitor line of derivation, Wemale by reference to a genitrix one. Large **nuru** set forth 'branches' (**sanai**) over the whole region, establishing 'Houses' (**luma**) in the domains of both territories. Residency determines the linguistic affiliation and mode of derivation of these units.

In Alune the notion of origin is encapsulated in the term **uwei**, (**wei** or **wey**) which conflates the ideas of 'origin', 'base', 'cause', 'centre' and 'source of continuity'. Notions of relative precedence within and between groups are expressed in metaphorical idioms. Within large **nuru**, 'branches' arrange themselves in a variable order of precedence linguistically constructed by using complementary categories such as 'ahead/behind' ('older'/ 'younger') or male/female. This is a loose and changeable precedence subjected to social competition. In Alune domains, earlier settlers take precedence over those who came afterward; they usually control larger sections of land and most positions of authority. However, prior establishment is insufficient to maintain these positions. Since large groups of settlers are better fitted to increase their status, a group of newcomers may gain renown for itself, expand in number, enter in strategic alliances and enhance its prestige, hence becoming an 'elder' **nuru** in that domain.

Alune **nuru** are strictly exogamous. As they enter in relationships of exchange and alliances, Houses give precedence to bride-giving progenitors over their progeny, a relationship described in Alune terms as that of 'granary mother' to 'female child'. This relationship may be repeated, reversed or severed and new alliances initiated, challenging the previous order of precedence at each generation. Progenitors 'feed' and 'fecundate' their progeny, a ritual duty that parallels that of the ancestors. Social reproduction of groups was formerly secured by 'fecundating rituals' that are now prohibited. According to Alune elders, the present celebrations and exchanges of prestations are a mere token of the large celebrations of the past. Yet these ritual celebrations of food still keep the blessings flowing from the world of the Sky to the world of the Earth.

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## NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND ORTHOGRAPHY

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Alune call their language **lepa** Alune, to 'speak', 'talk' Alune; the word 'language' is expressed by **sou** which also means 'history' or 'the words spoken'. Most Alune are now literate and some have transcribed several traditional songs and sayings of their elders.

**Lepa** Alune is a Central Malayo-Polynesian language. Short utilitarian wordlists of the languages of West Seram figure in various publications of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the most significant for the Alune language was the vocabulary list compiled in and near Riring by Sierevelt (1920). The first preliminary survey of the languages of Seram was conducted in 1911-12 by the members of the second Freiburg expedition. Tauern, Deninger and particularly Stresemann published the first study on sound shifts in the cognate languages of Seram.<sup>1</sup> A few years later, Niggemeyer, who lost most of his field notes during the war, published a short grammar, a wordlist and a collection of 33 folk tales from the data he collected during the Frobenius expedition in 1937-38.<sup>2</sup> In his study of the historical relationships of the languages of central Maluku, Collins (1980) proposes a detailed classification of the mountain languages of West Seram, descendants of Nunusaku, the proto language of west and central Seram to which the Alune (and Wemale) languages belong. However Collins does not include a detailed study of the Alune language, which he divides in three dialect groups North, Central, and South (Kairatu).

Scholarly studies of the Alune dialects are recent. A preliminary dictionary of the dialect [k] of Riring was produced by Y. and T. Taguchi in 1990. In her dissertation, M. Florey (1990) examines language shift in the Alune speaking villages which resettled at or near the coast after 1950. She has since conducted research in the mountain village of Lohia Sapalewa and is currently producing a dictionary of the non [k] dialect of Lohia Sapalewa and Lohia Tala. According to Florey, there are only two Alune dialects since Kairatu is almost totally extinct.

These two dialects, which are mutually understood, are identified as [k] and non-[k]. The former is spoken in the lower Sapalewa valley (Riring Rumasoa, Buria Latuerake), at the north coast (Kawa, Murnaten, Nikulukan, Niwelenu, Wakolo, Patahuwe) and in the Eti

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<sup>1</sup>Stresemann 1927 (See also Collins 1980 p.6, 54).

<sup>2</sup>Niggemeyer 1951 pp. 50-69, 288-300; 1952 pp. 116-132, 238-250.

river valley (Murikau, Lumoli Niniari). This [k] dialect is also still spoken in several settlements which were originally inland but moved southward, for example Nurue, Kamal at the south coast and Huku Anakota or Huku Kecil (in the southern hills but coming originally from upper Sapalewa). The non-[k] dialect is present in the upper Sapalewa (Manusa and Lohia Sapalewa) and in their children villages (Rumbatu Rumberu Kawatu and Lohia Tala). The [k] dialect is the most widely spoken of both. The following table shows the main differences between the two dialects.<sup>3</sup>

non-[k] dialect (Manusa)	[k] dialect
1- ['] glotal stop	[k]
eg. 'ane	kane to 'eat'
ni'wele	nikwele 'coconut'
'wali	kwali 'same sex sibling'
2- [ml]	[nd]
eg. mlinu	ndinu 'garden'
mlau	ndau 'toward the sea'
3- [d]	[r]
word initially but [r]	in all environments except consonant
elsewhere	clusters where it is pronounced [d]
	(eg. ndinu 'garden')
eg. do'one	rokone 'short'
porole	porole 'yellow'
dani	rani to 'cry'
4- [j]	[r]
variant of [r] found only in	
meije	meire 'this'
meje	mere 'that'

I thank Yushin and Takako Taguchi and Margaret Florey for letting me use the early drafts of their dictionaries. The Taguchi are working in Riring where a [k] dialect is spoken. Their and Nina Leong's amicable assistance at an early stage of my field work was much

appreciated.<sup>4</sup> So was Florey's. The linguistic notes she shared with me were of considerable assistance. I did not have Florey's dictionary in the field but I rely chiefly on it in this thesis. She has allowed me to quote, under reservation, an early version (1994).<sup>5</sup> When I refer to her entries I acknowledge these by indicating (Florey Alunedic 94) in a footnote.

Throughout this thesis I use different type-faces to distinguish languages other than English. The quotations in Alune are in **bold** and those in other non-English languages, including in Bahasa Indonesia, are printed in *italics*.

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<sup>4</sup>The Taguchi preferred this early draft of their dictionary (1990) not to be quoted.

<sup>5</sup>At an early stage of a multidisciplinary dictionary research project, I contributed some thousand entries to the draft which is quoted in this thesis.



## INTRODUCTION

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This thesis is the result of both archival and field research. The archival investigation was principally conducted in Leiden and The Hague during the preparation of my MA degree (1988) and afterward. The field work inquiry, of relatively short duration (11 months), was conducted in the domain of Manusa Samanuwey in west Seram, eastern Indonesia, between May 91 and April 92.

Seram, *Nusa Ina*, the 'mother land' is the largest island of the Moluccas and one of the closest to Irian Jaya. It lays alongside Ambon, between the realm of the former northern sultanates and the southern islands. Although a variety of research has been conducted in Seram by modern scholars (Ellen, Valeri, Platenkamp, Grimzlek), the island remains largely unstudied. Seram's diverse and complex social history is still inadequately documented. In this thesis I concentrate on 'Wele (or Kwele) Telu, the Three River region of west Seram.

Much has been written about West Seram. However an in-depth study of this material reveals little of the region's own perception of its history. In an attempt to provide a description of the whole region in the short duration of the Second Freiburg expedition (1911-12) Tauern remained necessarily superficial. However, among his multiple appendices is preserved an important Alune text which, compared to contemporary data adds an anthropological perspective to Knaap's excellent historical account of the Saniri of the Three Rivers. (1987).

Jensen and Niggemeyer (1939) have gathered a rich collection of narratives. It is their work which first drew my attention to the region. The majority of the narratives were collected in the Wemale region where Jensen and Niggemeyer did their main field work (1937-38). It was theirs and de Vries's opinion that Alune had a poor oral tradition. This opinion was difficult to contest since no contemporary ethnographic inquiry had been conducted among the Alune and the first specific studies of their language only started in the 1990s (Taguchi, Florey).

Alune social units were also unclearly defined by early visitors, mostly officers and missionaries, who resided in the region for some period of time and provided descriptions of the local societies at an initial stage of the implementation of colonial administration (mainly Sachse 1907 and 1922 and de Vries 1927). Examining these various records, van Wouden 'wonders what sort of group the *soa* is among the Alune' (1968 p.74) Based on the same documents, Bubandt perceives the Seramese *soa* as 'always a subunit of a larger whole



spread over several villages' (1991 p.38). Wemale and Alune both have 'Houses' (**luma**) but the early visitors struggled (as I did myself) to define these ambiguous units. Wemale link membership to groups along the genitrix line and Alune along the genitor line but little more is known about affiliation. One noted feature of Alune alliances of marriage was large exchange of prestations and the excesses of this practice.<sup>1</sup>

More fieldwork was required to carry out a preliminary assessment of the contemporary Alune society. The research leading to this thesis was undertaken as part of the Comparative Austronesian Project. It was financed by the Department of Anthropology of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies of the Australian National University and further supported (in many ways) by my husband, Johan Smit.

I went to Manusa, a small and remote Alune domain, on the advice of Pa W. Syauta, who traced his ancestry to the northern domain of Lissabata, and was my first Alune informant in Ambon. Pa Syauta told me that I had to go to Mansaman.uey, for although located at the distant periphery of the main regional centres, this mountain domain was the Alune custodian of Nunusaku, the sacred 'core' (**uwei**) of the region.<sup>2</sup> The name of this sacred and invisible banyan, inaccessible to the living, ought not be pronounced in Manusa but the powerful symbolism of its botanical metaphor certainly permeated the whole Alune society. Going to the field after a long immersion in archives, my primary purpose was, as McWilliams puts it, 'to develop an understanding of the society in its own terms' (1989 p.2).

In this thesis I investigate Alune knowledge of the past and their contemporary social practices. I am also concerned with the concepts of order and tradition which support their social organisation, as I observed it in one of their small mountains domain. The Alune, and among them the group of Hena Manusa Samanuwey (or Mansaman.uey), are established along the three large river valleys of West Seram which they share with the Wemale. Their total number is over 20,000. The mountain populations are forest agriculturists who still depend largely on sago. Comparatively more isolated than the coastal communities, the mountain 'domains' (**hena, inama, anakota**) claim to have preserved a traditional relationship to their land and their ancient mode of affiliation and marriage alliances.

This thesis consists in nine chapters and three appendices. The first chapter is an overview of the present socio-ecological environment of 'Wele Telu and a short survey of the

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<sup>1</sup>There is also a voluminous documentation available on the Kakehan and the ritual practices of this initiatory brotherhood. However, this intriguing field of research is beyond the scope of the present thesis.

<sup>2</sup>The domain of Japio being its Wemale counterpart in this duty.

implications of intensive commercial logging and migratory land settlements on parts of the island. As a development planning effort seems currently aimed at Seram, I examine also some of the issues at stake in the socio-economic development of this island.

The second and third chapter provide an extensive overview of the past that informs my approach to the present situation of the region. It also allows a better understanding of the Alune response to the social changes their society is currently undertaking. Although the inland region retained a large degree of autonomy until the late 19th century, during the last hundred years 'Wele Telu has been the theatre of historical impositions such as the assimilation within a colonial administration, successive foreign and national military occupations, repeated guerrilla warfare, and, more recently, the implementation of drastic modernisation policies. This is the best documented part of the island history and these political and economic processes can be outlined relatively precisely. However the region also has a different perception of its past, which is based on its ancient internal ideological and political system and makes it respond creatively to the changes brought in by external forces. The Alune (and Wemale) domains in each river valley (**batai**), although fairly independent, were loosely united by varied and changing alliances. Their dignitaries congregated in large assemblies and celebrations (**nili**). A form of precedence organised the domains of each of the three river 'trunks' (**batai**) around a coastal 'core' (**niliuwe**). **Uwei** (**wei**), the 'source of continuity', 'origin', 'base', 'cause' or 'core' is a fundamental concept, and Alune give precedence to whatever is **uwe**, because it is 'senior' (**a mena**) to what flows from it, follows, branches out, but also returns (**leu**) to it. The **niliuwe** of a **batai**, the 'core' of a riverine community of domains, is at the coast and is **a mena**, the 'elder', the 'foremost'. It presents an asymmetric relation between mountain and coast. However the position of 'elder' is not ascribed *per se* to the coast. As levels change, other values of this society become prominent and the precedence of elder/younger is reversed between mountain and coast. If power is centered at the coast, the perpetuation of life and wealth has its source in the mountains where the sacred and invisible banyan, epitome of the pervasive concept of **uwe**, still stands.

Like most Austronesian societies, Alune are greatly concerned with the notion of, and the knowledge about, their origin and tend to interpret the present in term of this knowledge. As Fox pointed out,

'..The indigenous ideas on origin involve a complex array of notions. Conceptions of ancestry are invariably important but rarely is ancestry alone a sufficient and exclusive criterion for defining origins. Recourse to notions of place is also critical in identifying persons and groups, and thus in tracing origins. Similarly, alliance, defined in the broad sense of relations of persons and groups to one another, is also an important element in

defining origins. Together all these notions imply an attitude to the past: that it is knowable and that such knowledge is of value, that what happened in the past has set a pattern for the present, and that it is essential to have access to the past to order the present.'(1996 p.5)

The Alune discourse on origin is phrased in relatively few words, often relying on metaphoric language, **lepa sou ela** 'to speak the great language'. This historical discourse relies primarily upon laconic recitation of names and places to locate individuals and groups, validate their claim upon a territory, and establish orders of political organisation that often compete. The 'source of history' (**sou uwei**) condensed in these names is immutable, but those who hold the right to utter them may freely interpret and updated their narratives to justify the past or assimilate changing contexts. In Chapters Four and Five, I inquire into the social knowledge embedded in Alune narratives, the named places of the groups and the deeds of the ancestors that consecrated these sites. For the people who link themselves to them, the names of these ancestors are **na ela mena** ('name', 'great,' 'elder/first'), renowned founding names of the region. Their figures are archetypal role models and protectors and their deeds are mapped on the land. The case studies are provided by the narrative of origin of the mountain domain **hena** Manusa and the narratives of the groups who, along successive migrations, joined around its ritual centre.

Alune and Wemale societies are composed of named non-localised origin groups (**nuru**) whose segments (**luma**) have assembled in various domains. Thus, each domain has a unique set of founding members and a single history. In Chapter Six, I examine the organisation of one Alune mountain domain. Most **luma** settled in or near their point of origin but some are widely distributed over the region. In Alune domains, earlier settlers, those who came 'ahead' (**a mena**), have precedence over those who came 'behind' (**a muli**) who are 'younger children' (**ana mulini**). In Manusa these earlier or more powerful House are called **upu hena** the 'grandfathers of the domain', they have access to larger sections of land and control most positions of authority and ritual duties. However, initial establishment is not sufficient to maintain these positions and, as **upu hena** become extinct or move away, entrepreneurial **ana mulini** arise to replace them.

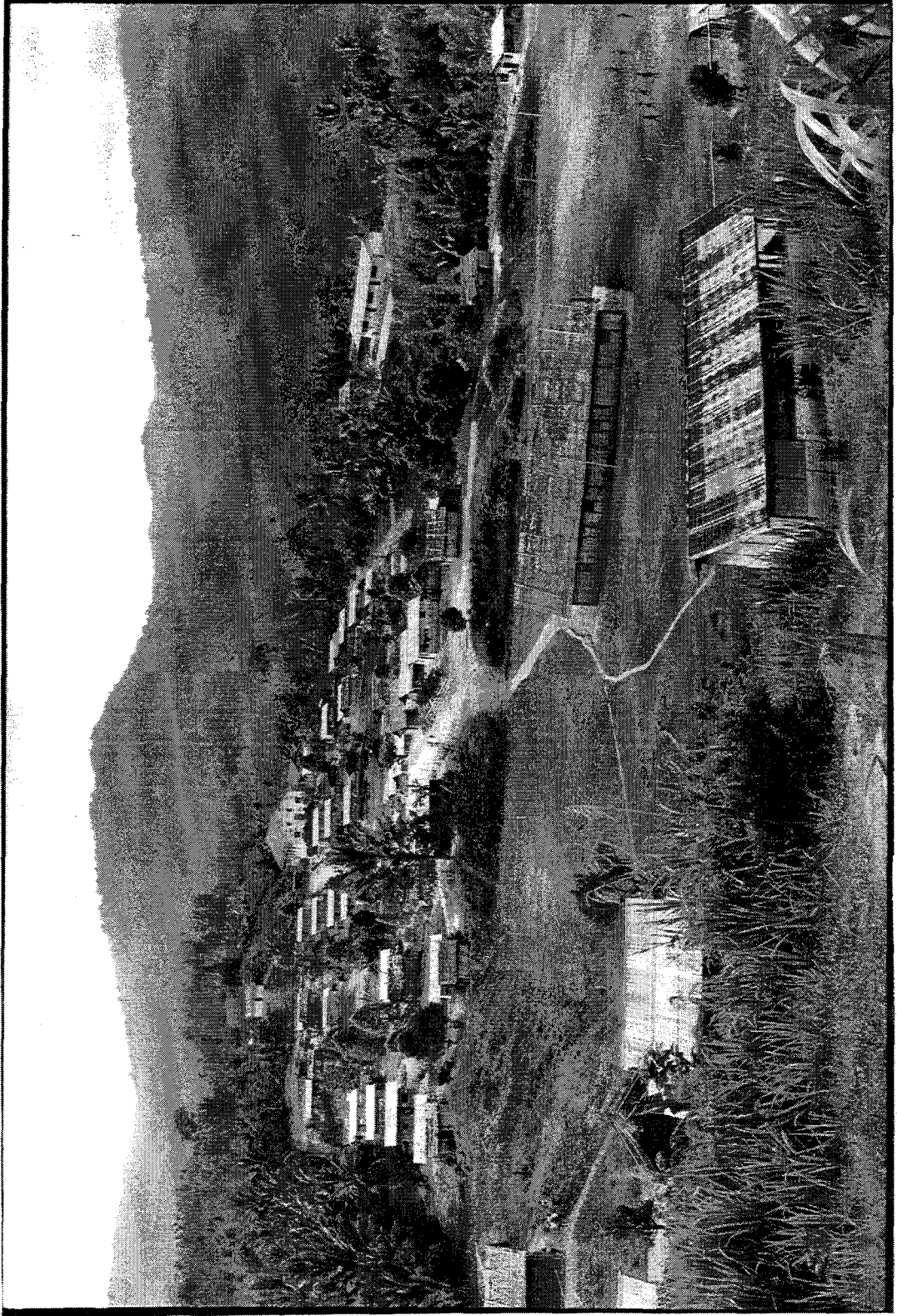
The territory of the **hena** is regarded as a single entity of which no section may be divided, sold nor even fenced. In mountain domains, the *soa* system or **nuru ela**, was a superstructure superimposed by the colonial administration circa 1915. In the second part of Chapter Six, I examine the *soa*'s regional implications through the example of Manusa where it lasted until 1977. In appendix 1, I document the successive forms of settlements of the **hena**. This provides an example of the pattern of change which has affected the highland area of West Seram since the beginning of this century.

In Chapter Seven, I examine the Alune **nuru** and **luma**. The members of a **nuru** share a common name and the idea of a common origin, often associated with a named ancestor or a site (marked by trees, and/or waters or rock formations). Large **nuru** fragment and subdivide; these sub-units are called **sanai**, 'branches'. Relationships between the various 'branches' of an origin group are rather loose when they exist, and a **nuru** has no overarching internal structure of authority. However, its members usually acknowledge one of its 'branches' as **nuruwei** the 'core' of their **nuru**. This 'core' (**uwei**) the 'earlier', 'elder' and most potent 'source of continuity' of the **nuru** is the group presently regarded as the largest or most renowned, but not necessarily a line that derives most directly from the founder. Indeed distant tips may 'return' to support or replace the initial trunk. Their relationship to the founder can subsequently be socially elaborated and inserted into the body of narratives which pertain to that **nuru**. Within large **nuru** the 'branches' (**sanai**) are ordered in a variable order of precedence linguistically constructed primarily by using the complementary categories **a mena/a muli** 'earlier'/'later', 'elder'/'younger'. This order is subjected to social competition and recognition by the other members of the **nuru**. As they move into another domain, some 'branches' affix an extra name to their group. A branch may also sever links with its previous origin and start its own **nuru** placing the 'core' **uwei** of its new **nuru** under a new branch name and thus establishing for its members a new 'core' of origin.

The localised kin groups, ramifications of the **nuru**, are the **luma**, 'Houses'. These Houses are bound to different domains where they are in custody of a share of its land. These territorial claims are attested by narratives recalling the arrival of the group in the domain and how they received land. The first House of a **nuru** to settle in a domain is the 'mother House' (**luma inai**) of that **nuru** in that domain. Any subsequent House of the same **nuru** arriving in a domain either blends into this 'mother House' or founds a new 'branch House' (**luma sanai**). The members of a given House live, at least sporadically, in a single domain. Each House is composed of one or several lines, made of one or several households the **luma toini** ('house content'). Thus the social group is roughly the equivalent of the residential one. A reason for this is the shared interests of its members in their common assets in the domain. Thus, while the **nuru** is a non-localised social group united under a common 'core' name, its 'branches', the **luma** are usually well rooted in the domains where their forebears established themselves. Some of them are large units that compete to expand and acquire renown. In Appendix 2, 'The 15 **nuru** of Manusa', I survey the composition of these social units in the **hena** describing them down to the individual households. Relegated to a second annex to that chapter, (Appendix 3: 'The physical entity of the **luma**') is a description and analysis of the features and purposes of ancient and modern Alune dwellings and ceremonial buildings.

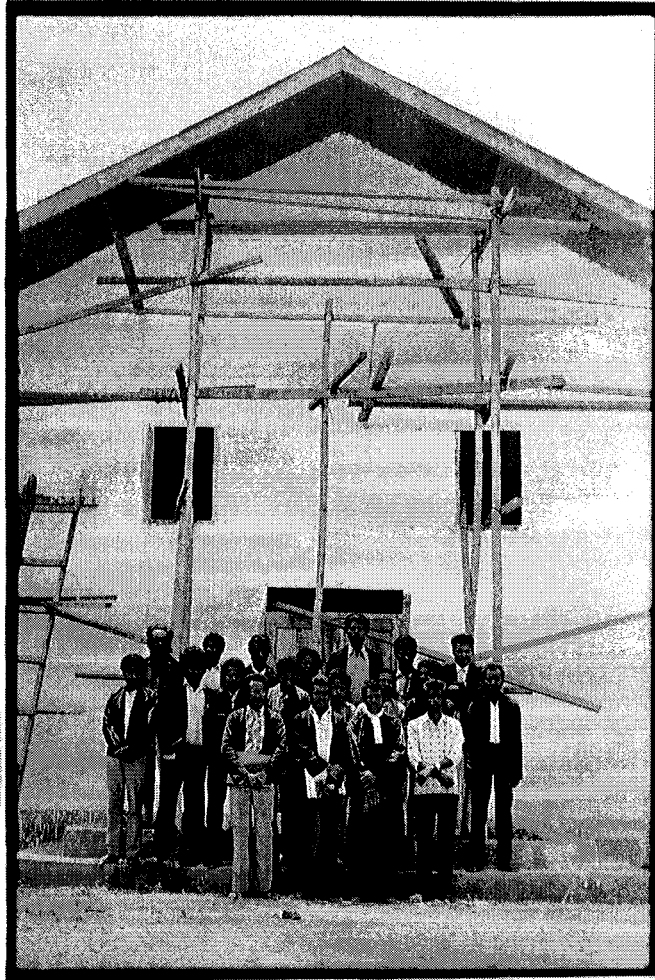
Alune do not structure their alliances on the basis of exclusive cross-cousin marriages and although they have preferential forms of alliance, none is prescriptive. The material on affinity and alliance documented in Chapter Eight, is presented in what has now become a classic ethnographic approach in the region. I investigate the Alune system of affinity and alliance and the process by which they are maintained following Alune's 'metaphors for living', for, as Fox pointed out (1980b p.333), their 'analysis may provide a better comparative perspective on alliance than van Wouden's formal model'

Finally, although I do not explore this dimension in the present thesis whose purpose is to provide a preliminary ethnography of an Alune domain, the material presented and analysed in this undertaking exhibits numerous features that can be examined from a comparative regional and Austronesian perspective. I have presented this material in a form that enables further comparative researches with other eastern Indonesian societies whose socio-cultural mode of perception and actions as well as historical experiences present similarities to those of the Alune.

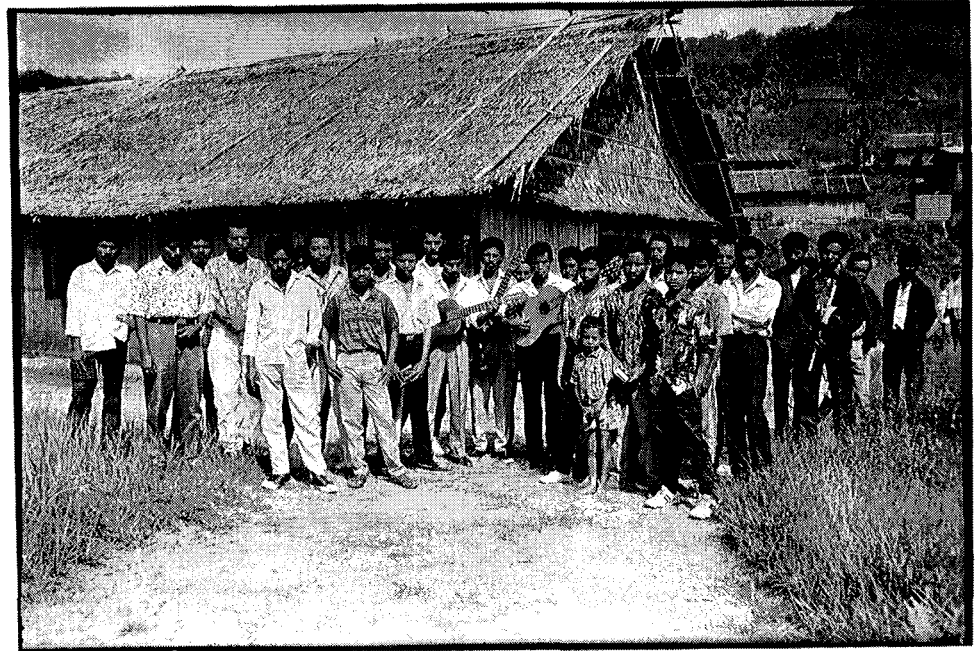


1 Desa Manusa Manuvey at Tona (1992)





2 The council of the church elders



3 The church musical group







4 The football team

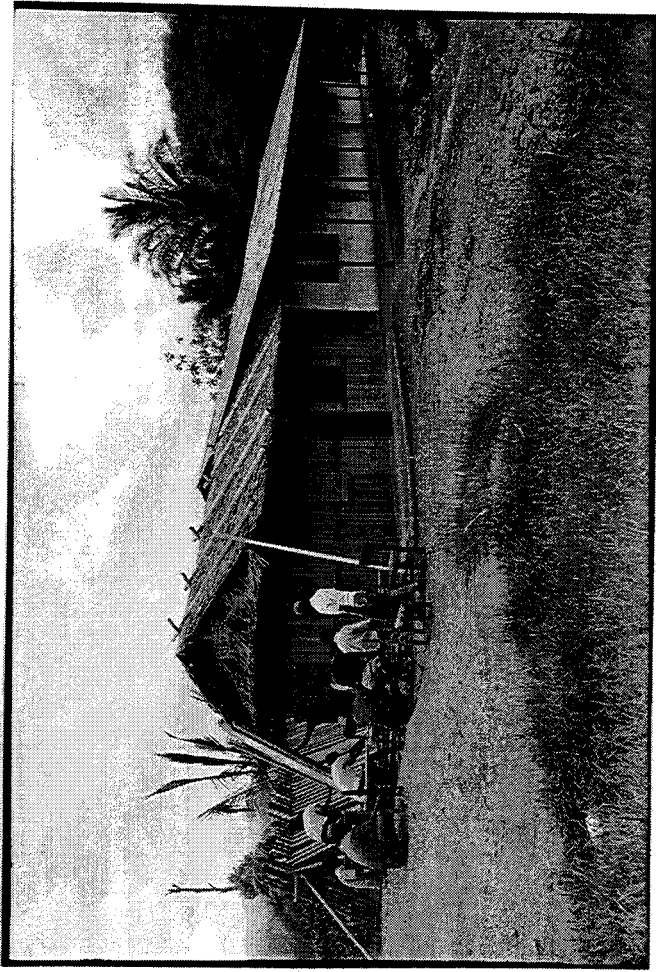


5 The women's club





6 Mending the water pipe



7 The school



## Chapter One

### THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

According to the Moluccan people, their archipelago comprises the sacred number of 999 islands. Seram, the largest one, presents a particularly rich bio- and cultural diversity.<sup>1</sup> After a brief overview of its administrative, geological and climatic setting I focus on its western region, where I conducted research.

The Indonesian Province of Maluku consists of three administrative divisions, the northern, central and southern regencies or *kabupaten*. Seram is incorporated in the central *kabupaten* Maluku Tengah.<sup>2</sup> It lies between 127°56' and 130.51° East and between 2°46' and 3°51' South. The island is divided into three regions, West, Central and East Seram; and 8 subdistricts or *kecamatan*.<sup>3</sup>

In an area where islands occasionally appear or disappear, Seram, the Mother Island (Nusa Ina) is an ancient land consisting mainly of limestone. In geological terms it is a hedge, a remnant slab of the Australian continent.<sup>4</sup> It is situated within the tectonic Banda-Arc at the

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<sup>1</sup>The size attributed to Seram varies with the sources. It is 17,152 km<sup>2</sup>, with an east-west length of about 338 km according to the *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 7dln. 's-Gravenhage, 1918 but it is 18,625 km<sup>2</sup> according to Y. Taguchi. (1989 p.16) and M.J. Florey (1990 p.10) who do not quote their source. This discrepancy probably depends on whether the adjacent small islets, now incorporated in the island's administrative subdivision, are included or not in the figure. According to the *Handbook of the Netherlands East Indies, Geographical Handbook Series. Naval Intelligence Division 1944 p.291*, Seram is 347 km (216 miles) long with a total area of 17,746 sq. km (6,821 sq. miles). According to Barkhuis the length from Wanatutu in the west to Kwamor in the east is 312 km and the greatest width of the island is 68 km (*TAG 2nd serie XXXI.1914 p.364*).

<sup>2</sup>Maluku Tengah (administrative centre: Masohi) includes 16 subdistricts (*kecamatan*) and 518 villages (*desa*). In 1990, the total population of the regency was 589,798 in a total area of 29,153 km<sup>2</sup>. At the same period the total population of the province was 1,851,087 (source: Kantor Menteri negara Kependudukan dan Lingkungan Hidup, Jakarta 1992).

<sup>3</sup>Seram Barat (64 desa, Ibu kota Piru), Seram Utara (49 desa, Ibu kota Wahai), Taniwel (34 desa, Ibu kota Taniwel), Bula (20 desa, Ibu kota Bula), Seram Timur (38 desa, Ibu kota Geser), Tehoru (20 desa, Ibu kota Tehoru) Amahai (20 desa, Ibu kota Amahai) Kairatu (29 desa, Ibu kota Kairatu). Source: *Monografi Daerah Maluku* (no date - post 1975) Dept. Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

<sup>4</sup>Johan Smit kindly provided or updated the geological input for this thesis.

junction of intersecting oceanic plates. The island is not volcanic but earthquakes are frequent. It was uplifted around forty million years ago and is still tilting towards the south. For that reason, the island has flat sandy beaches and swampy areas in the south and the east, and a rocky coast line with cliffs in the north and the west. Mount Binaia (or Binaja) in central Seram, is the highest point, culminating at 3027m (or 3055m depending on the maps).

An east-west watershed divides the island, creating two climatic zones. The south-east monsoon brings rain to the southern part of Seram from May to September (wettest months June and July) while it is rather dry in the north. The north-west monsoon from November to March brings rain to the north (wettest months December and January) leaving the south relatively dry. Obviously the rainfall is less predictable in the highland region of the watershed, where the evergreen montane forest is often wrapped in clouds and kept damp by drizzle. In some regions the villagers are isolated inland for several weeks when heavy rain causes the rivers to overflow, rendering tracks impassable. The temperature ranges between 21° and 30° in the day time. Evenings and nights are warm at the coast but cool and sometimes windy in the mountains.<sup>5</sup> Lying to the east of the Wallace line and within the east Malesia division, Seram possesses a New-Guinea-Melanesian fauna (opossum,<sup>6</sup> bats, cassowary, hornbill, bush turkey, etc.) The Dutch introduced the deer. The island is renowned for its unique entomofauna but it also has an interesting population of reptiles and birds.<sup>7</sup> All of them are directly endangered by the intensive logging taking place on the island.

#### 'WELE TELU AND HENA MANUSA

The 'domain' (**hena**) of Manusa is situated in the centre of the western region of Seram called 'Wele Telu, the 'Three Rivers' region ('**we** or **kwe** or **wae**: 'water', 'river, **ele**: 'large', **telu**: 'three'). 'Wele Telu, is a large area (roughly 35,000 Km<sup>2</sup>, about a fifth of the island), adjacent to, but excluding the westernmost peninsula of Huamual (see maps 1.2: West Seram, Ambon & Uliaser and 2.1 'Wele Telu). It is named 'Wele Telu because it encompasses three large river systems. These three rivers flow from the Ulateina (**ulate**:

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<sup>5</sup>The climatic conditions in the hills are further detailed below (see: Yearly cycle of the gardens)

<sup>6</sup>*Phalanger orientalis* and *Phalanger maculatus*. The pig was introduced circa 1500 BC.

<sup>7</sup>De Beaufort lists the principal zoological expeditions on Seram until 1914 (*TAG* 2nd serie XXXI 1914, p.381-2).

'mountain', *ina*: 'mother'), a central mountainous watershed parting the region along an east-west axis.<sup>8</sup> The Eti river flows westward away from this central area, the Tala southward, and the Sapalewa northward.<sup>9</sup> Only the low waters of the Tala are navigable. They are used to float the timber logged in its upstream region.

The traditional eastern boundary of 'Wele Telu corresponds to the ancient partition of the island into Patasiwa (group of nine) in west Seram, and Patalima (group of five) to the east of it. This boundary, delimited by the Makina river in the north and the Mala river in the south, was also the limit of the former Dutch colonial sub-division (*onderafdeeling*) of west Seram. 'Wele Telu covers three modern administrative subdistricts (*kecamatan*): Seram Barat, Kairatu and Taniwel. These three subdistricts comprise one hundred and twenty seven *desa* (main villages). Their three coastal *Ibu Kota* (administrative centres) are Piru, a few kilometres north of the Eti river mouth, Kairatu, south west of the head waters of the Tala and Taniwel, east of the mouth of the northern Sapalewa.<sup>10</sup>

## Population

The population of Seram is unevenly distributed. The steeply sloping mountainous area of the central and eastern regions was already largely depopulated over a century ago, and the bulk of the population concentrated along the lower coastal areas has been joined by transmigrants. The modern policies continue to follow these trends, encouraging the mountain dwellers to relocate closer to the coasts and promoting transmigration. In the west, the coasts of 'Wele Telu have been settled for several centuries by local populations and migrants of mixed ethnic origin (central and north Moluccas, Butonese, and more recently

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<sup>8</sup>The highest point of the Ulateina is Mount Hatu Nusa (Rock Island). It rises at about 1350m and is the easternmost summit of this dividing ridge which reaches 1028m at its westernmost summit: Batu Metena (Black Rock). (Sachse, 1922 p.4).

<sup>9</sup>This (anti-clockwise) sequence in naming the rivers corresponds to the order of precedence followed by tradition.

<sup>10</sup>Each of these three *kecamatan* roughly assembles the domains of the former traditional division in river *batai* ('trunk' or 'log'): *kecamatan* Seram Barat comprises the Eti *batai*, *kecamatan* Kairatu, the Tala *batai*, and *kecamatan* Taniwel the Sapalewa *batai* (which included the Wemale Uli *batai*). For political and economic motives, in the 1960s *hena* Manusa opted to sever its ties with the Sapalewa region (*kec.* Taniwel) and join the southern *kecamatan* of Kairatu (former Tala).



south Moluccas, Java, Nusa Tenggara, etc). They are densely populated compared to the highlands areas.<sup>11</sup>

Although everybody learns Bahasa Indonesia at school, the distinctions between the people of the coasts and those of the mountains continue to be emphasised by the groups themselves. The contemporary trend promotes uniformity, but the mountain and coastal population live in different environments and have quite distinct modes of subsistence, social organisation and cultural values. In the mountains the groups are forest farmers and hunter-gatherers while the coastal mixed population is involved in trade, sedentary agriculture, the plywood industry, fishing or administration. The highland people eat sago, game and forest products while the coastal diet is rice, fish and some garden products.

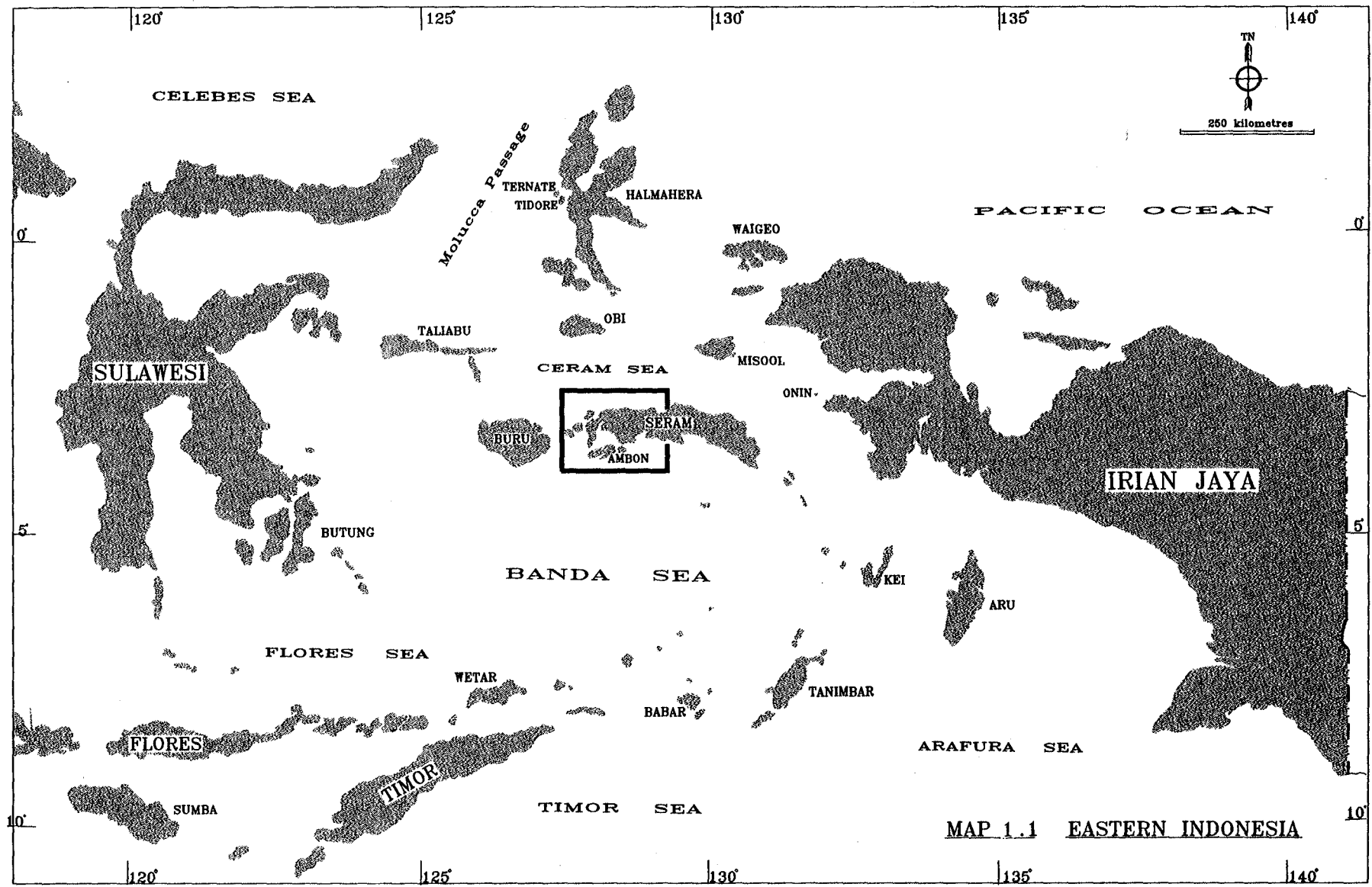
The highland valleys of west Seram are occupied by two linguistically related groups, the Wemale in the east and the Alune in the west. Their modern *desa* usually correspond to their former traditional territorial unit or 'domain' (called either **hena**, **inama**, **anakota** or **batai**) some of which had ritual or political duties in the wider regional system of their river valley. Alune and Wemale are Reformed Christians (GPM) while the coastal population is predominantly Muslim with a minority of different Christian affiliations. National unity prevailing, ethnic identities are not acknowledged by the current form of census which seeks information on the religious but not the ethnic affiliation of the population. Since a fraction of the Alune and Wemale population lives in mixed coastal settlements, their exact population is difficult to evaluate precisely. In their lexicostatistic survey Y. and T. Taguchi (SIL 1989) estimate the Alune population at about 12,000 people in 28 villages.<sup>12</sup> I reach approximately the same figure (a little less) when adding the population, village by village, with a rough estimate of the coastal Alune population, as recorded by the Biro Pusat Statistik Jakarta.<sup>13</sup> I estimate the Wemale population at 8,000 to 10,000. Again the number of Wemale and Alune villages varies depending on whether one includes the mixed coastal

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<sup>11</sup>The density of the population living on the low slopes of the south western coast of Seram is now well over 50 per km<sup>2</sup> and it has increased at a pace of 63% per decade during the last 20 years (source Hayes 1997a p.2). However this general average does not provide the real picture. In reality the coastal villages near the industrial lumber developments have a much higher population density per square kilometer, for example Waisarisa 410, Kamal 498 and Waiselang 841. (source *Kecamatan Kairatu dalam angka* 1995). In the highlands the population density is 19 per square km (328 in 17 settlements, including some Butonese settlements, on the southern middle slopes).

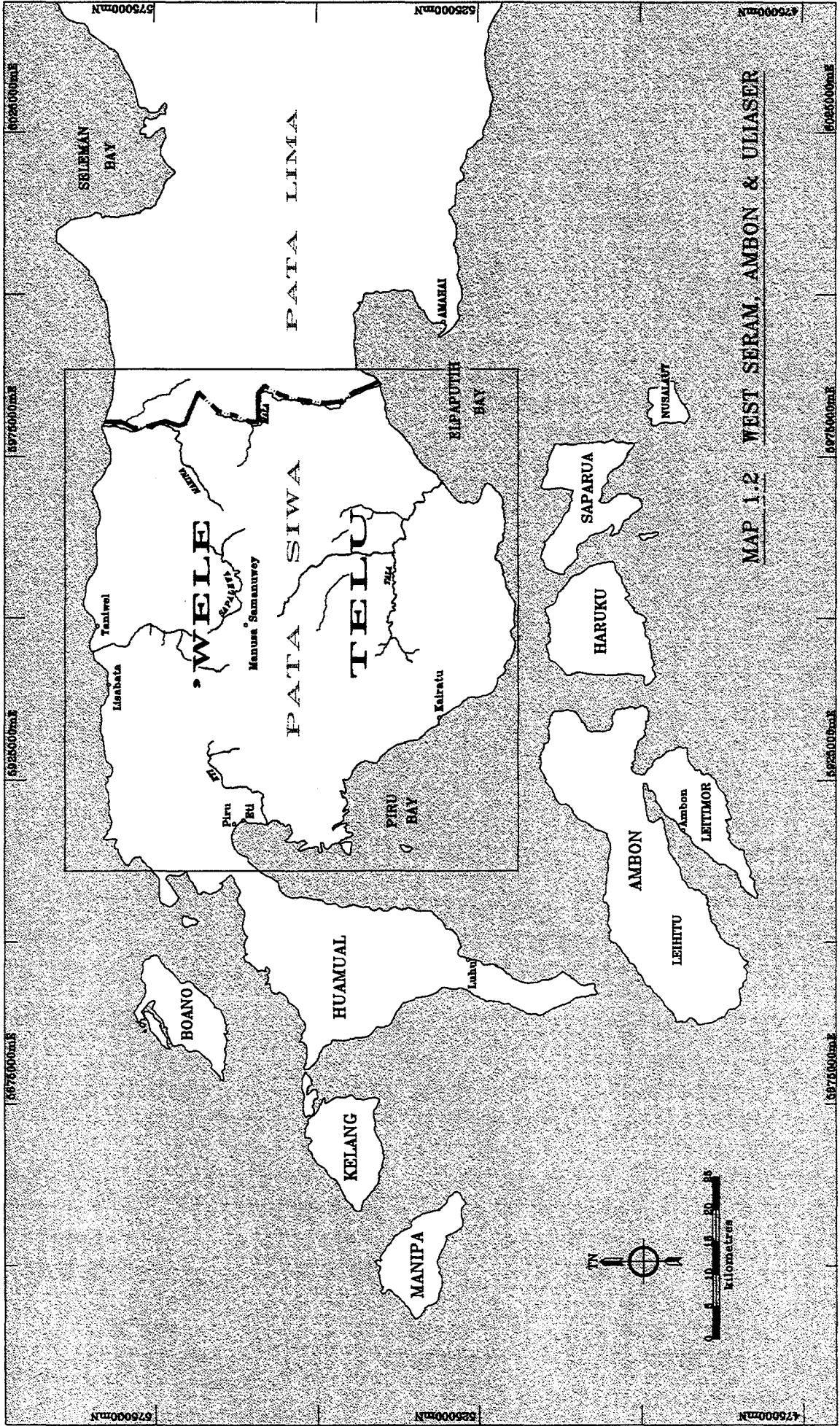
<sup>12</sup>In 1996, the figure proposed by SIL is higher but the number villages lesser: 13,000 in 22 villages (SIL Atlas Bahasa Tanah Maluku ed. PPPM- Universitas Pattimura dan SIL).

<sup>13</sup>My approximation is based on the figures provided by Kependudukan Kecamatan Kairatu Sept. 88, Kependudukan Kecamatan Taniwel Oct. 91 and the Monografi Daerah Maluku (no date - post 1975, dept. Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan).



MAP 1.1 EASTERN INDONESIA





MAP 1.2 WEST SERAM, AMBON & ULIASER



settlements with pockets of Alune speakers or not, and if one counts the *desa* and their dependent *dusun* as separate settlements or not. As Collins notes:

Grounds for separating Alune and Wemale range from Tauern's doubtful claim that Alune are descended from mercenaries sent by the sultan of Jailolo (1928:1002) to Niggemeyer's reference to blood group research of the thirties (1952:51). Still earlier authors noted costume and diet differences between the two groups.<sup>14</sup>

Traditionally those two linguistically related groups insist on their differences and avoid inter-marrying.<sup>15</sup> The Alune women were weavers while the Wemale wore a *tapa* loincloth (as did the Alune men). The Alune also have a strong prohibition on the consumption of snake meat, which is a delicacy among the Wemale. Finally the Alune 'origin groups' (**nuru**) are based on genitor lines while the Wemale **nuru** are based on genitrix lines. However these origin groups have expanded on both sides of the ethnic boundaries and several **nuru** have both Alune and Wemale 'branches' (**sanai**). Ultimately the affiliation with one or other linguistic group depends on residence. Thus if a Wemale man marries an Alune woman, follows her customs and resides in her village, their children will become Alune and receive land. This implies that the man may have started in that village a new (Alune) branch of his (Wemale) **nuru**. The reverse applies and an Alune man may be incorporated into a Wemale genitrix line.<sup>16</sup>

### Communication

A coastal road forms a semi-circle along the southern and northern coasts of 'Wele Telu with an interruption along a little populated fraction of the western coast. A few secondary roads reach out to the main hill settlements like Buria (Alune) in the north or Hunitetu (Wemale) in the south. Several walking tracks penetrate through the forest, leading to the further remote mountain communities. *Desa Manusa*, the focus of this study, is one of the latter.

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<sup>14</sup>Collins 1980 p.82.

<sup>15</sup>Jensen 1948 p.20.

<sup>16</sup>However, unless he is landless an Alune man will prefer taking his Wemale bride home, returning a female child to her line.

Manusa is a rather isolated Alune mountain 'domain' (**hena**) with a territory of 69 square km and a population of 417 (in 1995).<sup>17</sup> It is the farthest village from the coasts, 75 km inland from the *ibukota* of Kairatu. Manusa is situated in the upper valley of the Sapalewa river (sub-district Taniwel), but administratively it belongs to the southern sub-district of Kairatu (Tala river valley). Manusa was for a short period (late 1970s and early 1980s) linked to Hunitetu by a 47 km long logging trail. Since this collapsed, reaching the domain from Hunitetu is again a day and a half walk climbing up and down a slippery path roughly cut through bush land, forest and waterways.<sup>18</sup> In the past, Manusa had two large 'plantations' (**lusune**) with a few garden houses, acting as post houses on the path to the southern coast. These small hamlets grew into the 'children' ('**wete**) villages of Rumbatu and Rumberu (from which originated Kawatu, a third settlement, closer to the coast). Having expanded further, they became independent *desa* in the 1930s. These 'children villages' still act as a relay between the coast and the distant 'mother village' (**ina nihena**). Manusa also has long lasting historical ties with the southern coastal town of Kairatu (6,600 habitants), now the administrative and military centre of the *kecamatan*. Located near the harbour where a ferry links Seram to Ambon, the capital of the Province, Kairatu is the main market place, the first medical post and the educational centre for the people of Manusa and the children villages.<sup>19</sup>

Although the ancient division into Pata Siwa (Group of Nine), in the west, and Pata Lima (Group of Five), in the east, has lost its historical significance, it remains a cultural boundary through the island and it is not frequently crossed. There is little east-west exchange and communication on Seram and no infrastructure exists to facilitate it. As a result, 'Wele Telu is an island to itself and the different regions of Seram have little contact with and share no benefit from each other. All the production output is directed towards the 'outside' from which comes most of the administrative and entrepreneurial input which controls and manages the island.

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<sup>17</sup>From the point of view of Manusa the area and population of its traditional **hena** is much larger since it includes Rumbatu (52 km<sup>2</sup> - population 711) and Rumberu (60km<sup>2</sup> - population 689) (figures 1995). However these two children villages are now independent *desa*.

<sup>18</sup>The official distance is 51 km but with the shortcuts it comes down to about 42-45 km. However, heavily pregnant women, elderly persons or young children cannot walk that path during the wet season. A sick person, assuming he/she has the money to pay for the medical assistance that can be obtained at the coast, has to be carried on someone's back.

<sup>19</sup>Coming from the mountains, the last 24 km between Hunitetu and Kairatu can be traveled by minibuses on a narrow bitumen road built at the beginning of the century.

## Vegetation

The official upper limit for logging is 800m. The upland of west Seram is over that altitude and its population density is low, therefore the steep slopes are still covered with large patches of evergreen montane rain forest. This primary forest is, predominantly constituted by *Agathis* type such as *Agathis dammara*.<sup>20</sup> This watershed areas has been classified 'zone of protection forest' (*kawasan hutan lindung*) to preserve the water and soils along its steep slopes (see map 1.3: land use in Seram).<sup>21</sup> The territory of **hena** Manusa encompasses a large portion of the central divide area of 'Wele Telu. The land around the settlement is dotted with garden houses, their swidden cultivation and long term groves, distributed between secondary growth and mature forest. The few areas of permanent grassland (*Imperata*) are the remnants of the intensive garden plantations imposed by the Japanese during the war.<sup>22</sup> The forest remains the main supplier of food particularly foodstuff rich in protein like game, birds, fish or larvae, but also sago and numerous non- or semi-cultivated vegetables that are harvested daily, primarily by women and children. Different varieties of 'sago palm' (*Metroxylon: pia aini*), the main staple food of the Alune, grow wild or in groves near streams and swampy areas. The forest also supplies firewood, palm, bamboo, rattan and various products of daily use. It also provides craft, building and trading materials.

## Production and subsistence

The people of Manusa have an essentially forest-oriented domestic mode of production and subsistence. Although they practice swidden cultivation, a large proportion of their foodstuff is the product of foraging and collecting. 'Sago' (**pia**) is by far their greatest source of food energy. In the mountains, a meal that does not include sago is not regarded as complete, even if rice is served in abundance. Sago extraction is a time consuming activity, but three to four days of hard work provide enough staple food for two weeks for a family of five or six. It is done by a man alone or with one or two friends or relatives. The sago is usually

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<sup>20</sup>For further details on the types of vegetation - see Edwards, Macdonald, & Proctor, 1993.

<sup>21</sup>This map is redrawn from an original map of the Rencana Kawasan Lindung dan Bududaya (n°6), kindly provided by A. C. Hayes.

<sup>22</sup>*Imperata* is also called *alang-alang*, elephant-grass or cane-grass. It makes good hunting and trapping ground.



processed near the cutting site.<sup>23</sup> If the 'grove' (*pia uwei* litt. the 'source of sago') is far away from the village, it is often combined with hunting parties. Alongside sago, numerous wild vegetables, leaves, ferns and herbs, flowers, tubers, roots, mushrooms, fruits, berries and nuts are encouraged to grow and later harvested from the forest. The swidden 'gardens' (*mlinu*) are usually exemplary for their agro-diversity. The inter-planted crops are cassava, taro, potatoes, sweet potatoes, sugarcane, peanuts, soya beans, vegetables (cabbage, onion, pumpkin, eggplant, tomato, leafy vegetable, etc), stimulants and medicinal plants or spices (such as tobacco, ginger, chili pepper, turmeric, lemongrass, shallot).<sup>24</sup> One of the ancient names given to the Alune by the people of the coast was 'rice eaters'.<sup>25</sup> However, only a few older Alune women in the mountains are still cultivating small swiddens of dry rice or a little millet.<sup>26</sup> Near or around the gardens, 'plantations' or 'orchards' (*lusune*) are planted with 'coconut trees' (*ai ni'wele*) and fruit trees (various types of citrus and bananas, plantain, avocado, durian, papaya, jackfruit, guava, langsat, plum rose, mangosteen, canarium, cashew nuts, *Areca* palm and betel piper vine, *Arenga pinnata*, cinnamon etc). During the fallow period small clearings are kept around the crop trees planted on that land. This also signals that the *lusune* is maintained by its owner and not available to others without permission. Trees or plants like the native '*Agathis*' (*ai 'alane*) or the introduced coffee, pepper, candlenut, garlic and clove are planted as cash crops. In general these are not very successful and represent only a minor source of income. Indeed, the people of Manusa grow few cash crops, essentially the *Agathis* for its resin, the 'dammar' (in Malay '*damar*' '*alane tuluti*'), the '*Canarium*' (*ai iale*) for its nuts, and some 'peanuts' ('*asane*').<sup>27</sup> Clove trees do not grow well at Manusa altitude (900 to 1000m). Other common cash crops (coconut, durian, banana etc) are too heavy to be carried 50 km through the forest considering the low price offered for them. Intermediaries buy the products at the end of the road in the hill

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<sup>23</sup>The techniques used by the Alune to fell sago trees, extract the pith, process and preserve the flour are quite similar to those described many times for PNG and other Moluccan areas. The 'peticles' (*punale*) of the sago are used for building houses and the 'fronds' (*pia loini*) for thatch.

<sup>24</sup>See below : Yearly cycle of the gardens.

<sup>25</sup>Makahala: folk etymology: *makan* (*kane*): to 'eat', *ala*: 'rice'.

<sup>26</sup>The elders reckon that hill rice became infested by pests when some transmigration settlers started making heavy use of pesticides in the wet paddies they established at the coast. Another likely reason for the Alune to not cultivate dry paddies is that rice, which is consumed at festive meals only, can now be bought already husked from the shop at the coast. The fact that it has to be bought with money and carried a long way uphill enhance the prestige of serving it.

<sup>27</sup>*Agathis* and *Canarium* are ancient traditional cash crops; they have been grown for several hundreds of years for that purpose (*damar* was used for making torches and the nuts are a regional delicacy selling at a high price on the Ambonese market). Peanuts have been recently introduced as a cash crop. The word '*asane*' (*kasane*) comes from *kacang*.

village of Hunitetu. The hunters occasionally smoke some game and women make a few litres of coconut oil to sell or barter at the coast for salt, textiles, petrol, machetes and other basic goods. The other possibilities for income are to find some temporary work at the coast or in the forest for one of the logging companies, but most of these jobs are taken by transmigrants. To enter the public service as a teacher or a civil servant or to enrol in the army are highly valued positions but they are only accessible to the village elites.

### Yearly cycle of the gardens

The regional yearly average humidity is over 90%. In the highlands, the annual rainfall is over 3,000mm. On the northern flank of the divide, the 'rainy season' (**tale ulane**) starts in May with the strongest easterly wind blowing in June and July. It slows down in August, getting warmer with less rain in September. October and November are fine with a little rain almost everyday. The wind then begins changing, turning westerly in December with the start of the **tale lea**, 'dry season' (**lea**: 'sun'). The weather stays warm and relatively dry from January to April. People's life style follows the rhythm of these seasonal variations, and the activities of the agricultural cycle are linked with the climate of the divide.

The period between the dry and the rainy seasons, which corresponds to the planting periods, is called **tehane**. **Teha** or **tnane** means 'to plant', 'to place in the ground'.<sup>28</sup> There are two planting seasons, one in October two months before the weather fully changes from wet to dry and one in March, two months before it changes again from dry to wet. The staple food, sago, and the main cash crops, the *Agathis* (for its resin, *damar*), are planted in the forest and are both available all the year around. People spend a lot of time 'working the gardens' (**aria mlinu** or **amlinu**), 'hunting' (**dipa'e**) 'trapping' (**bebai**) or 'gathering' (**letue**) in the surrounding forest, and most families have established a semi-permanent 'covered raised platform' (**sisine** or **tale**) on their land to shelter from the weather and watch over their plantations.<sup>29</sup> Those who have no children at school may stay away from the village from late August, when they start to 'clear a garden' (**sola mlinu**), until November, at the end of the first harvest.

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<sup>28</sup>Florey has (in Lohia) **ma'leli'e**: 'change over from hot to wet season' (Alunedic 94).

<sup>29</sup>Small 'shelters' (**tale**) are also built near the sago groves in the swampy areas of the **hena**. People do not establish a semi-permanent garden house there because it is infected with mosquitoes, but men have a shelter to protect themselves from the rain when they extract the flour. Women also have small temporary shelters in their distant gardens, particularly if the crop requires weeding.

In late August-early September the farmers start preparing their land, 'slash down' (*lasa*) the secondary regrowth and clear the selected areas. Several elements are taken into consideration to select a site: its orientation, its distance from the settlement, the sacred elements related to it, the length of time it has remained fallow if it is a secondary regrowth, etc. People like returning to a site that was once worked by one of their ancestors.<sup>30</sup> In contrast to the pioneer shifting techniques used by the inexperienced transmigrants farming the lower hills, the traditional swidden cultivation and the intercropping methods of the mountain Alune minimize the damage done to the local ecosystem. This sustainable farming of the forest preserves the fertility of the soil, ensuring its regeneration. There are no permanent fields or terrace plantations and the very steep slopes are seldom cultivated. They are uncomfortable to work and, although they are well drained, the fertile top soil is easily washed away by the heavy rains which fall on the region during the wet season. These slopes are usually planted with a few trees (*dammar* or fruit trees) established within small clearings.<sup>31</sup>

The gardens are opened for one or two years with a maximum of three years and then left for long periods of restorative fallow. Usually the land is allowed to rest after the second or third year of farming, depending on what was planted on it or on how well the soil produces on that particular plot. It is left to revert to 'bush fallow' ('*wesie buini*: litt.: 'empty forest') for up to one generation (20 to 30 years) between two swiddens. The diameter of the trees in the re-growth has to reach at least the size of a man's thigh before anyone can return to make a garden on it. Thus a plot is seldom worked more than twice by the same person. However, since the villagers of Manusa were grouped in their new settlement in 1977, the duration of the fallow areas nearest to this settlement has sometimes been brought down to ten or fifteen years. The villagers are more compelled to reside in this large single settlement than they were in their former hamlets since their children are going to school. Thus, many try to open swiddens in the neighborhood of the village, in a forest area that is already partly depleted by the previous extraction of rattan, bamboo and timber for firewood or construction. However most families still have gardens at several hours walk and adults sleep on site when working in them.

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<sup>30</sup>The spots once favored by forebears have both agricultural and spiritual qualities. They usually are the best pre-domesticated locations with fertile soil, good orientation and some still produce the remnants of earlier crops or orchards. They are also infused with the ancestors' power and are protected by their might. Before Christianity, people's forefathers were buried on their own land i.e. in the proximity of their offsprings' swiddens.

<sup>31</sup>I saw one steep slope planted with a few taro.

A belt of trees is left around the swidden allowing a faster regrowth when the land is returned to fallow. Large trees within the swidden are usually preserved; their bigger branches being lopped if they give too much shade. The principal garden implement is the 'long machete' (**sari nanu'we**). A few older men still have the ancient machete with a longer iron blade called **sari hitu** (**hitu** 'seven') and various development projects have equipped the community with a few spades and shovels. Slashing is regarded as predominantly a man's job but the women do a great deal of work too, and I saw widows and spinsters clearing their own gardens alone. The fallen vegetation is left to dry for at least three weeks, some of the timber being recycled as fire wood. In September or in early October the swiddens are carefully 'burned' (**busa**) taking into account the wind conditions of the day. If needed, the farmer does the burning with friends and neighbours, helping to cut fire breaks (**hlulu mlinu** 'to clean around a garden') and protect nearby forest or fallow land. Two days after 'the garden is burned' (**mlinure 'otu peneka**) the couple or the woman alone, 'clean up' (**luru'e**) the patch and starts 'planting' (**tnane**).

September, the month when the season begins to change, is optimal for planting. The light rains which have just started (or are still falling, but at a lesser rhythm) allow the nutrients released by the burning to penetrate and fertilise the soil, facilitating germination. Stronger rains would wash them away, no rain would hinder the germinating process. Before planting, some families bring their seeds to the church to be blessed and protected against pests and theft.<sup>32</sup> 'Seedlings' (**tubui**) and 'seeds' (**inai**) are regarded as female (**binitubui inai**: 'female-shoot'-classifier). There are different ways of sowing: **bubu**: 'to insert', **sepu'e** 'to throw' or 'tuck in', **mulai** 'to scatter' or **libu'e** 'to disseminate'. The few people who plant 'peanuts' (**'asane**) do so in early September.<sup>33</sup> It is one of the first things to be planted in a 'new garden' (**mlinu belue**). In late September and early October people plant tubers like 'cassava' (**'abi kasbi** and **ubi kasbi 'wabi ite**), 'taro' (**bera** and **bera'ota** 'calladium'),<sup>34</sup> **ubi jalar (isabu)**, **ubi kumbili (tole)**, **ubi batata (luai)**, 'sweet potatoes' (**'wemau**), and leafy 'vegetables' (**utane**: generic name, also referred as 'vegetable food': **utan.loini**). The recently introduced 'soya bean' (**'wabebi**), 'bean' (**'bue**), 'tomato' (**tomat**), 'cabbage' (**kol**), 'celery' (**sup**), 'onion' (**bawane**), garlic and the vegetables that require a new garden, are also best

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<sup>32</sup>Soa, the ancient 'signs' of protection, known as *sasi* (or *pemali*) in the region, were prohibited as devilish objects. Interestingly, they are now promoted again at the coast as all purpose devices for environmental protection.

<sup>33</sup>It is not a very popular crop. It needs a new garden and some maintenance. Furthermore, harvesting is back breaking and the product difficult to protect from predatory children. It is regarded as a minor cash crop.

<sup>34</sup>Florey has **ba'ale**: 'taro'. (Alunedic 94)

planted at that time of the year in Manusa. The imported seeds can be bought at the coast. 'Corn' (*ilate*) can be planted almost anytime but it also needs newly cleared ground. The few elderly women who still plant a little 'rice' (*ala*) do so in October when the bamboo are high enough to bow their heads toward the ground because the rice will do the same, growing tall and its grains heavy. Because of its origin (stolen from the sky), rice requires a quiet and isolated place to grow.<sup>35</sup> The gardens have no 'fence' (*'ota*). If a plantation attracts a wild 'pig' (*apale*) people protect it with 'spear traps' (*ita busule*) strategically placed on its track.<sup>36</sup>

During early December, people move back and forth between the settlement and their gardens. They return from the gardens to clean and weed the village and the cemetery for the renewal of the year. As they start the preparations for Christmas and new year, the wind begins to turn eastward bringing the first rain (*ulane ului*: the 'head of the rain') and the seedlings 'sprout' (*usu* or *tu'une*) in the gardens. It is a time to keep silent while weeding and caring for the new 'shoots' (*tubui*), so as not to attract pests and malevolent spirits near the new young plants.<sup>37</sup> January is warm and dry; the first tubers are extracted (*'alie*: 'to dig up', *borie*: 'to pull out') according to daily needs.

In February, the peanuts are harvested and people return to working in their gardens, cleaning the plots and preparing for the second season. If needed, new parcels of land are cleared, left to dry for a couple of weeks, then burned and planted two days afterward. In March, when the weather is the finest, most people stay in the gardens to weed and watch over their new fields. The men go trapping and hunting ('opossums': *marele*, wild 'pigs' *apale*, 'deers': *maralane*, 'bats' *salune* and various birds like 'cassowaries', *manu 'alabi* or 'hornbills' *manu ala'we* etc), the women pick forest 'leafy vegetables' (*utan.loini*), 'mushrooms' (*utan.banai*) or collect 'sago grubs' (*susene*). The children fish, trap or 'spear'

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<sup>35</sup>Only a little dry paddy is produced now in the Alune region. I know of at least three types of dry paddy still grown in the Sapalewa: *ala moni* a 'fragrant rice', *ala maralane*, called 'deer rice' because of its long spikelets and *ala linin*: a red brown rice, a speciality of the village of Riring. Rice granaries have disappeared because almost no one is growing rice anymore. I describe the ritual and planting of rice in relation to the *luma botoi*, one of the ceremonial buildings outside the settlement, in appendix 3.

<sup>36</sup>Angry ancestors sometimes send wild pigs to destroy their children's harvest.

<sup>37</sup>It also corresponds to the Christian Advent and the villagers are encouraged to reflect on their actions during the past year and to pray for the new coming year.

(**tela**) 'shrimps' (**mitale**) and 'eels' (**mlu**) in the rivers.<sup>38</sup> As the 'nale tree flowers red in the mountain, it is the second planting time for tubers, gourds, vegetables, and peanuts.<sup>39</sup>

In May come the first signs of the wet and a new time of silence in the gardens. Everyone comes back to the village to celebrate Easter. With the school holidays in June and July come also the heaviest rains. However it is the time to harvest clove and fruit-trees and the whole family spends a lot of time in the gardens, only returning to the village for the Sunday Church service. The 'durians' (**tulene** *Durio zibethinus*) are most appreciated, as are also the 'Canarium' (**iale**) or the wild red and blue 'pineapple' ('**wampala**). More than a dozen distinctly different kinds of 'bananas' (generic name: **tema** or **uri**) are harvested around Manusa.<sup>40</sup> Different sorts of 'coconut trees' **ni'wele** (**ni'wele lala'we**, 'red coconut', **ni'wele putile**, 'white coconut', **ni'wele bulane**, 'moon coconut', etc), are also found in everyone's groves. However, a large portion of the vegetables, shoots, leaves, roots, flowers, mushrooms, wild fruits and over a hundred different edible seasonal forest products consumed in Manusa, are directly harvested from the forest.

Since most mountain people do not grow swidden paddy anymore, there are few collective working parties, and the large festive meals in the gardens have also disappeared. These have been replaced by the celebrations of Christmas and New Year, when all the villagers return to the settlements. The rest of the year, the residents are seldom all in their villages at the same time. Some are busy in distant gardens or have gone hunting, others work or study at the coast.

### Note on the practice of swidden cultivation in the Seramese highlands

In order to adequately understand the role of smallholders in forest cover change in Indonesia, it is critically important to acknowledge a continuum of farming systems running from traditional shifting cultivation (involving long fallows and long term forest conservation) at one extreme, and 'forest pioneer' cultivation (often involving long term degradation and deforestation) at the opposite extreme. In Indonesia, an ideological

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<sup>38</sup>Small animals are trapped with 'rope traps' (**bole**) or 'arrow traps' (**busule**). Shrimps and eels are caught with 'basket traps' (**bubuinai** or **busule**).

<sup>39</sup>People also say that it corresponds to the time when, at the coast the *laor*, a coral sea worm, comes out at the lowest tide of the year (end of March).

<sup>40</sup>For example, **tema bulane**, **tema omole**, **tema iale unui**, **tema batai**, **tema pa'u**, **tema tenine**, **tema omine**, **tema masale**, **uri silane**, **uri utune**, or **uri na'wa buai**.

polarisation exists whereby government representatives and environmental NGO representatives tend not to recognise the continuum.<sup>41</sup>

The highlands of west Seram are populated by several groups of subsistence forest farmers who practice traditional shifting cultivation. They have managed their environment for generations, progressively introducing new plant species (dry paddy, plantains, tuberous, manioc, etc) and small amounts of cash crops (clove, canarium, coffee, cocoa, cashews). Most of them associate hunting and gathering with selective swidden agriculture and sago extraction. It should also be emphasized that gathering is not a depleting activity. No one collects the whole crop; usually people only harvest the few fruits, leaves or tubers they require for the time being.<sup>42</sup> Often a shoot or a seedling is replanted and the ground weeded a little around the plant. Forest farmers' knowledge should not be under-estimated. Their customary ways of inter-cropping and managing the forest are efficient and ecological. The sustainable agro-ecosystem they partly created has modified the initial environment but preserved, and possibly enhanced, its resources for future generations. Swidden farmers are keen promoters of agro-diversity. When they go to the coast they observe the methods and results of the sedentary farming communities of transmigrants. Some of them bring seedlings to try their propagation. When consulted, most farmers appear willing, as they did in the past, to adapt new crops and try different farming technologies as long as their cultivation appears practicable (suitable for the land) and profitable (advantageous for the farmer).

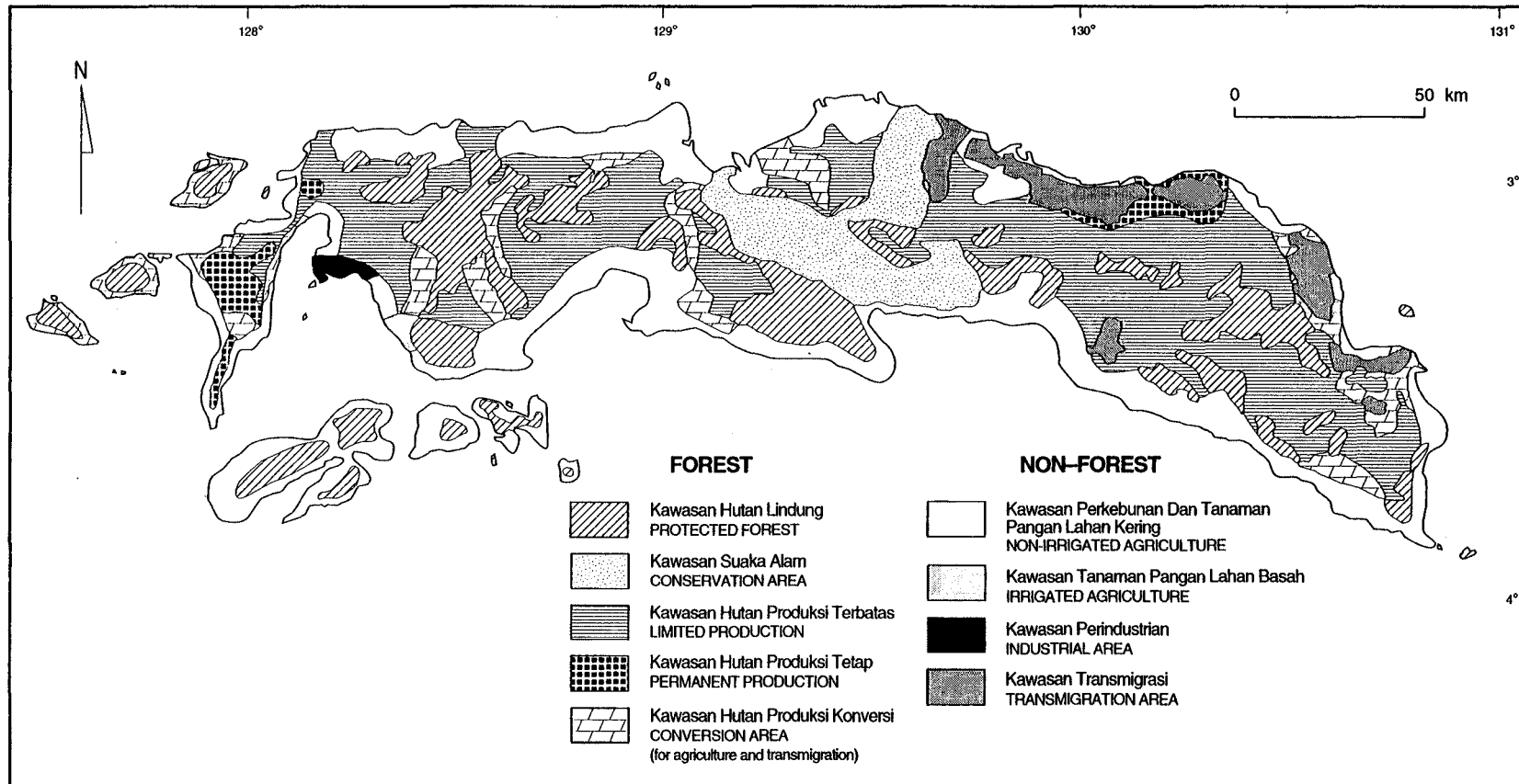
In Indonesia, an average swidden can support between 20 and 50 people per square km if handled in a sustainable manner. In the case of Manusa the average is 6 people per square km and it is under 20 in most of the mountain villages of the region. Until better agricultural techniques are proven more efficient by thorough experimentation, the delicate bio-diversity of the steep slopes of the Seramese high hills will be best preserved by the practice of small swidden plots and long periods of fallow. The methods and technologies, as well as the uniformity promoted by the 'green revolution' could have disastrous consequences on such an environment.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Sunderlin & Resosudarmo 1996 *Rates and Causes of Deforestation in Indonesia: Toward a Resolution of the Ambiguities*. Occasional Paper n°9 Bogor. Centre for International Forestry Research.p.5-6 quoted by Hayes 1997b p.5.

<sup>42</sup>Children (and foreigners) are taught at an early stage that doing otherwise is greedy and improper.

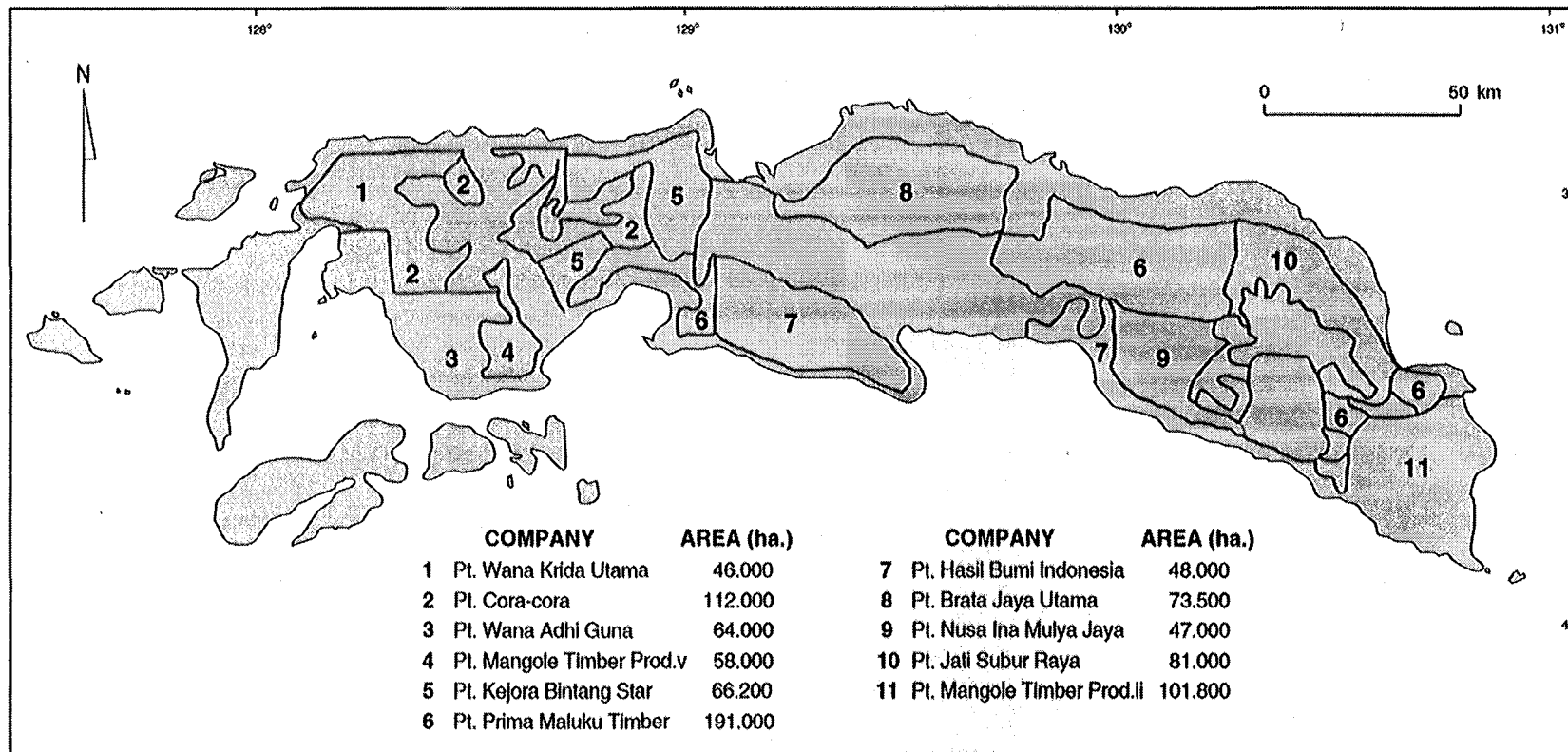
<sup>43</sup>The aim of the national government is to discourage swidden practices as a general policy in the whole Eastern Indonesian region. However, I believe that for the time being, it is the best adapted and most



MAP 1.3 LAND USE IN SERAM







**MAP 1.4 TIMBER CONCESSIONS IN SERAM**



It is a different problem on the low slopes either closer to or on the coast, where the population density is much higher and constantly increasing (for example 498 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> in the transmigration settlement of Waimital in 1995). However it would be an error to oversimplify the issue and recommend the same policy for two such different contexts. Indeed, the statistical data for the region support the assumption that 'swidden agriculture can no longer be regarded as a viable dominant mode of adaptation for the region'<sup>44</sup> because the average population density for the Moluccas on land area with slopes less than 40% is 58 per square kilometer (36 in the Kairatu district of Seram). However it is not advisable to use that generalisation since there are important differences of population density between the low and the high lands and very different ecosystems to be taken into account.<sup>45</sup>

## FOREST INDUSTRY

...It was as if the land had been skinned of life. I couldn't believe that anyone would deliberately do that to the Earth.<sup>46</sup>

### A brief overview

Officially 56% (1,037,000 hectares) of the forested areas of Seram are concessions for the forest industry *Hak Pengusaha Hutan* (HPH) with 12 companies actually operating on the island (see map 1.4 Timber concessions).<sup>47</sup> However a comparative examination of maps

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durable mode of cultivation on the slopes of the highlands which have a slow growing or stable population and sufficient territory.

<sup>44</sup>Hayes 1997a p.5.

<sup>45</sup>In my opinion agroforestry, which is not possible any more at the coast, remains the best adapted mode of cultivation in the specific context of the highland villages which have slopes over 40%, a slow growing population and sufficient territory. Another important message to convey to the Indonesian policy makers is that the majority of the Moluccan (and Irianese) rural population is no keener to replace sago by rice than the Javanese would be to do the opposite.

<sup>46</sup>James Gosnell, great chief of the Nishga'a (Queen Charlotte Islands - Alaska), upon encountering a clear-cut logging on his land. Quoted by D. Suzuki in Knudtson & Suzuki 1992 p.xxvi.

<sup>47</sup>Deny Hidayati 1997 p.16, 19, 21. (Source: Dinas Kehutanan Maluku Tengah 1995). I found most of the statistical data for this section in the report of Dr. Hidayati; however, my analysis, commentary and conclusion differ from those of that author. The map 1.4: Timber concession in Seram is a strict reproduction of the Peta Wilayah Kerja Cabang Dinas Kehutanan/KPH Maluku Tengah (no date), kindly provided by A. C. Hayes.

1.3 and 1.4, shows that 44% of the remaining forest left is not all 'conservation area' *suaka alam* (natural reserves open for tourism) or 'protection forest' *hutan lindung* (for water and forest conservation or watershed protection). For example the western peninsula of Huamual is not under concession, nevertheless almost its whole surface is classified as either 'permanent wood production' *hutan produksi tetap* (unlimited management) or 'conversion forest area' *hutan produksi konversi* (for agriculture or transmigration). In reality it is likely that if no form of control is applied, about three quarters of the island's forested areas are threatened by different forms of exploitation that will all lead to its short or long term destruction. The total volume of wood processed in 1995 in the *kabupaten* was 282,098 m<sup>3</sup> (plywood, timber, boards, panels, etc.) This figure includes the production of Buru, the other main source of lumber in the region. There is no estimate of the illegal logging activity taking place on the islands, nor of the damage done by unsuitable exploitation to the standing forest. However, both phenomena are acknowledged by the local administration as a real concern.

Timber extraction and the related forest industries constitute the most worrying issue on Seram, where the lumber companies are operating under the nominal control of the department of forestry. Many of the regions exploited are not readily accessible and cannot be adequately controlled by the regional government. In several of these areas the commercial loggers have been reported to climb higher than officially permitted. Unfortunately the data available is often out of date. The maps of the Forestry Department and those of the timber concessions present several discrepancies and do not fully correspond with the statistics on land use. This renders the task of accurately estimating the real situation almost impossible.<sup>48</sup> For example, once brought at the same scale, the superposition of the map of the timber concessions over the map of land uses for west Seram shows that two lumber companies (Pt Cora Cora and Pt Wana Adhi Guna) seem to have received logging concessions in 'protection forest areas' (*kawasan hutan lindung*).<sup>49</sup> One of these infringements affects the Solohua mountain ridge, an Alune sacred site in the south of west Seram. It is a place where the dead are believed to dwell for a while, growing their own gardens and fruit trees. This sacred site for the mountain people was also a hunting and gathering ground for the coastal people. At the time of my fieldwork it was

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<sup>48</sup>Potter estimates the rate of deforestation in the Moluccas between 1982 and 1990 at 24,300 ha per year. (Potter, L. 1993 p.108).

<sup>49</sup>According to Hayes (op. cit., 1997a p.10-11) the coastal area of the *kecamatan* Kairatu is marked as conversion forest on the map of the forestry department but other maps define the same zone as land for dry cultivation.

being systematically deforested. Furthermore, from what I could witness, replanting and rehabilitation is either not undertaken at all or is poorly conducted, and it is often limited to the areas that are visible from the road.

### **Logging and transmigration on Seram**

The present commercial logging and the planned migratory land settlement pose a serious threat to both the forest and its traditional populations.<sup>50</sup> As Ellen notes, 'the Moluccas is one of the few places in the Indonesian archipelago where it is possible to find a complete altitudinal sequence of vegetation'(1997 p.178). The human impact on the Seramese forests is not new but it is now increasing and damaging. Industrial logging hinders the traditional enduring mode of subsistence, chasing the game away and stripping off the staple (sago) and cash crop trees (*Agathis dammara*), rattan, bamboo etc, with no or little compensation for the local population and irreparable damage to the forest. The settlements of poor and often unskilled transmigrants extend upland at an accelerating pace interfering with the sustainable management of the forest by its traditional farmers and menacing their survival.

In Seram like elsewhere, indiscriminate logging is often followed by forest degradation. The land made available is quickly settled and further deforested by organized or spontaneous migrants. After a few years, a proportion of these migrants abandon the eroded land rendered unproductive by their mismanagement. However, by the time they join the mass of urban poor on the nearby overpopulated Ambon island, the damage they have done is often irreversible. To a certain extent we can evaluate the prospects of Seram by examining the situation on Ambon island since the 1980s. A massive (mainly spontaneous) transmigration and the ensuing growth of unskilled population have had a distressing impact on the ecology of the island. The subsequent shortage of land provoked an expansion of deforestation in favor of inappropriate forms of cultivation for the steep slopes of the island, which, in turn, accelerated soil erosion. According to agronomists who have worked there for several years, the depletion of Ambon island has reached the point of no return. This is without mentioning the damage produced to the surface waters by the excessive use of insecticides and fertilizers and the visible impact of this on the marine environment.

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<sup>50</sup>The Moluccas (particularly Seram and Halmahera) and Irian Jaya were declared high priority destinations for large scale land resettlement projects by Dr Soekanto, Director-General of Recruitment and Allocation to the Transmigration Program, who planned that 60% of the overall resettlement during the years 95-96 would occur in these regions. (Bubandt N. 1996 p.1). However it seems there has been some delay in the full implementation of that project on Seram.

A middle size transmigration project is planned in the low and medium hills south of Manusa near its children villages. In the mountain villages, the departure of family units and the arrival of newcomers are both registered in a tradition of precedence into which interrelated family groups or 'houses' (**luma**) perceive themselves as members of a single community. It is this community as a whole which traditionally incorporates small numbers of newcomers willingly to respect a 'tradition' (**atate**) which regenerates itself as it is transformed by these newcomers. However, if this long planned project of transmigration takes place, one may wonder which direction the assimilation will take when a community of 1,500 transmigrant households is established between the 300 households of Manusa (and children villages) and their main access to the coast.

There has been a recent shift in the transmigration policy to link the projects with the timber estate program. This program encourages the transmigrants to eastern Indonesia to produce permanent cash crop in tree-crop estates (PIR-Trans) or to work for large scale mono-crop commercial timber plantations (HTI). Bubandt clearly summarized the threat:

Deforestation rather than reforestation is the net result of the timber estate program, whether one goes by the official criteria set down for timber estates or by the actual effect of their implementation. Because of their size, their placement and their association with large numbers of transmigrants and with pulp plants, the timber estates will have unprecedented effects on the locality in which they are placed.(op.cit.p.11)

The transmigration schemes usually involve the less resourceful people and, to a certain extent, they may be regarded as 'the export of poverty and unemployment from Java', (but also Bali, Lombok, and Sulawesi), 'to the outer islands' (Goss 1992 p.92).<sup>51</sup> These schemes, as the World Bank admitted almost ten years, ago, also usually create more difficulties than they solve.<sup>52</sup> On Seram the same World Bank is financing the upgrading of the southern coastal road and the so called trans-Seram Highway. Aimed at supporting local development, it will in effect facilitate the extension of the logging activity and a faster transfer of the lumber to feed the largest plywood factory in Indonesia, which has been established at the southern coast (in Waisarisa near Eti). The size of the financial profit for the logging industry and the political gain for the government may obscure the issue. However, unless the conflict of interest between an immediate depleting exploitation and a

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<sup>51</sup>Most of the transmigrant population has a low level of education (little or no schooling), a further handicap in the Moluccas since the province still has the second highest level of education in Indonesia (after Manado).

<sup>52</sup>World Bank 1988, *Indonesia: The transmigration program in perspective*. Washington DC:World Bank.

long term sustainable management of the natural resources of the islands is effectively addressed, the ongoing mis-management will enrich very few and dispossess many. Brookfield and others have long advocated the concept of 'the environment as a common resource that ought to be socially manageable for the good of all' in a co-ordinated trans-regional co-operation.<sup>53</sup>

For the time being, if the economic situation of Seram in general or the 'Wele Telu region in particular was to be summarized in one word, depletion rather than development would describe it best.

### **SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL PROSPECTS**

During colonial times, the prospects of Seram were rated low and the island was given little attention. The fact that it is now given a great deal of attention within the framework of Repelita V is not necessarily improving the situation. It actually deteriorates its environment without notably improving the living conditions of its population.

#### **From colonial to present time**

At the beginning of the century, the Dutch granted a few concessions and leases on the southern and northern coasts and a handful of planters tried rubber, copra and cloves. Small plantations of cocoa, tobacco, coffee, and agricultural products were also tested but with unsatisfactory results, attributed to the lack of infrastructure and the absence of qualified workers. In the 1930s commandant Sachse tried in vain to convince his government to attempt sizable agricultural projects on the north coast of the island. Although it was not realistic, this idea is most certainly at the origin of some of the modern projects now attempted in that same region. The contemporary approach is mainly directed to large exploitations of timber all over the island. In addition a little oil is extracted in the east (Bula), and some sago exploitations and fishing have been undertaken in several locations on and near the island.

When examining some of the issues at stake in the socio-economic development of Seram, it is essential to remember that the island has roughly two main regions. Two thirds of Seram, mostly in the eastern half of the island and along the coasts, are below 600 metres; the

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<sup>53</sup>Brookfield, H & Byron, Y. eds. p.30.



remaining third, all inland, rises between 600 and almost 3000 metres. The coastal and low hill periphery has a fast growing multi-ethnic population. The highland central region is much less populated. It has steep slopes where the soils have a limited potential for agriculture and are easily eroded once deforested.<sup>54</sup>

The issues at stake in the more accessible coastal areas are currently being examined by several teams of researchers quoted earlier in this chapter.

### **Development projects**

Manusa can be used as an example of the usual failures of the development projects attempted in the region. Poorly planned in distant offices, with no local consultation on their appropriateness nor on the way to proceed in their implementation, none of the agricultural projects (clove, cocoa, coffee, apple, garlic, and various vegetables) have been successful yet. Small projects of farming and raising domestic animals (chickens, pigs, fish pond, cows etc) which did not take into account the local situation, failed as well, leaving organisers and organised equally frustrated. Under the banner of *modernisasi* an interventionist and uncoordinated governmental effort is taking place to develop the region. The *Departemen social* designated several mountain villages as *Projekt Social*, a rather humiliating status, that makes these communities the recipients of diverse support in the form of gifts of (low quality) tools, (old) seeds, patronizing advice, and non-participative forms of assistance. In effect, it is turning these villages into a training ground for various university students to try projects of house construction, water systems, farming etc. The Church has also targeted some communities with diverse small scale development projects. A mobile unit of the health service (a project called *Safari*), walks once a year through the mountains to promote contraception and vaccinate or inoculate with unnecessary vitamin A entire villages with the same two syringes, rinsed in rain water between each patient.

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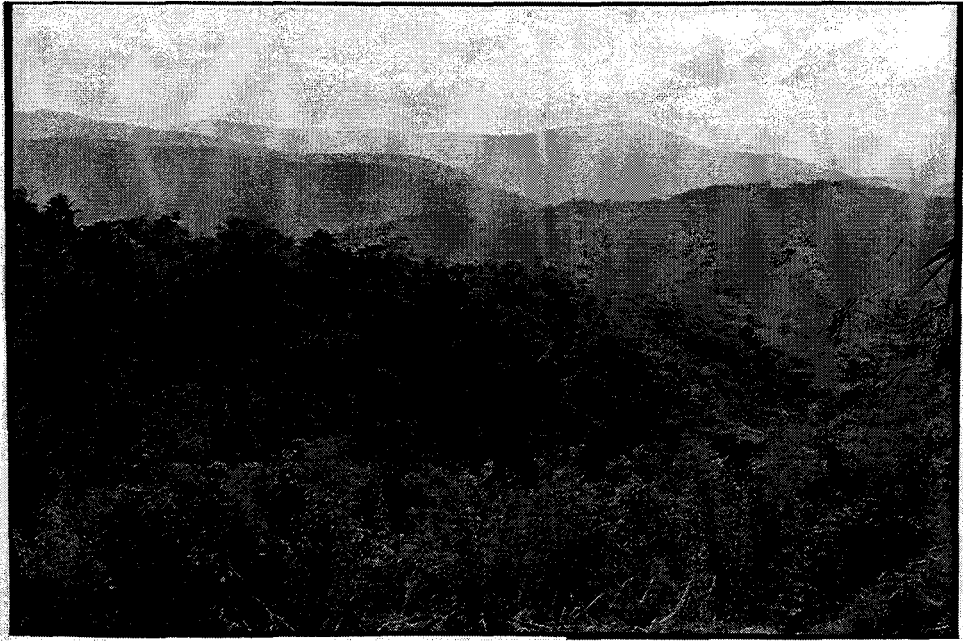
<sup>54</sup>Although they have been subjected to the same development policies, I would argue that each of these two regions has its own specific social and environmental requirements which call for two different forms of socio-economic development projects. Seram is not the only island of the region to which this applies; there are other areas with comparable contrasting types of geomorphology, climatic conditions and socio-cultural resources. All would benefit of carefully (and jointly) planned and adapted development projects.

## **Concluding notes**

Although development has become associated with production and consumption, not everybody urgently needs such symbols of modernity as a refrigerator or a TV set in the mountains of Seram. Priority should be given to attend to the most vital issues which are at stake. The region is rich in rivers which flow all the year around. The conception and implementation of well adapted collective water and sanitation systems would not represent major costly projects. Yet they would greatly benefit the mountain communities. The local populations could be involved in their construction, receiving at the same time the tools and the training for their maintenance. This participation in a project from its inception would encourage people's feelings of responsibility toward its maintenance. It would also provide them with new technical skills and the tools to apply them. It could also be extended with further training in small scale industries to provide for local needs. For example, Manusa now has a carpenter. The man studied at a technical college and worked for a while at the coast but decided to return to his land and exploit his skill in his own community.

On Seram and in the region in general, most of the commercial projects are making an unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. Furthermore, the products leave the islands with no benefit for their populations. Future development projects should concentrate on being beneficial to the local populations. When one considers the pace at which the region is being deforested, the word emergency comes to mind.





8 The Sapalewa valley viewed from Manusa



9 The pig stone in Nuruitu



## Chapter Two

### WEST SERAM IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

The study of societies in eastern Indonesia requires a cautious historical assesment of what constitutes 'tradition'.<sup>1</sup>

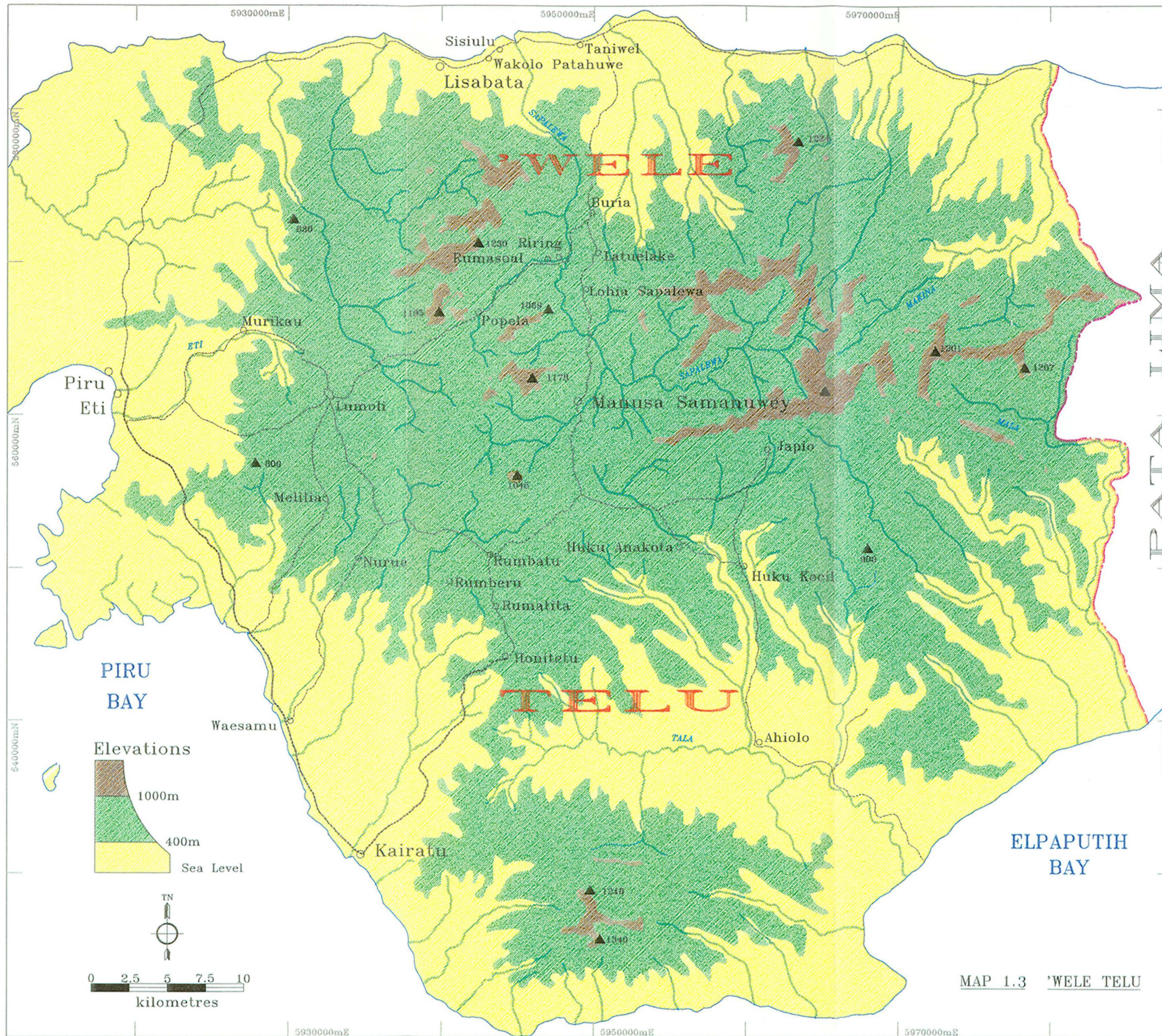
The history of Seram is extremely complex for at least two reasons. First the history of the groups living inland (presumably more ancient populations but not always) can seldom be traced more than a 100 years back. Second, there is a complex interweaving of coastal populations. At least since the 14th century the Ternatan, Bacanese and Tidorese sultanates established colonies or alliances on the northern and southern coasts. Seram, a halt along the trading routes, became itself a small producer of cloves (mainly in the peninsula of Huamual) and an exporter of sago. Traders and migrants from Sulawesi and Java also settled along the coasts. Because of its reputation of inaccessibility, Seram was until recently the refuge of large communities of pirates, dissidents or separatist groups from neighbouring islands. Some of them went far inland. Thus, the Alune are attributed an Halmaherese origin by Tauern (1918 pp.29-30).<sup>2</sup> Each group established its own enclave bringing its model of social organisation and eventually Islam to the coastal regions.

Since the 17th century the intervention of the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) and the re-organisation implemented by the Dutch colonial administration modified further the situation on the coasts but this influence was not drastically felt inland until the beginning of the 20th century. However, the situation described by the first European visitors inland (late 19th, early 20th centuries), was the result of centuries of interaction between these rich trading coastal domains and the mountain populations. Early reports and writings about the mountain region sketch out small independant domains with loose and changing alliances. Coastal and mountain communities were known to trade and intermarry but a general state

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<sup>1</sup>Fox J.J. 1980b p.329.

<sup>2</sup>Similarly, Boes writes that west Seram is occupied by 'the Wemale who show many characteristics of the Melanesians and the Makahala or Alune who show more similarities with the people of the northern Moluccas'. Boes A.G. 1921 p 88).



PATA LIMA

MAP 1.3 'WELE TELU

of tension, enmity or warfare was reported between them. The same was later reported about the mountain groups. Indeed, the oral traditions of the Alune and Wemale who still occupy the interior of 'Wele Telu, recall numerous movements of populations seeking land in the mountain region as well as down to the coast or migrating because of quarrels, illnesses or warfare.

'Wele Telu, the Three Rivers region of west Seram is the focus of this study; hence I will concentrate on the history of this area within the broader and intricate Moluccan history. Initially, I cover the south-westernmost peninsula of Huamual which became the most affluent domain of the island and remained so until the VOC deposed its leaders and transplanted its population.<sup>3</sup> 'Wele Telu was also characterised by a political organisation of the groups established along the Three rivers and interacting with the coast in a loose federative manner through general assemblies and consultation of representatives, along the river as well as through the whole of the 'Wele Telu region. In Alune, these large assemblies were called *nili ela*, in Ambonese *saniri besar* or *saniri hutu*. The following chapter is an attempt to shed a new light on this regional federative institution.

Although located at the geographic centre of the Moluccas and being the largest island of this archipelago, Seram held a peripheral position in the official history of the region. During the first half of the 17th century, Huamual briefly became a major producer of spices for the Asian trade and its main harbour, Luhu, a prominent *kota*, vassal of Tidore. However no Seramese domain established a realm of influence powerful enough to become one of the political centres of the region. In the Central Moluccas, Seram, the Mother Island (Nusa Ina) is referred to as the land of Nunusaku, the origin place of the people of the region. Seram evokes a dark, mysterious, passive and powerful source of life and fertility, not an economic or political centre.<sup>4</sup>

The eastern and western coasts of Seram were on two ancient trade routes. One of them ran along the eastern coast with cargos of Papuan slaves, birds of paradise skins, turtle shells, trepang and medicinal *massoy* bark<sup>5</sup> which were traded between Onin (Irian Jaya), the Seram laut islands and Banda. The second and main route ran from Banda along the westernmost peninsula of Huamual and up to the northern Ternatan and Tidorese

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<sup>3</sup>When this occurred the Asian merchants changed their routes, relying on and expanding other trading posts on the northern and eastern coasts. At the end of this chapter is a folding map of 'Wele Telu (map 2.1).

<sup>4</sup>The name Seram supposedly comes from the Portuguese word *serano*: 'scary', 'frightening'.

<sup>5</sup>The aromatic bark of the *Cryptocaria massoy* is widely used in southeast Asia. It has warming medicinal properties and its fragrance is used for cosmetics and culinary preparations.



sultanates.<sup>6</sup> Banda yielded nutmeg and mace.<sup>7</sup> Ternate and Tidore produced cloves.<sup>8</sup> These routes were known by Chinese,<sup>9</sup> Malay and Javanese merchants.<sup>10</sup> The Asian traders anchored in the Ambonese islands to sell commodities (cloth, iron blades, porcelain, silver etc) and replenish their provisions of fresh water. These activities nearby or on its shores brought to west Seram some of the goods and ideas introduced by the merchants. Islam was introduced in Huamual during the late 15th, early 16th century.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the sultanate of Ternate had, since the 14th century, established several tributary domains along the north coast of 'Wele Telu (the main one being Iha Lisabata) and its political and cultural influence was being felt throughout the region.<sup>12</sup> The mountain people still recall the reputation of fabulous wealth of the sultan. Trading commodities were bartered for sago and dammar resin between the coasts and the mountains. Until recently, bridewealth, compensation and fines among several groups of Seram and Buru consisted of up to several hundred Chinese plates, celadons, textiles (among others, *patola*), weapons and jewelry. Most had been imported in ancient times.<sup>13</sup> Powerful heirlooms and ritual objects of great renown were

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<sup>6</sup>According to the historian Ch. van Fraassen, the central Moluccan islands were already involved in the trading network between the north and Banda in the 14th and 15th centuries. (*B.K.I.* 132 (1976) pp. 293-305).

<sup>7</sup>The fruit of the *Myristica fragrans* resembles a peach. It is composed of several layers: the external skin or endocarp, a yellow pulp or mesocarp that is used preserved or candied, a fibrous aromatic red membrane or endocarp (arillus) that once dried is the spice mace; this membrane surrounds a thin hard shell (the nutmeg of the poor) that contains the kernel or nutmeg proper.

<sup>8</sup>Cloves are the flower buds of the *Eugenia aromatica*. They are harvested and dried just before they bloom. Besides their aromatic and therapeutic properties, cloves are held in the mouth against bad breath or tooth aches.

<sup>9</sup>According to António Galvão, Chinese junks came to the Moluccas along the northern route (from the Chinese sea), anchored at Makian and 'were the first to buy clove wholesale in the islands.' (Hubert Th.Th.M. Jacobs, S.J. p.80-81). The word for clove, *cengkih* (*cengkeh*, *tjenkih*), is of Chinese origin. Its trade with China might date back to 2000-1500 BC. The use of cloves in ancient Europe is also attested by its mention in the *Natural History* of Plinius the Ancient (70 AD).

<sup>10</sup>Huamual and Seram are listed in the Nagara-Kertagama among the dependancies of Majapahit in the XVI century. (Ch.F. Van Fraassen in Polman 1983 p.2).

<sup>11</sup>The first conversions to Islam are believed to have occurred in the Moluccas during the years 1460-65 (Hubert Th.Th.M. Jacobs, S.J. op. cit., p.334). Christianity came much later. Francis Xavier briefly visited the southern coast in 1546 without making lasting conversions to Catholicism. Protestantism only spread inland in west Seram during the early twentieth century when the Dutch *pacificacie* opened the area to the missions.

<sup>12</sup>Lissabata (or lisabata) —whose *raja* was the leader of the Saniri of the Sapalewa Batai— is said to have been founded by a prince coming from Halmahera (Tauern, O. D. 1918 p.154).

<sup>13</sup>Also noted by Nanlohy, 1928 p.173.

also obtained likewise. The prosperous and wealthy islands of *The Travels of Simbad the Sailor* might depict the Moluccan spice islands in the 14th and 15th centuries.<sup>14</sup>

#### THE PORTUGUESE ATTEMPT (1511-1599)

The Portuguese literature of the early 16th century mentions only the south-west and south-east coasts, the sole regions of Seram to be known by the Portuguese traders of the time. The peninsula of Huamual and/or west Seram were both called Muar or Veranula, from the name of the main harbour of Huamual, later known as Luhu.<sup>15</sup> The eastern part of the island was named Ceram or Seran. Batachina de Muar referred either to the whole island of Seram or —as the Portugueses became more involved in its regional politics— to its western part. The name Terra da China or Batachina (batu Tjina, i.e. Chinese land, possibly because the word **batu**, rock, is frequently used in place names) was given by the Spanish and Portuguese to several islands that were trading with the Chinese merchants (mainly Halmahera and Djailolo but sometime Macassar and Sulawesi).<sup>16</sup>

Almost upon arrival, in 1511, the Portuguese tried to close the northern Moluccas to Asian traders to enforce their monopoly on the trade of spices, nominally established with Ternate. The Malay and Javanese responded by encouraging the cultivation of clove trees on Huamual (Kambelo) and Leihitu (the northern peninsula of Ambon facing Huamual). The cloves grown in the central Moluccas —although of a lower quality— were actively traded to the Asian merchants. Thus, by the end of the 16th century the North of Hitu and Huamual had developed into prosperous Islamised domains allied to Java and Ternate respectively. Between 1558 and 1650 a dynasty of seven Ternatan governors, descendants of the same lineage, established themselves in Veranula de Muar (Luhu) along the eastern coast of Huamual<sup>17</sup>. Luhu, also called *o lugar de Veranula* by the Portuguese, was a fortified **kota**.

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<sup>14</sup>The Arab traders called the Moluccas *Jazirat-al-mulk*: 'the land of many things'. (Swadling 1996 p.23).

<sup>15</sup>Called by the Dutch Varnalo or Warnoel. Rumphius 1910, dl.I, bl.4 and bl.417, (quoted in Notulen van de Bestuurs-en algemeene vergaderingen van het KITLV 1910-11 p.464, in *BKI* 65:1911).

<sup>16</sup>Hubert Th.Th.M. Jacobs, S.J. op cit. pp.79, 303, 333, 360, 363, etc.

<sup>17</sup>(Van Fraasen op. cit., p.7). One of these rulers was called Roboangue (the name reoccurs in Portuguese sources and may belong to more than one individual). In 1590 a Portuguese letter referred to Roboangue as being the *capitão geral d'el -rey de Ternate e senhor de Viranula*. (Hubert Th.Th.M. Jacobs, S.J op. cit., p.339).

In the years 1540 it was reported to have 'its own independant chief and was situated in a strong place' that counted 'four hundred guns'.<sup>18</sup>

The governors of Luhu led the Muslim resistance in west Seram and Hitu, organising the fight against the Portuguese and later against the brutal imposition by the Dutch of their monopoly on the trade of spices. Beyond their nominal dependancy to Ternate, these governors expanded their own realm of influence along the southern, western and northern coasts of Seram and on coastal Buru. When the Portuguese lost their initial agreement with the Muslims from Hitu, they strengthened their alliance with the Ambonese villages which had converted to Catholicism.<sup>19</sup>

The island of Ambon consists of two peninsulas joined by a narrow land bridge: Hitu (or Leihitu) in the north and Leitimor in the south. When the Dutch came for the first time to the area in 1599, the Portuguese were hardly maintaining their influence on the southern part of Hitu and on Leitimor where they had build a fort (around which grew the city of Ambon). Hitu and Huamual, where most of the trade of cloves with the Asian merchants was taking place, were Islamized and strongly supported by Java and Ternate.<sup>20</sup>

## THE DUTCH HEGEMONY

### The impact of the spice monopoly and the 'Culture System' on west Seram (1599-1860)

The main concern of the first commandants of the VOC fleets<sup>21</sup> was to establish trade and assistance agreements with the spice producing islands against the Portuguese. Upon arrival

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<sup>18</sup>This description is made just before Veranula had to make obedience to the Ternaten which defeated it with the help of the Portuguese. The Portuguese were worried that the *kota* would welcome the Spaniards who were also sailing in the vicinity. (Hubert Th.Th.M. Jacobs, S.J op. cit., p.303-305). To secure an anchorage on Hitu, through which passed the trade route, the Portuguese took side upon arrival, assisting Hitu in its (armed) contest against Veranula (Luhu) several times between 1512 and 1522 thus marking their hostility against Huamual.

<sup>19</sup>The Portuguese also had for allies the Catholic Ternatans who had followed them when they withdrew from Ternate in 1574 and were established in the southern part of Ambon island.

<sup>20</sup>This religious border (Islam/Christianity) is still partly perceptible on Ambon island where many Catholics embraced Protestantism upon Dutch conquest.

<sup>21</sup>Wijbrand van Warwick and Jacob van Heemskerck of the *Tweede Schipvaart* (Second Fleet) in 1599, Steven van der Haghen of the *Derde Schipvaart* (third Fleet) in 1600, and Admiral van Heemskerck in 1601 and 1604.

on Ambon in 1599, the Dutch made such an agreement (*eeuwig verbond*: eternal alliance) with the Muslim resistance of Hitu (*Hitoe*) and later with Huamual (*Hoewamohel*, *Hoamoal*). The new allies fought the Portuguese together, finally forcing them out of the Moluccas in 1605. On departure, the Portuguese surrendered the Catholic villages of Ambon to the Dutch. However tension arose rapidly between the VOC and its new partners, Christians and Muslims. The Dutch, who failed to assure pastoral care for the Catholics, imposed on them heavy duties.<sup>22</sup> The region was in an endemic state of warfare as the different domains and realms of influence opposed each other, but the Dutch gave their Christian allies very little protection in return for their compulsory services. At the same time the VOC tried to enforce its monopoly of the trade of spices on its Muslim trading allies from Hitu and Huamual. However, during the first quarter of the 17th century, Bugis and Chinese merchants offered guns, cloth, porcelain and other commodities at a much better price than the Dutch could afford, and barter trade flourished on Hitu and Huamual.

The most important village on the east side of the island (Seram) was and still is, Luhu, at this time (the 1620s) a significant comptoir (trading centre) of cloves ... It is not possible to describe all the villages (of Huamual) which ... stood out for their richness in cloves and also for the number of kora kora (war canoes) and able men essential for their (feared) *hong*i campaigns.<sup>23</sup>

Among these allied domains paying tribute to the Ternatan governor of Luhu, were two important coastal members of the Federation of the Three Rivers of west Seram ('Wele Batai Telu). The first one was the harbour of Piru near Eti, the southern river of the federation, which is still acknowledged by Manusa as its first ruler and 'older brother' ('*wali mena*'). The second domain of importance was Lisabata (or Lissabata), a rich northern trading centre whose rulers had received a bride from the Ternatan ruling family of Luhu.

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<sup>22</sup>Among the villagers' obligations were the *hong*i *tochten* ('punitive expeditions'). This native fleet was used by the Dutch until the middle of the 19th century to control the region and launch punitive expeditions against rebellious communities. In case of victory, the participants received a share of the looting and a few prisoners (slaves).

<sup>23</sup>Wall van de V.I. 1928 pp.212, 213, (my translation). The original text is the following: *De voornaamste negorij aan de Oostzijde des eilands was en is nog Loehoe, destijds een aanzienlijk nagelcomptoir (...) Ondoelijk ware het alle vervallen negorijen te beschrijven, dorpen niet alleen door hun rijkdom aan nagelen maar ook door hun aantal kora-kora (oorlogsprauwen) en strijdbare mannen, zoo onmisbaar voor de hong*i-tochten. However Luhu was in the west of Seram, although on the east side of the peninsula of Huamual (see map 1.2).

Lisabata chaired the assembly, (*Saniri* or *nili*), which gathered the representatives of the domains of the Sapalewa river among which was **hena** Manusa.<sup>24</sup>

It became clear to the Dutch that the only way to enforce their monopoly on production and trade was to keep the Asian traders out of the region and to secure total control of the clove growing industry, whatever the cost to the local populations. The infamous Governor General Jan Peterzoon Coen took the most drastic measures to achieve these objectives. Having ordered the massacre of the population of Banda (about 15,000) in 1621 to enforce VOC control over the production of nutmeg and mace, Coen organised intensive campaigns of intimidation and repression (*hong*) against the villages of Hitu and Huamual, which were still covertly trading cloves with the Asian merchants or refusing the VOC contracts.<sup>25</sup>

At Luhu, ... the Ternatans refused to bring their cloves to the Dutch, and instead transported them over the mountains to Lesidi and Erang where they were sold to the Makasarese for rice and slaves.<sup>26</sup>

In 1627, the Christian populations of the southern Ambonese peninsula of Leitimor were ordered to plant ten clove trees per household each year to rival the production of Huamual and Hitu. In 1644, to further assert their presence in Huamual, the Dutch rebuilt a bigger fort in Luhu. The *kota* of Luhu became called Overburg, from the name of the fortress which they enlarged in 1647 (the building became the largest *redoute* of the Ambonese region).<sup>27</sup> After a long and fierce resistance, the Dutch finally defeated Hitu in 1646. They dismantled its ruling system and assigned its mountain populations to coastal residences under the strict control of the Company. By 1656, after years of violent conflicts, the *landvoogd* Arnold de Vlamingh van Oudtshoorn had completely crushed all uprisings on

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<sup>24</sup>One type of ancient heirloom plate is called 'olo Hitu' 'tribute to Hitu'. Although this is not recorded, the mountain domains probably presented tribute to their coastal centre.

<sup>25</sup>Some 1,000 Bandanese took refuge in Makassar. Experienced spice traders since the 15th century, they contributed to the expansion of Makassar as a major spice trading centre. The Bandanese also went to Seram Laut (a small island on the slave route along east Seram) or sought asylum with their other trading partners. (Andaya 1991 pp.72, 83). The *hong* was originally the feared fleet used by the Ternatan sultans to keep control over their dependancies. These vessels (*kora kora*), rowed by slaves, were faster and more reliable than the Dutch sailing boats and some could carry up to 300 armed men. The Dutch took over the system, imposed compulsory participation on villagers, and continued it for their own benefit.

<sup>26</sup>Andaya 1991 op. cit., p.73.

<sup>27</sup>Van de Wall op. cit., p.212. 'The fortress Overburg was re-established in 1817 when Seram rebelled again. It was commonly used during the first half of the nineteenth century (...) but was closed in 1862 (...). In 1897 it was destroyed by a fire and this was the end of the whole village.' (Van de Wall op. cit., p.213 - my translation).

Huamual.<sup>28</sup> The Company abolished the Ternatan governorship of the peninsula, destroying all the settlements and plantations.<sup>29</sup> Huamual, which comprised about one hundred villages, was entirely depopulated.

The history of the Company on Huamual is eminently one of resistance and oppression, oppression and resistance in a circular manner. As a process it went on for (...) years and ended with the suppression of the land and people of Huamual.<sup>30</sup>

The populations of Huamual who had not escaped to 'Wele Telu (west Seram) were relocated to the island of Ambon, where their leaders were assigned residence.<sup>31</sup> The narrative of origin of some families living nowadays in the mountains of west Seram, retrace their arrival from Huamual and their incorporation within different mountain communities.<sup>32</sup> While some mountain groups welcomed the fleeing population of Huamual, others contributed to their defeat by joining the Dutch in their punitive expeditions. Indeed, contacts and alliances had been established between the Dutch and these inland populations earlier, during the *hongi* expeditions on the south coast of Seram. Thus, on 21 November 1631 a *hongi* fleet against Tobo had been welcomed by a thousand *Alfoeres*.<sup>33</sup> They helped the Dutch to take over the place, making with them a ritual oath of alliance (*matacau*) which promised their support against all the enemies of the Company.<sup>34</sup> The VOC used these volunteer native warriors from the mountains jointly with the *hongi* to collect harvests, suppress revolts or conquer new territories. They roamed around rebellious villages, hunting fugitives in the forest and taking part in the pillage.

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<sup>28</sup>De Vlamingh was Governor of Ambon from 1647 to 1650 and 'superintendent' (*landvoogd*) of Ambon, Banda and the (northern) Moluccas from 1650 to 1656. (Knaap G.J, 1987 pp.XIX-XX).

<sup>29</sup>To counter the over production of spices that had provoked a steady fall of prices after 1633, the policy of *extirpatie* (the eradication of unauthorised clove and nutmeg plantations) was implemented in the Moluccas from 1647 (or 1653, depending of the sources).

<sup>30</sup>Van de Wall op. cit., p.213 (my translation).

<sup>31</sup>The inhabitants of Luhu were resettled in Mamala (Van de Wall *ibid.*).

<sup>32</sup>For example, in Manusa the *nuru* Matital. In the Elpapatih and Teluti bays, Tichelman (1925,pp.723) found several families which had taken names directly related to the event: Mairuhu (*mai*: to 'come' *ruhu*: Luhu) i.e.: 'those who came from Luhu'; Ruhulesin (*lesi*'e to 'be leftover', to 'remain from'), 'those who remain from Luhu'.

<sup>33</sup>*Alfoeres*, *Alifurus* or *Alfures*: the name given to the non-Muslim mountain people of the region. Nowadays, it is mainly a derogatory term associated with backwardness (although some Ambonese intellectuals like to use it to designate themselves).

<sup>34</sup>Rumphius, G.E in *B.K.I.* 64 (1910) p.84.

A 'culture system', (the compulsory growing and selling of spices), was enforced on Ambon and Lease.<sup>35</sup> The populations of these islands were confined to their settlements and compelled to produce cloves for the Company. During the same period, most of the coastal communities of west Seram (mainly Muslim), were forced into subordination. They became incorporated into the administrative district of Ambon as subjects of the VOC. Like the Christian villages, they were controlled, taxed and bound to various services. However, they were strictly prohibited from growing cloves and from trading with anyone except the VOC. The rice, textiles, tools and other products sold by the Dutch were more expensive than those offered by Asian merchants.<sup>36</sup> Deprived of the cloves, their main product of exchange, most Seramese could no longer afford these commodities. The irony is that bringing the Moluccas to its ruin did not profit the VOC; the cost of enforcing its control and compensating the sultanates became higher than the profit they made on the spices.<sup>37</sup>

Van Fraassen describes this period as one of 'stifling stagnation' which lasted for a century and a half.<sup>38</sup> According to De Graaf, as long as the Dutch maintained their monopoly, controlling the price of cloves on the world market, the villagers of the Ambonese islands who produced spices lived in acceptable conditions but for the others it was mere survival on sago.<sup>39</sup> This, however describes only the coastal regions controlled by the Dutch (among others, west Seram), where people were assigned to residence in villages and could not freely rely on distant gardens and hunting grounds. Trading and raiding expeditions were initiated and controlled by the Dutch for their own benefit. Furthermore, the Company often received the support of feared gangs of head-hunters hurrying down the mountains to share in the looting.<sup>40</sup>

Besides their war techniques, weapons and adornments, very little is known about these mountain populations during the 18th century. They were of little interest for the VOC and

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<sup>35</sup>Lease: name given to the small islands of Haruku, Saparua and Nusalaut, in the east of Ambon (cf. map 1.2).

<sup>36</sup>In 1712, a decree of the VOC officially banned Chinese traders from the region east of Makassar (Andaya 1991 op. cit., p.78).

<sup>37</sup>Swadling P. op. cit., p.42.

<sup>38</sup>(op. cit., p.12).

<sup>39</sup>Graaf, H.J. de. 1977 p.191.

<sup>40</sup>Hillcrest settlements often have a panoramic view over the coastal area. One can spot a boat at sea and be at the coast by the time it anchors. These 'joint' raiding expeditions against the coastal villages of Central Moluccas which had rebelled against the Dutch, lasted until the beginning of the 19th century. The Alfoeroes played a noticable role during the repression of the Saporuanese uprising of 1817.

remained virtually outside the realm of the Dutch administration until the last quarter of the 19th century.

During the 18th century, the Company became an administrative dinosaur, overwhelmed by its own size and weakened by mismanagement and corruption. By the end of the century, its financial decline was irreversible. On 31 December 1799 the VOC was officially bankrupt and its possessions were taken over by the state under the management of the Oost Indische Handel en Bezittingen. However, the French had overthrown the *Stadhouderate* in 1795 and the Kew Letters issued by Wilhem V gave the English the custody of the Dutch possessions in the Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, India, Sumatra, Malacca and the central Moluccas.<sup>41</sup> The Ambonese and Bandanese possessions were managed by the English from 1796 to 1803. The British administration maintained the policy on the monopoly of clove growing and trading, but it was not carried out as rigorously as under the management of the VOC. When peace was restored in Europe, the British returned the islands to Dutch administration but reconquered them on February 16, 1810. During this second British *interregnum* which lasted until March 9, 1817, the Moluccas were under the authority of the Resident Martin, an ardent promoter of the liberal ideas which were spreading over Europe at that time.

The form of government introduced by the English was an enlightened and humane one, which meant a great relief to the population (...) Although the monopoly on the purchase of cloves was continued in force, the population was free to plant as many clove trees as it wanted. There was a vast improvement in the supply of consumption goods, which caused a drop in the prices of these.<sup>42</sup>

The restoration of Dutch authoritarian administration over the central Moluccas in 1817 was met with revolts all over the region, and the Dutch had to contain them with the support of Batavian troops. This prompted an investigation of the regional administration by the Dutch Government and the abolition of the feudal institution of 'Culture System' was recommended. In 1815, a Royal Decree freed the trade of the Dutch Indies but did not remove the Culture System. In 1824 the Governor General, Baron van der Capellen, visited the central Moluccas himself and decided to ease the pressure on local populations by canceling several unpopular measures like the eradication (*extirpatie*) policy and the compulsory participation in punitive raids (*hongi-tochten*).<sup>43</sup> In 1848, a law of liberalisation

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<sup>41</sup>Hall D.G.E. 1970 pp.326-42.

<sup>42</sup>Van Fraassen in Polman op. cit., 1983 p.32.

<sup>43</sup>The measures taken by Van der Capellen are published in articles 56 and 71 of the Staatsblad 1924 n°19a. (cf.:van Vollenhoven 1918 p.395, who also mentions the source of several other important policies and regulations concerning the Moluccas).



of the colonial territories was passed in the Netherlands. As a result, some of the limitations imposed by the Dutch administration on boat building, trading, fishing, changing residence, etc, were lifted in the Moluccas. However, the forced growing of cloves was not abolished until 1863.<sup>44</sup> By then, the Moluccan islanders could again freely grow spice trees, but these policies came too late. In west Seram, free cultivation did not bring back the former prosperity. The Dutch monopoly had been broken when the British established plantations in Zanzibar and cloves production was no longer profitable. The prices had dropped with the increase of world production and they never rose very high again. Furthermore, Huamual, the main producing centre, had been depopulated and the remaining coastal communities, tightly subordinated to Dutch administration, could not trade on more profitable markets.

Except for the occasional account of head-hunters' raids from the mountains, very little is known about the people of the interior before the late 19th century. Trading and exchanges which had taken place in the 17th century between the coastal and highland populations are not recorded, and by the time the Dutch fully controlled the area there was not much left to be traded.<sup>45</sup>

### **The 'Pacification' and colonisation of the highlands (1860-1948)**

The mountain people of west Seram begin to be mentioned in European documents during the second half of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20st. I have divided this important era in three periods: the early stage of 'pacification' (1860-1904), the Dutch military campaigns in 'Wele Telu (1904-1916) and the colonisation of the highlands (1916-1948). I first provide some background on the colonial policies and the literature of the time, and examine the attitude of the colonial administration toward the local religious and political institutions.

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<sup>44</sup>Hall D.G.E. op. cit., pp.572-73.

<sup>45</sup>The mountain people of Manusa recall a pre- European book: **bu'u** (*buku*), a powerful heirloom with a copper engraving which was in the possession of the ruler of Eti. It was possibly one of the trading diaries which were given by the early merchants to the village headmen with whom they established trading relations. (See Billai Laba: Oral tradition about early trade by Indonesians in southwest Papua new Guinea, in Swadling P. op cit p.301-305).

## *The framework*

### **The colonial policies at the end of the 19th century**

At the end of the 19th century, the necessity to relinquish the no longer lucrative trade of spices gave rise to new colonial policies in the Central Moluccas. The first aim was to achieve full administrative control of the region, and the second to evaluate its economic potential for European free trading entrepreneurs. Accordingly, the exploration of the remote regions and their pacification (*pacificacie*) became a priority.<sup>46</sup> These colonial policies, which started to be promoted in the coastal areas of west Seram around 1855, were fully implemented in the mountains of 'Wele Telu by 1920.

By the 1880s, the western coasts of Seram were largely under Dutch administrative control. In their reports, the regional administrators recommended the pacification be completed by achieving full control of the interior. Simultaneously, these remote regions were to be explored, their mineral resources assessed and their potential for plantations and other agroforestry projects evaluated. The exploitation of these resources implied a peaceful subordination of the entire 'Wele Telu region. Pacification was thus to benefit commerce, modernisation and Christianisation. Indeed, the early missionaries came to support vehemently the cry for 'pacification' when they met the strong opposition of the Kakehan, the regional male initiation brotherhood, and became aware that it was the main obstacle to their ministry. Furthermore, members of the Kakehan were head-hunters and the newly christianised villagers their potential victims.<sup>47</sup> During the beginning of the 20th century, repeated military campaigns of intimidation and punitive expeditions methodically criss-crossed the region, and by 1919 they had brought it into submission.

The main argument of the Dutch Liberals of the time was that the native populations had to be freed from their local despotic rulers, who should be replaced by young leaders of the 'good families' educated in colonial schools. In 'Wele Telu the early period of pacification (1855-1904) brought four types of operation. First, the communities which attacked the pacified villages were penalised (they were fined and their settlements and gardens were burned if they did not comply). Second, the traditional leaders of the political and religious

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<sup>46</sup>Nowadays the word 'casualties' is used to describe the innocent civil victims of our modern wars; similarly the Dutch described as 'pacification' (*pacificatie*) the ruthless military repression of any form of rebellion (including peaceful flight) against the imposition of colonial rule.

<sup>47</sup>Keeping up the faith of the 'natives' was by itself not an easy task. It did cost the supportive congregations in the Netherlands a lot of rice. In Ambon these new Christians of the remote regions were nicknamed the 'rice converts'.

organisations who were an obstacle to the colonial control of the region were converted or evicted (those who resisted were arrested or exiled and replaced by approved candidates). Thirdly, the communities which rebelled against the Dutch authority were forced into submission (the colonial troops waged anti-guerrilla warfare, took over settlements, confiscated guns and continuously patrolled the mountains to force those who escaped to surrender). Once the last rebellions were quelled, the final operation was the registration of the whole population for census and individual tax collection. By 1919, the interior of 'Wele Telu was under control and regularly patrolled. By then, all the communities had been registered and numerous hamlets were congregated into larger and more accessible villages. A network of paths made the region accessible to patrols, tax collectors, medical personnel, teachers, explorers and preachers, many of whom described their experiences in reports and publications.

### **The early literature**

Although there is a large amount of valuable literature on the Ambonese region, there is no reliable ethnographic description of the social organisation of the groups established in the 'Wele Telu region.<sup>48</sup> The end of the 19th, and the first third of the 20th century, saw the publication of several travel accounts, the most famous being the remarkable voyage account of the naturalist A. R. Wallace who travelled through the Moluccas from 1857 to 1861. Multiple communications (*mededeelingen*), reports or introductory articles (*inleiding*) were also written (or copied from each other) by the military, missionary, medical and colonial personnel or by the investigators involved in the expeditions (*excusiën*) to pacify and explore west Seram.<sup>49</sup> The authors were aware from early on, of the existence of two mountain groups in 'Wele Telu, the Alune and the Wemale. Generalities about what distinguished them were dutifully repeated: their location (Alune in the west, Wemale in the east), clothing (the Alune women wore a woven skirt, the Wemale a loincloth in bark), lines of derivation (Alune were 'patrilineal', Wemale 'matrilineal'), the first had large bridewealth payments, the second did not. There is also plenty of superficial or critical descriptions of the oath-taking ceremonies; the customs surrounding birth, initiation and burial; the housing

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<sup>48</sup>Here, I strictly limit my review to the literature about west Seram and more specifically about the Alune before 1930. A critical overview of the literature available on the Central Moluccas is given by Van Fraassen in Polman op. cit., 1983 pp.8-12 (16th century) 19-32 (17th and 18th). An excellent annotated bibliography of the 19th and 20th (until 1980) is provided by Polman herself. A comprehensive bibliography on recent Moluccan research (1980-1994) is provided by L.E. Visser (1994 pp.231-249).

<sup>49</sup>The most important or most reliable are quoted in this thesis or listed in the bibliography.

and lifestyle; the tools and weapons; the folklore and the handicrafts etc.<sup>50</sup> However the authors seldom bothered to state precisely which settlement or group their data had been collected from and often indiscriminately compiled information from different sources under the category 'native' or *Alfure* customs. Interestingly, even authors like de Vries (1927), who initially carefully tried to differentiate Alune and Wemale, finally amalgamated them. This hints at the need to inquire about the people's own formulation of their Alune or Wemale identity.

In the literature, the mountain groups are usually referred to by the general term *alfures* or Patasiwa. At the most, some authors like Riedel, identify them by river basin.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, the colonial division per river basin did not totally correspond to the traditional political organisation of the federation of 'Wele Batai Telu, the 'Three Large River Trunks'. The federation was based on the loose and changing alliances of communities which linked their membership to one of these trunks (**batai**). The Dutch geo-administrative grouping of villages per river basin (Boot 1893, Sachse 1907 and 1922) did not always correspond to that traditional state of affairs. For example the Sapalewa valley was, and still is, occupied by Alune groups but the Sapalewa **batai** included several Wemale communities from the Uli river valley more to the east. The name Makahala is also used for Alune by some authors, but not always with the same meaning.<sup>52</sup> For most authors (Tauern 1918, de Vries 1927) it stands for Alune but Sachse, a main source for that period, tends to use it to refer to the Sapalewa Alune only (1922 p.184). Van Hecht Munting Napjus writes that the

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<sup>50</sup>Some of the best examples of these general descriptions are found in: Riedel, J.G.F. 1886 *De Sluik- en Kroesharige rassen tussen Selebes en Papua*. 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff (Seram pp.86-145); Boot, W.G. 1893 Korte Schets der Noord-Kust van Ceram, in *Tijdschrift van het Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* 10 (2). pp.885-1204; Martin, K. 1894 *Reisen in der Molukken, in Ambon, den Uliassern, Seran und Buru*. Vol. I. Leiden:Brill (North and west Seram pp.66-250) and later Deninger, K. 1915 Geographische Übersicht von Westseran, *Petermanns Mitt.* 61 (pp.385-85); Giel W.H. F. Het Binnenland van West-Ceram en Zijne Bewoners. *Indisch Genootschap* (1916-17), pp.1-26. 's-Gravenhage, Krayer van Aalst, H: 1916, Meijne Reizen op Seran, in *TAG* 33 (1916) pp.340-44, Tichelman, G.L. 1925 De Onder-afdeeling Amahai (Seran) *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap te Amsterdam*. Leiden (*TAG*) n° 42, pp.653-724, Ruinen, W. 1929 Ethnografische gegevens van west Seram, in *Mensch en Maatschappij* 5e Jaargang 1929 n°1. Groningen. (pp.220-232), etc.

<sup>51</sup>According to Riedel who was Resident of Ambon in 1880-83, the Patasiwa tribe (*stam*) splits itself into three divisions (*afdeelingen*), the Patasiwa Maselo, the Patasiwa Mamali and the Patasiwa Makuaka. The Maselo or tatoed Patasiwa live along the rivers Eti Tala and Sapalewa. (1886 pp.86-145)

<sup>52</sup>There are two folk etymologies for that name: 1- *makan ala* 'Rice eaters' (*makan* bahasa Malay: 'to eat', *ala* bahasa Alune: 'rice'). 2- *Maka ala*: 'those who do (cultivate) rice' (i.e. the Alune, since the Wemale do not).

Alune are also called Loemau Wane, and the Wemale Kwe.<sup>53</sup> As for the Tala, the river valley and its *batai* are shared by both groups. Thus an *alfure* or a Patasiwa of the Tala may be either Alune or Wemale. However most of the reports which mention place names do not bother to locate the settlements they refer to, and many of them have since changed name, been displaced or regrouped.

Orthography is another variable.<sup>54</sup> Finally, some freedom is sometimes taken with chronology. This is to say that getting a clear picture through these documents is at times awkward. Most of them read better after fieldwork. However this archival documentation constitutes the only written accounts about the region at the time and some provide valuable information when read in context.<sup>55</sup> Just as the Siwa Lima system, the Kakehan has inspired numerous authors, the most renowned, although not the most accurate, being J. P. Duyvendak. (1926).<sup>56</sup>

In my view, the most interesting early reviews and discussions of the economic prospects of Seram in the second half of the 19th century were written by the naturalist P. Bleeker and the assistant resident P. van der Crab following the visits to the Moluccas by the Governors General in 1855 and 1860. A few years later, in 1897, the former Resident of Ambon, G. van Hoevell, promoted a few more ideas on the same topic.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, although a century has elapsed since those reports were elaborated, I have not come upon any seriously new propositions to attempt the development of this region in a sustainable approach, in the most recent literature.

Three major Western authors worked in or visited 'Wele Telu before 1930 and wrote extensively about it: O. Tauern, (1918), F. J. P. Sachse (1907 & 1922) and G. De Vries (1927). The German ethnographer Tauern was, (with Deninger and Stresemann), a member of the Second Freiburg Moluccas Expedition in 1911-12. Although he is criticised for superficiality by van Fraassen (in Polman op. cit., p.48) I have found some useful

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<sup>53</sup>Hecht Muntingh Napjus, J. van. 1912b p.793. *Luma'u* ('my house') wane? ('wani ? 'men 's loincloth'), *kwe*: 'river', 'water'. Wemale were also referred to as the people from the *kwe* ('river') Mala (their eastern border with the Patasiwa).

<sup>54</sup>For example: Somyet = Soumet = Soemite, nowadays Sumite (but does Lasahata stand for Lisabata?)

<sup>55</sup>To mention only a few, the reports of military officers like W.G. Boot (op. cit., 1893), J. van Hecht Muntingh Napjus (op. cit., 1912), W.H. F. Giel (op. cit., 1916-17), G.L.T. Tichelman (op. cit., 1925), W. Ruinen (op. cit., 1929), or missionaries like H. Kraye van Haalst (op. cit., 1916), contain useful and relevant data.

<sup>56</sup>For a list of authors who have written on that topic see Polman op. cit., p.318 (Kakean society).

<sup>57</sup>Bleeker P. 1856 Vol. 2; van der Crab P. 1862; van Hoevell G. W., 1897 in *TNI* 1 (1897) pp.384-404.

comparative data in his detailed description of Saniri and Kakehan meetings, houses, tattoos etc, as well as in his collection of photographs. F. J. P. Sachse, a Dutch military officer who spent some twenty years in the region (Seram and PNG), is one of my main sources and is repeatedly referred to in this chapter despite the limitations of his views. G. De Vries, another military officer, was bivouac commander in the Wemale village of Hunitetu from 1920 (or 1921) to 1923. In 1927 he wrote a book which became popular in the Netherlands, where life in the colonies was a favorite topic at the time.<sup>58</sup> De Vries gave a vivid and sympathetic description of the region and its inhabitants during the period of his stay in 'Wele Telu. He also collected histories and narratives from several villages. Although he roughly differentiates Wemale and Alune, part of the ethnographic interest of his descriptions is lost in imprecision and generalities. The value of the data he collected is better appreciated with a preliminary knowledge of the field.

Geographers, geologists,<sup>59</sup> naturalists, agronomists, doctors and preachers also explored Seram. Among them were some romantic travelers:

[The islands] have an inexpressible beauty ... The surf foams and breaks on the reef. Behind the white coral beach, the green wooden hills rise steeply. ...[The people] are happy and carefree.<sup>60</sup>

An Alfure does not think of tomorrow. He has also few worries about his daily bread as there is always sago.<sup>61</sup> [Furthermore, claims the author, it is the women's job to process it!]. The Seramese rushes [i.e. without thinking]. He is a head-hunter and an anarchist.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, van Wouden's analysis of some main features of the Alune social organisation will also be discussed in this thesis.<sup>63</sup>

### **The ban on the Kakehan and Saniri organisations**

The mountain population, (often labeled as *Alfures* or *Alfoeroes*), bartered and traded with the Muslim and Christian coastal communities, but also launched episodic head-hunting or

<sup>58</sup>de Vries G: 1927.

<sup>59</sup>Among the geologists who surveyed Seram was K. Martin (in 1891-92).

<sup>60</sup>Text from a Dutch documentary (propaganda) about Central Moluccas made in 1948. (Quoted by van Kaam B. 1977 p.43).

<sup>61</sup>Nanlohy 1928 p.270.

<sup>62</sup>Krayer van Aalst H in TAG 33 (1916) p.342.

<sup>63</sup>van Wouden F.A.E., 1968 (first published in 1935 - English translation by R. Needham).

ransacking expeditions against their villages. The Dutch were aware that mountain groups also pursued conflicts among themselves but these quarrels or the ransacking of coastal villages were difficult to control. A report of 1857 states that the colonial administration interfered in village quarrels and that several communities joined to fight the colonial government. Peace was re-established, says the report, when the leaders of the Kakehan were arrested. Then, says also the report, several *raja* voluntarily submitted and the villagers came down to live peacefully along the coast.<sup>64</sup> This is an example of what was recommended and systematically implemented throughout the region during the following years.

Until 1905, writes an assistant resident,<sup>65</sup> the mountain region was still largely *terra incognita* and the Dutch military posts were far away from 'Wele Telu. The hilly and densely forested terrain rendered access difficult, particularly during the wet season. In war time, remembers Sachse (1922), the people were taking refuge on inaccessible hill tops using them as fortresses. However, from 1857, repeated expeditions were launched from the northern and southern coasts to control or penalise the inland communities. In 1860, a double pronged punitive expedition was led by Lieutenant Colonel de Brabant, one column, walking from the north, was directed against the Alune *inama* of Buria (upper Sapalewa) and the other, starting from the south coast, went against the Wemale *negari* of Hunitetu.<sup>66</sup> The two columns joined in the mountains, having crossed 'Wele Telu from coast to coast. The campaign had been organised to punish the mountain villages for the taking of the head of a mission teacher in Waesamu (south coast). In retaliation, some settlements were burned down and their plantations cut down.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>In Verslag Ned. Bezittingen and Kolonien 1858 p.14.

<sup>65</sup>J. van Hecht Muntingh Napjus, in *T.A.G.*: 2.XXIX- 1912, p.777.

<sup>66</sup>The people of Hunitetu were feared head-hunters. At that time, they were in Lakubutui in the upper Tala in the territory of Japio Batai where they had been welcomed after having been defeated by another group. A few years later, Japio called on its allies to force the Hunitetu people out because they had also been taking several heads among their hosts. As they went further south along the Tala, they frightened the Liline people, who fled northward and joined a group established in the Sapalewa. Bringing with them some precious heirlooms, the Liline gave their name to that settlement (Riring), but the first settlers retained their precedence over sacred land. A section of the Hunitetu community went down to the southern coast and settled in the Elpapatih bay. The others, said the lord of the land of Manusa, were permitted to settle at the southern border of the *hena* ('domain') territory where they are now. This single chain of events exemplifies how fragmentation, migration and new association of groups has been a recurrent feature in the area. The narrative of the Ahiolo-Hunitetu war, well known in the region, was recorded by G. de Vries (1927 pp.200-203).

<sup>67</sup>Van Rees (1863 pp.81-86 and 129-163) examines the origin of the events and gives a vivid and informative account of the whole campaign. He also discusses the Kakehan organisation on pp.65-81.

In 1859, a report of the government of the Moluccas stated that:

*... Op het groote maar schaars bevollkte eiland Ceram trachte de Governer's government invloed, tot handhaving der rust en tot bevordering van den landbow uit te breiden, maar niet altijd met het gewenschte gevolg. In september 1860 braken op de zuidkust van Ceram weder ongeregeld heden uit die niet dan na vrij ernstigen tegenstand bedwongen werde. De Hoof doorzaak daarvar werd gezegd te zijn hen Kakian verbond.<sup>68</sup>*

... On the large but under populated Seram island,<sup>69</sup> the government tried to increase its influence as peace keeper and to improve agriculture but not always with the expected result. In September 1860 incidents began again on the south coast of Seram which were contained only after a strong counteraction. The principal cause mentioned was the Kakehan movement.

Lieutenant Sachse was a military administrator of west Seram. In 1902-4 he was based in Wahai (Bay of Seleman, central Seram north coast) and in 1904-6 in Piru in the Eti region. He commented:

*West Seran kan niet te orde en rust komen, zoolang het kakian bestaat, en daar zijn leer strijdig is met de zedelijkheid, zoo is de Regeering volkomen gerechtigd tot het verbieden van de uitoefening daarvan.<sup>70</sup>*

West Seram can not come to order and peace as long as the Kakehan exists, and because its teaching is against the common norms, the government is completely justified in forbidding its ritual.

For the civil and military administrators and the missionaries alike, head-hunting and the uprisings inland were associated with the Kakehan and thus with the Saniri. Indeed, the prominent elders and political leaders of the Saniri Council of each river basin were also religious leaders in the Kakehan (*Kakean* or *Kakian*),<sup>71</sup> an initiation brotherhood to which most adult men belonged. The Kakehan, about which we know very little although much has been written, was described as a *bond* (alliance, league), a masculine secret society acting as a large regional association of male initiation groups. It was characterised by initiation practices, secret paraphernalia, ritual seclusion of boys in men's houses, warfare and ritual murders (head-hunting). The Saniri was depicted as a disorganised, inefficient and corrupt

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<sup>68</sup>In *Verslag Ned. Bezittingen and Kolonien* 1859 p.16.

<sup>69</sup>At that time the combined population of Seram and Buru was estimated at about 60,000 inhabitants (*Verslag Ned. Bezittingen and Kolonien* 1855 p.8-9).

<sup>70</sup>Sachse, op. cit., 1907 p.95.

<sup>71</sup>In the mountains the brotherhood was also called *sasihane* (possibly from *sasi'e* to 'testify').



assembly.<sup>72</sup> The general opinion was that the Kakehan was not only responsible for the head-hunting, a barbarian practice, but that it was the last bastion against the process of pacification. The mountain *alfures* were described as looters and murderers, and the Dutch administrators expressed their duty to protect the coastal settlements which were already 'pacified'. The proof of the phenomenal extent of head-hunting due to the Kakehan influence in the mountains, were the hundreds of heads that military patrols reportedly discovered in the *baileo*.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, skulls had been found hanging from the main poles and beams of these men's meeting houses in Seram and the tradition is described by Jensen as a Wemale practice.<sup>74</sup> The Alune of Manusa hung their trophies on a tree near their initiation house. However heads were not that easy to capture or to obtain, and hundreds of them seems an exaggerated figure. Reports and letters from the missions repeatedly called for regular patrols by armed police. They recalled roaming bands of head-hunters of the Kakehan, terrorizing coastal villagers and keeping them away from their gardens. In the *Verslag van de Nederlandsche Bezittingen en Kolonien* of 1856, the Kakehan leaders were accused of head-hunting, fomenting revolt, and preventing the villagers from being vaccinated against the smallpox which had decimated the population.<sup>75</sup> The following year, the same periodical stated that:

Despite repeated efforts, the poisonous influence of the Kakehan has not yet been successfully overcome on Seram.<sup>76</sup>

During a conference much commented upon in the Netherlands, the assistant preacher Krayer van Aalst (who spent 15 years in Seram from 1897) declared that Seram was unsafe and that 70 Christian converts had been beheaded in 7 years. In the years 1911-13 the missions, supported by the Governor General van Heutsz, increased the pressure to obtain the prohibition of Kakehan and Saniri meetings. Finally, under the joint efforts of military administrators, mission workers and civil government the Saniri and the Kakehan were officially prohibited in 1914 for 'they maintained cruel customs and impeded progress.'<sup>77</sup> If large scale head-hunting ever occurred in 'Wele Telu —something that has never been

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<sup>72</sup>I return to that institution in more detail in the following chapter.

<sup>73</sup>Formerly, baileo with 300 or 400 skulls were not unusual on Seram' (Boes A.G. 1921 op. cit., p.94).

<sup>74</sup>Jensen, A.D.E. 1948 p.241.

<sup>75</sup>Op. cit., p.77. That the illness, like the flu, was introduced by the Dutch in the first place is not mentioned.

<sup>76</sup>*Vers. Ndl. Bezit. & Kol.* 1857 p.32.

<sup>77</sup>Boes A.G. 1921 p.94.

proven— by 1918 it was eradicated and, with it, the traditional system that was resisting colonisation.

*The early stage of 'pacification' (1860-1904)*

The Alune hill settlement of Kairatu in 'Wele telu was a centre of barter trade between the mountain people and the outside.<sup>78</sup> It was also within easy reach of a good anchorage on the southern coast and close to Ambon island. For these reasons, as early as 1860, the Dutch posted a troop of 150 men in this rebellious settlement. However, in the 19th century the administration of Seram was part of the *afdeeling* Saparua, (a southern Uliaser island) and the island remained governed by the controller of Hiha (on Ambon island) until the first officer was posted to Kairatu in 1882. Before that, Seram was divided into four administrative districts (*afdeelingen*): Waroe in the east, Wahai in the north, Amahei in the south, and Kairatu in the West.<sup>79</sup> In 1882 the administration of Seram was reorganised into three districts (*afdeelingen*), each with an officer in charge (*posthouder*). The officers were posted to the coastal settlements of Kairatu (west), Amahai (south) and Waru (east). The military occupation (*bezittingen*) had two garrisons, one in Wahai (north) and one Amahai (south). According to Riedel, this re-organisation was meant to provide a 'more orderly administration,' since 'up to this moment they had no control over the interior'.<sup>80</sup> However none of the military garrisons was yet in 'Wele Telu.

Repeated expeditions were launched in the Tala and Eti region during the years 1869, 1875-76, 1884-85 and 1889 in order to bring under colonial administration the Wemale and Alune settlements which were accessible from the southern coast. The local rulers who collaborated were given three pointed bonnets and gold, silver or copper regalia. Later they were appointed, receiving salary and advantages. The others were arrested or banned and replaced by more cooperative candidates. By 1900, writes Sachse, 'law and order among the tribes' was achieved in the coastal villages but the mountain groups still had to be pacified with presents, 'always asking for more but taking more and more victims. The worst' adds

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<sup>78</sup>A narrative collected by Jensen and Niggemeyer recalls Kairatu's role in the exchange network between coast and mountain (1939 n°80 p.133). Kairatu, now on the coast, is the administrative centre of the *kecamatan*, a main harbour and market town in the region.

<sup>79</sup>Sachse 1907 p.33. (See also Van Hecht Muntingh Napjus in *TAG 29 Vol.2*, Leiden 1912 p.799-800). On a later map, dated 1943, the same districts appear as *onderafdeelingen* (sub-divisions). It seems it returned to 4 sub-divisions in 1911 (Cf Napjus p.799 note 3).

<sup>80</sup>Riedel J.G.F.1886 p.95.

Sachse, 'were the Tala Wemale of Hunitetu and the Sapalewa Alune of Rumasool [and] Buria.<sup>81</sup>

Until 1904 the officer in charge of the civil authority of 'Wele Telu was based in Wahai on the northern coast of central Seram, several days by boat and walk from its inland region. Lieutenant Sachse, the officer in charge at the time, repeatedly complained that it was impossible to control the region from that distance. In January 1904, after a succession of incidents in the 'Wele Telu region he finally obtained permission to establish the first military post in Piru. From then on the Dutch military campaigns became more effective. Piru, an ancient dependency of Huamual, was a good anchorage on the South coast in the pacified part of the Eti valley, only a day away from Ambon by steamboat. Sachse, who had by then been promoted to civil and military commander of Seram, chose to base himself in the hill settlement of Kairatu with 80 men. From there the patrols could readily access the South Tala area and control the newly displaced Wemale of Hunitetu. A year later an expedition marched from the upper Tala over the divide and reached the northern Sapalewa region, finding the mountain track to the Alune settlements of Rumasool and Buria.<sup>82</sup>

Sachse's stated objective was to obtain more men to keep a constant patrol on the area. He intended to show force and coerce the region under colonial rule to impose 'pacification' rather than simply displace the settlements to the coast. Some of Sachse's recommendations to improve the agricultural exploitation of the island (like setting up large rice plantations in the north, a project presently being followed up), do not appear the most appropriate for the ecology of the island. However he rightly believed that it was indispensable for regional development that the mountain populations be maintained inland. He was ahead of his time in making this recommendation and repeatedly confronted the colonial administration about it.<sup>83</sup> The fact that there are still several mountain settlements in 'Welu Telu nowadays is certainly partly due to Sachse's obstinance to keep people inland at a time when the policy was to resettle them in villages along the coast.

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<sup>81</sup>Sachse op. cit., 1923 p.167.

<sup>82</sup>Before that, the troupes travelled from the south to the north by boat, around the western coast. It took them two days to reach the mountains of the Sapalewa and this was more than the villagers needed to disappear in the bush.

<sup>83</sup>The young lieutenant Sierevelt (posted in the mountains of west Seram from 1915 to 1919) also shared these views.

### The colonial re-configuration of the mountain settlements

In 1866, during the early period of pacification, **hena** Manusa entered into the written history of the archipelago, identified as a cluster of hamlets and registered as the *Manoesa manoewe complex*.<sup>84</sup> In 1860, an expedition conducted by Lieut. col. de Brabant marched for two months (September 25 - December 1) throughout 'Wele Telu, crossing the island from north to south for the first time. The expedition must have passed across the land of Manusa but no settlement is mentioned. The *Manoesa manoewe complex* only appears in Sachse's reports when a patrol traversed it on 12 February 1866, marching from the south on its way to Rumasoal, further north in the valley, downstream of the Sapalewa.<sup>85</sup> The Dutch called a number of related settlements or hamlets a 'village complex'. However, neither Mapone (Manusa's chief hamlet) nor any of its garden or grove settlements like Usua, Waiame, or Batu Mete nor its ritual centre Nuruitu, (or Rumbatu and Rumberu, its children hamlets in the Tala region) are mentioned in Riedel's rather exhaustive list of villages from the Sapalewa region in 1886.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless the author refers elsewhere to Manusa as the *negari* where stands the Nunusaku.<sup>87</sup> He thus acknowledges its existence as a territorial and administrative entity.<sup>88</sup>

The present pattern of village distribution is largely a result of the Dutch colonial attempts to pacify and bring under greater governmental control the independent mountain peoples of central Seram at the time when the first formal administration districts were established in 1882 ... Pacification itself had been more or less achieved by 1910.<sup>89</sup>

Nowadays after several generations have passed, it is difficult to draw a detailed picture of the small communities (hamlets) which occupied the inland region before the Dutch

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<sup>84</sup>This is 38 years before its Wemale neighbour, Japio, is mentioned for the first time.

<sup>85</sup>Sachse, F. J. P., 1922 p.244-247).

<sup>86</sup>Riedel J.G.F.1886 op. cit., p.88.

<sup>87</sup>Riedel describes the sacred tree as a banyan *Ficus altimeraloo*, *Rxb.* (op. cit., p.88-89).

<sup>88</sup>In west Seram, a *negari*, *negeri* or *negorij* was a 'village' or 'village complex' (Alune: cf. Sachse 1922 p.109, Stresemann 1923 p.336, Tauern 1918 p.153). Made of one large village or sometimes of several hamlets, an Alune or a Wemale *negorij* had a 'governing council' called Saniri **hena** and a 'meeting platform' or *baileo anakota* (also called **sisi hena**: 'village platform'). Not all the hamlets had a **sisi hena** but one was needed by a *negorij* for ruling and ceremonial purposes. **Hena** can thus mean village as well as *negorij*'. (van Wouden, op. cit., 1968, p.71).

<sup>89</sup>Sachse, op. cit., 1907 p.33.

administrative restructuring.<sup>90</sup> The groups (domains) were associated with a river valley as members of the **batai** ('trunk') of that river, whether or not they were allied among themselves.<sup>91</sup> In each of the three **batai**, (Eti, Tala, Sapalewa) of 'Wele Telu, we know about the large domains which fought the Dutch because they were reported and described. However an early action of the military administration was to regroup the smaller communities into sizable settlements (*negeri*) easily accessible to its patrols. During the years 1912-16 the related or allied hamlets within the *negeri* were gathered into *soa*. Under this *soa* model, Houses (**Luma**) from different origin groups (**nuru**) shared some garden and orchard land and a common ward in the settlement of the *negeri*. By 1916, each mountain *negeri* was made of several *soa* (often three). As several segments of origin groups (**nuru**) gathered into one *soa*, taxable individuals became identified by the name of their *soa* rather than by the name of their origin group.<sup>92</sup> The case of Manusa, described in a later chapter, illustrates the successive changes in mode of settlement to which these groups have adapted since the beginning of the century (see Chapter six: The *soa*, and appendix 1: The successive settlements of Hena Manusa).

#### *The Dutch military campaigns in 'Wele Telu (1904-1916)*

**Hena** Manusa has a set of narratives which are as old as the history of the settlement. The **hena** fought victoriously against two other Alune groups, had several war episodes with their Wemale neighbour Japio Batai and joined in some head-hunting raids against coastal settlements.<sup>93</sup> However Manusa's people have no narrative about the Dutch conquest because they never fought against the Dutch. When they were first visited they ran away. Later they agreed to register and gathered into three *soa*. When asked why the **hena** did not rise up with all its neighbours, the Saniri elder replied that it was not the role of the **hena** to fight (against invaders from the outside). In 'Wele Telu, the task of Manusa was to watch

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<sup>90</sup>Their number and location fluctuated and it is unlikely that many people would have known of all the settlements of the three valleys, unless their ritual or ruling functions would have required that knowledge. However each group usually remembers the sites of the ancient hamlets where its ancestors once dwelled.

<sup>91</sup>For example the neighbouring domains of Manusa and Lohia Sapalewa both belong to the Sapalewa **batai**; however an ancient and mutual lack of trust characterises their relationship.

<sup>92</sup>To obscure the matter further the name of a large or influential **nuru** was often chosen as a *soa* name. With time and migrations, some of these *soa* may no longer have any members of their original leading **nuru** in them. Under the modern Indonesian administration the *soa* has been abolished but its structure remains visible and people can still choose to identify themselves by either their **nuru** or their *soa* name.

<sup>93</sup>All recall the heroic deeds of the **amalesi**, (**ama**: father, **lesi**: war) the war leaders (*kapitan perang* in the central Moluccas) during land disputes or head-hunting and retaliation parties.

over the Nunusaku. By duty, Manusa was the custodian of the place from where all mankind —insiders and outsiders— had once come. Therefore it was not its role to repel anyone. The main fighting *negeri* of the Sapalewa Batai region were the two Alune *inama* of Buria and Rumasoal and their allies. The leading *negeri* in the fight against the Dutch in the Tala region were the Wemale people of Hunitetu and Japio Batai.

A group and its territory may be called a *hena*, an *inama*, a *batai*, or a *kota*, etc. The Dutch administration referred to all of them as *negeri*. Similarly, I distinguish region: *gebied*, the Dutch word for territory, domain, region or basin, which is used by Sachse to refer to each river valley,<sup>94</sup> from *batai*, the traditional name for a group and its territory (usually the people living in the same river valley). A *batai* may be a single group and its hamlets like Japio Batai, or a larger federation that includes all the groups of a river valley like the Tala Batai. In the Dutch system Japio Batai was included in the Tala region, but traditionally Japio was a *batai* allied to, but independent from, the Tala Batai.

Both the Tala and Sapalewa regions, and for a short period the Eti, were repeatedly the site of uprisings and subsequent Dutch punitive expeditions. This led the mountain people into a succession of battles which they could not win.

### **The Sapalewa campaign (1904-1906)<sup>95</sup>**

In September 1904 Sachse launched a major punitive expedition against the Sapalewa Alune of Rumasoal who had burned Waesamu (including its church building) and taken several heads in the Eti Alune region. The Dutch fined them but they refused to pay and ran away into the forest. One hundred and thirty soldiers and two hundred and thirty carriers climbed to Rumasoal but 'they were continuously shot at and never saw the enemy'. The carriers ran away at the first shots and soon the troops dispersed and had to retreat on difficult terrain.<sup>96</sup> However, the Dutch had learned several techniques of guerrilla fighting in the Aceh wars (1873-1908), where they had started to win the wars when 'lightly armed flying columns were organized for the maintenance of internal peace and the harassing of the chiefs that still held out'.<sup>97</sup> A similar strategy was successfully applied in Seram in the following years.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>The three patrols' itineraries in 'Wele Telu.

<sup>95</sup>Main source: Sachse 1923 pp.169-72, 173-74, 176-77, 1, 244-277.

<sup>96</sup>Sachse (1922 pp.169-70) The campaign is told again by Nanlohy (1928 p.174).

<sup>97</sup>Hall op. cit., p.580.

<sup>98</sup>Sachse gives detailed accounts as well as excerpts from his personal diary and the patrols log (op. cit., 1922 and 1907). On October 5, 1904, he wrote that he sent all the fit men available on almost continuous patrols to the extent that the base camp was left in the care of the sick and the wounded. He adds that the

Early in 1905 Sachse called for more troops but the government of Ambon decided to stop the expeditions inland. In remote regions, the implementation of the colonial policies depended very much on who was on site, in charge of the government. Sachse's personal view was that the communities were to be pacified and re-grouped but maintained inland to develop the region, while the tendency at that time was to gather them along the coast. Sachse was renowned as a competent but rigid officer. In March he was replaced by the Lieutenant of infantry, W. Ruinen. The post in Kairatu was abandoned and Sachse was sent back to Wahai, his earlier garrison, two days away from 'Wele Telu. As soon as he had left, the villages of Tala and Sapalewa were reported in unrest again and Sachse obtained orders to return in August. This time his troops succeeded in crossing the island from the north without a local guide.

For Sachse there were three factions in the Sapalewa Alune region in 1905-08. The coastal people allied with Wakolo and Patahue, two Alune hill settlements, formed the first faction. The second alliance was made up of the strong mountain communities of Rumasoal Buria Riring and Lohia. Further inland in the upper Sapalewa was the *Manusa complex*, the third group which remained neutral (Rumberu, Manusa's southern hamlet, was regarded as part of the Tala region).<sup>99</sup>

In 1905-06 the relations between the coastal and mountain settlements were tense in the north, wrote Sachse, and the Dutch were busy keeping peace and order in the Sapalewa region. The Alune of Rumasoal, Riring, Buria and Lohia in the Sapalewa mountains had joined forces against the Dutch.<sup>100</sup> Manusa and its children villages were reported quiet.<sup>101</sup> The Dutch detachments patrolled the mountains methodically, keeping a head camp in Rumasoal until the end of the rebellion. The patrol officers fined the rebels and started to register the populations. This was not an easy task because many people still lived in small and scattered family groups which moved easily.<sup>102</sup> Afraid to be forced to join the army, the

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frequent patrolling had considerably reduced the smuggling of guns and powder from the coast into the hills. (op. cit., 1922, p.171).

<sup>99</sup>Except for Wakolo and Patahue, which were already near the coast, all these groups are still in the mountains.

<sup>100</sup>In this war, Lohia people allied with Buria.

<sup>101</sup>'Manoesa Manoewe and the settlement of this negorij in the Tala river that is called Roemberoe stayed neutral.' (Sachse 1923 p.173).

<sup>102</sup>By 1911 many had been regrouped in larger settlements (Van Hech Munting Napjus 1912 p.791).

men did not like to be registered and, 'because of their inborn distrust', frequently changed their names.<sup>103</sup>

### **The Tala campaign (1905-1908)<sup>104</sup>**

In the Wemale Tala region the principal opponents of the Dutch were first the people of Hunitetu and, when they encountered them in 1907, the group of Japio Batai (Ahiolo), the eastern neighbours of Manusa. The Wemale of Hunitetu and the Alune of Huku were accused of head-hunting and of illegally trading salt. The Dutch fined them but they refused to pay. The coastal people were afraid to show the way to their settlement in the mountains but the Dutch found it in September 1905. They occupied Hunitetu as the community was celebrating a large kakehan feast with many guests. The rulers of Hunitetu and Lumatita had to submit publicly and were sent to Ambon. They were replaced by rulers appointed by the Dutch.<sup>105</sup> Corvée workers were designated and assigned to build a road between Kairatu and Hunitetu, and patrols criss-crossed the area. A few months later, Hunitetu and its allies rebelled again. The Dutch arrested their leaders, who were held in Ambon, and confiscated all the weapons they could find. Many people took to the bush when the patrols approached but the Dutch followed a new strategy. They patrolled constantly and the fugitives could not work in their gardens or build shelters (they were found when their children cried).<sup>106</sup> Commando troops were sent as reinforcements from Ambon, and by February 1906 all the rebels had surrendered and returned to their villages. Leaving a permanent post in Hunitetu, the Dutch progressed to the upper Tala and subdued Sumite (Wemale) and Huku Anakota (Alune) without combat.<sup>107</sup>

From there, in July 1907, an expedition explored the region and, moving upstream on the Nui river, found the Wemale people of Japio Batai (called Abio or Ahiolo by the Dutch).

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<sup>103</sup>The Dutch view the introduction of the *soa* system as a simplification (in settlement and naming). However this also provided people with an extra name to choose from.

<sup>104</sup>Main sources: Sachse 1923 pp.172-73 -165-191, 244-277, tijdschrift 2, 33, 1916, pp.342-45.

<sup>105</sup>When possible the Dutch chose accommodating local personalities. The **Alamane** (spokesmen and translators) were good potential candidates. As 'village messengers' they spoke several languages. They were well respected speakers but they did not hold a leading position in the community. They could thus act as intermediaries while the Dutch were training the sons of ruling families in coastal schools.

<sup>106</sup>The Hunitetu people could not run for shelter in the central mountain either. This was the territory of the Ahiolo group and they were enemies.

<sup>107</sup>The campaign is described by Sachse op. cit., 1922 p.171-72 and 258-68. Many people fled and some Sumite villagers, among them the Nikite (Fern tree) who took refuge in Manusa. With time, they modernised their name (Neyte), were joined by relatives and became the largest **nuru** of the community.



They agreed to be registered but refused to surrender their guns.<sup>108</sup> The Dutch ordered the construction of another road, this time from Huku Anakota to the coast via Sumite.<sup>109</sup> By the end of 1907 the region was thought pacified and the military post returned to Amahei, a quiet anchorage in the Elpaputih bay. However, in 1908 some people of Japio refused to serve as carriers and burned a Dutch bivouac in the mountains. In retaliation the Dutch led a punitive campaign and after a month of fighting, they occupied the main settlement of Japio. The men who had run away or were accused of head-hunting were forced to work on the construction of a new road. The assistant resident ordered the community to move to a new settlement more accessible to patrols (where it is now). The *raja* of Japio refused to assist the new authority to implement that decision. He was arrested and exiled to Banda.<sup>110</sup> During this period of instability the Wemale people of Japio, who had lost their traditional leader and had to move settlement, quarreled among themselves. As often occurred in the region, some families left the group. A few moved temporarily to the territory of the Alune of *hena* Manusa. They were permitted to stay with other Wemale refugees from Sumite (South Tala region) in the hamlet of Waiame at the headwaters of the Sapalewa river, half a day's walk from Nuruitu.<sup>111</sup>

During these years, the Dutch regularly patrolled the whole southern bay of Elpaputih and the Tala region, subduing rebels, preventing uprisings and collecting guns. They also systematically inspected the hinterland, forcing the villagers to open paths and build roads. Several hundred kilometres of tracks were built in the years 1907-1909 during the military campaign to pacify 'Wele Telu.<sup>112</sup> Sachse was well aware of the prestige gained by the Dutch when they succeeded in forcing the strong Tala Wemale of Hunitetu to surrender in February 1906. For three successive years, his patrols systematically continued their coercive operations and displays of strength over the whole 'Wele Telu region.

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<sup>108</sup>Sachse 1922 pp.179-181.

<sup>109</sup>Both Hunitetu and Huku roads figure on the map published in Tauern op. cit., 1918.

<sup>110</sup>Like Manusa, Japio regards itself as the custodian of the sacred banyan and believes its duty is to remain on site. According to Jensen (op. cit., 1948 p.43), the old village leader and the elders of Japio who did not want to accept the colonial rules left the community to live alone in their gardens. They were called **habubunita** (nita: ancestor, appearance). This still occurs in Manusa when an elderly disagrees with the new tendencies of the community.

<sup>111</sup>Jensen calls this settlement Wajale. The Nikite (from Sumite), still have gardens in Waiame.

<sup>112</sup>There were so many tracks, writes Van Hecht Munting Napjus in 1911, that 'pacified' people were very reluctant to maintain them and, as fewer patrols were called for, the bush regrew over them although they had been painstakingly opened through the densely forested hills. (op. cit., 1912 p.784-5). Some of these tracks still remain the only paths from villlage to village in the mountains.

### **The introduction of individual tax, village regulation, soa system and new village government (1906-1914)**

In 1906, as people started to trust the government revealing their names more easily, the collective tax was replaced by an individual tax. Until then taxes were communal and the groups followed their own system to gather them. Those who had lesser resources perceived this individualisation of the tax collection as an injustice and resented it. 'In the beginning there was a movement against it but it was very quickly counteracted.'<sup>113</sup>

In September 1906 the assistant resident convened all the village headmen of the Tala Sapalewa and Eti and ordered them to give up all their weapons. Those who refused were put in prison. By mid-November, 3027 guns had been collected (an estimated 80% of the total). This broke the spirit of revolt. Sachse wrote that some men had tears in their eyes when surrendering their guns. Indeed, guns, like machetes or *keris*, had names and magic powers. They were treasured heirlooms (*pusaka*) adorned and handed down along men's lines. Furthermore guns were also hunting implements and without them many fewer pigs, deer, casuaris and opossums could be caught, which meant much less meat for everyone.<sup>114</sup>

1906 was also the year of de Graaff's village regulation which controlled all village institutions in the Dutch Indies, imposing a colonial form of village government. 'It was an instrument for such excessive interference from above that there was hardly any village autonomy left and the general effect was to turn villages against Dutch rule', writes Hall referring to Java and Sumatra.<sup>115</sup> It applied to the Moluccas as well. Once the rebels were subjugated, the patrols started to register, vaccinate and gather the people into larger settlements.

Each settlement (*negeri*) was made of several *soa* sub-units. According to Ruinen the *soa* system was introduced in the mountains in 1907. Ruinen, who held the post of archivist of the Molukken Institute in west Seram in 1905-07 and 1916-19, knew the region well. He recorded that a traditional community (*stam*, 'tribe' or *negorij*), was composed of several **luma inai** (mother houses: segments of **nuru**) or genealogical units (*verwantengroepen*) while the new *soa* units were the administrative units of the local government.<sup>116</sup> Indeed, the

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<sup>113</sup>Sachse 1923 p.177.

<sup>114</sup>As they were never allowed to obtain guns again, the mountain dwellers continue nowadays to hunt with traps and spears (the Wemale also use bows and arrows).

<sup>115</sup>Op. cit., 1912 p.750.

<sup>116</sup>Ruinen, W. 1929 p.228.

colonial government, finding the genealogical units of each community too small and/or too numerous, brought together several *luma inai* under one *soa* so that a *negeri* became composed of a limited and identified number of units. By 1916 the *soa* system had been widely implemented. As Ruined noted: 'It is well possible that groups were created, which had little or nothing to do with original groupings'.<sup>117</sup> However, I believe that when the *soa* system was introduced, the Dutch had limited control over the mountain populations. Thus it is most probable that the patrollers told the people of a *negeri* (a settlement and its territory), to assemble into a given number of *soa* and left them to decide which one they joined. Resettlement and shift of alliances were a common practice among the mountain people. The units joined or split off easily, forming new groups as suited their political, economical and other concerns (health, disaster, quarrels, war, spells, etc). The imposition of the *soa* system may have appeared as the systematisation of a pattern which already existed under another form. This would explain its rapid adoption.<sup>118</sup>

Under the new regulation, the appointed *regents* of each *negeri* were directly under the authority of the assistant resident. Van Hecht Munting Napjus, the assistant resident of Seram between 1909 and 1911, wrote that the communities also had a lord of the land (*raja tanah*), by then a mere honorific title, one or several messengers (*alamane*), warlords (*kapitan*) and ritual leaders (*maoewin besar*). All these elders retained some influence although not officially part of the new village government.<sup>119</sup> With the introduction in west Seram of the *soa* system, *soa* leaders (*kepala soa*) also interfered in community government. According to Ruinen, the elders of these new social and territorial sub-units of the *negeri* were usually former 'latu, kapitan or alamanan, or someone who could speak Malay or somehow stood out from the rest'.<sup>120</sup> For the Wemale, Jensen uses the word 'clan' to refer to *nuru* or *luma inai*.<sup>121</sup> He says that Wemale clans (*nuru*) were generally scattered into several villages. Most *nuru* had their own ritual centre and performed ceremonies which gathered together its members who lived in different villages. The *latu nuru* was the head of a clan (*luma inai*) in a given village. Although Jensen thought that the function had previously existed, there was no overall regional clan (*nuru*) leader when he did his

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<sup>117</sup>Op. cit., p.228.

<sup>118</sup>The example of Manusa's *soa* is described in Chapter six.

<sup>119</sup>Op. cit., 1911 p.800.

<sup>120</sup>Op. cit., p.228.

<sup>121</sup>1948 p.58.

fieldwork.<sup>122</sup> The term **latu nuru** was also used to refer to the head of a *soa*.<sup>123</sup> In each *soa* there was one most influential **nuru** from which the **latu nuru** usually came. Van Hecht Munting Napjus wrote that earlier on, in the mountains, the lords of the land were often designated as *regent*.<sup>124</sup> However Sachse, who regarded the dignitaries of the Kakehan as the most influential authorities, made sure their sons were trained in Dutch schools in order to send them back later to rule their communities.

Once they had been gathered, the villagers could be compelled to build schools, resthouses for the patrols, tracks and covered bridges all over the mountains. In 1910-11, two roads were built in the south which opened the Tala Wemale region. One ran from the new coastal settlement of Kairatu (in Piru bay) to the new settlement of Hunitetu, where a permanent bivouac stood. The other road joined the new Japio (Ahiolo) to Elpapatih bay within easy reach of the military post of Amahai. This allowed effective control of that region.

When west Seram was declared pacified in the 1910s, the teachers-preachers from neighbouring islands were progressively posted to the most accessible *negeri*. Zealous promoters of the Dutch-Ambonese Christian values and of the education policies, most of them regarded the mountain dwellers as primitive and ignorant people who had to be civilised and educated, forcibly if necessary. Their interference in village affairs and private lives were sometimes outrageous and strongly resented. This is still remembered when their successors turn up in the mountain villages with the same attitude.

During the pacification period, colonial policies and their implementation fluctuated between rigidity and tolerance. In January 1909 Van Hecht Munting Napjus was appointed temporary *assistant-resident* and military commander of Seram, the position previously held by Sachse. Van Hecht Munting Napjus was posted to the southern harbour of Piru until 1911. Sachse and his troops were again sent back to the port of Wahai in north Seram. As *controleur*, Sachse was under the orders of the *assistant resident*. Sachse argued that constant patrols and multiple bivouacs were still needed to maintain peace and keep the region under control. However, Van Hecht Munting Napjus and the Ambonese government

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<sup>122</sup>Jensen (1948 p.60) thought that the title of **ma ina luma** ('father-mother of the House') might have previously been given to a **nuru** chief (*oberhaupt*). The hypothesis of a **nuru** supreme leader is most improbable since the groups were too scattered. However each **nuru** has respected elders.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid p.61.

<sup>124</sup>Op. cit., 1911 p.800.

regarded this strategy as a waste of energy.<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless some routine patrols were maintained between 1909 and 1914 and no major revolts occurred.

### **The last uprisings of the Eti and Sapalewa Alune (1914-1916) <sup>126</sup>**

Because of its remoteness, the Sapalewa region was the last in 'Wele Telu to fall under full colonial administration. However, between 1910 and 1914 changes were happening throughout that region. The people of Rumasoal had been forced to move their settlement to within sight of Riring, where a Dutch garrison was posted, and Buria had to be rebuilt along the new road. Another bivouac was posted in Lohia, and small communities like Manusa were gathered into *soas*. Assembled into larger settlements or forced to move closer to the coast, ruled by appointed regents who sympathised with the colonial government, controlled by the teachers-preachers, subject to patrols, taxed and constrained to *corvées*, most mountain people thought they had lost much more than they had gained in the colonisation process. Nevertheless, men's meetings of the Kakehan had been permitted again, the forest was still deep, and patrols or preachers seldom ventured away from the paths.

Sachse always regarded the Kakehan as a barbarian custom to be suppressed because it was responsible for head-hunting and supported the resistance against colonisation. However the central policies were unclear, changing with the ideas of the time. In 1906, the initiation feasts were permitted again, although officially only a succinct version could be performed. It was still prohibited to restore or rebuild the men's houses and the traditional meeting halls (*baileo*), most of which had fallen apart.<sup>127</sup> One of these Kakehan ceremonies (the succinct version) is partially described by Mrs. D. Kraye van Aalst under the name 'flower feast' (*festa boenga-boenga*).<sup>128</sup> She was the spouse of a Dutch assistant-preacher who had made the abolition of the Kakehan his life mission (and personal advertising in the Netherlands). Both succeeded in accomplishing their mission. In 1914, as a result of the recommendations they and others made, the Kakehan was definitively prohibited. At the same time the coastal regent of Waesamu in the Eti region became aware that the Dutch were at war in Europe. The news spread in the mountains and people thought the Dutch would have less soldiers on

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<sup>125</sup>Sachse, who had been criticised but was respected for his deep knowledge of the region, signaled Van Hecht Munting Napjus' lack of experience (Manuhutu op. cit., p.33 and 183).

<sup>126</sup>Sources: *tijdschrift* 2, 33 -1916 pp.342-45, Sachse 1922, pp.184-91, 274-76 etc.

<sup>127</sup>Van Hecht Munting Napjus, op. cit., 1912 p.789-90.

<sup>128</sup>In *Eigen Haard Geillustreerd Volkstijdschrift*, 1911. An earlier and much better description is given by Van Rees (1863 pp.74-78), who based his description on the confession of Markus Kakiali, a Kakehan priest who was captured, interrogated and converted before being executed. See also Schmid W.J.M. (1843 pp.25-38) and Ludeking E.W.A. 1868.

site.<sup>129</sup> The hostility was already high. This final brutal interference in their traditional affairs was bitterly resented and it launched the mountain people in a last desperate uprising.

This last uprising in west Seram in which all the Alune tribes participated, started in October and lasted 15 to 18 months. It became apparent to our disadvantage that there was more than one gun per village<sup>130</sup>

It started at the north coast when, at the end of November 1914, the overzealous appointed *raja* of Wakolo tried to force his Muslim population to convert to Christianity. The people fled into the mountains. The *raja* was dismissed by the government and in December most people returned to the settlement after they had been promised religious freedom. Shortly afterward (February 1915) a report of Sachse mentions that Riring and Rumasoal were the *brandpunt* of the rebellion in the Sapalewa. In many places the villagers had run away and the patrols found emptied settlements. As Sachse reported, it constituted an act of rebellion (*verzet*).<sup>131</sup> Therefore several Saniri elders and the leaders of Riring, Rumasoal, Buria and Lohia Sapalewa were arrested and taken to prison in Ambon. Part of the villagers returned to their settlements and surrendered their guns. Since a patroller had been wounded nearby, the Dutch concentrated some troops around Rumasoal.

In April 1915, the Alune of Lumoli, a hill settlement in the Eti river valley, which was thought pacified, attacked a patrol. Then, upstream, the people of Melita and Nurue burned their new villages. When the Dutch realised that the rebellion had spread along the whole upper Eti valley, they set bivouacs in Lumoli, Murikau and Waesamu. With their garrison in Piru and these three bivouacs they controlled the entire Eti valley and patrolled it until everyone had returned from the forest, paid fines and finally rebuilt the villages.<sup>132</sup>

In May, while the Dutch were busy patrolling the Eti valley, the rebellion became generalised in the middle Sapalewa valley when a coastal regent forbade Rumasoal to hold a Kakehan initiation. The villagers of Rumasoal, Riring Buria, Latuelake (Laturake), Popela and Latulasena ran away into the forest. According to Sachse, the uprising spread to Lohia, Manusa, Rumbatu and Rumberu. Half of the population of these settlements had gone bush

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<sup>129</sup>Sachse op. cit., 1922 p.185.

<sup>130</sup>Lieut. Giel W.H.F. (1916-17 pp.1-26) p.8. For hunting and defence purposes, each village had been permitted to keep one gun.

<sup>131</sup>Sachse, op. cit., 1922 p.274.

<sup>132</sup>Murikau, Nurue and Waesamu are now at the coast (since the RMS?). Like Kairatu for the Alune of the Tala region, Waesamu was the coastal trading village of the mountain Alune of the upper Eti.

when the news had spread that the *Kompania* had forbidden the Kakehan and that everyone was going to be forced to convert to Christianity.<sup>133</sup> Reinforcements were sent from Ambon and four brigades of Javanese soldiers led by the Commandant of Ambon and Ternate fought their way through the region. They passed through Manusa, lost two men and found Riring in flames. When they reached Rumasoal and Buria, the villages were burned down. To control the Sapalewa, the Dutch established a large bivouac in Riring. From that base they patrolled downstream to Taniwel while a second patrol passed through Manusa and over the divide to join the bivouac of Lumoli in the upper Eti.<sup>134</sup>

In June, while the majority of the troops were in the mountains, several patrollers were killed or wounded near Piru, the Dutch administrative centre on the south coast. Sachse, who had returned from Irian Jaya, took things in hand with 15 brigades. By August the Alune region was continuously criss-crossed by patrols which followed anti-guerrilla techniques. After several fights the villagers started to surrender. One after the other they returned and rebuilt their settlements. However, in November Rumasoal was still resisting. Old enmities between mountain groups resurrected with the uncertainties of the conflict. In December, the group of Huku, which had been defeated and kicked out of Manusa several decades previously, took three heads from the people of Rumbatu and Rumberu, the children villages of Manusa.<sup>135</sup> The Dutch intervened and after some fighting forced a settlement of the matter. Meanwhile, more guns were found in the Tala region. In Hunitetu and in several other places the people had rebuilt their *baileo*. The leaders of Hunitetu and Ahiolo were taken to Piru to prevent an uprising of the Tala Wemale.

Finally, at the end of January 1916 the head of Rumasoal presented himself in Riring. This officially ended the rebellion. The leaders were condemned to hard labor and the rebel villagers had to pay fines in dammar and sago. As a punishment, some communities were moved closer to the coast. People were put to work on the construction of more roads or new villages, and community work was organised to service these new infrastructures. The last guns were collected and the villagers forced to pay their taxes. Three permanent garrisons were maintained in Piru (Eti), Hunitetu (Tala), and Riring (Sapalewa).

Sachse admits that the mountain people resented the prohibition of their Kakehan feasts and meeting houses. The coastal villagers were not pleased either by the coercion of Dutch rule.

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<sup>133</sup>Op. cit., 1922, p.186.

<sup>134</sup>The hamlets of Manusa in the upper Sapalewa had been regrouped into one settlement (Usua).

<sup>135</sup>Huku Anakota and Huku kecil had moved south of the divide (see Chapter Four: Nili Hau at Lum.buini).

'From then on' (1916) says Sachse, 'although they were satisfied to be protected against the mountains Alfures, they understood that their former life style was definitely over.'<sup>136</sup>

### ***The Colonisation of the highlands (1916-1948)***

As they were establishing their colonial rule, the Dutch proceeded to survey, chart and map remote territories all over Indonesia. Roads were built to open the way for trade and industry. Following the directives of the colonial policies, pacification had to be secured, the island's potential assessed and the regions prepared for exploitation and development.

### **The opening of 'Wele Telu: infrastructures and exploration**

In west Seram, beside large sections of coastal roads, several roads and tracks were built to penetrate inland through the Eti, Sapalewa and Tala valleys and along minor rivers.<sup>137</sup> During the 'pacification' campaigns the Dutch continuously patrolled the region and proceeded to its intensive exploration.<sup>138</sup> Uncharted areas were surveyed and the first maps of inland Seram were published.<sup>139</sup> Until 1915, recalls Sachse, no one knew exactly where the mountain villages were, and to add to the confusion, people frequently moved their settlements or changed their names.

### **The economic potential: assessments and exploitation**

After the first World War, the colonial administration became concerned with improving the socio-economic conditions of the local populations as well as developing the island to attract Western developers. Numerous surveys and reports were produced by various advisors in an attempt to elaborate appropriate economic policies. However their opinions differed on whether or not Seram could be effectively developed and on the means to improve the exploitation of the island.<sup>140</sup> The geologist Ruinen systematically explored the southern and

<sup>136</sup>Op. cit., 1922 p.167. In protest, some villagers defecated in schools and churches, turned the Dutch flag upside down and ran into the mountains when they were fined.

<sup>137</sup>Details about the paths and road networks and their construction are in Sachse 1922 pp.169-91.

<sup>138</sup>Ruinen, W: 1929 p.221

<sup>139</sup>The only map available was on a scale of 1./250,000. Sachse made one with a scale of 1./50,000. Early maps see: Sachse in *T:A.G.* 23 (1906) 1, and in op. cit., 1922. The German Freiburg expedition also produced several early maps: Tauern O.D. in *Petermanns Mitt.* 60 (1914) 2, pp.75-78 and in op. cit 1918; and Denninger, K. in *Petermanns Mitt.* 61 (1915) pp.385-88.

<sup>140</sup>Some recommendations of these reports are being uncritically implemented half or three quarters of a century after they were written.



northern regions but did not give Seram much prospect.<sup>141</sup> The potential for the development of the island was limited, he concluded. Although there were some pockets of *padi ladang* on the coasts, sago and dammar were the primary crops. Copra probably had the most potential. Ruinen also wrote an article in which he emphasized the industrial potential of sago flour to improve the economy of Seram. He described the traditional rights over sago groves and the plantations which had been initiated by the government in 1914.<sup>142</sup> Tichelman shared most of Ruinen's opinions. The prospects for *Landbouw colonisatie* (agricultural colonisation) were not very good either.<sup>143</sup> Some plantations had been experimented with but nothing was really profitable. Tea, coffee, or rubber plantations required roads and workers.<sup>144</sup> Although the patrols had opened numerous horse tracks, there were no real roads at the altitude where these plants could grow, and the cost of transport would have been higher than any profit. Besides, there was not enough population on the island. Some observers complained that the local population was not eager to work for the Dutch projects and suggested importing Javanese labourers.<sup>145</sup> Rutten was even more critical of the potential for economic development. Prospects, he believed, were limited to small scale sago, rubber and coconut plantations or limited fishing and timber industries.<sup>146</sup> The word stagnation repeatedly appeared in these reports.

By 1918 Captain of Infantry Sachse, who was an ardent supporter of Seram's development, had become Lieutenant Colonel. In his Communication edited by the Encyclopaedisch Bureau<sup>147</sup> he criticised the inconsistencies of the successive civil governments and the general lack of interest in Seram.<sup>148</sup> To stimulate the development of the region, he argued, it was necessary to turn its population of swidden agriculturists into sedentary farmers.

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<sup>141</sup>Ruinen W. op. cit., 1929. Ruinen was the civil and military administrator of west Seram during 1905-07 and 1916-19. He became the archivist of the Molukken Institute and, in 1928, published an annotated bibliography of the Moluccas between 1550 and 1921.

<sup>142</sup>Ruinen 1921 in *IG* 33 (1921) n°1 pp.501-523 and n°2 pp.598-622.

<sup>143</sup>Tichelman G.L., op. cit., 1925, *TAG* n° 42.,pp.690-92.

<sup>144</sup>In many areas, erosion would also rapidly render the steeply sloped ground unproductive. It should also be emphasised that the Seramese soils are different and much poorer than the rich Javanese soils and would not withstand the same form of intensive agricultural exploitation.

<sup>145</sup>Although the situation has profoundly changed, this ideology is still seen in the 'tug of war' of the promoters of transmigration to Seram.

<sup>146</sup>Rutten L. 1920 in *TAG* 33 pp.43-73.

<sup>147</sup>1922 *Encyclopaedisch Bureau* Vol XXIX.

<sup>148</sup>There had been 15 different post holders in seven years in Amahai, and in 1922 only 4 of the 10 positions of Assistant had been filled on the island (Manuhutu, W. 1983 p.67).

Sachse had gathered the small hamlets into larger villages along the tracks which had been opened in the mountains. However, his successors had brought a lot more people to the coast and this was one of the reasons, he said, why the highlands had never been developed. Furthermore the relocation (*relocatie*) policy was often implemented in an inconsidered manner, leading to very poor health conditions and radical acculturation of the population transplanted to the coast.<sup>149</sup> At the same time, foreigners and also educated Christians from other islands who had worked for the Dutch, were given concessions without precise directives or control on what they were doing with them.<sup>150</sup> Other authors suggested promoting small scale agricultural enterprises, (cocoa, cinnamon, copra, fruit trees, dammar resin, *gemutu* palm fibre, eucalyptus oil etc), all of which were tried in the following years (and today) without much success. Forest exploitation was another alternative promoted by Beversluis when he was the Chief Forestry Officer in the 1920s. Timber exploitation in Waesamu on the South coast of Seram, now one of the largest plywood producers in Southeast Asia, was in operation in the 1930s and the damage it was doing to the environment was already a concern.<sup>151</sup> At the same period, Markus was also concerned by the losses inflicted on the local fishermen by the extensive Japanese tuna fishing along the coasts.<sup>152</sup> Almost seventy years later this environmental degradation of the Seramese land and sea has drastically escalated.

### **The administration of the mountains villages**

Sachse reports that in 1919-20 the *onderafdeeling* was quiet.<sup>153</sup> In the mountains, patrols were no longer attacked anymore and the villagers presented themselves for the censuses, health control, vaccinations and tax collections.<sup>154</sup> The administration was reorganised in 1926. However, until 1928 the civil administration of Seram was still under the control of a military commander. The colonial soldiers (local troops, mainly Javanese) were criticised for

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<sup>149</sup>Tichelman (op. cit., 1925 p.724) expressed the same concern. Jensen (1949) describes the appalling living conditions of the Sapalewa Wemale populations at the time. Although I traveled for several years throughout the Indonesian archipelago, my first visit to the coast of East Seram in the early 1980s left me with the same impression.

<sup>150</sup>Among them Clark, an Australian, was blamed for the bad treatment given to his coolies (Manuhutu op. cit., 1983 p.71). Following a similar system of reward, Indonesian war veterans were entitled to small temporary concessions throughout the new nation.

<sup>151</sup>Ormeling, F in *Economish Weekblad* 13 (1947) 14 pp.226-227.

<sup>152</sup>Markus B. 1930.

<sup>153</sup>Op. cit., 1922 p.276.

<sup>154</sup>The new village taxation system (*Ordonancie 1914 art.15 dorpbelastingen*) was only applied after the war. (Vollenhoven C. van, 1918 p.404).

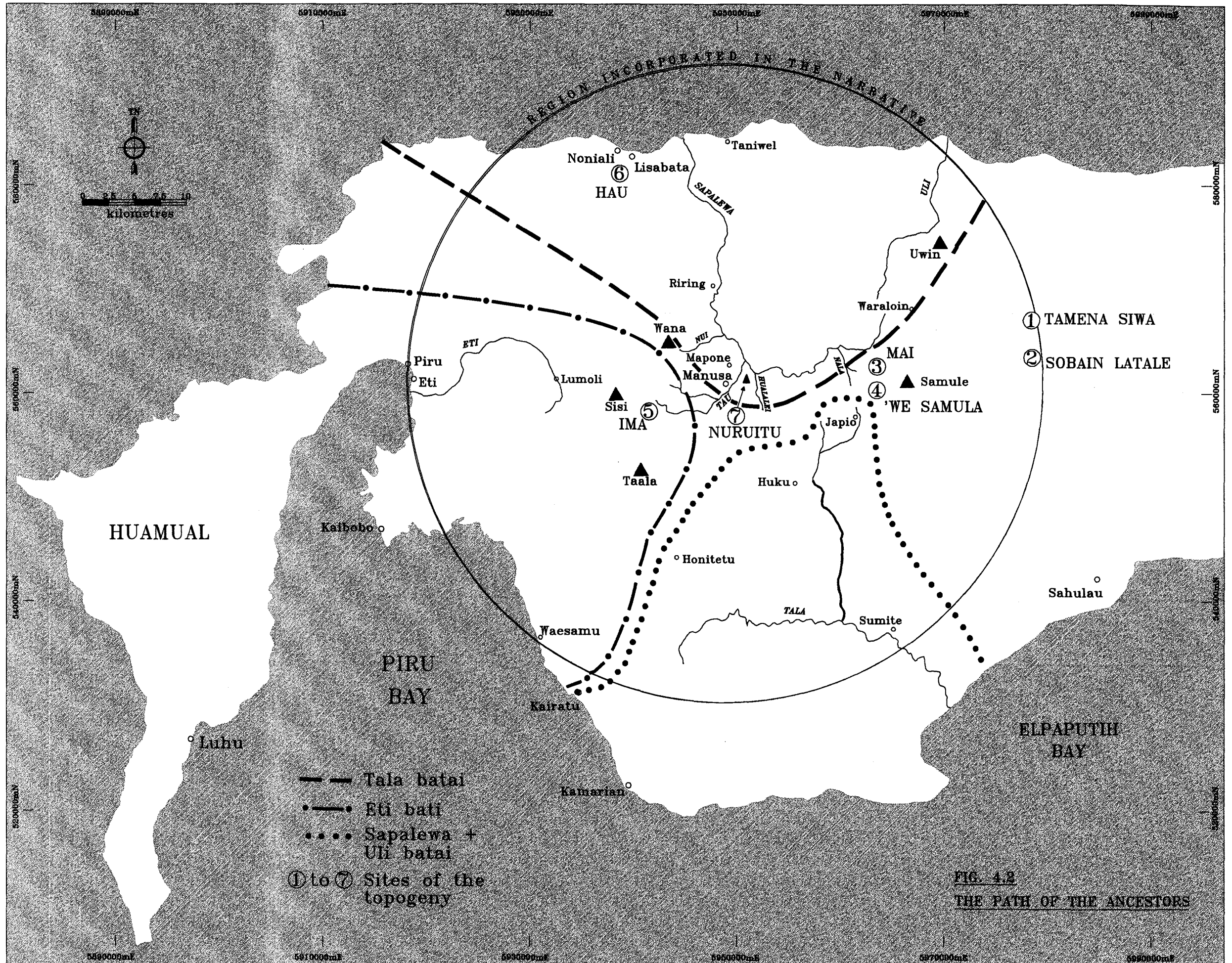


FIG. 4.2  
 THE PATH OF THE ANCESTORS

their rudeness toward the population. Several reports also questioned the role of the commandants of the permanent bivouacs established in the mountain villages (Alune: Riring, Lohia, Wernale: Ahiolo, Hunitetu etc). Because of unclear policies it was, in effect, left to the decision of the commandant in charge of each bivouac whether and how to interfere in village development. As a result, for a community in a remote area the swiftness and degree of its Ambonisation depended on which military or civil servant was in charge of its administration. When he was the bivouac commander of Riring, Lieutenant A. Sierevelt surveyed the Alune Sapalewa region. He is still remembered in the mountains for making an effort at learning Alune.<sup>155</sup> In Manusa, the grove where he established his base camp was called Buela (**bu'u ela**: 'big book'), because of his large chart book. Sierevelt had worked under Sachse's orders and followed most of his views. He also suggested that the populations which had been relocated to the coast should be allowed to return to their former mountain settlements. Sierevelt was also in favor of maintaining the pole houses in the mountains, where the nights are cooler.<sup>156</sup>

#### **Welfare, religion and education**

Just as in the rest of the world, the recurrent epidemic of flu of 1918-22 decimated the region. There were not enough doctors nor medicine and people were difficult to find because they used to return to live in their gardens during outbreaks of illnesses.<sup>157</sup> Reports acknowledged a diminution of the population during these years.<sup>158</sup> Indeed, in the mountains entire branches of **nuru** (origin group) disappeared. Rumbatu, the southern hamlet of Manusa, was badly affected because it had a lot of contact with the coast. Their Ambonese preacher claimed the disaster was a sign of divine anger and gained the mass conversion of the survivors. As Sachse comments, the prohibition of the Kakehan in 1914 had left a spiritual vacuum.<sup>159</sup> It was partly filled with a rigid Ambonese interpretation of the

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<sup>155</sup>His worldlist for civil and military officers was published by the Encyclopaedisch Bureau (Sierevelt A. M. 1920).

<sup>156</sup>Interestingly, around Riring, Sierevelt's headquarters, one still finds a few more pole houses than elsewhere. The Lieutenant was killed near Buria in June 1915 during the last Sapalewa uprising (Sachse 1922 p.275).

<sup>157</sup>Fresh food is harvested according to needs and little is stored in village houses; so if all the adults become ill and no one goes to the gardens, the whole household is rapidly underfed. Furthermore a diseased person is not isolated because his/her soul would feel rejected by the living and surely depart. Thus, a sick person is usually closely surrounded by all his/her relatives, a caring custom which favours contagion.

<sup>158</sup>Tichelman, an administrator of the onder-afdeeling Amahai, estimated that the epidemics killed almost 10% of the population of the Elpapatih bay (Tichelman G.L. op. cit., 1925, TAG n° 42, p.676).

<sup>159</sup>Op. cit., 1922 p.190.

Protestant Reformed Church, often imposed forcefully on the villagers by their teacher-preachers. By 1925 most of the mountain villages were officially regarded as converted. In the mountains, religion and education were coupled, and initially school and church were combined in the same building. Since 1907 the directives of the department for colonial education promoted a large effort to educate the populations in remote areas. By 1920 most mountain villages had their own school.<sup>160</sup>

Although Church and school were formally separated in the Moluccas after 1874, in the mountains of Wele Telu education remained in the hands of mission teachers. As Seram in general aroused little interest from the government, Church organisations became influential policy makers. The mission teachers and ministers remained the main policy implementers in the mountain villages until well into the 1950s, when the Moluccans seeking independence (RMS) took refuge in this remote area, leading to the occupation of the region by the Indonesian Army.<sup>161</sup> This explains why the schools of Manusa, Rumbatu and Rumberu and others in the mountain, are still nominally subsidised by the Re-Reformed Church (*Gereja Protestant Maluku*).<sup>162</sup>

## THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

This century, one particular set of events has singled out west Seram from the rest of the Moluccas. The separatist movement *Republic Maluku Selatan* (RMS), which briefly erupted in Ambon in April 1950, was taken to the highlands of west Seram where it resulted in guerrilla warfare which lasted for over ten years. This movement has been largely documented but mainly from the point of view of the Central Moluccans in the Netherlands rather than that of the mountain populations which were affected by it. Many were dragged into this war with or without their consent and forced to take sides in a fight in which not all felt concerned. The process further divided the population, some supporting those seeking independence, others the national government. But all were directly or indirectly the victims of a fight between two forms of power under which they were going to be engulfed, whoever the winner was. The struggle forced more people toward the coasts, and although relatively

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<sup>160</sup>There was a flourishing tradition of Christian education and training of so-called 'native teachers' in Ambon, and educated Moluccans had been for centuries sent all over the eastern islands as teachers or preachers.

<sup>161</sup>With a brief interruption during the Japanese occupation (1942-45).

<sup>162</sup>However buildings and teachers are provided by the Indonesian state and pupils do not receive more religious education than in the national schools.

few disappeared in combat, many died of diseases and malnutrition.<sup>163</sup> When the last separatist fighters surrendered in 1962, those who supported them (often because they were relatives), or were merely believed to have done so, became the victims of long standing humiliations and reprisals, which are still endured by their children.

Once the region was pacified again it could re-open for economic exploitation and the political restructuring of the Orde Baru. As a result, new forms of external intervention have been increasingly felt, and dealt with, in the Seramese highlands since the 1970s. Poorly informed, and then only by the promoters of the new ideologies, these communities have had no prior non-violent experience of 'modernity' nor any adequate education, and little time to accommodate or fit these new religious and political models to their own traditions. Indonesia's development ideology is intensively promoted by the educational system, the administration and the various Churches (onto which it is also imposed). Most of this discourse is being accepted, supported, reinterpreted and manipulated by its local promoters before the targeted villagers are able to measure the full impact of the implementation of national development policies on their own communities.

### **The contemporary anthropological literature on the Alune**

In 1937-38, the German anthropologists A.D.E. Jensen, H. Niggemeyer and J. Röder carried out investigations in Seram, sponsored by the Frobenius Institute of Frankfurt. Jensen did some field work in the Sapalewa Wemale region and traveled with Niggemeyer in the Alune area. Both were students of Frobenius and their interest was drawn toward an epistemological study of culture, the so-called *Kulturwissenschaft*, (science/philosophy of culture) or *Kulturmorphologie*, a historical (evolutionist) treatment of ethnographic material, which followed the German diffusionist approach of the time. Beside Röder's report about his work in the Manusela area (Central Seram),<sup>164</sup> and a few minor publications of the team, their two main volumes provide some direct or comparative material about the Alune.

The first one, Jensen, A.D.E. and Niggemeyer H. *Hainuwele, Volkserzählungen von der Molukken-Insel Ceram*, (Jensen's doctoral thesis) was published in 1939. Both men journeyed throughout north-west Seram for four months with an interpreter, compiling

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<sup>163</sup>The gardens of fugitives or 'rebels' were destroyed, using the anti-guerrilla techniques learned from the Dutch. For a short account of the experience of Manusa people see 'The years without fire', in appendix 1.

<sup>164</sup>1948 *Alahatala, die Religion der Inlandstämme Mittel-cerams*. Frankfurt a/M:Meisenbach.

narratives and origin stories, carefully recording where they collected each of them. By doing so, they assembled a unique collection of Wemale and Alune narratives which remains a major reference, even if these narratives have to be read in German, i.e. through a double translation. Jensen's second main publication was *Die Drei Ströme, Züge aus dem Geistigen und Religiösen Leben der Wemale, einem Primitiv-Volk in den Molukken*, in 1948. In this book, Jensen's primary concern was to investigate Wemale cosmogony. The book, although very general in its approach, is the first ethnographic study of a population of Seram. It contains detailed descriptions which are very valuable once disassociated from his theoretical analysis.<sup>165</sup> Niggemeyer initially intended to write an ethnographic study of the Alune but his field notes were lost during the second World War.<sup>166</sup> No anthropological research was conducted among the Alune afterward.

## CONCLUSION

I have given an extended overview of the past because I believe it informs the approach to the present situation of the region. It also allows a better understanding of the response of the Alune to the social changes they are undertaking. To avoid a reductionist exercise of an isolated study of social change *per se*, I have integrated within other chapters the contemporary history of Manusa, and the various forms of cultural and social transformation this mountain community is undergoing. Manusa is an isolated community but its networks of exchange with the outside world are nevertheless very ancient.

This century, geographically isolated communities of Indonesia have been under external and repeated pressures, usually encapsulated under the term 'modernisation'. Under the banner of 'development', colonial and later national policies have imposed various social restructuring and promoted their incorporation within the state. Since the late 1960s these so called 'peripheral' communities have been confronted with multiple pressures to integrate into the 'modern' nation state. Simultaneously, they face national and international commercial interests in their natural land and sea resources. This rush for their 'green gold' is now happening on an unprecedented scale even if we compare it to the spice trade and the hegemonic monopoly of the past.

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<sup>165</sup>The author seldom mentioned where he collected particular data but most of his study for that book was conducted in the Uwin mountains area.

<sup>166</sup>From that expedition, Niggemeyer produced a word list, a short Alune grammar and an article on weaving techniques (see bibliography).

In the region, acculturation, i.e. the Moluccan form of homogenisation known as Ambonisation, constitutes a large part of this process of modernisation and incorporation. Thus if we (or some day the descendants of the people themselves) are to understand on what grounds the Moluccan societies have integrated or rejected present political-economic changes and the socio-cultural transformations they generated, it is essential that ancient traditional (or previously super-imposed) structures also be recorded, while those who remember them are still alive to narrate them. As de Saussure observed: 'What predominates in all change is the persistence of the old substance; disregard for the past is only relative. That is why the principle of change is based on the principle of continuity'.<sup>167</sup> I agree with L. Visser's view that 'there is no need to break with the tradition of earlier anthropological studies'.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, why deprive ourselves of useful professional tools, or disregard the insightful research work of some of our predecessors? Nothing constrains us to accept uncritically or apply blindly any of their hypotheses.

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<sup>167</sup>De Saussure F.1959, p.74, quoted by McWilliam 1989, p.9.

<sup>168</sup>Review of Mearns and Healey's book (*Cakalele*, 1998 - in print)





## Chapter Three

### NILI 'WELE BATAI TELU, THE ASSEMBLY OF THE THREE RIVERS

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The Dutch civil, military or religious administrators of the beginning of the 20th century, attributed head-hunting, but also the resistance against colonisation to the Kakehan, the male's initiation brotherhood, and to the Saniri (*niliela*), the large assemblies in which almost all the coastal and mountains groups of west Seram participated.<sup>1</sup> In 1914, after all the attempts to either use or transform these assemblies into an administrative instrument of the colonial bureaucracy had failed, the Saniri was officially abolished and its meetings prohibited. However, mountain elders said that occasional assemblies continued to be secretly held in the Sapalewa until the 1950s. It seems that there is now a revival, and a subsequent 'reconstruction' of that tradition at a regional level. A modern Saniri of the Three Large River Trunks is expected to convene in the near future, before the end of the century.

Thorough research into the Nili 'Wele Telu or Saniri of the Three Rivers has recently been conducted by Gerrit J. Knaap in the Dutch and German archival documents.<sup>2</sup> Having read most of the same archives but with the advantage of some field work in the region and a basic knowledge of the local language, I would like to add some complementary data to Knapp's account. As Knapp notes, 'volumes of paper' have been written on the subject. However I will approach the topic from a slightly different angle. First, although Saniri and Kakehan were undoubtedly related, if only because the same people assembled in both councils, I will leave the Kakehan aside in this argumentation. The Kakehan was of the order of *adat agama* (religious tradition), the Saniri was concerned with *adat pemerintah* (traditional administration), two distinct spheres in people's view.<sup>3</sup> Second, I agree with

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<sup>1</sup>Saniri is the central moluccan name under which these assemblies are recalled in the literature. The Alune equivalent is *nili*: 'assemblies' *ela*: 'large'.

<sup>2</sup>Knaap G.J. 1993, in *B.K.I. Deel* 149:2e Afl. pp.250-273.

<sup>3</sup>Knaap (p.255) seems to derive the Saniri from the Kakehan, since the members of the Kakehan summoned the assembly of Saniri. I do not share this point of view. In my view these were two separate institutions with different purposes and not all the members of the Saniri were Kakehan initiates.

Knapp that speculating on the origin of the Saniri is unproductive. What interests me is to examine the ideological support on which this loose federate institution persisted for at least two and possibly three centuries. Besides, since a new Saniri tradition is about to be born, I also wish to inquire what the ancient one meant for the west Seramese. I essentially use two 'new' sources; one is an ancient Alune text collected by Tauern,<sup>4</sup> the other is the information provided by several mountain elders, principally the late Pa Mon Souhali, who was one of the last elders of the ancient *nili* tradition in the Sapalewa.

### THE SETTING OF THE NILI

West Seram was a densely forested area at the periphery of a large trading operation controlled by the northern Sultanates and later by the VOC. Ternate had a *Gubernur* in Huamual and several vassal settlements on the south and north coasts. The interior was occupied by small rival groups, scattered along the valleys of the main rivers. Small scale warfare and head-hunting was current both in the mountains and at the coast, and everybody lived in mutual suspicion. Yet exchanges were vital and alliances, even temporary ones, were indispensable. Periodic assemblies of the elders, called *nili*, facilitated the relationships between various units. This widespread institution, which assembled the elders in each domain, also met at river and regional level. Although every small unit remained fiercely independent, these councils maintained some communication and coordination between the various coastal and mountain groups of the region. The oral tradition confirms the ancient existence of these *nili* assemblies in west Seram. They gathered the representatives of small and large units at the level of domains (*nili hena*), river valley (*nili ela*) or region (*nili 'wele batai telu* or *saniri hutu*).<sup>5</sup> Matters of regional interest and precedence were settled at these councils at legislative and judicial level and later registered within the oral tradition.<sup>6</sup> For example, the narrative of origin of Manusa (presented in the following chapter) recalls various *nili* and bases several claims upon the decisions taken by these assemblies.

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<sup>4</sup>Op. cit., 1918, pp.157-60.

<sup>5</sup>*Nili hena*: 'village assembly', *nili ela*: 'large assembly' (of one river valley), *nili 'wele batai telu*: 'assembly of the three large rivers trunks'. In Alune, as a verb, the word *nili* means to 'mix' or to 'arouse'. Mixing people and ideas and stirring them into activity were indeed among the purposes of the *nili*. *Saniri hutu*: Tauern gives *hutu(a)* as a synonym for *mulia*: 'in the back' 'behind', 'in the mountains' (in *tapea* text below). *Batai* means 'trunk' (of a felled tree) or 'log', it is a classifier for large oblong object or body (usually lying). It is used to refer to a river valley, a mountain range and to the people who inhabit it.

<sup>6</sup>Its contemporary equivalent is the *Lembaga Musyawarah Desa* (LMD).

The mountain people of west Seram were Black Siwa (Kakehan initiates), and the coastal settlers White Siwa, but all were Pata Siwa, (Group of Nine), while the east of the island was inhabited by the Pata Lima (Group of Five). Although this is not the case anymore, we may suppose that it gave the Siwa a minimal sense of common identity. The mountain people depended on the coast to obtain goods like salt, weapons or heirloom objects; and the coastal settlers, who dreaded them, traded forest products and services for these goods.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the idea of a common origin linked to a central mountain and to a sacred banyan tree called Nunusaku, was largely shared throughout west Seram, even among the coastal newcomers.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the forced dispersion over west Seram of a large fraction of the population of Huamual, a powerful and entrepreneurial dependency of Ternate, in the 17th century, probably gave the *nili* institution its impetus on a wider regional scale.

My analysis focuses around a text collected by Tauern related to the *nili ela* held in the Sapalewa in 1903. To my knowledge it is the longest of the texts collected at that time in the Alune language (*lepa* Alune). Although it seems to have been overlooked by previous authors, it epitomises a knowledge, fragments of which are still proclaimed and transferred through generations. This text, a greeting formula, is referred to as a *tapea*, (*Tapele* Land, Earth), because it starts by recalling the ritual formula: *Tapele 'ai Lanite*: Earth and Sky.<sup>9</sup> *Tapea* are used to open assemblies or welcome those attending a ritual. Having called Earth and Sky as witnesses, the *alamanane* ('herald', 'spokesman') names each of the dignitaries following the order of precedence which applies for that specific circumstance.<sup>10</sup>

The *tapea* hereafter was the greeting address chanted by the herald of the *nili ela* 'Wele Batai Telu, (the 'large assembly of the Three Large Rivers Trunks') to welcome the representatives of the Sapalewa *batai*. Since it lists the members attending the meeting, this text displays the composition of the *nili ela* Sapalewa *batai* held in Sapalewa circa 1903. Tauern collected this *tapea* in 1911 or 1912 in Wakolo (north coast, Sapalewa region). He numbered the greetings for each domain attending the meeting from 1 to 25, giving for each a short explanation/translation into German. I reproduce below this Alune text with an

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<sup>7</sup>The type of services varied from sago processing to revenge murder or the performing of fertility rituals. Murder is prohibited but the two other forms of services are still regularly delivered.

<sup>8</sup>On Seram this belief goes beyond the Pata Siwa border, but of course the name of the central mountain changes (for example Mt. Manusela in Central Seram).

<sup>9</sup>In Bahasa Indonesia *tapea* is rendered by: *dengan hormat*.

<sup>10</sup>Florey has :'*ahbali*: 'chant sung at beginning of large meeting as greeting or sign of respect in which the title or rank of those present is listed'. '*Ahbali* also means: 'to explain the purpose of a meeting' (Alunedic 94). It is indeed partly inferred by the given ordering of the participants.

English translation of Tauern's comments. However this text implicitly contains more than Tauern elicited, and to render it accessible I have elaborated on its content in the table below the **tapea** (table 3.1 Composition of the assembly of the niliela circa 1903). The table conforms to the Alune **tapea** following the reference numbers of each greeting. It complements this text with various information provided by Pa Mon Souhali, elder of the **nili** Sapalewa and several elders of Manusa Eti and Kairatu (Tala). I have also added some data collected by Sachse (1922). When the orthography of a village name is unclear I give the modern spelling in square brackets, as they figure on the maps of figures 3.1 and 3.2.<sup>11</sup> In the remaining part of the chapter I further explain the content of the table below, extending its implications to the whole Three Rivers. My analysis of these data is based on the understanding I gained on the subject through repeated interviews conducted with mountain elders.

## THE TAPEA

'The greetings of the saniri members in the baileo' (Tauern's title)

1- **Tafea**.<sup>12</sup>

**Ina-ku ama-ku, Saniliwei hahu inai, latu Kapaniane, latu Ohane, Anakota telu, Mawena butusu lisin lua, Upui Wene kai tamaela latua, latu lete hutua, latu lau sawa.**

Tauern's comment: 'Greeting, naming kepala saniri Sapalewa, latu, anakota, priests, regent. Lord of the inland, lord of the coast.'

Note: The formula: **Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui [...] kai tamaela latua. Latu lete hutua latu lau sawa** is repeated for each 25 greetings, after listing the title and the named dignitaries of the domain. The translation is the following: **Mawena butusa lisin lua:** '12 dignitaries', **upui:** 'grandfather', 'ancestor', i.e. regent, deputy [name], **kai:** 'and', **tamaela latua:** 'lords, big men'. **Latu lete hutua** (or **mulia**): 'lord up at the back' (in the mountains),<sup>13</sup> **latu lau sawa:** 'lord down at the coast', i.e. all the mountain and coastal representatives.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>For these maps I use the topography of the base map plan USA SOS, SWPA 1943, but the settlements figure at their ancient locations as shown on the map used by Tauern in 1918 (Gotha: Justus Perthes). The village names follow the modern spelling mentioned in square brackets in the table.

<sup>12</sup>All along this text f = p.

<sup>13</sup>De Vries (op. cit., 1927 p.283) says the mountain people were referred to as **lolete mlia:** 'up in the back' (of the coast). Although mountain elders say that it really means 'those who are wisely watching and caring from behind', it is sometimes, by ignorance, given the connotation of backwardness.

<sup>14</sup>The formula had a second meaning. It is referred to in the Ambonese region as *raja gunung raja pante* 'the *raja* of the mountain the *raja* of the coast', i.e. the traditional ruler and the regent appointed by the colonial government, the first one was still the real ruler at that time, the second a puppet figure or a Malay-

This formula permits the inclusion of all the notables who are not named individually. I only mention it in full in the first greeting, marking its presence afterward by: **kai...**

**2- Sapu semi lori Pattilou Laene, Anakota mawen Mosole, upui laele kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Lissabata, Noniali. Stepping across the Semi brook toward the east, Pattilou, the secular Head of the Sapalewa group, unknown regent and family.'

**3- Sapu Tona lopai, Titalou, Makulita, Anakota mawen Nehu, namuni namena, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui Seae, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Niwelehu, Niquelebu. Stepping across the Tona brook toward the west, *raja tanah* Titalou and Makulita.'

**4- Sapu sama lori Sullatu, Sunewara, Anakota mawen Sinohi, Anakota mawen Halatu, elak Tamale, elak Tikana, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui laele, kai...**

Tauern's comment: Sisihulu. 'Stepping over the Sama to the east. Names of 2 *latu*.'

**5- Leu lolete anakota mawen Kolie, Latu Wakollo, latu Patue, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui Kolie, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Wakolo Patue.'<sup>15</sup>

**6- Sapu lopai Anakota Mawen Halatu, Latu hata, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui ulate, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Murnaten. Going further to the west.'

**7- Likelin Wawai Sarimetene, Anakota Mawen Leisiwa, Latua lua, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui elie, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Lumasoale. The mount Liteli is above, therefore one must pass over it to go from Murnaten to Rumasoa. Sarimeten is a *latu*.'<sup>16</sup>

**8- Sapu lori, Liline kai Tauke, luma upui Soamae, Anakota mauwen Liline, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui Liline, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Liline. Stepping to the east. Liline and Tauke are *latu* families from Luma Upu Soamae.'

**9- Leu lolete Manusa Manue, Anakota mawen Lawalesi, Makaruku lolane kai kebute, latua lua, Mawena butusa lisin lua, latu lete mulia, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'More inland toward Masa Manohue.'

**10. Leu lori tewa Sailue ianaa namena, Anakota Mawena telu, Nurua kai Latua, Anakota Mawen Sahatu, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui Hiliwe, kai...**

speaking intermediary with the colonial administrators. However the regents' power increased as the colonial system took over.

<sup>15</sup>Leu lolete: 'going up'.

<sup>16</sup>Sarimeten: 'Black Machete', may have been the name of a representative *latu* but it is essentially the title of the domain itself (see table).

Tauern's comment: 'Lataela. Go to the east over the water (Sapalewa). Title of the *pohon bandera*, 3 high priests and the *latu* families Nurua and Latua.'

11- **Lori kena Anakota Mawen Tapinau, Anakota mawen Lofinusa (*Lopinusa*) Elak Taniwele, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui latue, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Taniwel. Eastward.'

12- **Lori latu masiwe, latu Lumamina, Latu Matofale (*Matopale*) latu Lumamuli, upui Enie, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Lassahata.'<sup>17</sup>

13- **Kaputi tefai lori, Anakota Mawen Neisiwa, Mawena butusa lisin lua, Latua lua, upui Latue, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Hulung. To the east beyond the river Kaputi.'

14- **Leu lori Anakota mawen Tafinau, Latua lua, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui Latue, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Kasie.'

15 **Lori Anakota mawen Menalima, Latua lua, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui latue, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Saweli.'

16- **Lori kena Anakota mawen Laiului, Latu Olone, Latu Pana, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui Monie, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Luhutai.'

17- **Lori Anakota mawen Selimana, Latu Selimana, Latu Paturuai, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui latue, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Selimana.'

18- **Lori Elak Silie, Latu Pasinalu, Kapitan pasinalu, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui latue, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Patinalu. The *Kapitan* Patinalu is the warlord of the Sapalewa group.'<sup>18</sup>

19- **Lori Latu Nunue, Latu Manasaite, Latu Matitale, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui Kamare, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Sohue.'

20- **Lori Wemale, Alune, Latu Kasale, Latu Alia, latu Matafuli, Latu Lumairani, Mawena butusa lisin lua, upui latue, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Eastward at Patunuru Wemale Alune.'

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<sup>17</sup>Lori: in these cases (12 to 20): eastward (to the left looking landward from the north coast).

<sup>18</sup>I disagree with Tauern. See table and related footnote.

21- **Leu lolete Wene, Ulata telu, Latu Lumalatale, latu manakuti, Latu malihute, Anakota Mawen Kaune, Mawena butusa lisiin lua, upui Lisiela, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Wene and the Three Mountains. More landward to Uwin and the Three Mountains.'

22- **Lori anakota mawen Tanisawei, Latu Numafine, Latu Aniune, Mawena butusa lisiin lua, upui latue, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Paa.'

23- **Lori Anakota mawen Lofinusa, Latu Melihute, Mawena butusa lisiin lua, upui Kasale, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Rumah Sokat.'

24- **Likeline batu pelen wawai, Sailbubui Bulia Anakota mawen Lilue, Luma upui anamena safalia, Mawena butusa lisiin lua, upui Nauwe, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Bulia. Mount Liteli lies in between, so it is said over the Liteli one arrives... The Sail Bubui Bulia is the *ujung bandera* of the Sapalewa groups. Luma Upui Anamena Safalia is the name of a latu family.'

25- **Lora wet Bubui, Latu makabala, Latu Rake, Latu Salene, Latu Matuhulala. Lolete Anakota mawen Lofinusa, Elak Tifiali, Latu Tifiali, Mawena butusa lisiin lua, upui latue, kai...**

Tauern's comment: 'Latulake and Lohia. Lora : landward which is not clear and bubui is the top end.'<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Latuelake is **lora** 'landward' (south) from Buria (n°24) and Lohia is **lolete** 'up' (and further south) from both Latuelake and Buria.





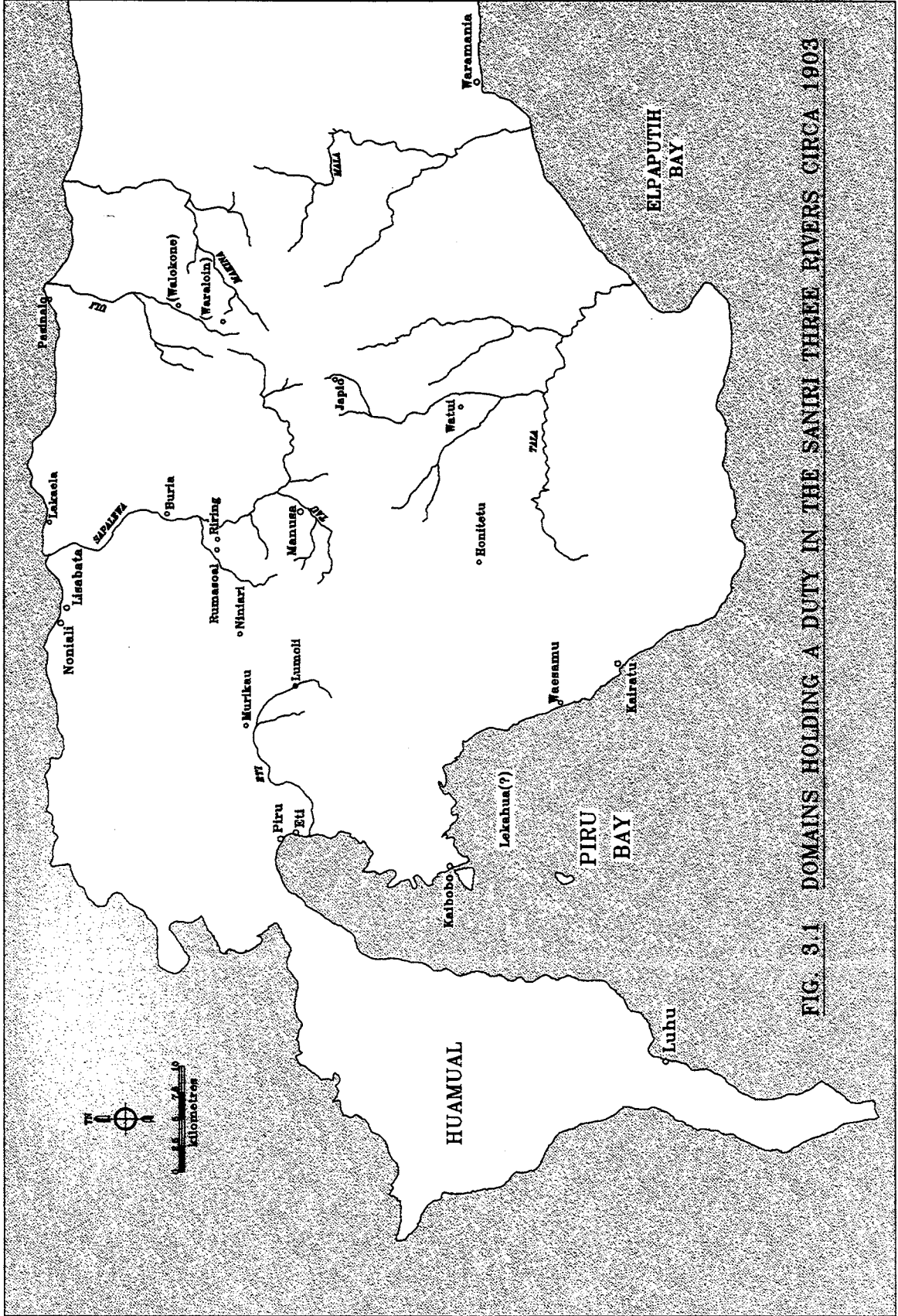


FIG. 3.1 DOMAINS HOLDING A DUTY IN THE SANIRI THREE RIVERS CIRCA 1903



**Table 3.1 Composition of the assembly of the Nili Ela Sapalewa Batai circa 1903<sup>1</sup>**

Domains in precedence order Title/duty of the domain	Title/name of domains deputies	Function	Remarks
<b>1 Saniliwei</b> 'Base/origin of the Saniri' Leading Committee	<b>ina ama</b> (mother father) Hahu Inai <b>latu</b> Kapaniane <b>latu</b> Ohane (kolane?) <b>3 anakota</b> <b>12 mawena</b> <b>upu</b> Wene	Head (repr. of Sapalewa) representative of Eti representative of Tala implementers of each river 12 dignitaries regent, deputy	Wele Telu highest ranking dignitaries. <sup>2</sup>
<b>ALUNE - COAST (west of Sapalewa)</b>			
<b>2</b> Lissabata, Noniali [Lisabata Nuniali] <sup>3</sup> <u>Title:</u> <b>Inama Ahuinai</b> 'Mother Pig' <sup>5</sup> <u>Duty:</u> supreme arbitrators of <b>nili ela</b>	Abdul Pattilou ( <i>raja</i> Lisabata) <b>anakota mawen</b> Mosole ('Forest')	former vassals of Huamual <sup>4</sup> dignitary (Kakehan)	mixed Alune/Muslim villages.  (when held in Sapalewa).
<b>3</b> Niwelehu-Niquelebu [Niwelenu]	<b>2 upua:</b> Titalou & Makulita <b>anakota mawen</b> Nehu	regents dignitary (Kakehan)	
<b>4</b> Sisihulu [Siseulu]	<b>2 latua:</b> Sulatu & Sunewara <b>2 anakota mawena</b> Sinohi & Halatu <b>2 elake</b> Tamale & Tikana	lords of the land dignitaries (Kakehan) elders	Siseulu was a powerful domain during the 17th century. Near Patahuwe in 1920 but not on maps after 1960. <sup>6</sup>
<b>5</b> Wakollo, Patue [Patahu]	<b>anakota mawen</b> Kolie <b>2 latua:</b> Wakollo & Patue <b>upu</b> Kolie	dignitary (Kakehan) lords of the land regent	current Wakolo and Patahuwe
<b>6</b> Murnaten	<b>anakota mawen</b> Halatu <b>latu</b> hata	dignitary (Kakehan) lord of the land	

**ALUNE - MOUNTAIN (west of Sapalewa)**

<p>7 Lumasoale [Rumasoal]  <u>Title:</u> <b>Inama Sarimetene</b> 'Black Machete'  <u>Duty:</u> exposes the cases to be judged.<sup>8</sup></p>	<p><b>anakota mawen</b> Leisiwa ('Side Nine')                  2 <b>latua</b> (not named)  <b>upu</b> Elie</p>	<p>dignitary (Kakehan)                  lords of the land                  regent</p>	<p>member of the Nili Kwele Batai                  ('Assembly of the Big River Trunk')<sup>7</sup></p>
<p>8 Liline [Riring), Tauke  <u>Title:</u> <b>Anakota</b> ('judge')  <u>Duty:</u> implement the decisions of <b>nili ela</b></p>	<p><b>luma upui</b> Soamae  <b>anakota mawen</b> Liline  <b>upu</b> Liline</p>	<p>lord of the land                  dignitary (Kakehan)                  regent</p>	<p>member of the Nili Kwele Batai (see n°7)                  the sentences and sanctions were                  executed by the local <b>nili</b> and Kakehan</p>
<p>9 Manusa Manuwe [Man. Samanuwey]  <u>Title:</u> <b>Anakota 'Webute</b> 'Judge Hearth Shelf'  <u>Duty:</u> ritual centre of Kakehan</p>	<p><b>anakota mawen</b> Lawalesi<sup>9</sup>  <b>lolane</b> 'ai 'webute Makaruku<sup>10</sup>                  2 <b>latua</b> (not named)</p>	<p>dignitary                  high dignitary</p>	<p><b>lolane:</b> <i>kolane:</i> dignitary, 'ai: 'and', <b>webute:</b>                  'hearth shelf', emblem of Manusa and of                  its ritual duty at a regional level</p>

**ALUNE - COAST (east of Sapalewa)**

<p>10 Lakaela (now part of Taniwel)  <u>Title:</u> <b>Inama Sariwei</b> 'Source/                  Handle of the Machete'  <u>Duty:</u> arbitrator<sup>11</sup></p>	<p>3 <b>anakota mawena</b> Nurua, Latua,                  Sahatu  <b>upu</b> Hiliwe</p>	<p>dignitaries                  regent</p>	<p>or <i>pohon bandera</i> 'the pole of the flag'                  (see n°24)</p>
<p>11 Taniwel</p>	<p>2 <b>an. mawena</b> Tapinau, Lopinusa  <b>elak</b> ('big man') Taniwele</p>	<p>dignitaries (Kakehan)                  elder (lord of the land?)</p>	<p>same family of dignitaries in 23 and 25</p>
<p>12 Lasahata (now part of Taniwel)</p>	<p>4 <b>latua:</b> Masiwe, Lumamina (e. House)                  Matopale, Lumamuli (y. House)  <b>upu</b> Eni</p>	<p>lords of the land                  regent</p>	<p>4 re-grouped independent hamlets ?</p>

**WEMALE - COAST (east of Sapalewa and coastal Uli Batai)**

13 Hulung	<b>anakota mawen</b> Neisiwa 2 <b>latua</b> (not named) <b>upu latu</b> (not named)	dignitary (Kakehan) lords of the land regent	
14 Kasieh	<b>anakota mawen</b> Tapinau 2 <b>latua</b> (not named) <b>upu latu</b> (not named)	dignitary (Kakehan) lords of the land regent	
15 Saweli	<b>anakota mawen</b> Menalima ('Elder five') 2 <b>latua</b> (not named) <b>upu latu</b> (not named)	dignitary (Kakehan) lords of the land regent	
16 Luhutai [Nukuhai]	<b>anakota mawen</b> Laiului 2 <b>latua</b> Olone, Pana <b>upu</b> Monie	dignitary (Kakehan) lords of the land regent	
17 Selimana [Sanimala]	<b>anakota mawen</b> Selimana 2 <b>latua</b> Selimana, Paturuai <b>upu latu</b> (not named)	dignitary (Kakehan) lords of the land regent	(not on maps after 1960)
18 Patinalu [Pasinalo] <u>Title:</u> <b>Kapitan</b> <u>Duty:</u> envoy of the Sapalewa	<b>elak</b> Silie, <b>latu</b> Patinalu, <b>kapitan</b> Patinalu <b>upu latu</b> (not named)	elder, dignitary regent	usually lords of the land are not warlords <sup>12</sup>
19 Sohue [Sohuwe]	3 <b>latua</b> Nunue, Manasaite, Matitale <b>upu</b> Kamare	lords of the land regent	
20 Patunuru [Hatunuru]	4 <b>latua</b> Kasale, <sup>13</sup> Alia ('Ginger') Matapuli ('Mace'), Lumairani <b>upu latu</b> (not named)	lords of the land regent	Patunuru was made of 2 re-settlements 1 Wemale and 1 Alune (the names Ginger and Mace possibly express this)

**WEMALE - MOUNTAIN (Uwin region: Uli Batai)**

<p>21 Wene [Huwene or Uwin] also called Ulata Telu, 'Three Mountains'<sup>14</sup></p>	<p>3 <b>latua</b> Lumatale, Manakuti, Malihute <b>anakota mawen</b> Kaune <b>tamaela upu</b> Lisiela<sup>15</sup></p>	<p>lords of the land dignitary (Kakehan) elder/deputy</p>	<p>the group is now at the coast in Uwen Pantai. Ancient link with Watui (Tala). Lumatale (Luma Latale: 'Lac House')</p>
<p>22 Paa (not on maps)</p>	<p><b>anakota mawen</b> Tanisawei 2 <b>latua</b> Numapine, Aniune <b>upu latu</b> (not named)</p>	<p>dignitary (Kakehan) lords of the land regent</p>	<p>possibly Uwin Paine, the former name of Matapa. (in the mountains in 1903 Matapa is now at the coast)</p>
<p>23 Rumah Sokat (not on maps)</p>	<p><b>anakota mawen</b> Lopinusa <b>latu</b> Melihute <b>upu</b> Kasale</p>	<p>dignitary (cf n°11 &amp; 25) lord of the land regent</p>	<p>possibly a hamlet of Lumakoate ('Strong House')a <b>nuru</b> of Lumapelu ('New House'). (in the mountains in 1903 now at the coast)</p>

**ALUNE - MOUNTAIN (east of Sapalewa)**

<p>24 Buria <u>Title:</u> Inama Saribubui 'Tip/Blade of the Machete' <u>Duty:</u> arbitrator<sup>16</sup></p>	<p><b>anakota mawen</b> Liluc <b>luma Upui Anamena</b> Sapalia <b>upu</b> Nauwe</p>	<p>dignitary (Kakehan) lord of the land regent</p>	<p>or <i>ujung bandera</i> 'apex of the flag' (see n°10) <b>Luma Upui Anamena:</b> 'House, ancestor First born'</p>
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And last, **lora bubui** ('landward to the tip'):

<p>25 Latuelake [Latuerake] and Lohia [Lohia Sapalewa]</p>	<p>4 <b>latua</b> Makabala, Rake (<b>elake:</b> big) Salene, Matuhulala <b>anakota mawen</b> Lopinusa<sup>17</sup> <b>elak</b> Tipiali, <b>latu</b> Tipiali (Tibali) <b>upu latu</b> (not named)</p>	<p>lords of the land dignitary (Kakehan) lords of the land regent</p>
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<sup>1</sup>Based on the Alune text recorded by Tauern (op. cit., 1918, pp.: 157-60), and the data provided by Manusa elders and Pa Mon Souhali, elder of the **nili** Sapalewa. The text, a greeting formula, is called **tapea** (= **tapele** Land, Earth = *dengan hormat*). It lists the title of each domain and the names of the dignitaries holding duties.

<sup>2</sup>Tauern translates **latu** (lord) or **elak** (big one) as lord of the land, **anakota mawen** as high priest, (**anakota**: implementer, **mawen**: dignitary) **upu latu** or **upu laele** as regent (**upu**: grandfather, ancestor) and **tamaela** as clan elder (**tamata**: man **ela**: big).

<sup>3</sup>Contemporary names are given in square brackets.

<sup>4</sup>Sachse, op. cit., 1922 p.137.

<sup>5</sup>Ina ama (or inama) 'mother father'. A domain having the title of inama held the position of arbitrator and judge in case of regional conflicts. Thus Lisabata (or Lissabata) and Noniali were inama (mother-father) with the title of Hahu Inai (or Ahuinai): 'Mother (or female) Pig'. They headed the Assembly when it was held in the Sapalewa.

<sup>6</sup>Following the RMS secessionist movement and the restructuring or Orde Baru, several villages were gathered under one single *desa*.

<sup>7</sup>The Nili Kwele Batai was an independent coalition of five Alune domains with its own delegation at the 3 Rivers. The others members were Liline (n°8) Niniari, Lumoli and Murikau, 3 domains of the Eti river.

<sup>8</sup>Sachse op. cit., 1922 p.138.

<sup>9</sup>According to the present lord of the land of Manusa their **anakota mawene** was from Luma Upu Souwei (i.e. the house of the lord of the land).

<sup>10</sup>Family of notables from Riring, a branch of Akolo from Tala. Became extinct in Manusa for a few generations but is now represented again.

<sup>11</sup>Coastal **inama**: judge in the **nili ela** of the Sapalewa. Its representative sat at the root side of the felled trunks (benches) of this forum of justice (counterpart of n°24).

<sup>12</sup>However in that case **Kapitan** did not necessarily mean warlord (**amalesi**), and the duty of **Kapitan Patinalu** was to go around to convene the members of the assembly.

<sup>13</sup>Sea Kasale is a hamlet near Uwin and a **nuru** in Abio.

<sup>14</sup>N° 21, 22 and 23 formed the **Uli batai**: the Trunk of the Uli river, a strong group of allied Wemale villages.

<sup>15</sup>Lesiela (or Lisiela): large Wemale **nuru** distributed over various domains (Jensen op. cit., 1948, pp. 26, 111). The full name is probably Ama lesi ela: Great war lord.

<sup>16</sup>Mountain **inama**: judge in the **nili ela** of the Sapalewa. Its representative sat at the branch side of the felled trunks (benches) of this forum of justice (counterpart of n°10).

<sup>17</sup>Dignitaries from the same **nuru** in n°11 (Alune) and n°23 (Wemale). Several of the non localised exogamous units (**nuru**) have branches (**sanai**) in both language groups.



## THE NILI ELA ORGANISATION

At the beginning of the 20th century, the same model (probably modified over centuries) was roughly repeated in each of the three river trunks (**batai**). The dignitaries changed (although their titles were usually hereditary) but the position remained in the same domain because its function was associated with the place which had 'received it from the ancestors'.<sup>20</sup> I focus on the domains holding these functions (one in each river), not on the individual dignitaries who represented them.<sup>21</sup>

For each river there were seven main positions in the Saniri assembly. These positions were held by various domains which were represented by their dignitaries.<sup>22</sup> The **inama** or **inama latu** ('leading mother father') was the senior position.<sup>23</sup> For each of the three rivers the **inama latu** was a large coastal settlement, former vassal of Ternate. It shared the position with a low hill settlement supposedly representative of the mountain domains. For example, Lisabata and Nuniali in the Sapalewa river or Piru and Eti in the Eti river. The duty of the **sarimetene** ('black machete') was to expose the cases to be arbitrated at the assembly. In each river that duty was held by a senior magistrate of the domain in charge of that position. The **anakota** (impersonated by several high dignitaries: **anakota mawena**), were the implementers of the decisions/sanctions of the assembly in their region.<sup>24</sup> The coastal domains which were **inama sariwei** (**sali** or **sael uwei**: the 'base/handle of the machete',

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<sup>20</sup>Since people believe in a form of metempsychosis along the family line, one may say that, to a certain extent, the function also stays with the same person.

<sup>21</sup>The dignitaries are mentioned by Tauern 1918 pp.154-60 and later by Sachse 1922 p.137 (and other authors). But these lists do not fully correspond. Furthermore the duties and the titles are recorded but only a few of the domains holding these positions are mentioned.

<sup>22</sup>Both the domain and the dignitary who represented it bore the title of this specific position in the assembly. Thus for example **inama sariwei** refers to the position of the domain and is the title of its representative.

<sup>23</sup>The reconstruction of Blust (1980), offers (...) Proto-Malayo-Polynesian *\*datu* (after Dempwolff) with four possible components of meaning: 1) political leader, chief; 2) priest; 3) aristocrat, noble; and 4) ancestor, grand-father, elder. This range is admittedly rather wide and Blust suggests that the *\*datu* 'probably was a lineage- (or clan-) liked official' (Blust 1980:217).<sup>1</sup> Bellwood 1996, p.19. Traditionally in west Seram, **Latu** (lord) is a title which suggests a leading position but not a specific duty. A lord of the land, a ruler, a high priest, a warrior may all be **latu**. Tauern uses it usually for lord of the land (i.e. **latu nusa**), Van Wouden for ruler or village head. The colonial government superimposed a system of regents at three levels (*raja*, *patih* and *orang kaya*). In the 1920s west Seram was subsequently divided into 56 taxable regencies (Sachse 1922 p.135), however these do not always correspond to the previous traditional units.

<sup>24</sup>The authors usually translate **mauwen** or (**mawene**) **anakota** (captain of a boat) as 'high priest' because the **mawena** were also leading dignitaries in the Kakehan. Indeed, the role of the Kakehan was also to ensure that traditional law was implemented among its members.

Malayu: *pohon bandera*, Wemale: *bandera ehuwei*: the 'staff/pole of the flag'), held the positions of senior judges and their dignitaries sat at the base end of the felled trunks which were used as benches by the council of arbitrators. The domain holding the position of **kapitan** summoned the members of its river to the assembly and its representative was the envoy in charge of that duty. The task of interpreter and ritual 'herald' (**alamanane**) was also part of that duty.<sup>25</sup> Finally, the mountain domains which held the position of **inama saribubui** (**sali** or **sael bubui**, Malayu: *udjung bandera* Wemale: *bandera erui*, the 'tip/blade of the machete') were the counterpart arbitrators of the coastal **inama sariwei** (one being 'the handle' and the other 'the blade' of the machete, symbol of the arbitration). Their representative sat at the branch end of the felled trunk of his river (in a junior position).<sup>26</sup> The borders of *saniri* jurisdiction recorded below (table 3.2 The *saniri* borders) were listed and agreed upon by several **nili** elders.

### Nili Sapalewa

In the Sapalewa river the senior **inama** was the domain of Lisabata (n<sup>o</sup>2) jointly with Nuniali.<sup>27</sup> Lisabata, a vassal from Ternate, ruled at and from the coast. Lisabata's ruler was also called **inama latu** Ahu Inai (Female Pig).<sup>28</sup> According to Pa Mon, Patilou (Nuniali) could enforce his authority over his children villages along the coast (as far eastward as Hulung) but had not much power over the mountain domains. The **sarimetene** ('black

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<sup>25</sup>The title **kapitan** evokes a war leader (*kapitan perang*). It was first given by the crews of Portuguese ships who visited the region to the persons (spokesmen) with whom they had contact and who seemed to be leading their groups, since they came forward. These **kapitan** (the title was incorporated in various local languages) were the dignitaries in charge of the relationships of their domain with the outside. By extension, the envoy of the **nili** received the title of **kapitan**. The ancient/mountain name for the same function is **alamanane**. **Alamana** means 'to intone', **alamanane**, a 'ritual chant' (for example a **tapea**) and **alamanane** or **ma'a alamanane** is the 'one whose office is to chant' it, the other duty of the **kapitan** or **alamanane**.

<sup>26</sup>The imagery [of flag and pole, base and tip] evokes a paradigm of objects that stands fixed in place and reach upward toward the sky. Like such axis mundi as the cosmic mountain, the world tree, and the origin house, the union of pole and flag expresses a hierarchical distinction between one who plants, grips and steadies the foundations of a structure and one who keeps it upright and erect.' E. G. Traube 1986 p.57.

<sup>27</sup>Tauern 1918, p.154, Sachse 1922 p.137.

<sup>28</sup>The term **inama** (**ina ama**) defines a domain and/or its leader. The dignitary in charge in Lisabata wore on his chest a gold artifact representing a female pig feeding nine piglets (the Patasiwa people), and a woman's *kain*, symbols of the female (feeding, caring) position of his **inama** within the whole federation. The pig was a predominant symbol in Seram long before Islam made its way to its coast, and the golden pig endured for a few centuries around the neck of a Muslim lord. It has now disappeared.

machete') was the domain of Rumasoal (n°7), also called Liunama.<sup>29</sup> The Sapalewa had two **anakota**, the domain of Riring (n°8) and, for ritual matters, (n°9) the **hena** Manusa Samanuwey. The **inama sariwei** (*pohon bandera*) was the domain of Lakaela (n°10). The **kapitan** was the domain of Patinalu (n°18), also called Manumeten (Black Bird).<sup>30</sup> And the **inama saribubui** (*ujung bandera*) was the domain of Buria (n°24) also called Latu Salene.

Inland, west of the Sapalewa, was the independent coalition of the **nili** Kwele Batai, the Saniri of the Trunk of the Large River. It brought together the Alune mountain settlements of Rumasoal (**sarimeten** of Sapalewa), Riring (**anakota** of Sapalewa) with those of Niniari, Murikau and Lumoli, three mountain villages of the upper Eti river. This mountain/indigenous coalition had its own representatives in the large Saniri. It counterbalanced the coastal powers of Kaibobo (Eti) and Lisabata (Sapalewa), two former Muslim vassals of the Ternatan governor of Luhu in Huamual. Although the Dutch quickly found that they could use the mountain people against the coastal villages to pressure them into submission (see Knapp p.258) they seem to have ignored the existence of the Kwele Batai. Knapp mentions (op. cit., p.255) an association of villages under the northern power of Siseulu but no one seems to remember it in the mountains.<sup>31</sup> Sisiulu (its contemporary name) is now a minor coastal village near the mouth of the Sapalewa.

As Knapp also notes (op. cit., p.270), not all the Patasiwa were members of the Saniri. To the east of the upper Sapalewa, the Wemale domains of the upper Uli and upper Sapalewa region, Abio Batai, Walokone and Waraloin do not seem to be mentioned anywhere in relation to the Saniri. However their neighbours, the group of Wene (Huwene or Uwin), also called Ulata Telu The Three Mountains (n° 21, 22 and 23) which formed the Uli Batai, the Trunk of the Uli river, were part of the Nili Sapalewa in 1903.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>According to an elder of Eti, the domains of Riring, Rumasoal Lohia Sapalewa, Buria and several hamlets of the upper Sapalewa formed an alliance called Liunama kai Sikarana, independent from Nuniali. The domains of Riring and Rumasoal were also part of another independent alliance called Nili kwele Batai 'Saniri of the Big River' (see below).

<sup>30</sup>Sachse, op. cit., p.134, Tauern, op. cit., p.154.

<sup>31</sup>Since the meetings of the large Saniri were usually held at or near the mouth of a river, Sisiulu might have been simply one of these meeting sites which tried to take advantage of this opportunity to obtain Dutch acknowledgement. This diplomatic manoeuvring occurred in the south where coastal villages claimed *vis-à-vis* the Dutch a suzerainty over mountain settlements, which they could not enforce (see Ludeking).

<sup>32</sup>The partition between Alune and Wemale is not as clear cut as Jensen presumed (op. cit., 1948, pp.109-11).

**TABLE 3.2 THE SANIRI BORDERS (OTE NILIA ELÁE)**

U.: **ulate**: mountain, 'W.: 'we: river, B.: **bubui**: top.

The (east/west) borders Patasiwa Patalima (5/9) are 'W Ma'ina in the north (door: Warasiwa) and 'W Mana in the south.

	NORTH	SOUTH	EAST	WEST
<b>ETI</b>	U. Inai ulu 'W.Pana (Mountain) mata 'we Pasama (beach)	with Sapalewa	'W. Nala (with Sapalewa) Waesamu (with Eti) (Hatalaela: mediator)	includes Huamual rajahan: Luhu-Siale Laela, Asaude, Palasune
<b>TALA</b>	Ulate Inai	sea	'w. Sari Mala (5/9)	'w. Nala (with Eti)
<b>SAPALEWA</b>	sea	Ulate Inai (with Tala)	Ulate Lumate or Orale (with Uli Batai)	'w Pasama (with Eti) (betw.Nikulukan & Ni'welehu)



For the two other river valleys, where I spent only a few days, my data are more limited and less reliable.<sup>33</sup> I have assumed that they followed the same principle of precedence as in the Sapalewa.

### Nili Eti

In the Eti valley, the senior **inama latu** was the coastal domain of Eti (Sachse 1922 p.137), also called **inama latu Tihu Metene** (Black Lake).<sup>34</sup> Pa Mon said: 'it rules but it does not know how to work', giving the image of a passive ruler. The **sarimetene** ('black machete') was the domain of Hatu Telu (Three Stones): Piru.<sup>35</sup> The **inama sariwei** (*pohon bandera*) was the domain of Lekahua with the role of high court administrator.<sup>36</sup> The **anakota** was the **hena** Lima Laia (Laiwin?). The domain of Piru also held the position of **kapitan** entrusted to the dignitary Lael (**latu ela**) Tepesua (or Tupasou) Rumalatu. The **inama saribubui** (*udjung bandera*), the domain of Kawa, was represented by the dignitary Butusiwa Niay (Ninety Snake).

### Nili Tala

In the Tala valley, the senior **inama** was the domain of Kaibobo, also called **inama latu** Tahisane Popute (by Tauern and Pa Mon) or **latu** Polonunu by Sachse (op. cit., p.137).<sup>37</sup> The **inama sariwei** was the domain of Watui with, as representative, the **elak** ('great man', 'elder') Nikwele (Coconut).<sup>38</sup> There were two **anakota mawena** (or **muweni**: high

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<sup>33</sup>One of the difficulties is that the domains are not recalled by the name of their main settlements but by a ritual name in their *pasawari* (the domain 'anthem' or 'motto'). This name may correspond to an important family (Buria: Lumbatu), to a ritual object (Manusa: '**webute**: 'hearth rack,' 'house altar'), or to a ritual function (Lisabata: Ahuinai: Mother Pig) etc. However no one person knows them all and only part are willingly disclosed.

<sup>34</sup>This is the name of a lake in Huamual (Tauern p.154). This suggests that the group may have been among the dignitaries who escaped to west Seram when the peninsula was depopulated by the Dutch in the 17th century.

<sup>35</sup>**Hatu** or **batu**, a (sacrificial) stone often represents one hamlet/community. Piru is the association of three of them. The expression **Batua muli batu mena**: the stone behind, the stone ahead, describes the relationship of vassal groups or children villages to a leading/mother domain.

<sup>36</sup>(*Mangku Bumi* and *pemanku panji*), in Sapalewa this role is held by the **sarimetene**. I have not localised the modern name of that settlement (if it still exists).

<sup>37</sup>According to an elder of Eti, this position was formerly held by Samasuru Paulohi (under the name: Haru Tumpaka).

<sup>38</sup>Watui is also given as the **sarimetene** (Sachse 1922, p.138).

dignitaries), Ririhatu Parinusa from the domain of Alatu (Kairatu) and Salaputa from the domain of Waesamu.<sup>39</sup> An elder of Eti said that in the large Saniri of the Three Rivers the domain of Waesamu was the **hatalea ela** (in charge of the protocol and the mediation between the Three Rivers, a function that resembles the role of each **kapitan** in their own river). There were also two **kapitan makuresi** (or: Makalesi: The One Who is Strong - also a family name). One was the domain of Mani (Waramania in Elpaputih bay) represented by Tunia Siwalete (nine up). The other **kapitan makuresi** was the domain of Alatu (Kairatu), represented by the **elak** Akolo. The **inama saribubui** (*udjung bandera*) was also Alatu represented by the **elak** Ruspanah (branch Soi Puti: White Areca Nut).<sup>40</sup> Thus Alatu was strongly represented in the Saniri of Tala with the triple position of **mawen anakota**, **kapitan** and **saribubui**. Alatu, an influential low hill Alune settlement, (now the main coastal township of Kairatu), seems to have been an essential mountain counterpart for Kaibobo, the Muslim coastal power in the south, possibly the equivalent of Niniari for Lisabata in the Sapalewa, or Eti for Piru. The Dutch rapidly realised that, in reality, the coastal domains had very little power in the mountains. What gave a certain authority to Kaibobo was that it had key alliances and was backed by its ally and 'blood brother' (**pela**), the bold Wemale mountain domain of Hunitetu, whose warriors were feared in the whole region.

The two southern river valleys of the Eti and the Tala were the most disturbed by the Ternatan and later the colonial influence; therefore the structure of their **nili** is less clear.<sup>41</sup> Hereafter, I concentrate on the **nili** Sapalewa, the northern river assembly, which I know best. It is also the least documented in colonial archives.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>According to Pa Neyte, Salaputa is the name of their **sisine** (meeting platform); according to Pa Kapitan the name is also found in Lohia Tala.

<sup>40</sup>Information provided by Pa Mon and Eti elders.

<sup>41</sup>Besides, I worked only for a short period in these regions and the information which would allow a deeper knowledge of the traditional duties and regional claim for precedence is not made readily available.

<sup>42</sup>The Dutch did not know much about the **nili** Sapalewa, for when the VOC, and later the colonial government, started trying to control the meetings of the large assembly, most of the time the trunk of the Sapalewa simply did not show up. The real meeting was held in the mountains (*bicara di darat*) while a show was put on at the coast (*bicara di laut*) for the Dutch administration. (For details of these coastal meetings see Knaap. op. cit., pp.262-65.)

**ALUNE \_ COAST (west Sapalewa)**

- 2 Lisabata
- 2 Nuniali
- 3 Niwalehu - Niquelebu
- 4 Siseulu
- 5 Wakolo, Patahu
- 6 Murnaten

**ALUNE \_ MOUNTAIN (west Sapalewa)**

- 7 Rumasoa (+ member Nili Kwele Batai)
- 8 Riring, Tauke (+ member Nili Kwele Batai)  
(with Niniani & Murikau of Eti)
- 9 Manusa Manuwey
- 10 Lakaela
- 11 Taniwei
- 12 Lasahata

**WEMALE - COAST**

(east Sapalewa/coastal Uli batai)

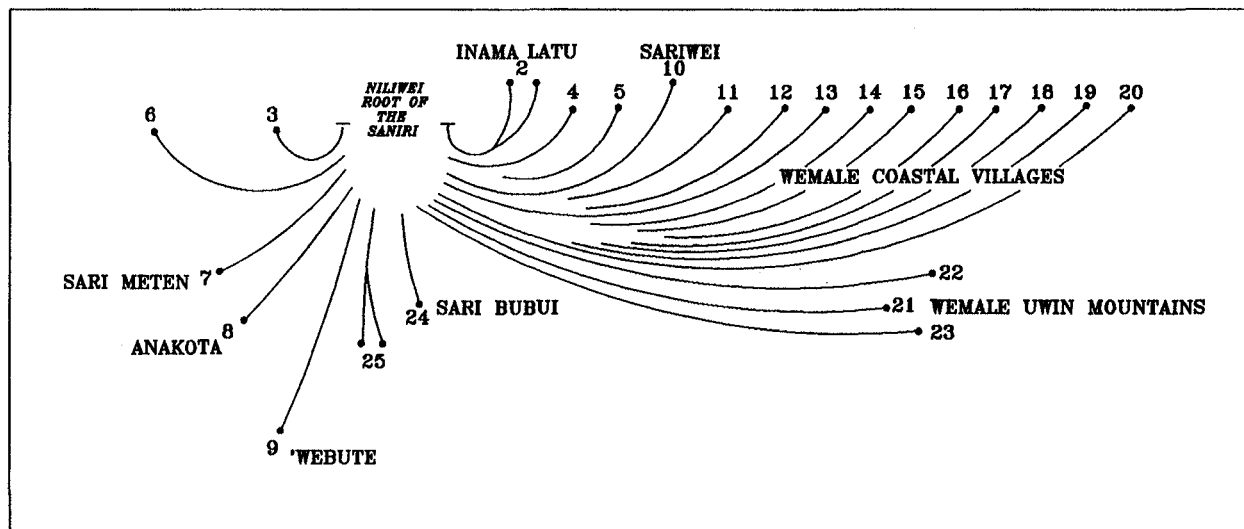
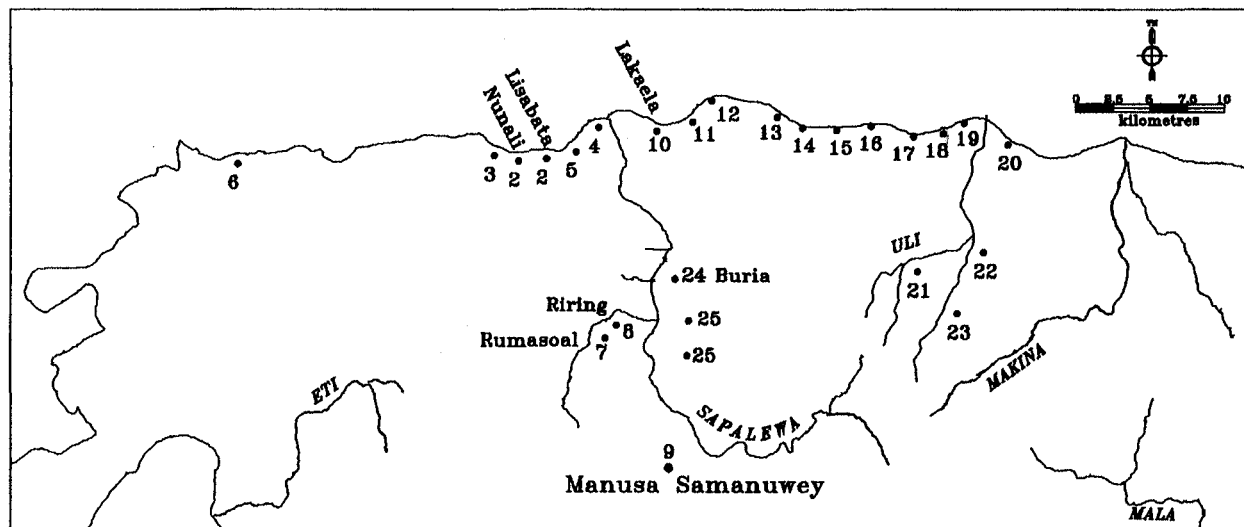
- 13 Hulung
- 14 Kasie
- 15 Saweli
- 16 Nukubai
- 17 Selimana
- 18 Pasinalo
- 19 Sohuwe
- 20 Hatunuru

**WEMALE - MOUNTAIN (Uwin region)**

- 21 Patahuwe
- 22 Matapa
- 23 Lumapelu

**ALUNE MOUNTAIN (east Sapalewa)**

- 24 Buria
- 25 Latuerake
- 25 Lohia Sapalewa



**FIG. 3.2 THE TREE OF NILI SAPALEWA BATAI CIRCA 1903**





## THE NILI BATAI AND THE DOMAINS

The **nili** was primarily an assembly where conflicts between domains were brought for arbitration. The parties in conflict were helped to reach an agreement which was witnessed by the representatives of the whole region. The assembly acted as peace keeper and negotiation facilitator for various matters related to secular power. The core group of the assembly, the **niliwei**, the 'source/base' of the Saniri, arbitrated these large conciliatory coastal meetings. The **nili** of a river was the point of convergence for mountain and coastal groups of the same valley to meet, interact and debate, reinforcing regional cohesion. It was also an arena where wise and respected men could reassess the precedence of their domains and their own prestige. Gathering its most noted men, the large **nili** assemblies preserved some form of cohesion within the Three River **batai**.<sup>43</sup>

The **nili** of the Sapalewa **batai** forms a tree, explained a mountain elder, 'the' tree of the river. Referring to a river valley of 'Wele Telu and its people, one says **batai**, meaning a 'log', a 'trunk', a 'large reclining body' or a lying tree (not a standing one). A **batai** loosely gathers the riverine domains of its valley, as the people (and the land) of one river tree.

When they are greeted in front of the whole assembly, the domains are positioned within the **batai** in a precedence ordered from coast to mountain. Transcribed on the map (see figure 3.2. the tree of Nili Sapalewa Batai), it also draws a 'lying tree' (**batai**) along the river valley. This 'log' lies with its 'base', (**uwei**), the 'core' of a tree, at the coast, and its branches (**sanai**) extending over the Sapalewa region, encompassing most of the coastal and mountain domains. The trees on which the **nili** elders sat to deliberate were ritually felled in the forest. The logs were brought in procession by the participants and laid on the ground.<sup>44</sup> The representatives sat from bases to branches according to the seniority of their office. In each **batai** the senior representative was a powerful coastal Muslim domain allied to Ternate. This coastal centre (the **inama latu**), was the **niliwei** the 'core', the 'base', 'the source of continuity' of the **nili** of its river and, as such, was given ultimate precedence. In the Sapalewa, the other positions/duties were shared equally between coastal and mountain domains. However, seniority was given to stronger and better established domains. The

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<sup>43</sup>The three **batai** are now roughly divided into three *kabupaten*, but no modern institution has replaced the **nili ela** abolished in 1914.

<sup>44</sup>The ceremony is described by Tauern (op. cit., 1918).

seating positions of the dignitaries reflected this order of precedence.<sup>45</sup> The most respected men of the region, and the felled trees on which they sat, together epitomised the **batai** as a political entity in the wider region. Thus the ordering of the domains within each **nili batai** centered them around a coastal 'core', their **niliwei**. It also ordered them in a precedence that was roughly oriented from coast to mountain, from 'core' 'base' (**uwei**) to 'tip' (**bubui**), and from 'elder'/'first' (**a mena**) to 'younger'/'after' (**a muli**). The domains of 'Wele Telu were called **hena**, **inama**, **kota** or **anakota**, in relation to their position in the **nili** of their river.

At the origin, these domains had been founded by supra-human ancestors who assembled other families around them, explored the region and established a community, marking the wider possible boundaries of their domain.<sup>46</sup> These founders had assured a position for their domain within the river **batai** and such positions remained the privilege of the group constituting that domain. However the following generations had to maintain these rights, which implied gathering enough followers to preserve a strong community.<sup>47</sup> Before colonisation, there was little restriction on mobility. The narratives give the impression that most communities experienced some division as they expanded, quarrelled or were defeated by a neighbour. Those who departed opened new regions, joined another group or took some of its territory over. Some domains had renowned war leaders (**ama lesi** 'war fathers') able, if required, to call on and obtain the support of other allied domains against a predatory neighbour or to enrol them as raiding partner. These authoritative and respected men were active members of both the **nili** assemblies and the Kakehan brotherhood of their rivers, where followers were co-opted.<sup>48</sup> The personal wealth and renown achieved by a reputed man who emerged in a group was also claimed by his domain of origin. This man's fame contributed to enhance the prestige of his domain and re-enforced its position within the **batai**.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>For example, the coastal **inama sariwei** (the 'base/handle of the machete') sat at the root end of the felled trunk near its base in a senior position, while the **inama saribubui** (the 'tip/blade of the machete') a mountain domain, sat in a junior position at the branch end (**bubui**: 'tip', 'top') of the same trunk.

<sup>46</sup>Beside their courage, some great war lords and migration leaders had recognised supra-natural abilities, and their deeds are immortalised in narratives.

<sup>47</sup>Since the region was not overpopulated there was no real pressure for territory. However the strength in numbers of strong able men was an important factor between domains which practiced head-hunting raids against each other.

<sup>48</sup>In 1914, the **batai** of the Three Rivers had attained enough cohesion to propagate, from domain to domain along each river valley, a succession of uprisings against colonisation (see previous chapter).

<sup>49</sup>This is still true. When a distant relative from the Netherlands came to visit Manusa, he was received in the name of the 'whole Sapalewa batai' (Sapalewa **batai pusua**). The villagers also ensured that the word spread in the region that a prestigious guest had been honoring the domain.

One of these ancient domains is now *Desa Manusa*, the **hena** Manusa Samanuwey, the subject of the present study. As an elderly lady told me when I first entered the village, **Saman uwei** 'Source of the allotment', means 'the place where everything in the world, land, people, tools etc, were distributed'.<sup>50</sup> It was this initial deed of its founding ancestor which had given the domain its permanent status within the region. This is recalled in the narrative of origin of the domain (following chapter). According to the **nili** elder of Manusa, because of this, the **nili** Sapalewa **batai** consulted the domain first (before the **anakota** Riring) when something important in matters of ritual had to be decided. Because of the position epitomised in its name and proven by its narrative of origin, the **hena** Manusa claims a central ritual position at the level of the entire 'Wele Batai Telu (and beyond). Similarly the other domains of the region make various claims and, since some of these are conflicting, only a strong group can afford to maintain them. Samai 'the one who attributes', the ancestor of Manusa, is also renowned for welcoming many people. As the same elderly lady explained: 'who adds people, adds land'.<sup>51</sup>

#### THE NURU AND THEIR SANAI, THE LUMA

Prior to entering the domain of Manusa by way of its narrative of origin, one needs an elementary understanding of the **nuru**, the 'origin groups' who inhabit the region.<sup>52</sup> What all the members of a **nuru** have in common is a name. To this name is attached a narrative recalling either the deed of an ancestor, and/or a place of origin. As they expand into new territories or neighboring domains, **nuru** branch out, growing and diversifying in various **sanai** 'branches'. Some have stretched over both the Alune and the Wemale regions. The people regarded as the descendants of the initial core constitute the **nuruwei** 'the core of the **nuru**', its elder or initial trunk.<sup>53</sup> The claim to the prestige of that position may be disputed

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<sup>50</sup>*Artinya tempat pembagian semua di dunia, tanah, bangsa, alat alat...*: 'It means the place where all the things in the world were distributed/shared, the land, the people, the tools etc.' **Saman uwei** (**uwei**: 'origin/source', **sama**: 'allotment/dispersal').

<sup>51</sup>*Tamba jiwa tamba tanah*. This is true at the level of the household, the origin group or the domain. Warfare and head-hunting have been prohibited and the borders between conflicting domains are now delimited by the government. However keeping up the number of their members still remains a matter of survival for the mountain communities under the administration of the modern state. The rivalry for prestige and renown between domains now takes the form of various competitive activities. I further elaborate on the theme in ensuing chapters.

<sup>52</sup>**Nuru** also means 'end', 'extremity', 'limit', 'boundary'. The origin group or **nuru** and its 'branches' **sanai**, are further described in Chapter six.

<sup>53</sup>In bahasa Indonesia **uwei** is usually translated as *sumber*, *pohon*, and in some cases, *pusat*.

between branches. Some **nuru** order their branches in different, sometimes combined, orders of precedence. Thus, a branch may call itself a **mena** or **ana mena** 'the elder', 'the first born', 'the one who walked ahead', while another branch may be a **mulu** or **ana mulini**, 'the youngest', 'the last born', 'the one who comes after', 'the one who follows'. Between them a 'female' (**bina**) branch may have developed among various collateral branches. Although elder, ruling, or large and rich branches are better fitted to maintain their status, any small branch of a large **nuru** may one day gain renown for itself and, in turn, enhance the prestige of its **nuru**.

As 'branches' (**sanai**) grow and diversify, some keep the core name, recognising a common origin without necessarily keeping in contact with the 'initial core' **nuruwei**. Other units take an additional name to distinguish their branch and may with time forget their name of origin. Branches may also intentionally sever the link with their initial **nuruwei** and originate a new **nuru** (of which they become the **nuruwei**).<sup>54</sup> As **nuru** generate influential members and rich Houses, it is not so much a hierarchy which is established between them, as a very fluctuating competition. Renown and value are the objects of regular evaluation and readjustment. Thus, claims for prestige and precedence apply between the **nuru** and, within them, between their branches. As some **nuru** become extinct while the branches of others transform themselves into a new core, it is difficult to take a precise or definitive count of the **nuru** distributed over Wemale and Alune domains. There is usually little interaction between the various branches of a **nuru** unless their Houses are in the same or in a nearby settlement. There is no **nuru** head nor any authority that can be applied over a branch, a House or an individual by the **nuru** as a jural body.

The territorial units which constitute the branches are the Houses, **luma**.<sup>55</sup> The first House to arrive in a domain is the **luma inai**, the 'mother House' of its **nuru** in that domain. The Houses of the same **nuru** who arrived afterward, or decided to branch out but remained in the same domain, are differentiated and called **luma sanai**, 'branch Houses'. The different Houses of a **nuru**, in one or several domains, are usually distinct and unrelated; however they do not intermarry. Sharing a common **nuru** name implies exogamy. Among the mountain people, who still know about their origin, this rule is still strictly respected. It is by the intermediary of their Houses, which are the exchanging units, that different **nuru** give and return brides to each other. Remote communities, like **hena** Manusa, are essentially

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<sup>54</sup>Which **nuru** is at the origin of another is seldom a fully established matter.

<sup>55</sup>I write House (with capital H) to distinguish the social unit from the building of the same name: **luma**, house.

endogamous at domain level. Within a domain like Manusa, the 'rich and famous', the elder and the ruling lines of the **nuru** which have gained founding positions in the domain (**hena upui**) largely exchange brides among themselves. But through strategic marriages, proper behaviour and multiple descent, any House or any of its lines, including those perpetuated through women, may achieve status and wealth, enhance the renown of the **nuru** and eventually fuse with or replace an older line or a declining House.

### THE CONCEPT OF UWEI

**Uwei** (**wei**, **wey** or **huwei**)<sup>56</sup> is a fundamental concept which re-occurs in Alune discourse. In a tree, the 'base' (or in a leaf, the 'axil') is the 'origin' (**wei**) and is 'elder' (a **mena**), while the 'tip' (**bubui**) is 'younger' (a **muli**).<sup>57</sup> Similarly, the **niliwei** of a **batai** was regarded as the 'core', the 'base' which initiated the **nili**, and the riverine domains were ordered around the coastal core of their **niliwei**.<sup>58</sup> The relation between the various branches of an origin group are usually very loose when they exist, and a **nuru** has no head. However, its members acknowledge one of its branches as **nuruwei** the 'initial core' of their **nuru**, the elder or initial 'trunk', i.e. the group of people who are regarded as the descendants and the continuation of this initial core.<sup>59</sup> At the origin of a domain is also an **uwei**. It is usually one or more ancestors who brought about and established the domain through their prestigious deed(s). In Manusa such an ancestor was at the origin of the distribution of 'everything which matters in the world'. Because of this action, the domain he founded was the **sama uwei** 'the source/cause/origin of the distribution'.<sup>60</sup> The spirit of these ancestors continues to protect ancient and new members who are incorporated into a domain, and their example still inspires the present generations. As such, a founding ancestor is the **uwei**, both the founder and the perpetual 'locus of continuity' of a domain. For the people who link themselves to them, the names of these ancestors are **na ela mena** ('name', 'big', 'elder/first'),

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<sup>56</sup>Proto-Ambonese (maluku) **puè**- 'origin' [Stresemann 1927]. Professor S. Wurm, personal communication.

<sup>57</sup>These notions are also applied to house construction (see appendix 3: the physical entity of the luma).

<sup>58</sup>Precedence was displayed and honoured at least for the duration of the assembly, (some of which could last several weeks). However it would be erroneous to over-emphasise the importance of this hierarchical order and construct more regional unity than existed. The lowlands with powerful trading centres, had no direct mode of control over the mountain domains. Interactions between domains were largely based on a mutually predatory mode, occasionally combined with exchange. As the Dutch interference increased, first the coastal and later the mountain domains lost, piece by piece, all degrees of autonomy.

<sup>59</sup>This group *represents* the point where all **sanai** originated and **luma** further forked out. If its elder line disappears, a younger line replaces it.

<sup>60</sup>His **nuru** took the name Souwei: **uwei**: 'origin/cause' of **sou**: 'history/language'.



or **sari ului**) as its 'tip'. Accordingly among the dignitaries holding these positions, the **sari uwei** is the elder and the **sari bubui** the younger.

The lower part of a standing tree (**ai**) is called **ai uwei**: the 'base', the 'origin of a tree' (near the root system).<sup>62</sup> It is a **mena**, the 'older' part of the tree, the part which grew 'first'. **Ai sanai**, the 'branches', **ai bubui**, the 'tips', **ai buai**, its 'fruits and flowers', and **tubui**, the 'shots' and 'sprouts' are a **muli (mulini)**, the 'younger' parts which grew 'afterward'.<sup>63</sup> When Alune use botanical metaphors to express an order of precedence; the 'base' or 'core', **uwei**, represents the 'elder' **a mena**, the source, the initiator, while the branches, tips, flowers fruits or shots, are given as analogies for a **muli** 'younger', 'followers' or 'successors'. When pressed to produce the opposite word for **uwei** people give several terms. **Bubui** 'tip' 'top', 'apex', **ului** 'head', 'top', 'lid', (**ulu bubui** 'the crown of the head'), or **buai** 'fruit'. Ramifications are **bu'u**. The metaphors **ai uwei** 'core of a tree' and **ai bubui** 'tip of a tree' imply an asymmetric relationship. Whatever is **uwei** is also a **mena** 'elder' or 'primary'; what is **bubui**, is a **muli** 'younger' or 'issued from'.

**Uwei (wei)**, the 'source of continuity', 'origin', 'base', 'cause' or 'core' is a fundamental concept, and Alune give precedence to whatever is **uwei**, because it is 'senior' (**a mena**) to what flows from it, follows, branches out, or returns to it. The **niliuwei** of a **batai**, the 'core' of a riverine community of domains, is at the coast and is a **mena**, the 'elder', the 'foremost'. It presents an asymmetric relation between mountain and coast. However the position of 'elder' is not ascribed *per se* to the coast. As levels change, other values of this society become prominent and the precedence of elder/younger is reversed between mountain and coast. If power is centered at the coast, the perpetuation of life and wealth has its source in the mountain where Nunusaku stands, the epitome of the pervasive concept of **uwei**.

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<sup>62</sup>**Ai lamuti uwei** is the 'core root of a tree' (the root system).

<sup>63</sup>**Ai sana uwei** 'tree branch source' is the fork of a branch: the point where a new twig grows from the trunk or from a main branch.

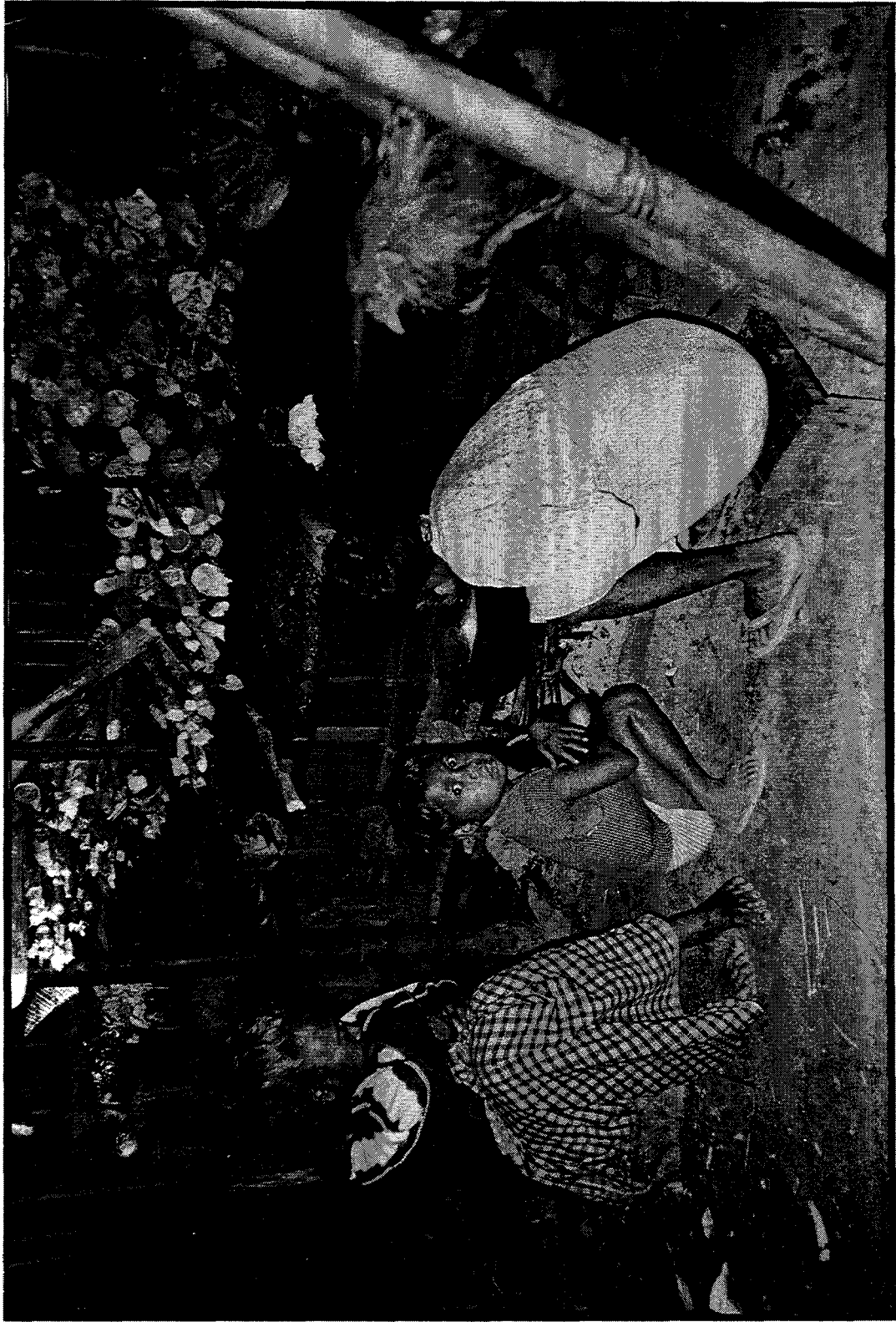






10 Bpk Mon (right) and Ian Southaly





11 Early morning around the heath shelf



## Chapter Four

### NARRATING THE PATH OF MA'SAMAN.UEY

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#### INTRODUCTION

The two first chapters have introduced the present setting of Manusa and outsiders' views of its history. The previous chapter set the domain within the traditional past of its region. In this chapter we go, or rather 'return' (**leu**) to hena Ma'saman.uey, following the path of the ancestors. This chapter is composed of three sections. The first examines the main Alune narrative forms and the second focuses on the social knowledge embedded in sacred places. The third section presents the narrative of origin of **hena** Manusa.

At a time when modern nations like Indonesia (or Australia) are engaged in extinguishing the traditional land rights of their native population, it is pressing to deepen our understanding of the oral tradition in which some of these claims are embedded. In west Seram, the knowledge associated with people's relation to origin and land is recalled in narratives. These narratives are not only the warrant of individual and group origins and the chronicle of all matters of renown in which a group takes pride; they also establish people's codes of social behavior and their relation to the environment. Alune narratives are the support of the 'history' (**sou**) of groups, the record of their rights, precedence and duties. They also are a living register of the intricate network of relations between these groups.

The people of Manusa are greatly concerned with the extension of their renown; the further their repute extends, the better. They believe this fame to be largely due to the unique position of their domain within the history of 'Wele Telu and beyond. Yet they are not interested in a universalistic approach to historiography. The flesh and bones of their history deals directly with their intimate notion of identity. It is located on the hills and streams which surround their settlement and mark their boundaries. It is a named and known ancestor who left his gigantic footprint still visible on a rock along the path they walk everyday. Here another one sat down shaping a rock formation and there the dog of a third one became petrified. These landmarks need not be explicated, everyone knows them, and their history may also act as a land title.

But this multi-faceted history is difficult to penetrate unless one is aware of the different meanings embedded in the name(s) of a site or associated with an ancestor, and mentioned seemingly casually. The legitimacy of a story, its veracity, is often supported by the use of rhetorical devices, folk etymology, metaphors or euphemisms (*isa sou*: 'to turn the language around'). Furthermore the narrator might test the knowledge of his listeners by leaving *sou i'ine* ('hints', 'clues') along the path of his account, and different versions are told to different audiences. The full extent of what may be contained in a place name or the fact that an ancestor or an event is mentioned in connection with it, is never given in full. Fragments accumulate often from different sources, given at different times in different circumstances, which slowly build a mental image in the subconscious of the listener rather than a single clearly delimited picture. Yet, for the narrator, what is described is a precise and generally crucial event which occurred at a given place and was performed by one or several notables of great renown in the tradition. Although the moment is not dated, the episode still stands as a precise point on a chronological succession of significant events in his historical tradition. This chronological framework is not provided by a succession of dates or by the genealogies of ruling dynasties but by a sequence of places. Historical events are linked to and mark these places.

In turn, other narratives (see following chapter) may be inserted at a given place/event within the sequence. This insertion validates the positions of a narrative in the chronology of places/events. The sequence of places implies a ranking in seniority and precedence in the succession of place/events. Thus the choice of the point of insertion of a narrative into the given sequence is crucial. It states the position of this narrative —and thus of the people to whom it belongs— within the order of precedence in the 'origin structure' of the domain.<sup>1</sup>

## **HISTORY, NARRATIVES AND NARRATORS**

### **Sou - History in the words spoken**

Alone regard each other as people of one language, one history. The word to express this idea of 'language/history' is *sou*. *Sou* means 'language', mode of speech, i.e. 'the power of speaking' and 'that which is spoken'.<sup>2</sup> To belong to the same language group is *sou esa* (*sou*

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<sup>1</sup>Fox J. 1995 pp.219-220.

<sup>2</sup>Dictionary of English language.

'language' *esa* 'one) to be of 'one language'. The Alune language is *sou mtoline*: the 'true language'. *Sou belata* was the language spoken by the Dutch (*Belanda*). *Sou libute* 'broadcast language' are tales and gossip; good news is *sou misete* 'language good'. *Sou mo'wai*, 'men's language', is called *lepa sou ela* to 'speak the big/meaningful language'.<sup>3</sup> This is done by *isa sou* 'turning the language around', using metaphors or euphemisms 'to conceal meaning and intention'.<sup>4</sup> Used in a ritual context, this 'meaningful language' enlivens the power of this historical time. Elders do not talk openly about ancestral topics but leave *sou i'ine*: 'hints', 'clues', 'signs', 'indications', or 'marks', for the listener to seek.

### Ma'alulua 'The ones who lead the way' - Narrators and verbal forms

If there is any account of the journey of the ancestors of Manusa in a formal or ritual language, it does not seem to be remembered or was not divulged to me, although I repeatedly inquired about it.<sup>5</sup> However, the succession of places and the events which occurred in each of them were freely disclosed by Pa Reane, the *tapele upui*, lord of the land of the domain. who claims as his ancestor the Great Lord Samai, 'the one who attributes', the founding ancestor of the domain. Some details of the story were also volunteered by four other main informants Pa Neyte, Pa Kapitan, Pa Matoke and the late Pa Souhali. Pa Neyte is the *nili ama*, or head of the *saniri (nili)*, the village council of elders.<sup>6</sup> Pa Kapitan is an elder from a ruling family of Manusa. Although not from a founding *nuru*, Pa Kapitan is renowned for being learned in *adat (atate)* and history because he holds the copybooks in which his father wrote down the sayings of the elders when the younger generation converted to Protestantism. Cheerful, humorous and very knowledgeable, Pa Matoke was the oldest man in Manusa. Having retired from the social undertakings of the village, he spent most of the time in his garden house. This, he felt, entitled him to speak freely, and he did. Pa Souhali, an elder of the neighboring domain of Riring, was respected in the area as one of the highest ranked regional representatives of the mountain at the *nili elae* of the Sapalewa

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<sup>3</sup>Ela: 'big', 'large', 'of stature and status', 'important', 'meaningful'.

<sup>4</sup>For example, *dulue hleu* 'to descend to the edge' is a euphemism for defecate (Florey Alunedic 94). Here too, I have combined with mine some of the data collected by M. Florey, who also investigated the semantic field of this important Alune word-concept.

<sup>5</sup>Rotinese do not express historical narratives in their ritual language either. 'Although characters in these narratives may, at times, recite ritual language poetry to each other, ritual language itself is considered an equally inappropriate vehicle for the expression of the narratives.' (Fox, J. 1979 pp.14-15).

<sup>6</sup>Formerly, the *nili ama* acted as representatives of their community at the Great Saniri, *Nili Ela'e*, the regional meetings of the Three Rivers.



Batai. The late Pa Souhali was a great narrator of the histories of his river **batai**.<sup>7</sup> He was renowned for his chanting of the **patloune** Nili Sabain Latale, the traditional chant commemorating the first assembly (**nili elae**) of the people after they left Nunusaku. **Patloune** are slow and grave chants sung by an elder man late at night, accompanied by hand clapping. As they recall the deeds of ancestors, and thus these ancestors themselves, **patloune** require a formal setting and the sharing of palm gin, betel-nut and tobacco with these ancestors. This form of chanting is usually restricted to a small audience.

Each elder presented me with a different aspect of the unwritten chronicle, the **ma'lulu**, which stands as the main historical narrative of the domain. **Lulue** means to narrate, to open up. **Ma'lulu lalane** ('opening up the path') is the breaking of the waters at childbirth; in verbal form **ma'lulu** means to 'lead the way', to 'open the path'. A chant leader or the narrator of historical narratives is called **ma'alulu**, 'one who open the path'. The metaphor of childbirth is not accidental. These narratives, and the essential knowledge they convey, were taught to the young men once they had been born to full manhood through initiation.<sup>8</sup> The body of the **hena** is linked to the Mother Mountain by the path of its topogeny like a child is connected to its mother's womb by the umbilical cord.<sup>9</sup>

While **tuni** belong to the genre of folk tales told for entertainment, for which 'truth' (**toline**) is not relevant, **ma'lulu** deal with deeds and events whose authenticity is not questioned. The time when the deeds recalled in **ma'lulu** occurred and the ancestors who performed them, are all situated at the dawn of mankind when Sky (**Lanite**) and Earth (**Tapele**) were not yet so clearly separated as they are now. The society was still at its early formation, ancestors had celestial links and their powers or actions surpassed human common ability. They gave to mankind fire, rice, tools and special knowledge or access to specific territories, waters, etc. Usually, the graves of these ancestors, who opened the land and shaped the society, are not to be found on earth.<sup>10</sup> Although this is one among many regional variants, the narrative telling how an ancestor of the **nuru** Nikite stole the first seedling of rice from the Sky is regarded as a **ma'lulu** of that **nuru**. On the other hand, although both recall the deeds of

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<sup>7</sup>Several people may be accredited to tell a story but some have more right than others. When hearing a narrative one should find out to whom it belongs, who tells it and in which context it is told. There is no such thing as a single 'Alune History' (Florey Alunedic 94 entry Mambelu).

<sup>8</sup>**Mo'wai tinai**: initiated man: **mo'wai**: 'man' **tinai**: 'true/real/sufficient'.

<sup>9</sup>The thread of fibre which adorns the machete, linking together handle ('source') and blade ('tip'), is a representation of the same metaphor. It is also used to express the relationship between the domains in position of Sariuwei and Saribubui in the federation (cf. Chapter Three - The Nili Ela Organisation).

<sup>10</sup>One ancestress is said to be buried on a hill but her grave is not marked and it is not a pilgrimage site.

tricksters, the story of Bia is yet another version of the tale of Abu Nawas,<sup>11</sup> and this kind of tale is called **tumi**. No one would seriously claim the ownership of a **tumi**, while a **ma'lulu** often justifies the claims or rights of a specific group which owns the prerogative of telling its history.

The **ma'lulu** telling the origin of Manusa belongs to the domain; therefore anyone in the **hena** may tell the events recalled in this narrative. However it belongs more specifically to the group of the lord of the land, **nuru** Souwey who claims Samai as its first ancestor. The importance of this claim is spelled out in the name of **nuru** Souwey: **sou**: 'language', 'history', 'words', **uwei** (**uwey**): 'origin', 'source', 'core'; in Ambonese Malay it is rendered by: *pohon sejarah*, the 'tree/trunk of history'.<sup>12</sup> Traditionally only a bearer of this name —and thus a representative of the source of the history of the domain— may legitimately claim the title of lord of the land in Manusa.

### Ma'lulu - The topogenies

De Vries, a military officer who spent two years in west Seram (1921-23), claimed that in contrast to their Wemale neighbors, the Alune had very little oral tradition.

*Men kent het verleden niet of zeer vaag ; geen overleveringen in omloop.*

One does not know the past, or very vaguely, (there is) no widespread transmission.

However, when I told an elder that someone had said this he encompassed in a gesture the hills around the village and replied that history could not be forgotten in Manusa because the ancestors had left their footprints (the 'memory of their steps': **lela la'wai**) on them.

To my pre-fieldwork frustration, most Dutch and German authors (except Tauern) did not produce many texts in local languages other than short songs and brief lexicons. However I was inclined to agree with De Vries when faced myself with the same problem. There is no such thing as a given *text* narrating the origin of the **hena**. Each time I asked about it I received an ordered succession of place names, listed in a genealogical mode, each characterised by noted topographical features: a hill and/or a water body and/or a tree. These, I was told, were the sites where the ancestors had stopped, held meetings and/or

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<sup>11</sup>Cf. Fox J., op. cit. 1979 p.16.

<sup>12</sup>The metaphor of the tree is associated with the idea of source and continuity and is used to represent the direction of its flow from trunk to branches and tips, a recurrent Austronesian feature.

divided their group on their way from the sacred mountain to the **hena**. Furthermore, the family units that came to the domain at or after its foundation, retraced the path of their arrival through a similar mode. Given in a minimalist style, removed from my expectation of poetic chants in ritual language, these lists hardly looked like narratives. However, time passed, and as I walked the surrounding hills, my knowledge about these topogenies grew and developed. Following Fox, I call topogeny, the *ordered succession of place names* that Alune people tell when recalling the path followed by their ancestors, *in relation to a particular starting point — a point of origin*.<sup>13</sup>

Topogenies have important functions. For example, one of the narratives collected by Jensen and Niggemeyer uses a topogenic mode to trace and validate the southern boundaries claimed by the **hena**.<sup>14</sup> The narrative describes how, walking toward the south coast, Samai passed through several places and named them according to the apparently small events which occurred at each of them. As he reached the lower hills, he met the people of two settlements near the coast. Having established with them a new network of exchange, Samai returned to Manusa and told his people to set up gardens and post houses on that path. It is not fortuitous that, once put on the map, this succession of place names draws the southeastern boundaries of the **hena** at that time. Furthermore, the two villages near the coast are the main exchange partners of the **hena**, while the gardens and post houses are its children villages. Thus here, the evidence of boundaries, the origin of satellite villages, and the relations with allied domains are all recorded in a single narrative.

It will become clear, while proceeding through the narrative of origin of the **hena**, that the path of the ancestors follows a determined sequence in space, which can be roughly traced on a map. Therefore, any narrative affixed to a given site (in space) is also set in an order of precedence in time within the journey itself. Who preceded and first distributed the land, who joined as follower, who merged and thus 'returned' (**leu**), are grounds for intense controversy and competition between groups. Indeed, to precedence is attached renown.<sup>15</sup> The following narrative provides an example of how the prevalent Alune category: **a mena** (the one 'ahead', the 'elder brother')/**a muli** (the one 'behind', the 'younger brother') operates to mark precedence. To be a **muli** ('those who came after', a 'younger brother' a 'last born' or a 'junior of the same generation') does not lessen the rights of a person or a group, as long as

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<sup>13</sup>Fox 1997b. p.91.

<sup>14</sup>Jensen, A.D.E. 1939 *Hainuwele: Volkserzählungen von der Molukken-Insel Ceram*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann (narrative n°80 p.133).

<sup>15</sup>See Pauwels S. 1990a pp.21-34.

in the eyes of who is a **mena** ('those who came first', an 'older brother', a 'first born' or a 'senior of the same generation') the relation remains public knowledge. However, precedence in that matter is the object of fierce competition and continual reassessment between individuals and groups. Indeed, who was once, or now is, a **mena**, is not trivial. Its acknowledgment in narratives, for example on a claim over land, sets this precedence in the tradition of the whole region.<sup>16</sup>

The corpus of narratives from the origin groups, which grows around the nucleus of the initial topogeny, is a living thing of which sections may die of obsolescence while others expand. Furthermore, the narrator decides which aspect he develops according to the context or the audience he faces. Thus, there is no such a thing as 'one' single, complete and definitive version. For example, the *soa* system (imposed around 1915) is sometimes included in the narrative of origin as an order instituted by the founding ancestor. When it is given, this account is inserted late in the chronology of the narrative, when the community had already established its ritual centre. The *soa* was introduced in order to incorporate the peripheral mountain societies within the sphere of the colonial government. However from the point of view of the narrator, it is the reverse which occurred since he attributes this (regional) 'change' to the founding ancestor at the centre of the social order of the domain. Three of the oldest men in the village knew that the *soa* was an external institution, but the younger men, among them this narrator, did not. The past informs the present but the present constantly remodels the past.

For a long time, I simply resisted the idea of having to freeze living material into *texts* bound in the two dimensions of a page, to transform the other's living reality into *mythos*. Having finally overcome this, I was still confronted with the problem of compilation, i.e. imposing a linear order on a polyvalent and elusive oral tradition. The method I follow hereafter is the least unsatisfactory one I have found. For the sake of clarity, I make a distinction which is not formulated but, I believe, is implicit in Manusa. I have compiled under the label 'the narrative of origin' the succession of meaningful sites acknowledged by everybody in Manusa as representing the history/topogeny of the foundation of the domain until the establishment of its ritual centre, Nuruitu. I keep in a separate chapter the topogenies of the units (segments of **nuru**) which joined around this ritual centre, distinguishing them from the topogeny recording the path opened by the founding ancestor and his followers. Some of these units have affixed their topogenies to 'the' narrative of origin of the **hena**. However

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<sup>16</sup>It is also both a delicate matter of inquiry and a favorite ground for gossip (**Sou libute** 'broadcast language').

while this path is fully acknowledged by everyone, the spacio-temporal point where some units have affixed their own topogenies is subject to political manipulation and therefore contestation. Indeed the sacred sites of the narrative of origin offer potential *loci* onto which new coming units can (try to) affix their own topogenies, not unlike the way they attach their House(s) onto the domain.

## PLACES, KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITY

An oral tradition(...) is more than a reflection on the past. It is an image of a people expressed and projected in time.<sup>17</sup>

There is often more than one natural feature on or near a given site, and the same place is at times referred to by the hill on which a tree stood, by the river which flows through it or by the lake nearby. Thus many of these places have more than one name. The narrator refers to one or the other depending on the event he recalls. However a complete list of the names of a site, mentioning all its meaningful features, is seldom uttered since it is something that may only be performed with the utmost respect. The full meaning of a name is only revealed in a ceremonial context because this naming recalls all the knowledge and power embedded in the place.

Although the process does not seem to be frequently practiced, if need be a site may be renamed to suit its new purpose or to commemorate the last event it witnessed. Thus, when the people of Manusa defeated those of Huku and forced them out, they renamed Huku's hamlet Lumbuini ('Abandoned House'). Later, when they made this site their main hamlet, they renamed it Mapone ('Guava Garden'). Nevertheless the elders of Manusa assured me that none of the sites on their ancestral path ever were, nor ever will be, renamed. Some just have several names.<sup>18</sup>

A basic topographical knowledge of the region is also indispensable to a deeper understanding of the topogeny. In Manusa, where genealogical memory seldom exceeds three generations, there is no genealogical support to the narrative of origin of the **hena**. This absence is not fortuitous but inherent to the system. Although there is a founding

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<sup>17</sup>Fox J. 1979 pp.10. In Manusa this image is also projected on the surrounding landscape.

<sup>18</sup>In Roti, 'the changing of names is a continuing process. (...) This means, in effect, that significant places tend to have more than one name, since old names are not to be forgotten.' (Fox 1979 p.19).

ancestor of the **hena**, this precursor is not traceable through a genealogy either. Instead it is the topogeny retracing the deeds of this ancestor to the foundation of the **hena** which acts as a device to legitimate the authenticity of both the **hena** and the ancestor. It positions the **hena** in the Three Rivers and gives precedence to the **nuru** of that ancestor as lord of the land.<sup>19</sup>

### **La'wai - The memory of places**

**La'wai** means 'trace', 'record', 'imprint', 'vestige' or 'memory'.<sup>20</sup> For example, a place marked to share food or where traces of it can be found, a table in a house or a halting point along a path, are **ma'ane la'wai** (**ma'ane** to 'eat' **la'wai** 'trace' 'record'). Similarly **ma'due la'wai** is a place to sit. **Ma'** is an instrumentaliser, **due** means to 'sit', to 'stay', or 'reside', and **la'wai** 'record' 'memory'. The place where a dignitary sits in an assembly, or the land on which a group resides both support 'memories of sitting' **ma'due la'wai**.<sup>21</sup> **Lela la'wai** is a 'footprint', i.e. the 'vestige', the 'print' (**la'wai**), left by a 'foot' (**lelale**). The places where ancestors left their 'footprints' (**lela la'wai**), hold their 'memory' and are subsequently infused with their knowledge. **La'wai** may also imply a notion of indefinite time, as in **la'wai sarei** 'sometime' (**la'wai** 'occasion' **sarei**: 'what' 'whenever') or to recall an 'event', a 'memory' of the past: **la'wai-sa**, 'on one occasion', 'once...' (**la'wai** 'occasion', **esa** 'one'). A bride who is returned in a differed exchange **leu ina la'wai** : she 'walks back the traces of an ancestress'.<sup>22</sup>

### **Ulateina - The Mother Mountain**

Alune units, **nuru**, **sanai** and domains (which are called **inama**, **anakota** or **hena**), root their 'history', **sou**, in the land. **Nuru** or **sanai** trace their origin to a place which is named and usually marked by a topographic feature, a lake, a hill or a tree. The people of Manusa follow the path of the ancestors of their domain through a succession of such named places

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<sup>19</sup>The House of the lord of the land of Manusa, who claims the originator (**uwei**) of the domain as the ancestor of their **nuru**, base their claim on their name: Souwey (**uwei** 'origin, source, continuity' of **sou** 'language history').

<sup>20</sup>I use some of Florey's definitions (Alunedic 94), with mine, in the following enquiry on the semantic field of this Alune word.

<sup>21</sup>In regional assemblies, the place where representatives 'sit' reflects the place where they 'reside', expressing the rank of their domain in the regional precedence.

<sup>22</sup>See Chapter Eight: **Leu ina la'wai**: to walk back the traces of an ancestress.

and occasionally visit them. However, Nunusaku, the giant and invisible banyan tree standing on Ulateina, the 'Mother Mountain', is not one of these places. Source of the Three Rivers which flow from the Ulateina, the sacred banyan extends its 'trunks' **batai** over the whole area. It is the initial and encompassing source of all the people of the region. Ulateina (**ulate**: 'mountain' **ina**: 'mother') is the foundation on which stands ('**ele'e**) Nunusaku and the land from where flow the Three Rivers. Sachse gives the following portrait of Ulateina:

The mountains of west Seram have in general the character of a middle range sequence. To give a description is extremely difficult since it does not occur in well defined mountain ranges such as in central Seram. Only a few tops are clearly marked while the rest forms an entangled complex of heavily forested ridges and hills, all around the same height. A first impression is that the region consists of one block in which erosion has carved out steep valleys and cañons, without any distinct direction.<sup>23</sup>

The Ulateina range is indeed an older land surface, which was raised, tilted, and subsequently deeply eroded. The region presents several hill tops separated by winding valleys but there is no higher central ridge, with streams radiating away from it, that clearly dominates. Instead, interwoven and captured drainages revolve around, forming an irregular and intricate pattern.<sup>24</sup> (See fig.4.1: West Seram middle range region). The area can not be identified any more, but in immemorable geological time the Three Rivers did probably, indeed, share a common source. In Alune narratives Ulateina, the whole middle range, the 'Mother Mountain,' is established as the wide site of this common source.

### 'Wele batai Telu - The Three River Trunks

**Nunusaku sama ite**  
**Sama ite 'Wele Telu**

Nunusaku has distributed us  
allotted us to the Three Rivers

Entering human time and space, the first people left Nunusaku, the sacred first abode of mankind and the symbolic centre of west Seram in Ulateina, the large middle range sequence. The invisible location of Nunusaku is secret and inaccessible to ordinary living

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<sup>23</sup>Sachse, 1922 op. cit., p.3 (free translation).

<sup>24</sup>There is neither a dominant mountain nor do the directions upstream/downstream necessarily correspond to an axis mountain/coast.

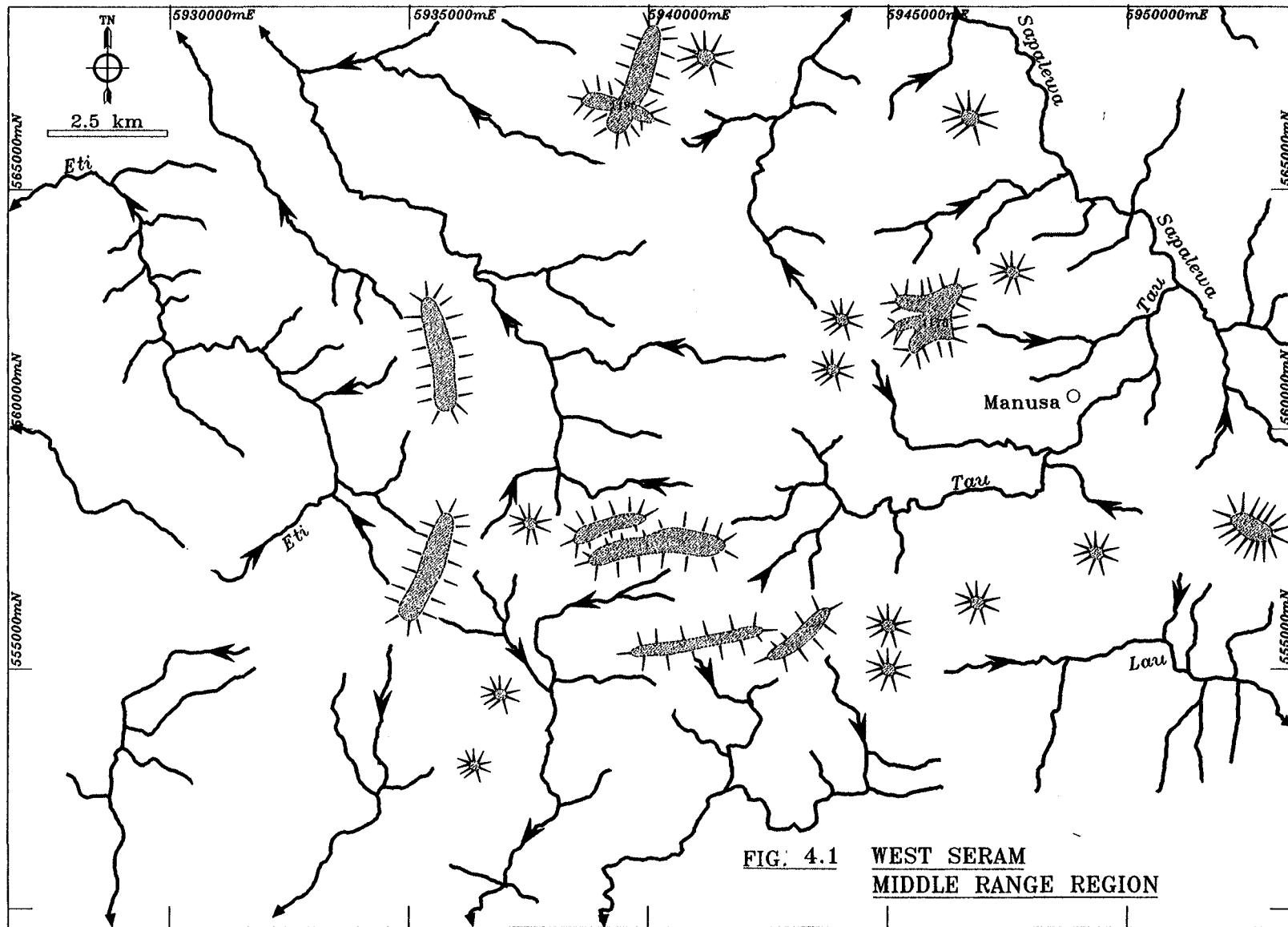


FIG. 4.1 WEST SERAM  
MIDDLE RANGE REGION





human beings. Spreading its branches to the Sky (**Lanite**) and its roots into the Earth (**Tapele**), Nunusaku is also the source of the three rivers, Eti, Tala and Sapalewa, which give the area its name: the Three Rivers, 'Wele Batai Telu'.<sup>25</sup> The people established in this area and those living on the southern islands of Ambon and Uliase, all link their origin to the Nunusaku, even the population of mixed origin. Most regard the Alune and Wemale mountain people of west Seram as the direct descendants and thus the custodians of the Nunusaku.<sup>26</sup>

The Alune population living in the valley of the Eti river in the south west belongs to the Eti **batai**.<sup>27</sup> In the south-east, several groups of Wemale and Alune people share the Tala **batai**. In the north the Alune living in the valley of the Sapalewa belong to the Sapalewa **batai**.<sup>28</sup> When large meetings (**nili ela**) were held, the Wemale of the north eastern Uli river **batai** joined with the Sapalewa **batai**. Manusa belonged to the **nili** of the Sapalewa **Batai**. The quotation at the beginning of this section was proclaimed at the meetings of the **nili ela** to declare the assembly opened. It has remained a symbol of regional unity.

### **Ma' saman uey - The name of the domain**

#### **Ma' saman uey (Masamanuwei)**

The place which is/the people who are at the origin/centre of the distribution/allotment.

People say that Samai, the founder of Masamanuwei, was among the first ancestors who walked through west Seram. This ancestor, now a mythical figure, is recalled for having performed, during a primeval assembly (**nili**), the distribution of heirlooms, names and sections of territory to the people over a large region. This deed gave him his name, Samai, 'the one who distributes/allots'. His renown also became associated with the domain he founded, which thus took the name: **Ma' saman uey**, 'The place which is/the people who are at the origin/centre of the distribution/allotment'.

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<sup>25</sup>We or 'wele: 'water', 'river', **le, ela**: 'big', 'large', 'great', **batai**: 'trunk' (of a felled tree), 'log', **telu**: 'three'.

<sup>26</sup>The concept of a central mountain of origin is also acknowledged in central Seram (under another name), but further east the coastal people, most of whom are Muslims, do not relate their origin to this sacred banyan.

<sup>27</sup>**Batai** a 'log', a 'trunk', also refers to the trunk of a felled tree on which the assembly sat when holding a meeting.

<sup>28</sup>See figure 3.1: Domains holding a duty in the Saniri of the Three Rivers circa 1903.

I was first told that Masamanuwei was the traditional name of the **hena**; then that it was Ma'a samane we; finally several elders agreed that the proper ancient spelling should be: Ma' saman uey. All these names were equally translated in Bahasa Indonesia by: *pusat pembagian*, the centre of partition, because the Great Lord Samai, the founding ancestor of the domain, divided all the people, distributing everything between them before sending them to populate the region. Because of his doing, Samai is also referred to as Latu Pati Ama Samane: the 'Lord Dignitary Father (who) Attributes'.

In the name Ma' saman uey, **ma'a** is an agentive, locative or genitive noun forming a prefix which is affixed to verbal roots.<sup>29</sup> Thus **ma'** conveys the triple idea of 'the people who', 'the place where', and 'the origin of'. **Sama** (in Bahasa Indonesia: *bagi*) means to 'share', 'divide', 'split up', 'attribute', or 'allot', **ne** is the nominative marker. The word **uey**, **wei** or **uwei** (usually translated in Bahasa Indonesia by: *pusat*: 'centre', 'navel'), expresses the concept I translate by 'origin', 'beginning', 'centre', 'source of continuity', and also 'junction point'. During the colonial era the Dutch administration named the domain the 'village complex of Manoesa Manoewé'.<sup>30</sup> Nowadays the domain and its official settlement is referred to as Manusa Samanuwey. In daily conversation one just says Manusa. Unless there is a specific reason, I also use this contraction.

### Outline of the topogeny

The narrative of origin of **hena** Manusa depicts its first ancestors as a group, performing a large ritual celebration and migrating away from a place of origin where the initial group had multiplied. They follow a path which leads them down and away from this undifferentiated source. The main regional differentiations are established (the 'Group of Nine' and the 'Group of Five', the Alune and the Wemale). When another assembly is held, the distribution of the people along the Three Rivers is proclaimed and the figure of a dignitary emerges. He is an **ana mulini**, a 'younger brother', a junior among his peers. He is named Samai, 'the one who distributes'. Along a succession of assemblies, the main allies of Manusa are depicted differentiating from the common central source and expanding to its periphery. Remaining close to this centre, Samai and his older brother, Latu Ela Mena, 'Big

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<sup>29</sup>**Ma'a** is frequent as an agentive noun for example: **ma'-subulu**, is **ma'a-subu-ulu**: 'one who uproots heads': a headhunter (source: Florey Alunedic 94).

<sup>30</sup>(Sachse 1922, p.248.) Various spellings are encountered in the literature: Masamanahuwe (Tauern 1918 map), Masa Manohue (Tauern 1918 p.158-9), Manoessamanoewe (de Vries 1927 map), Manusa Manuë (Jensen 1939 p.136), Manoesa Samanoei, etc.

Lord at the Front' (elder dignitary of the same generation'), try several places, but the group is still too small and the places not yet suitable. In an ultimate bifurcation, Samai remains with some **nuru** and establishes the ritual centre of Nuruitu, the 'Seven Nuru', while the 'elder brother' settles at the coast with the regalia. The precedence of the **nili** relationship is respected: younger brother in the mountains and elder brother at the coast. But the **hena** establishes this relationship with the **batai** of another river. As centres grow or decline the domains initiate alliances with new sources (previous alliances may or may not be severed in the process).

#### THE NARRATIVE OF ORIGIN: TOPOGENY OF MA' SAMANJUEY

The following presentation is very likely to represent only a few fragments of a much richer body of narratives. Part of it might also be erroneous. If the basic topogeny itself was widely known, not everyone agreed on my knowing too much about the details, and in my ignorance I was easy to delude.<sup>31</sup> I had to sort out a lot of bits and pieces to present here what seems reasonably reliable. However I have kept the contradictory renditions because their co-existence is an element inherent to the system. If, from our point of view, we are dealing with mythology, for the people of Manusa there is much more at stake. Besides being the historical validation of their territorial claims and the justification of their political position toward external and internal affairs, this topogeny supports the establishment of their macrocosmic order. It confirms Manusa as one source/centre through the deeds of its founding ancestor. It also positions the **hena** as custodian (not owner) of Nunusaku, the ultimate sacred centre of the region, which joins Tapele, the Earth, to Lanite, the Sky, the microcosm to the macrocosm.

I consider this narrative of origin as if it were made of two basic components. The first consist of intangible structural elements. It is the common origin story of all the members of the present community living in the **hena** (and beyond). It covers an immutable succession of named places where assemblies were held which, according to Manusa, shaped the history of the whole region. It is the topogeny told by and to everyone in Manusa, the permanent structural element of the narrative of origin. The other component comprises a number of elements, which may or may not be mentioned. Indeed, the topogeny is flexible enough to accept appendixes. These are the narratives about the gift of fire, the gift of edible

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<sup>31</sup>I also believe that what was disclosed to me could be disclosed here, probably only a 'tip' of a much larger tree.

vegetables and other useful plants, or about the historical changes within the **hena** history (for example the introduction of the *soa* system).

Another type of element that can also be inserted has to do with a social feature distinctive of this society: the sporadic arrival and/or departure of its members.<sup>32</sup> The topogeny allows in-coming units (segments of **nuru**) to shape their own historical narrative within the narrative of origin of the **hena**. As they incorporate themselves within the domain, some units insert their own narrative into its topogeny. They keep the topogeny alive and relevant for succeeding generations and changing contexts. These **nuru** narratives are examined in the following chapter.

The main narrative of origin and its appended narratives, examined in the present chapter, inform us about the group's *episteme* (knowledge) of origin and perception of the past. I do not attempt here a linear reconstruction of a single non-existent story.<sup>33</sup> Rather I examine the 'semantic field' of each site on the journey with its associated *mythèmes* (mythic themes)<sup>34</sup> and the narratives which are attached to it. I sum up the public knowledge about each place and the events which are related to it. Following the topogeny, place by place, I juxtapose the elements of knowledge about these sites, in search of Manusa's epistemology of origin.<sup>35</sup>

For clarity, I present the topogeny and its appended narratives in two sections. The first examines the idea of creation and the narratives about Nunusaku. The second section covers the journey from the foot of the sacred mountain to the bifurcation between the elder and younger brothers and the founding of the ritual centre of Manusa. The topogeny of this second section belongs to the founding **nuru** of the lord of the land but it also pertains to the common knowledge of the **hena**.

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<sup>32</sup>Successive policies have considerably hindered the opening of new territories and restrained mountain people's mobility in their own territory, but have not totally suppressed it.

<sup>33</sup>There are also versions for children, Christian interpretations and regional accounts. Different versions suppress or enhance different aspects.

<sup>34</sup>Lévi-Strauss.

<sup>35</sup>Fox J.1995a.

**Table 4.1 THE TOPOGENY OF MA'SAMAN UEY**

Topographic feature	Topogeny	Event/Outcome
Tree and Mountain, <i>axis mundi</i>	Nunusaku	Descent of people on earth.
Hill	Tasemana <b>bubui</b>	Celebration of and departure from the source.
Lake, Sapalewa spring, tree	Sobain <b>latale</b>	Bifurcation 9/5 - Differentiation Black/White - <b>Damale</b> vegetable & sago porridge.
Mountain and yellow river	<b>Nili</b> Mai at 'we Porola	Assembly - Bifurcation Alune/Wemale - Division by Samai of people along the 3 Rivers - Names and tools - 'Book' of history (regalia) - Departure of Waesamu and Kamarian.
Headwaters of a river	Japio Batai at 'we Samula	Bifurcation of the Wemale brothers of Manusa.
Mouth of a river, tree	<b>Nili</b> Ima at 'Uwela <b>matai</b>	Failed assembly (controversial localisation) - Fibre for weaving or mat making - Departure of Waesamu (second?) and Kamarian
Mouth of a river, abandoned house	<b>Nili</b> Hau at Lum.buini	Assembly - Take-over of Huku's land - Departure of Eti and Kaibobo.
Hill at the confluent of Sapalewa and the origin river of the <b>hena</b>	<b>Hena</b> Ma'saman.uey at Nuruitu	Establishment of the ritual centre of the domain - Bifurcation of eB/yB (source of history in the mountain, regalia at the coast).



## The Mountain and the Tree - Creation

Nunue ai 'welu,

Banyan, tree of testimony.

The narrative of the origin of mankind on the Nunusaku is concealed. It is kept distinct from the narratives of the partition and bifurcation of the people of Seram and from the foundation of **hena** Manusa. The tree of life and tree of knowledge, the sacred banyan, belongs to the order of the unspeakable. This was noted by all the previous observers, for example:

*Der Nunusaku ist für die West-Ceramesen das Symbol alles Heiligen. Bei allen Themen, über die sie nicht zu sprechen wünschen, pflegen sie zu sagen: (...) ' das stammt vom Nunusaku. Darüber dürfen wir nicht sprechen'.*

The Nunusaku is for the west Seramese the symbol of all that is sacred. For every topic they don't wish to talk about, they use to say: (...) 'this comes from the Nunusaku therefore we may not talk'.<sup>36</sup>

What is thus visible from the point of view of an outsider?

As a regional symbol, the Nunusaku appears painted, carved or printed on many official buildings or documents. The *waringin* is represented with straight pillar-like stems which form a main trunk rooted at the top of the Mother Mountain **Ulate inai**. Its three giant roots stretch down as the continually flowing Three Rivers.<sup>37</sup> Sending its aerial roots upward and downward it binds together Lanite, the Sky, and Tapele, the Earth. Lanite is the inverted world where dwell the ancestors, Tapele is the earth of mankind, and Nunusaku the source point where they are linked.<sup>38</sup>

Encompassing mountain and coasts, Nunusaku is one with the Three Rivers **batai** which flow from its trunk. Banyan and mountain, Nunusaku/Ulateina operates as the spiritual

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<sup>36</sup>Jensen 1948 p.227 (unless mentioned otherwise, all translations are mine).

<sup>37</sup>In some narratives these three roots are big snakes (utmost taboo for Alune but not for the Wemale). They either carve the land, opening the path for the three rivers, or are themselves the rivers. This identification of banyan roots with *nagas* or rivers is not unusual (Bosch F.D.K. 1960 p.128).

<sup>38</sup>Lanite and Tapele are first called as witnesses when oaths or evocations are pronounced.



centre of 'Wele Telu'.<sup>39</sup> It provides people coming from various origins with an ultimate *uweï*, a common 'source of continuity'. The domain of Manusa and its Wemale neighbours Japio share an antagonistic past and a common duty. Both domains claim to be 'sitting' (*due*) on a land on which 'stands' ('*ele'e*') Nunusaku.<sup>40</sup> Manusa regards it as its duty to watch over the lying (*ata*) body of this sacred land.<sup>41</sup> There is no organised pilgrimage to the domain, but occasionally someone who feels the need to do so, 'returns' (*leu*) from the distant periphery, to pay his respect and bring a request.

Inaccessible and invisible, Nunusaku is an indestructible symbol of unity for the composite population of the region.<sup>42</sup> The enigma which surrounds it allows every level of interpretation, beginning with its name. *Nunu* means 'banyan' but folk etymologies to explain the meaning of *saku* are multiple. According to Stresemann (op. cit., 1923 p.342) *saku* means to 'quarrel' and alludes to the bifurcation between Alune and Wemale. For the people of the northern coast, *saku* comes from *sako*: 'spear', for, they say, the three rivers sprang from the hole pierced by the spear of a spirit in the ground (Jensen, op. cit., 1948 p.226). For one of my early Alune informants, *saku* meant *sakue* the 'pouch' (a matrix, but not the placenta) out of which the first humans were born. Since *saku* also means to 'watch over', to 'guard', said this informant, the name Nunusaku is the contraction of *nunu nusa saku* 'the banyan watching over the island'. People of the mountains or people from the coast, Alune and Wemale, initiated and non-initiated, Christians or Muslim, each community proposes a variant on the theme, each has its authoritative narrator. What remains is that Nunusaku encompasses all of them within 'Wele Telu. Painted on the walls of administrative buildings or carved in their frontispiece and printed on official letterhead and calendars, Nunusaku is both symbol and witness of the long standing elaboration of a common regional identity.

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<sup>39</sup>There is a cycle of these forms, tree, mountain, pillar, and human body ever changing into each other... (Bosch F.D.K. op. cit. p.151) - Interchangeability between tree and mountain is also found elsewhere in Indonesia, particularly in Java (see: Christie A. 1978 p.145-46)

<sup>40</sup>One for the Alune the other for the Wemale.

<sup>41</sup>See in Chapter Six: The body of the land.

<sup>42</sup>This is a tree that lumber companies are not able to fell.

### *Nunusaku*

The first ancestors of mankind came down to earth from the Nunusaku tree.

This *mythème* is common knowledge. It is shared by the Alune of Manusa and the Wemale of Japio (Jensen op. cit., 1939 p.40-41). It is also widely recalled in the entire 'Wele Telu, the Patasiwa region and further south (Ambon and Lease). Variants of the *mythème* are also found in the Patalima region (Manusela). In Manusa, because of its intimacy with the very source of life and the abode of the dead, the version revealed to initiated adults ought not to be divulged.

Outsiders asking about it may be told half-jokingly that they can see the Nunusaku on the moon.<sup>43</sup> However as in every lore, there is a 'hint' (**sou i'ine**). The Nunusaku that one can see on the moon has two 'branches' (**sanai**), the large one is 'masculine' (**mo'wai**), the smaller one 'feminine' (**bina**). Having said this, the speaker remained silent. Nunusaku is unspeakable outside of ritual context. In this representation it is the principle or the support which unites a large male and a small female principle but the outsider is not told of their fecundating union.

When Alune children ask how the first people came to earth they are told that, like 'bats' (**salune**), the ancestors were hanging head down from the branches of the Nunusaku. 'Wet' (**mbosi**) and 'soft' (**mutale**), shrouded in an '**anune** 'cloth' (i.e. their placenta) people were like the bats which are also wrapped in their own **lapune** ('cloth', i.e. their wings). Finally they fell on the ground where they 'dried' (**mutule**) in the sun and became strong and 'hard' (**uru**). This is why, explained Yerinai the midwife, when the time has come, she tells the child to come head down like a bat ready to fly.<sup>44</sup> At birth, Alune babies are enveloped in a new '**anune**'.<sup>45</sup> Once babies have received the ritual protection which allows them to leave the house, their mothers walk them a little in the early morning sun to 'dry' (**mutule**) them and make them 'healthy' (**mutu**). Being 'wet' (**mbosi**) and 'soft' (**mutale**) is equated to being

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<sup>43</sup>Mankind around the planet sees on the moon various figures: the Chinese an old man named Yue Lao; the Samoan lady Sina and her child; the Scandinavian the children Hjuki and Bill; or animals as different as a hare, a toad, an eel or a tiger. (Guiley 1991).

<sup>44</sup>This is one of the formula of invocation to assist birth.

<sup>45</sup>Folk etymology relates the origin of the name Alune to the '**anune** (or **kanune**), the short skirt of sago fibres woven and worn by Alune women. Alune were identified as being weavers and Wemale as barkcloth makers.

'weak/feeble' (**amuta**) while being 'dry' (**mutule**) and 'strong/hard' ('**uru**) means being 'healthy' (**mutu**). The word 'dry' (**mutule**) and 'healthy' (**mutu**) are linked by a common root, as are the words 'soft' (**mutale**) and 'weak' (**amuta**). The cultural categories wet-soft-weak /dry-strong-healthy permeate the life of the individual from birth to death. As this narrative suggests, these categories are tough at an early age. The metaphor also uses the homophony to compare people (**Alune**) to 'bats' (**salune**). However, deriving one's ancestry from an emblem animal is unacceptable in a Christian world, and this, assured the elders, is just **nusu**, children's 'stories'.<sup>46</sup>

Talking about places recalls important deeds and those who performed them on these sites. These are sacred matters and speaking about them requires that the space where the words will be spoken be ritally opened and an offering shared with the ancestors. These matters are not really concealed, but their understanding requires a sum of knowledge which for the members of this society themselves is only slowly and unequally acquired. Thus, even though the elders have performed the ritual duties (**aria**: 'work') to open them, we, writer and reader, are now looking at the following ancestral path with outsiders' eyes only.

### *Tasemana Bubui*

Beating on their drums the tune of the Patasiwa, the ancestors sang the following **hatu** at Tasemana Bubui, a place also called Takwamena Siwa. After that, they left for Sobain Latale.

**Hee manusia hee. Hee manau'we. Hee Lanite uwe, 'ena sane ule rulu le'we nena samu manate.**<sup>47</sup>

This is (a fragment of?) an ancient ritual chant: **hatu**, an invocation. It was sung, said an elder, by men and woman dancing to the slow tune of drums and gongs on the **sisine**, the community's meeting platform'.<sup>48</sup> Elders do not provide a straight translation of this 'old'

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<sup>46</sup>With Christianisation the 'sources of continuity' have been renamed and Churches built on ritual land. Still, ancestral paths remain, written into the land, inexpressible.

<sup>47</sup>**Hee**: calling. *Manusia*: 'mankind' (not Alune). **manau'we**: 'request'. Lanite: 'Sky', **uwe**: 'origin', '**ena**: 'at/in/for', **sane** (?**esane**: 'unique'), **ule** (?**ulu**: the 'head'), **rulu**: 'descent', **le'we**: 'also/again', **nen**: (?**nenali**: 'celebration'), **samu** (**samule**?: the root which ferments the palm juice: drinks), **manate** (**manane**?: 'food').

<sup>48</sup>The onomatopoeic sounds (heeee, hoooo, haaaa) at the start of chants, invocations or prayers hold the power to summons the ancestors.

language. They relate to these **hatu** 'texts' through contextual interpretations. Pa Neyte (the **nili** elder), proposed the following rendition in Ambonese Malay:

*Dia turun di bawah Langit, jatuh dari pohon, pake sopan par dia pulang turun dulu latu patih.*

He (mankind) descends from the Sky, falls from the tree and with respect will return back, first the ruling lord.

**Nau**'we means to 'request', to 'send a message', to 'solicit', or to 'pray'. **Nau** is a form of divination in which healers solicit answers about illnesses and other disturbances of the natural order.<sup>49</sup> **Uwe** (**uwei**) is the concept of 'origin' and 'source of continuity' where a request can be solicited, Lanite is the Sky (the Heavens). **Rulu**, means to 'descend' (from a ladder for example). **Rulu bei** to 'derive from' describes a person's relationship to the Houses of that person's mother and mother's mother which are the **tauli uwei** 'progenitors of origin', (also the relationship of mankind toward the 'source' Sky). The end of the text can be interpreted as recalling a place where ancestors celebrated before departing.<sup>50</sup> The ritual/historical site of Tasemana Bubui (**tasemane**: 'chant', **bubui**: 'top', 'mountain'), also called Takwamena Siwa (**takwa**: 'once', **mena**: 'ahead' **siwa**: 'nine'), is half a day's walk eastward from Manusa.

The topogeny which follows is made up of six simple key events, four of which are a form of bifurcation (cf. table 4.1 The Topogeny of Ma'saman.uey). At Sobain Latale occurs the differentiation between the Patasiwa and the Patalima, and the further distinction of the Patasiwa into black Siwa and white Siwa. At Ulate Mai takes place the bifurcation between Alune and Wemale and the distribution/sharing by Samai of the people along the Three rivers. At 'we Hau the bifurcation between the two brothers occurs. At Nuruitu the founding ancestor establishes the ritual centre of the **hena**. As the journey proceeds, units leave the group, each takes its own path and settles at the periphery of Manusa. All of them are noteworthy allies, opponents or exchange partners of the **hena**.

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<sup>49</sup>The answer is interpreted in various manners. One of them is to break a small section of the house thatching (a witness of the household's life) and to measure its length against the palm of the hand using the knowledge associated with the meaning of numbers.

<sup>50</sup>The drums and gongs participated in people's assemblies and festivities. (The flutes were kept for the Kakehan ceremonies and are now reserved for the Church. Bamboo percussion is also used to communicate between distant places. Patasiwa, 'the People of Five' and Patasiwa, 'the People of Nine' use different 'beats': **tibal inai**).

This topogeny is the core of the narrative of Souwey, the **nuru** of the lord of the land.<sup>51</sup> However it is also the public knowledge about the **hena** and as such it belongs to everybody. It is narrated in the minimalist style which I reproduce here. This topogeny proclaims and justifies the position and role of the **hena** in the wider region: **Ma'saman.uey**, the 'source/origin of the distribution/partition'. It is the source that 'distributed' (**sama**) the heirlooms to groups as they departed (or came) to settle in the region.<sup>52</sup> The descendants of these groups now live at the periphery of Manusa.

As pointed out earlier, other narratives, potentially an unlimited number of them, can be appended to given sites along the topogeny. These places act as insertion points for these narratives as well as being the markers of an order of relative precedence in time and/or space. If the narrative belongs to the time when the **hena** already existed, for example the arrival of the family Neyte to the community, it is inserted in Nuruitu because there was no **hena** before this ritual centre was established. But the bifurcation of Japio, a narrative which belongs to the regional geopolitics, is inserted at 'we Samula near Mount Mai, the boundaries between Japio and Manusa, and corresponds to its spatial reference.

### **From lake Sobain to 'we Hau - Partition, distribution and bifurcation: the genesis of a social order**

The **hena** is surrounded by hills, rivers and forest. Thus it is hardly unanticipated that crests, rock formations, bodies of water and large trees play an important role as landmarks and symbols in this Austronesian society. Both ends of a river are often also meaningful sites. The spring is called '**wele ulu** ('water', 'head'), or '**wele bului** ('water', 'hair/capillaries') and the mouth '**wele matai** ('water', 'end', 'eye', **lalan matai** is the 'end/top' of a 'path').<sup>53</sup> The elders assured me that all the sites mentioned in the topogeny exist although I could not motivate any of them to take me for a 'grand tour'.<sup>54</sup> Most of these places are difficult to locate since they do not figure on existing maps.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore this is a symbolic and sacred

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<sup>51</sup>Elder in precedence, Souwey has progressively been losing its pre-eminence in the domain since 1925.

<sup>52</sup>**Sama** is best rendered by its Indonesian translation *bagi*: to 'share', 'distribute', 'allot', 'divide', or 'split up'. The ancestor Samai is the *orang pembagi*.

<sup>53</sup>Rivers, land and trees, are thought of as animated beings. The surface run off and tributaries of a river are its hair. Upstream/downstream (**nda/mlau**) is an axis of orientation.

<sup>54</sup>The sacred path represents several days walk along hunters' trails through the primary rain forest and is not accessible to outsiders.

<sup>55</sup>The region being of no particular interest for mineral resources there is no modern accurate map of it. Since the logging companies declined to allow me to have a look at theirs, the most detailed maps readily

geography whose objectivity has other criteria than those of map makers.<sup>56</sup> The journey, I believe, takes the form of a loop drawing the boundaries of Manusa with the south-western Eti Batai.<sup>57</sup> The informants who I thought would be the most reliable in that matter, the lord of the land and the **nili** elder, gave at times contradictory information about the position of the sites. Because the narrative belongs to the lord of the land, I favored his rendition. However I mention also the **nili** elder's version when it is contradictory because his land borders several sites. People visit some of these places individually, bringing small offerings when they are leaving for a long time, or returning after a safe absence, or if they have special requests. Some carry with them a little bottle of water from one of the sacred streams. It will heal, protect and make them successful in any projects they attempt away from the **hena**.

The initial dispersal and diversification starts by a bifurcation at Sobain Latale, the first place where people stopped.

#### *Siwa/Lima at Sobain Latale*

Walking away from the Nunusaku, the ancestors went in search of places to settle. On their path, they stopped on a flat place (**latale**) near a lake (**sobalinai**). They named it Sobain Latale. They conferred under a large **damale** tree.

Close to the origin site of the Wemale people of Waraloin, Sobain Latale is a lake said to be the spring of the Sapalewa river. The groups (including Manusa) who inhabit its drainage valley make up the Sapalewa **batai**, the (felled) trunk of the Sapalewa in the federation of the Three Rivers. Manusa's history starts at Sobain Latale, the spring of the sacred river which flows along the whole valley.

The full name of the site is **Sobain Latale Damale ai ela wei**. In a site name, the words often have several meanings; each relates to a narrative enshrined in the name of the place.

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available date from the 1940s (and bear the stamp 'declassified'). While I was in Manusa I used river or mountain names as land marks to localise the sites. However most of them do not appear on these maps (or the surveyor did not necessarily call them the same as the people do). Furthermore several rivers with identical names are drawn two or even three times at different places (on the same map).

<sup>56</sup>The figure 'The path of the ancestors' is only indicative of the topogeny.

<sup>57</sup>The south-eastern boundaries are drawn in another narrative (c.f.: op.cit. Jensen 1939 narrative n°80 p.133).

This is why these ancestral sites are *tanah sejarah*.<sup>58</sup> The following are some of the meanings associated with this site.

**Sobalinai**: a 'lair', a place where wild pigs bathe. This place is a hunting ground renowned for its bountifulness. Indeed, pigs and game are related to ancestors and to the tree spirits who dispense them.<sup>59</sup> **Lata** means to 'separate' and **latale** a 'flat area'. **Latal inai** is a 'small cup', the lid of a Chinese bowl, an heirloom object used in prestations, marriage or compensation and as a container for small offerings to the ancestors. Such offerings are made at these sites when one seeks support from eminent forebears. **Damale** is the tree called *ganemu* in Bahasa Indonesia (*Gnetum gnemon*); **ai** means 'tree', **ela** 'big/large/famous'; **ai uwei** is the 'trunk/core' of a tree. Another reason why the place received this name is because the people sitting under a majestic **damale** tree ate for the first time its leaves and acorns, a tasty vegetable available in the forest almost all year long and abundantly consumed by the Alune 'ever since'. Here is created the precedent and origin of that tree as a favorite edible plant in the whole region. At the main sites of the topogeny, meetings are held under a tree and people receive an edible or useful plant. Some of the names of these trees also refer to age groups in initiation.

They felled twice seven trunks (**batai**). The largest group sat down and occupied nine trunks. The other group sat on the five trunks which were left. From this sitting pattern they parted in the nine and five groups.

The word **batai** is also used to refer to an oblong segment or object which can be as large as a mountain ridge, as well as to a group of people like the inhabitants of the same river valley. When holding an assembly (**sanili** or **nili**), elders sat on trees ritually felled. Those more senior in rank (**a mena**: 'in the front', 'senior') sat near to the roots, those in a junior position (**mulini**: 'in the back', 'junior') closer to the branches. In a tree, the roots and trunk are regarded as the core, the most ancient part, the origin. It is the source of the sap and life which flows outward to the younger branches.<sup>60</sup> The metaphor is applied to express the precedence in rank (**a mena/a muli**) indicated by the seating order during **nili**.

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<sup>58</sup>**Tape sou** (?) Even knowledgeable elders seldom know them all because the corpus of folk etymology is continuously enriched by new referents.

<sup>59</sup>In narratives, hunted pigs fall in water and turn into useful trees or bring edible plants. For example, a narrative collected by Jensen in Waraloin Wemale (1939, n°19 p.70) tells how a pig carrying the first coconut fell in a pond where he died allowing the coconut to grow. In Manusa, a pig hunted by the ancestor of Matital turned into a sago tree, etc.

<sup>60</sup>Life, writes Bosch (op.cit., p.150), 'rises up from the root through the stem.'

There is controversy between the elders of Manusa over whether the assembly of Sobain Latale was, or was not, the first **nili**. Indeed, say some, the **nili** sessions are a custom of the Patasiwa. Could a **nili** take have taken place before the Patasiwa and Patalima were differentiated? The promoters of the idea say that this is precisely the origin of the institution.

They made a big feast, sacrificed pigs, shared the cuts, and ate together to tie up their decision. The Patalima went to the sunrise (east) and the Patasiwa to the sunset (west).

Here occurs the first bifurcation of the narrative: the partition of the whole island of Seram into moieties, the Patalima (**patane**: 'body' **lima**: 'five') and Patasiwa (**siwa**: 'nine').<sup>61</sup> Several narratives, both Alune and Wemale, mention this partition. For the Alune of at least Manusa, Kairatu and Watui (and probably others I am not aware of) it was established at Sobain Latale (**lata**: to 'separate'). This historical situation is attested as a division anterior to the arrival of the first Europeans.<sup>62</sup> In the central Moluccas the system is believed to be primarily linked with an allegiance to the northern sultanates, either Ternate (five) or Tidore (nine). How the bi-partition is expressed in the narrative is also significant. It is not that there is on one side nine groups and on the other five, rather the number of seats is equal and the number of the groups undifferentiated. What is said is that one side occupied nine trunks (**batai**) and the other five. This is not corroborated on the island by a division into nine and five domains, or river valleys either. As described by Jansen (op.cit.), in the central Moluccas, including Seram, the numbers five and nine epitomise totalities. Five represent a human body, nine is a fertile body i.e. the merging of a male and a female body (four plus four under one head).<sup>63</sup> From that perspective, Seram, the female entity **nusa ina** (mother island) is thus made of three parts the **pata siwa**, the **pata lima** and their totality: itself.

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<sup>61</sup>An Assistant Resident in Ambon, H.J. Jansen, translates most appropriately **pata** by 'the whole which is to be divided'. It is the meaning he gives also to the word **sama** (Indigenous classification systems in the Ambonese Moluccas. 1933, republished in 1977 in: *Structural Anthropology in the Netherlands*. Josselin de Jong P.E. de, [ed.] The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff- KITLV Translation Series: 17, pp.102). In Alune **sama** means: to 'divide', 'distribute', 'allot', the word from which Samai, the founding ancestor of Manusa, derives his name. However, what was 'divided' from a common source still remains part of its ever flowing source of continuity. Sachse (op. cit. 1907 p.60) translates **pata** by *stam*: 'tribe'; Jensen (op.cit., 1948 p.19) translates it by *Menschen*: 'the' people' or *Stämmen* 'tribes'.

<sup>62</sup>This socio cosmic division extends along the Indonesian archipelago in multiple variants, of which the Javanese *monca-pat* is only one. (Van Ossenbruggen, F.D.E., 1918 pp.32-60).

<sup>63</sup>In Manusa, this is the epitome of a harmonious marriage.



How is this relevant in Manusa? The difference between the Group of Five and the Group of Nine said the lord of the land, is that there are more animals on the five side and more men in the nine side. This, he said, is also because as soon as a man crosses the border to the east, he is transformed into a wild animal. There is a double understanding in this. Indeed it is believed that, passing into the Patalima territory where one has no allies, one becomes a potential prey for other head-hunting groups and may end up eaten (or so says the 'broadcast words'). However, there is also the idea of going so far away (**mlete nanu**) in the forest that one loses one's humanity and turns back into an animal (pig, deer), i.e. becomes prey. Far away in the forest, people, spirits, and animals are transformed into each other. This implies that men or women encountered there may be animals or spirits who have changed themselves to look like people. Multiple narratives account for these two way transformations.

At Sobain Latale was held a large feast where pigs were sacrificed and their meat shared to seal an agreement. When a pig is killed for a feast in Manusa it is incised in a specific manner. After its body hair has been singed, the animal's chest and abdomen are cut open from the neck through to the tail. The elder of the **nuru** of the assistant sacrificer slices out, in one go, the head, the throat and the oesophagus which are set apart. The head, throat, entrails and tail are given to prominent village elders. As the meat is roasted, the ancestors feed on its 'essence' or 'smoke' ('**weini**'). Small cuts were cured and stored over the hearth of the family shrine. When an agreement is reached or a relationship renewed between two parties, when a bridewealth is delivered for example, meat ought to be shared in a common meal, as the ancestors who witness the event request to be fed. Some **nili** assemblies did not reach an agreement, which is recalled by emphasising that no meat was shared. At the **nili** of Sobain Latale occurred the first diversification, the bifurcation of an initial core (the whole island) into two main branches, the people of Nine and the people of Five. This political situation was sealed, said the elders, with the meat sacrificed and shared by the various parties. This **nili** condenses centuries of regional history (Patalima/Patasiwa). As an episode in the topogeny it also acts as a further step to bring the world of the island to its present order.

When I asked how it happened that some Patasiwa were black and others white, the **nili** elder, Pa Lambert, produced the following narrative, which he situated in Sobain Latale. By doing this he integrated this new narrative early on within the chronology and topogeny of the narrative of origin:

At Sobain Latale, the **siwa** further divided into 'white' (**putile**) and 'black' (**metene**). There were two boats, a black and a white. The white Patasiwa boat went to the coast and

overseas taking away all the goods, tools and wealth. The black Patasiwa people stayed in the mountain where their boat petrified. They remained poor and ignorant, keeping only their simple tools.

Rocks, naturally shaped like petrified boats, are encountered all over the Moluccas. They often have a story associated with them. They are to be distinguished from stone *perahu* (boats) assembled by people in or nearby their villages as the metaphorical representation of various levels of their social organisation.<sup>64</sup> However the black boat of Manusa is neither of these. Although not as powerful as the Nunusaku, it is also a sacred symbol. The division between black and white *siwa* is given several explanations. The colour black is usually related to the tattoo of the members of the Kakehan initiation brotherhood. Most of the black tattooed *siwa* lived in the mountains.<sup>65</sup> They were distinguished from the white or not tattooed *siwa*, the non-initiated people living in the coastal regions of 'Wele Telu. Hence, this distinction between initiates and non-initiates demarcated the mountain from the coastal populations (although some individuals of the coast were initiated). However it is more than likely that the set of black and white categories meant more than tattooed/not tattooed, and referred also to the ancient creed and rituals of the brotherhood. The knowledge related to the Kakehan was never seriously documented before its prohibition in the 1920s, but it continues to be constantly re-created under multiple forms.<sup>66</sup> Another important event is associated with this first place where people halted after leaving the Nunusaku:

At lake Sobain Latale Upu Anine, sister of Samai, the founding ancestor of the **hena**, produced fire and showed mankind how to cook **pia**, 'sago porridge'.

**Upu Anine** is not usually recalled in the Topogeny.<sup>67</sup> However, when Pa Salmon explained how Anine made the first fire, boiling (**hlerue**) water to prepare sago porridge (**pia**) for the first time, he said that this occurred at Sobain Latale. Thus, on that same site, besides obtaining the **damale**, a planted tree which produces vegetables collected by women and

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<sup>64</sup>In the old village of Soya on Ambon island, piles of rocks are shaped as a *perahu*, each representing one of the *soa* groups. (Röder 1939, p.98). Multiple other examples are also found further south in the Moluccas.

<sup>65</sup>Different tattoos signaled the ranks of the initiated within the brotherhood.

<sup>66</sup>According to pa Kapitan, the last *raja* of Manusa, the black and white distinction occurred at 'we Saporola (the next site in the topogeny). The white Siwa left but 'no one knows where they went', he said, 'maybe to the Netherlands'. Pa Kapitan was educated at the coast and this refers to a coastal story saying that when the mountain people first saw the Dutch, they thought they were their returning 'white brothers'.

<sup>67</sup>**Upu**: 'forebear', 'predecessor', 'progenitor', 'ancestor', also term of reference for the male and female members of the second ascending and descending generations.

children almost all the year around; people also received their staple food: sago porridge, something which is cooked (boiled) by women. In the same site, they also sacrificed, roasted and 'cured' ('webu) all the game brought by the hunters. In the order of things, the meat (**utan misete**: 'foodstuff' 'good') from the forest is smoked and dried by men, and part is preserved for festive meals and ancestor offerings. The women boil sago, the staple food, and vegetables (**utan loini**: 'foodstuff' 'leaves') from their gardens or the forest.<sup>68</sup> Any celebration brings together the complementarity of the vegetable/sago/rice boiled by women and the meat cured/roasted by men. An elder explained that while men and women can improve the fertility of the land by cultivating it, the fecundity of the game is a matter controlled from the Sky over which mankind has no control.

The obtaining of sago porridge refers to the cooking process, not to the tree, which has separate stories of origin. There are several narratives recalling the origin of sago porridge in the region. Among the Alune, the best known is the story of a woman scraping off the dust accumulated on her body and boiling it in water producing the porridge for her grandchildren. Once extracted, the sago flour looks indeed like fine greyish sticky dust. Among the Sapalewa Alune, this woman is sometimes called Lai (**lai**: 'body dirt') as in Buria (Jensen, op. cit., 1939 n°17 p.69), or Tuni (**tuni**: 'tale') in Riring (Jensen ibid, n°18 p.69). In Manusa this gift is Anine's privilege.<sup>69</sup>

In the version of the topogeny transcribed by Jensen (ibid, n°82 p.136) Samai appears already at Sobain Latale, where he distributes between Alune and Wemale the heirlooms which he had brought from the Nunusaku.<sup>70</sup> There is no mention of the bifurcation between Patasiwa and Patalima. This suggests two possibilities. Firstly, the topogeny given to Jensen may be a parochial version, uniquely concerned with Manusa within the Alune/Wemale environment. Nowadays Manusa is again more aware and concerned with the wider region than it was at the time of regional depression when Jensen collected the narrative. Secondly, the heirloom objects were very powerful 'being-things' which did not fit

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<sup>68</sup>**Utan** means 'comestible', 'eatable' or 'food'. For example **utan banai** is a 'comestible mushroom'.

<sup>69</sup>The sago tree itself is sometimes personified as a woman spirit, sometimes as a transformed pig. The sago is also the metaphor for fecundity and reproduction for the Wemale matrilineal Houses while the Alune equivalent is the pumpkin vine.

<sup>70</sup>(...) *Dort war ein alter Mann, namens Samai, ihr Häuptlings. In Sabainglatali verteilte Samai alle Vermögensstücke, die er vom Nunusaku mitgebracht hatte, an die Wemale und Alune...* There was an old man called Samai, their leader. In Sabain latale, Samai shared between Wemale and Alune all the heirlooms that he had brought from the Nunusaku.

at all within the Christian faith that had been introduced in the mean time. Both circumstances combined might have consequently modified that version of the narrative.

*Alune/Wemale and Samai - nili Mai at 'we Porola*

Continuing on their path, the ancestors reached **Ulate** (mount) Mai and held a meeting (**nili**) at 'we Porola. There the Patasiwa Hitam obtained the tools. The Alune received the loom, while the stone to beat tapa cloth was allotted to the Wemale.

Here occurs the second bifurcation. Mount Mai is one of the landmarks east of Manusa, which designate the boundaries between Alune (Manusa) and Wemale (Japio).<sup>71</sup> Following a modern folk etymology, the name **mai** is supposed to come from the Dutch *mooi*: 'beautiful', because of the beauty of its location. According to Jensen (ibid p.136), the place was called *Moi* because it grew a large amount of a rattan called *moi* (unknown in Manusa). In Alune **mai** means 'here' but no one mentioned the possibility of this being the meaning of the name of the site. 'We Porola (or Saporola), said an elder is a yellowish (**porole**) stream flowing down from Mount Mai into the Sapalewa.

There, the elders gathered to hold the meeting which ratified the bifurcation of the two brother groups. I call Alune and Wemale 'brother' groups for two reasons. It is first justified by their close linguistic connection. As indicated by Collins, the Alune and Wemale languages are close branches of the same linguistic tree which he calls Nunusaku.<sup>72</sup> My second argument is cultural. It is based on discussions with informants. Both groups are insiders and regard it as their common duty to watch over Nunusaku, the Wemale in the direction of the sunrise, the Alune in the sunset. This 'brotherhood' of the groups is apparent in their origin groups (**nuru**) too. A single **nuru** may have both Alune and Wemale branches attached to its same 'core' (**nuruwei**).<sup>73</sup> I would argue also that the differences in their kinship systems (Wemale following genitrix lines of derivations and Alune genitor's ones), exhibit a manifest complementarity. The prohibition of marriage between the two groups,

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<sup>71</sup>People said that during the RMS time the Indonesian army renamed it Gunung Seribu Duapuluh 'Mount 1020'. However, this precise altitude figure appears nowhere on the maps I have. Yet, the range of Mount Mai can be seen from Manusa.

<sup>72</sup>The phonological differences which were supposed to distinguish Wemale sharply from Alune (...) are not so 'sharp' after all (...) the earliest stage of Wemale must have closely resembled Alune.' (Collins, J. T. 1980 pp.92-93, also developed in pp.54,-55 and 80-93).

<sup>73</sup>This is the case of Nia'we, one of the founding **nuru** of Manusa.

which maintains their differences, also recalls a brother relationship.<sup>74</sup> I have not heard these differences and prohibitions attested in narratives, nor is the idea of an elder/younger or male/female precedence expressed between Alune and Wemale. What they say is:

**Nunusaku sama ite, sama ite 'Wele Telu.**

Nunusaku has distributed us (Alune and Wemale), allotted us the Three Rivers.

Although they vary slightly on how and where it happened, the *mythème* of receiving the 'loom' (**lopu**) and the 'pounding stone' (**lia**) is common to Alune and Wemale.<sup>75</sup> Making use of one or the other was an apparent label of distinction between the two groups. Even nowadays, when both loom and tapa stone have become archaic, they remain the first markers that everyone recalls when referring to the difference between Alune and Wemale. The Alune women wove their '**anune (kanune)** 'skirt'. The Wemale men and women wore bark 'loincloths' made with beating stones. In Alune these are called '**wani (kwani or la'wani)** for the men and **harene** for the women. The Alune also beat bark, and the men also wore the '**wani**. A few elderly people still own pounding stones.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>In (exceptional) cases of marriage, it is the residency of the couple which finally determines the *de-facto* affiliation of their children to one or the other group. When a Manusa man married in a Wemale village he took residence at his wife's house. Their children are Wemale, except one of them who was returned to Manusa (Wemale have no bridewealth but return one child or more to the man's House). Inversely, the children of Wemale migrants who were incorporated in Manusa three generations ago, follow Alune tradition (**atate**).

<sup>75</sup>The following is a fragment of a narrative collected by Ad.E. Jensen (*ibid* pp.41-42) in Riring, an Alune village a 1/2 day walk from Manusa (the notes in brackets are mine). "Tuwale (the sun personified) assembled the people and took from a small container a stone which was going to become the beating stone. He turned to the women and said: "I will throw this stone and the one who will catch it will become your leader". A woman named Liasala (**lia**: beating stone, **sale**: to lean against) found the stone. The other women fought to take it from her. She threw herself on the ground with the stone under her so that the other women (mingled) in the scum could not see it. Here she lay holding on (leaning against the stone she crawled away with it). Only one woman, Wasilaine noticed it and followed her. However, she could not reach her because the path was steep, and thus she cried. As Liasala had reached the summit of the mountain she joined Tuwale and Mabita (his companion). Wasilaine followed her, crying. She threw herself at the feet of Tuwale begging (to receive) also a prerogative. Thus he gave her the loom with which the Alune women weave their skirts. (...) Therefore the Alune women wear a woven skirt and the Wemale women a loincloth'.

<sup>76</sup>Men collected hard pebbles in river beds and cooked them in bamboo with **damale** (*Gnetum gnemon*) leaves to blacken and strengthen them. One side was carved with large dents, the other with narrow ones. Men beat the bark of the **ai lumute**, first with the large dents and then with the thin ones to produce the different texture of the loincloths.

**Lopu** is the Alune word for both the 'loom' and the wooden 'blade' used by the weaver to tighten the weft yarns on top of each other. It also means the 'adze', the tool that Alune (and Wemale) men use to extract the pulp of sago, their staple food. Thus in Alune the word **lopu** means both 'loom', the tool of the women and 'adze', the tool of the men. Both the loom and the adze are essential implements for tasks which are clearly gendered in this culture: weaving for the women and sago beating for the men. Yet, whatever differences the main tools seem to signify, they bear the same name. The parallelism between these activities is further enhanced by the use of a similar term: the men 'pound' (**bita**) the sago's fibrous inner bark with their 'adze' (**lopu**) while the women 'weave' (**bita**) i.e. beat down the fibre of its bark with their wooden 'blade' (**lopu**). For the Alune, these two activities, based on the same vital substance: sago, one performed by men in the forest and the other by women in the house, are regarded as very similar in essence.

At **nili** Mai, the ancestors feasted for seven days, everything being by nine or its multiples. Samai divided the meat, and the groups were established around these cuts. From this he took the name Upu Samai, the ancestor who shared.

It is near **ulate** Mai, the ridge which marks the border of the territory of the **hena** with the Wemale people of Japio Batai, that the narrative of Manusa names, for the first time, its founding ancestor: Upu Samai. **Sama** or **sama'e** means to 'share', 'allot', 'distribute' or 'divide'. Samai was the brother (but also possibly the husband, elders do not agree on that point) of Anine, the woman who produced the fire and sago porridge at lake Sobain Latale.<sup>77</sup> Samai, the founder of the **hena**, is also the **tuane** of the sacred Tau river and the people of Manusa (and children villages) are the **upu'u**, the grandchildren of the river's **tuane**.

During the assembly (**nili**) at 'we Porola, everything was by nine because all the people were Patasiwa (the Lima had already left to the east). Every **nili**, said the elders, was the occasion

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<sup>77</sup>All the elders underline that these ancestors were not ordinary humans, who were doing the things that common people can not do. Their debate about the existence or not of an incestuous alliance is to be viewed from several aspects. A pair of ancestral brother and sister being at the origin of a clan is a mythological theme encountered elsewhere in the region. However, the pressure of modernisation and Christianity renders this mythème very improper. With or without Anine as a wife, it is said that Samai did not have children nor does he have a grave site. On the contrary Anine is said to have had thirty 'children' (sometimes referred to as dogs) and to be buried on the land of Lumatital. The alliance system prohibits the marriage between people who call each other brother/sister. Another hypothesis would be that a female unit (the bride receiving side is called '**wete bina**: 'female child') claimed to have first bring the fire or processed porridge. In a narrative collected by Jensen in Rumbatu, Anine is referred as a 'woman with a beard' with many children, i.e. the leader of a female unit? (ibid 1939 n°79 p.132).

of large festivities, in which the decisions were validated by distributing and eating meat together (under ancestral substantiation).<sup>78</sup> The mythical origin of some **nuru** names is related to the cuts of sacrificed animals which were attributed to a group, generally at a time of bifurcation. This is confirmed by Jensen among the Alune and is also found among the Wemale. Indeed, important events were marked by a sacrifice and sealed by a meal. One of these important events was the fission of a group. Those departing either kept the name of their **nuru** of origin or took on a new branch name. A narrative was elaborated around the event to commemorate it. The following excerpt was collected by Jensen, (ibid n°24 p.73) among the Tala Alune of Watui:

*Dort Schlateten die Patasiwa neun Schweine. Sie zerlegten sie in viele Teile un verteilten die Fleischstücke unter die anwesenden Menschen. Davon haben di Familien un die Dörfer ihre Namen bekommen, die sie seitdem behalten haben.*

There the Patasiwa killed nine pigs. They cut them in numerous shares and distributed them to the people attending. From this the families and villages received the names they still bear nowadays.

To distribute the meat is to divide/order the people (*bagi daging, bagi manusia*). In this Wemale narrative given to Jensen, the sharing takes place at the first site (Sobain Latale) before the partition between Alune and Wemale, and no ancestor is named. The distribution is not performed by a named dignitary but by the Patasiwa as a group (thus not by the Patalima). Watui does not claim a share in this action for itself, and the ancestor who performed it is not named because the narrative does not belong to them. On the contrary, the narrative of Manusa attributes the allotment of the cut, which gives the Patasiwa their names, to its founding ancestor, claiming the deed as a prerogative of the **hena**.

Samai sent the groups along the valley of the Three Rivers. Among those who left were the ancestors of the people of Waesamu and Kamarian.

Samai remains in the centre with his group while the others groups expand along three river valleys (not named). The narrative collected by Jensen in Manusa (1939, n°82 p.136), names these three rivers: the Sapalewa, the Tala and the Uli (not the Eti).<sup>79</sup> Indeed, the narrative, in ordering first the world around the **hena**, covers a geographical area nearer to Manusa with which the domain has closer contact. The Uli river is to the east of the

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<sup>78</sup>This is confirmed by Dutch reports complaining of the waste of time and resources each time a large **nili** was held in 'Wele Telu.

<sup>79</sup>Except for the lord of the land and a few knowledgeable elders, most people in Manusa believe, like outsiders, that these three rivers are those of the federation.

Sapalewa and belonged to the same **nili ela batai**, large saniri trunk. Manusa called these Wemale people of the Uwin mountains the Uli Batai (most of these villages are now on the north coast of central Seram). Manusa belongs to the Sapalewa Batai. The Tala river people are their south-eastern neighbours (mostly Wemale) and the abode of the former powerful *raja* of Sahulau and Sumite. Samai operates the initial division of the mountain Siwa sending people along the Sapalewa (Alune), the Tala (Alune and Wemale), and the Uli (Wemale).<sup>80</sup> Another bifurcation occurs at the following assembly when Samai's elder Brother goes to Eti.

Waesamu and Kamarian are two settlements on the south coast in between the Eti and Tala rivers. They are mainly inhabited by non-Alune speakers. Waesamu now comprises about 650 inhabitants (Seramese, Harianese and Saparuanese). Kamarian is a large and mixed community of about 5,450 people. Kamarian, said an elder, did not get any meat during the sharing. Thus, Samai asked for a little bit from every family to give to Kamarian. Consequently, Kamarian is made up of a lot of people from everywhere ('bits' of every family). This is why, added the elder, Kamarian's ancient name is Samaliani: Samai passed over it.<sup>81</sup> Acknowledging a common origin did not stop Manusa from repeatedly taking heads and waging war on Kamarian at the end of the 19th century. However, they also made a **pela** treaty when both needed to fight the Wemale people of Hunitetu, sharing equally the trophy heads they captured. Naming these large and distant coastal settlements in the narrative may represent a claim of precedence over them, thus embracing as well the whole southern coastal area.<sup>82</sup>

During the assembly near Mount Mai people also recorded their history. Lauteti Latuelamena, the elder brother of Samai, was entrusted with the copper and gold regalia which told the history from the time of origin. The **nuru** of Samai took the name, Souwey.

As this stage of the journey, as the group enters within the border of its domain, the narrative establishes the precedence of the leader, Latuelamena (**latu**: lord, dignitary, **ela**

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<sup>80</sup>Eti was a vassal of Ternate.

<sup>81</sup>Another folk etymology of that name is that they received centipedes (**liane**) as their share (**sama**) since there was no meat left.

<sup>82</sup>According to a former *raja* of Manusa, the people of Waesamu and Kamarian left from the following meeting place called Ima.



great, **mena** in the front/elder) also called Latuanamena, 'lord first born'.<sup>83</sup> He is the designated elder in rank over Samai, the Sharer (and future founding lord of the land of the **hena**) who is allocated the position of 'younger brother' (**ana mulini**). In Alune, the category of relative birth order, first born (**mena**)/last born (**mulu**) is an operator used to create an order of precedence in time, space or within social positioning. However there is more to it. The elder is the one who rules, but he is also the one who goes away while the younger brother stays (in the **hena**, with his **nuru**), like the last and smallest banana stays on the tree. This episode prepares the denouement that will occur at **nili** Hau.

The history of origin (i.e. the sacred secret story of Nunusaku) is believed to be contained within a precious regalia. It was entrusted to the Elder Brother but it is the Younger Brother's **nuru**, those who stayed, who took the name Souwey (**wei**: source/origin **sou**: language/history). Thus although the **nuru** of the lord of the land of the domain is 'the source of the history' (and is called so), it does not possess the regalia, i.e. it is not its repository. Similarly, although Latuelamena's group (Eti coastal people) is the caretaker of the regalia embodying the history, it is not the source of it. This history, said an elder, was told to the young men at the time of their initiation in the Kakehan. This is to say that it belongs to neither small nor large group, elder or younger, but to the brotherhood of all 'real men' (**mo'wai tinai**) of the entire Three Rivers.<sup>84</sup>

The group of Samai remained in the central region of the mother mountains (Ulate Inai). As they walked, the nine **nuru** tried several places. They wanted to establish their own **hena** but it was not possible for they were not enough people yet.

The narrative says that although the group had a name and a leader, this was not enough to constitute themselves as a society. Indeed, they had not the right number and they had not found their land. The 'right number' had to become seven **nuru** and their land had to have a ritual centre.

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<sup>83</sup>**Latu**: 'lord', honorary title, **ela**: 'great', 'large', 'big', 'important', **mena**: 'first', 'in front', 'ahead', 'first born', 'oldest', 'primogenitor', 'forefather', - **a'mena**: to be 'ahead of', to 'precede'. The expression is also used to start telling a narrative: 'first', 'in the beginning' (...)

<sup>84</sup>Most narratives assembled by Jensen about the creation were collected in the Wemale Uwin region. However *mythèmes* of the Sapalewa Alune (some common to Alune and Wemale) can also be found within Jensen's impressive compilation. Among them the Indian and Austronesian idea that sky and earth once were closer to each other and that the sky had to be pushed away to allow the light to come in (thus creating three spheres: the earth, the sky and the space in between). Another known theme concerned water, brought (from inside the earth?) by the snakes or *nagas* which carved the three river beds as they crawled on the surface of the earth. Others concern the first appearance of edible plants, sago rice and tubers.

### *Japio at 'we Samula*

The ancestors kept walking trying several places. First they went down from the headwaters of 'we Samula and it is there that the ancestors of the Wemale people of Japio batai left.

Although 'we Samula itself does not figure on maps, there is a mountain ridge called Ulate Samule on one map and Sawela on another. It is located at the east of the old Japio village where the elders said the stream flows. The differentiation between Alune and Wemale had already taken place at Ulate Mai. Here occurred the bifurcation between the Alune of Manusa and the Wemale of Japio. The two domains, Japio **batai** and **hena** Manusa, have a common boundary in the Ulate Inai (the mother Mountain). Besides sharing the symbolic custody of the Nunusaku, they recall a common history, rich in heroic deeds, incursions into each other's territory, head-hunting, murders, warfare and migrations. As the pacification was imposed on the region by the Dutch, the two domains sealed, in 1912, a treaty of **pela** blood brotherhood. This type of **pela** relationship, which is renewed at regular intervals, transforms the partners into blood brothers. Strong prohibitions and prescriptions are associated with that status.

### *Nili Ima at 'Uwela matai*

At the mouth of 'we 'Uwela they held another **nili** but it was not successful. Waesamu and Kairatu left for the south coast.

Jensen mentions Ima as a meeting place named '*from a tree*' (ibid, 1939 p.136). It may be the **ai ima** 'we the 'pandanus', a large bush whose leaves are used to weave mats (**niane**). An elder told me that **ai'ima** is *segenis kayu titi, sagu molat*. This is the palm tree which produces the 'fibre' (**baune**) used to weave 'anune, the women's 'skirts'. If this is correct then the Alune, having obtained the loom at the former **nili**, received here the thread. Whether **ai ima** stands for the pandanus or the *sagu molat* or both of them, the plant which grew at 'Uwela Matai is another essential item received by the people of Manusa during their journey.

The lord of the land said that the elders sat on an **ima'**we under a *kasuari* tree, which is one of the trees used during initiation ceremonies and from which an age group takes its name.<sup>85</sup> He also said that 'we 'Uwela was close to Lumoli and that the spring of 'we Tau rises near Ima. On the maps, the Tau rises in the range called Sisi Bubui, the boundaries between Manusa, Lohia Tala and Riring. 'We Tau is the 'wele wei (*air pertama*), the 'water of origin' of **hena** Manusa. The Tau river is also called **mata 'weli inate** (*air mata ibu*) the 'mother spring'. In a song in Bahasa Indonesia the river is referred to as '*kali Tau sumber idupku*', 'Tau river, the source of my life'.<sup>86</sup> The river is in the custody of the **nuru** of the lord of the land, representative of Upu Samai, the founding ancestor of the **hena**. Although it is potentially dangerous, this water has also healing, protecting and redeeming properties which can be dispensed by the elders of this **nuru**.<sup>87</sup>

However, according to the saniri elder the place was near Metu Siwa: the Nine Doors. This is one of the *tanah sejarah* of Manusa. It takes its name from a natural rock formation in the Sapalewa which has the form of doors and their frames. Close to the land of this elder's **nuru**, this is one of the places where people go with special requests. Thus it is not clear whether the 'Uwela river is running into the Sapalewa or into the Tau river. The contradiction between the lord of the land and the saniri elder reflects their competition for prestige and power. However, no one mentioned anything peculiar about this site except that this **nili** was too early. Its location at the south western boundary of the **hena** with two of its neighbouring domains and near the spring of the mother river of the **hena** does provide a first justification for its presence in the topogeny.

At the mouth of 'we 'Uwela they held another **nili**, said the elders, but this one was not successful either. The groups which were to become the large settlements of Waesamu and Kairatu, (now on the south coast), departed from Ima.<sup>88</sup> These are the two main towns

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<sup>85</sup>However, it is impossible to sit on either a *sago molat* or a pandanus for they have no trunk and both are made of long, hard and spiky leaves. Thus either it was another of his jokes or he might have meant a pandanus mat.

<sup>86</sup>The Tau river is the residence of eels and other ancestors who appear between twilight and dawn. It is surrounded with prohibitions for women to cross, bathe or wash in its water when menstruating because this is a living being (*karena itu manusia*). However since the village has converted to Christianity the lord of the land said that he has sent the ancestors far away and that they are now dwelling in 'we Puti and 'we 'Uwela.

<sup>87</sup>Formerly this transaction involved the gift of female objects (textiles or jewels) to the **nuru** of the lord of the land (which is in a female position).

<sup>88</sup>Earlier in the narrative Waesamu left from Mai. It is either a confusion or possibly another group (Hatusua?)

where the mountain people who live south of the divide (Wemale and Alune, including Manusa) go to the market, find jobs and send their children to secondary school. Thus, here again Manusa is claiming a form of relative precedence over these important modern regional centres. Waesamu's ancient duty in the confederation was to act as **hatala ela** ('mediator') between the **nili** Eti and Sapalewa while Kairatu was the **sari bubui** ('the top/blade of the machete') an executive magistrate in the **nili** of the Tala Batai.<sup>89</sup> When it was still situated on Mount Tupono (about thirty km inland from where it is now), Alatu (Kairatu) was the 'door' (**pintu**) between the mountain settlements and the southern coast. Waesamu and Kairatu were two rich, influential and rather large hill settlements when the Dutch walked in for the first time in the middle of the nineteenth century, involuntarily bringing smallpox.<sup>90</sup>

They tried several places before they finally reached 'we Hau.

It does not seem relevant to the elders of Manusa to mention more sites on the path of their ancestors than those I quote here. They just say: they kept walking, they looked for a place, mentioning only the sites where something occurred which they regard either as an essential event or as one which may be revealed.<sup>91</sup> The only person who depicted with precision the ancestors' journey was Pa Salmon, the regional **nili** elder. However if Pa Salmon was also from Alune Sapalewa, he was from the nearby domain of Riring not from Manusa. The topogeny he gave makes a large loop going down to the south coast via the Tala Batai region and returns to the mountain via the west and north coasts. In fact it encompasses all the 'Wele Telu including Huamual. As in other topogenies, it involves a succession of sites through which people passed, built a shelter or held assemblies. However, all these meetings failed to succeed. One of them fell short because there was no meat to seal the agreement. At Tilena Kabalesi, (**tilene** is a kind of 'palm tree', Kabalesi, a leader's name, and **lesi** means 'strong') they drafted the laws but they were not entitled to pass them, so this assembly failed too. Finally they reached again the Sapalewa Batai. There, they assembled at Lumbuini near Nuniali, the **inama** (**ina ama**: 'mother father') which held the right to decide upon the laws (*putusan hukum*), i.e. the appropriate site to gather for holding a successful **nili** Hau. Although the version of Pa Salmon returns also to **nili** Hau, it is a regional topogeny, a narrative which this elder had to know because of the function he held in the regional

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<sup>89</sup>This again positions Manusa at the centre of the interaction between the Three Rivers.

<sup>90</sup>*Vers. Ndl. Bezit. & Kol* reports 1857-59.

<sup>91</sup>To Jensen (1939, p.136) they did not mention 'we Samula nor the bifurcation between Japio and Manusa.

council. While it is not the topogeny of Manusa, it shows that **nili** Hau is one of the sites which is indispensable to the narrative at a regional level.

### *Nili Hau at Lum.buini*

The group reached 'we Tala and from there walked to Hau matai. There, they held another assembly at the place called Lum.buini.

This 'we Tala, said an elder, is a mountain rivulet, not the southern large river of the Federation. It is possibly a stream near Mount Tala Bubui, a boundary with Lohia Tala. However, there are several 'we Tala on the maps. On the other hand, 'we Hau (or Haw as a coastal Alune writes it) is nowhere to be found on these maps.<sup>92</sup> People said the Hau river is near Nuniali, the **inama** representative of the Sapalewa mountain people at the coast. Nuniali was paired with Lisabata, the **inama** Hau Inai ('Mother Sow'), as leading **inama** of the Sapalewa river's **nili**. Both were under the nominal authority of the Ternatan Muslim ruler of Luhu. The logic guiding the choice of Hau for this important last **nili** is manifest. The **inama** Hau Inai was the most powerful regional authority in the large assembly (**niliela**) of the Three rivers. It was the **inama** that ratified all the important decisions about territorial and ruling matters in the Sapalewa Batai. A decision endorsed by the assembly was usually accepted by the whole 'Wele Telu. Indeed in 1992, the village head, son of a **nili** elder, said that the assembly at 'we Hau had been sanctioned by the **niliela** of 'Wele Telu. This is to say that whatever had occurred or was decided at Lum.Buini had been approved and validated by the members of the council of the Three Rivers.

Thus there is an ambiguity about the location of Lum.buini and about the decision that was ratified. Two histories are conveniently interwoven here, which are never told together. Lum.buini means **luma**: 'house' **buini**: 'empty', 'deserted', 'abandoned'. In a region where people build temporary buildings and easily move their residence, one may expect to find more than one site named 'abandoned house'. Indeed, there might be a site at 'we Hau called Lum.buini near Nuniali where the **nili** was held. However another Lum.buini is also of much importance for Manusa. This is a former settlement of the Alune people of Huku. The narrative told in Manusa describes how an altercation among the youth of the two communities drifted into killing and head hunting, ending up in a war between the two

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<sup>92</sup>Jensen (1939, p.136) also mentions a river named Hau 'because of the type of grass that grew there', as one of the meeting places in the topogeny. An elder said that this was 'we Haulalei.

communities.<sup>93</sup> Having requested and obtained the support of 'the whole river valley' (Sapalewa **batai pusue**), said the village head, Manusa's warriors defeated Huku. The survivors fled south, abandoning their village and land to Manusa, who called the place Lum.buini.<sup>94</sup> The people of Manusa built one of their own settlements on this suitable location and named it Mapone (Guava garden).<sup>95</sup> Mapone remained the main hamlet of Manusa until 1977.

Assimilating a site of the same name in its topogeny of origin could well be a strategy of Manusa to legitimate its seizure of Huku territory while implying that the decision was ratified by the **inama** Hau inai. The fact that the village head insisted that they obtained the support of 'the whole Sapalewa Batai' would confirm it. Indeed the Alune people at the south coast believe that **nili** Hau was held at the site of the former Huku. By implying that the last **nili** assembly of its journey was held on a place that is referred to as the 'abandoned empty House', the community claims precedence over that site, removing Huku as previous settlers. Who was there first and why they left is not mentioned because the narrative of the war with Huku is not part of the topogeny. The topogeny belongs to the **nuru** of the lord of the land, the narrative of the war with Huku to the **nuru** of the warlord who led it. However it is not used by this **nuru** to insert itself into the community either.

#### *Hena Ma'saman.uey at Nuruitu*

While Latuelamena was waiting with the people at 'we Hau, Samai went looking for a village site. He climbed a hill near Tau **matai** and named it Nuruitu.

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<sup>93</sup>One version is recorded in Jensen 1939 n°81, p.135.

<sup>94</sup>This must have occurred before the beginning of the 20th century and before their guns were confiscated. According to van Hecht Muntingh Napjus, in 1911 Huku and Manusa were already situated on different sides of the middle ridge which he calls Otewatai ('**ote** limit **batai**: trunk: i.e. the boundaries). (Aantekeningen betreffende het Eiland Ceram of Seran, in *T.A.G.2.XXIX* 1912- p.778). Before this war, Huku and Manusa seem to have lived peacefully (narratives recall that they exchanged brides and that brothers-in-law hunted together).

<sup>95</sup>Matoke **Lum.inai** said they were the first on the land of Mapone. The site is now on the land that Souhali **lum.inai** received from Matoke when they came from Riring three generations ago. Mapone is an ideal site for a fortified traditional mountain village. It has sharp slopes to limit its access and a large panoramic view over the surroundings. Two springs provide drinking water, and the two streams which meet in its vicinity offer fish, shrimps, eels, watercress, bathing facilities, playground etc.

Still looking for a place to settle, Samai, the younger brother, went inland again while the elder brother, Latuelamena, stayed with the rest of the people at 'we Hau near the coast. Samai climbed a hill at the confluence of the Sapalewa and the Tau, the ancestral rivers of the **hena**, and called it Nuruitu (**nurua hitu**: the 'Seven Nuru').<sup>96</sup> On that hill Samai, the first lord of the land, established the ritual centre of the **hena**. It is in the logic of the tradition that Samai elected a hill at the confluence of the Sapalewa and the Tau.<sup>97</sup> 'We Tau is the **'wele wei** (*air pertama*), the water of origin of the **hena**. It links Manusa to the life bestowing Nunusaku through the Sapalewa, which springs from its very roots. Before Christianity, the dead returned to the Nunusaku travelling up the Tau and Sapalewa rivers after a long journey of purification. As a Church elder explained, Bible in hand, nowadays good people go straight to Nunusaku because the tree stands in the garden of Eden.<sup>98</sup>

Samai had walked far away and he was late. When he returned to Hau, Latuelamena had left with two **nuru**, leaving a sign in the direction of Eti. The elder brother stayed in Eti and the two **nuru** who went with him founded Kaibobo.

Nuruitu is away from the north coast. When Samai returned, said the elders, Latuelamena had left with his own group and two **nuru** of followers. This bifurcation is different from those which occurred earlier in the topogeny. There is no celebration and no meat is shared. Indeed, the position of younger brother of the coastal power(s) is claimed from the outside rather than reached from an internal consensus. Samai found a **tilu** 'sign', wooden sticks placed on the ground, pointing to the direction of Eti, the largest coastal centre of west Seram in past centuries.

Latuelamena, says the narrative of Manusa, went down from the north to the south western coast, where he decided to stay. He founded the domain of Eti, a large Alune village on the low hill of the Eti river valley, near Piru.<sup>99</sup> The two **nuru** which accompanied Latuelamena

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<sup>96</sup>A folk etymology of Samai's name explains that it also means 'climb up here': from **sa**: to 'climb' and **mai**: 'here', referring to his climbing up to Nuruitu.

<sup>97</sup>The confluence of two rivers is often chosen to build temples, villages etc, throughout eastern Indonesia.

<sup>98</sup>Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed (...) In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. A stream flowed in Eden (...) beyond Eden it divided into four rivers.' (Genesis 2. 8-10). The beauty of symbols is also in their universality. For the Christian people of Manusa, Eden is indeed to the east of them and the tree of life and the tree of knowledge is also one: the Nunusaku. The four rivers are the Eti, the Tala, the Sapalewa and the Uli, the river which flows through the land of their Wemale neighbors who also are custodians of Nunusaku.

<sup>99</sup>Eti was a dependency of Huamual/Ternate until 1650 through its relationship with Piru, (itself the main harbour and political centre of the southwest coast until the 1960s).

kept walking eastward along the southern coast and founded the **inama** Kaibobo in the Tala region. The narrative thus also establishes a relationship with one of the leading domains of the third river.<sup>100</sup> However, Manusa's elder brother is in the Eti **batai**. The closest to the Ternatan power, Eti was regarded as the strongest of the Three Rivers. It is still named first when listing the rivers in their order of precedence.<sup>101</sup>

Nine (**siwa**) represents a totality. Before the departure of Latuelamena the group of Samai was **siwa**. However, after the departure of the two **nuru** which founded Kaibobo, they became seven (**hitu**) **nuru**, around one ritual centre: Nuruitu.

Samai went down to Eti looking for his elder brother. When he found him, Latuelamena told him to return to the mountains. It was decided that Samai's duty was to guard the mountain region of the Nunusaku. It was also established that he should consult his older brother for important decisions.

What the narrative seems to imply is that **latuelamena** (the 'Great lord in the front') the leader, is *de facto* in a kind of peripheral position vis-à-vis the **hena**. This elder/younger bifurcation assigns precedence to Eti, who is acknowledged as older brother. The siblingship emphasises their unity, the birth order their respective rank. It also makes clear that one is a political leader, while the other is the caretaker of the source of life. Manusa, the younger brother in the mountains, is the custodian of the sacred origin, the centre from which all the people came, while the older brother rules from and at the coast. However, Manusa has to 'consult his older Brother on important matters'. Acknowledging the precedence of Eti in one realm also implies its restrictions as it assigns precedence to Manusa in another sphere of utmost importance. By setting the decision of Latuelamena's departure from the north coast (Hau) in context, the narrative brings it under the jurisdiction of the **nili Sapalewa batai**, to which Manusa belongs. This way, the decision of Manusa to become 'younger brother' in relationship to Eti, in another **batai**, is ratified by the Sapalewa Batai. The joint authorities of these two coastal centres in the council of the **nili ela** of the Three rivers, provide Manusa with an absolute legitimacy of its location and function.

Latuelamena, the older brother, left; Samai, the younger brother, stayed. When people move, explained the saniri elder, they take their banana tree: the elder shoots are carried away to be

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<sup>100</sup>Kaibobo was the leading **inama latu** of the **nili** Tala Batai. It had a major role in its river's **nili** as (masculine) representative of its river **batai** to the Ternatan governor of Luhu. According to a former *raja* of Manusa the domain of Kairatu also left from Hau.

<sup>101</sup>Eti (male), Tala (male) and Sapalewa (female). This order changed when the **nili ela** was held in a **batai** other than Eti. It then started with the host.



planted elsewhere but the small 'shoots' (**ai hlului**) stay in the ground at the foot of the old trees. The small 'shoots' left behind by a group ensure the continuity of its name in that domain.<sup>102</sup> This recurring metaphor can apply at different levels.<sup>103</sup> The **nuru** of Latuelamena (the elder brother), said this elder, is now represented in Manusa by Tibali, a 'shoot' of his **nuru** which 'remained' with the people of Nuruitu when Latuelamena left.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, for a founding **nuru** to remain a constituent part of the origin structure of a domain, it is essential (a matter of essence) to keep being 'represented' in that domain.

Latuelamena carried with him the 'book' of history. In Eti he took the name Turukai and the people he left behind are called Anasosi.

The ruling lord at the coast holds the powerful copper and gold regalia which testify to the people's history.<sup>105</sup> As elsewhere in Indonesia, the ruler in power centralises (or is believed to do so) the ritual objects which are regarded as a source of symbolic energy. Not only do they justify his position but they explain the very origin of his authority in the eyes of his subordinates. Manusa's lord of the land is 'the source of the history' (Souwey) because his ancestor was Samai, the younger brother of Latuelamena. However, the **hena** does not watch over the regalia. Likewise, although Eti is the caretaker of the regalia which bear witness to the history of the origin, it is not its source. This is because this initial history, source of all history, belongs to no single group, small or large, elder or younger but to the microcosm of the entire Three Rivers.

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<sup>102</sup>As the informant explained: *Seperti pisang, orang potong brankat bawah. Pohon kecil di bawah itu tinggal. Anak bonso (bungsu) itu ana (anak) cinta yang tinggal.* 'It is like with banana trees, when people leave, they cut (the young shoots), and carry them. The small shoots (still under the ground) stay. Similarly, the youngest is the cherished child who stays'.

<sup>103</sup>The elder used it also to explain how his older son went into the army while the younger one stayed (and became a ruler of the **hena**).

<sup>104</sup>Some believe that Tibali only joined later i.e. **leu** 'returned'. The Tibali themselves say they are 'ignorant children' and do not know, leaving others to debate a claim they do not formulate themselves.

<sup>105</sup>Latuelamena, says the narrative, brought to Eti the 'copper and gold book' containing the story of the Nunusaku and the origin of mankind. Questioned on that matter, the *raja* of Eti said that although he had not read the 'book' himself, it had indeed once been in the possession of his family. However, it had been taken to Ambon from where it seems it was sold to someone who took it to Jakarta not so long ago, thus by now it could well be in America. The departure (or the arrival) of groups carrying with them regalia of knowledge and power is another recurrent feature in the region, **nuru** Akolo in Manusa (see following chapter) or **nuru** Liline in Riring, for example (De Vries 1927, pp.11-13). However the objects are seldom to be seen.

When he settled in Eti, said the elders, Latuelamena took the **nuru** name Turukai.<sup>106</sup> The small 'shoots' of his **nuru**, who remained with Samai, were nicknamed **Anasosi**: 'ignorant children'.<sup>107</sup> If required, all Manusa becomes the **ana sosi**. For example, to 'outsiders', **tamata ma'ete** (**tamata**: 'person', 'people' **maete**: 'different', 'other'), Manusa repeatedly proclaims that, because the **hena** is not in charge of the regalia, its people are 'ignorant' of the narrative of the Nunusaku (it is a narrative that no one 'owns'). Thus they also are unaware of the precise location of the sacred banyan, the source of continuity of 'all the things in the world'. However, as one informant noted, they do not need to know, for they live on its very land and will enjoy the power of its fecundity as long as they remain on duty in **hena** Manusa.

## CONCLUSION

Alune preserve the 'record' **la'wai** of meaningful events and relationships in **sou**, the parsimonious 'language/history' of their narratives. In **hena** Manusa, telling about origin and history consists principally in recalling a succession of halting points along the path once followed by the ancestors who journeyed from the place of origin of mankind to the site where they established the domain. The ancestors passed through several places, held assemblies and named these sites in relation to the significant historical event(s) each of them witnessed. These places/events, ordered in a specific succession constitute and validate the history of the **hena**. They legitimate the location of its boundaries.<sup>108</sup> They also justify the internal social order and external relations of the community.<sup>109</sup> To the people who now live in the **hena** the ancestral deeds recalled in the narrative constitute also a reference and a model of behaviour for the present time.

Any narrative affixed to this ancestral journey becomes itself validated within the domain history. This is an important point because this is the way local history continues to be

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<sup>106</sup>One proposed folk etymology for Turukai is: **dulu** (to go down) **urue** (?) **peneka** (already) which was translated into Indonesian as: *berangkat pake buku*: 'left with the book' (regalia).

<sup>107</sup>*Sin tahu apa apa* (the ones who) 'do not know anything'. Their descendants are the House of **nuru** Tibali, who as **ana sosi** insist on their ignorance of the whole story.

<sup>108</sup>Several paths, opened by founding ancestors, delimit and legitimate the borders claimed by the domain.

<sup>109</sup>For example the elder/younger brothers's bifurcation justifies the unavoidable allegiance to the coastal power and warrants the recurrent social practice of a system of precedence between elder and younger within the domain. Throughout its history the **hena** has always had to make allegiance to some form of coastal/outside power. However we saw that 1) initially its control was minimal 2) Manusa claims precedence in other matters.

recorded and transmitted nowadays. Indeed other narratives are inserted at given places/events within the sequence of the topogeny. This insertion validates the position of a narrative —and the status of the people to whom it belongs— in the chronology of the origin structure of the domain. The choice of the point of insertion is crucial since the sequence of places implies a ranking in seniority and precedence in the succession of places/events. Some **nuru** (origin groups) have Houses (territorial units) branching over several domains. These Houses often hold separate narratives telling of their arrival and their social position in the specific domain where they are living now. Just as the domains rank themselves within their **batai**, the House, and through them the **nuru**, strive for precedence within the domains (see following chapter).

With all the people of 'Wele Telu, the **hena** shares the idea of a common origin at the Nunusaku. However, each domain has its own path. The history and identity of the various groups are inextricably interwoven within the land of 'Wele Telu, as multiple ancestral paths have criss-crossed this territory, instilling each site with multiple significances. Various groups, from diverse origins, have integrated themselves in the Three River valleys, their insertion legitimised by ancestral deeds and journeys. It is tempting to suggest that most topogenies of the Alune and Wemale domains of 'Wele Telu somehow start at Nunusaku, thus creating (and sanctioning) a common and ultimate origin (**uwei**), as generally claimed in the region. However, more research is required before this hypothesis may or may not be validated.

## Chapter Five

### NURUITU: A RITUAL CENTRE

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At Nuruitu, the final site (*la'wai* 'meeting point', 'halting place') of the topogeny, the position of the domain in regard to its land is legitimised by the establishment of its ritual centre. I have isolated this *topoi* of the topogeny because it is a spatial and temporal *locus* around which any group can join in the domain.<sup>1</sup> In the narrative too, this centre is set as an accessible point for other narratives to be inserted within the origin structure of the domain. Nuruitu is also the place where was established the initial social order of the domain.

In this chapter, I first present what I was told about the knowledge embedded in Nuruitu. Then, I examine the social order which was established by the units that assembled around this ritual centre to constitute the *hena*. In the third part I present the topogenies of some of these units which merged in the domain, and investigate the knowledge subsequently elaborated in these narratives. Finally I investigate the concept of centre in the social order of Manusa.

#### NURUITU: 'SEVEN NURU'

##### The place where men danced

Nuruitu became the place for men to dance and feed the pig spirit.

Nuruitu overlooks the confluence of the Tau and Sapalewa rivers. At this place 'we Tau, the origin river and with it the *hena*, join its river *batai*. Upstream leads to Nunusaku, downstream to the other groups of the Sapalewa *batai*.<sup>2</sup> On the low ridge of Nuruitu stands

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<sup>1</sup>The Alune word *la'wai* 'trace', 'memory' (see in Chapter four: *La'wai* the memory of place) also expresses the idea of 'junction point' and 'gate' or *topoi* where 'culturally significant knowledge is stored' (Fox 1998 p.13).

<sup>2</sup>'We Tau is the '*wele wei* (*air pertama*), the 'water of origin' of the *hena*. In the mountains many people still regard the Tau and the Sapalewa as sacred rivers and do not use their water for domestic purposes.

a stone table. The elder who is custodian of the land where Nuruitu stands, explained that this stone is a pig. Its body lies sideways to make a table but it stands on its feet when it goes walking. In the old times, the ritual performer collected **utan misete** 'good food' (meat) from people and regularly brought it to the pig table otherwise the pig would have gone walking, eating their gardens. The stone was also fed during large celebrations where men ate and danced 'fighting together without hurting each other.' The strength obtained during these dances (and trances) made them invincible in war. Trophy heads were not brought to Nuruitu and it is not a proper place to establish a settlement.

### **Nurua hitu, batua hitu: 'Seven nuru, seven stones'**

Samai named the hill Nuruitu: Nurua hitu, batua hitu, 'The Seven origin groups, the seven stones' because he settled there with seven **nuru**. As people came in, Samai encouraged them to stay, allotting them land.

When regional meetings are held and the title and rank of each participant is made explicit, the full name of the domain is recalled in the '**ahbali** chanting: Ma' saman uey Nurua Hitu, Batua Hitu. Ma' saman uey, means 'The place which is/the people who are at the origin/centre of the distribution/allotment'. **Nuru** may be translated by 'origin group', 'clan', 'extended family', and **a** is the plural marker. **hitu** means 'seven', and **batu** 'stone', 'rock' (sometimes 'hill'). The name **Nurua hitu, batua hitu** refers, said the elders, to the number of founding families at the origin of the **hena** and to the ritual centre of the domain. **Hatu** or **batu**, a (sacrificial) stone, usually represents one hamlet (or one community).<sup>3</sup>

Before Latuelamena left with two **nuru** the group was made of nine **nuru**. Nine represents a totality. After their departure, it was made up of nine minus two: seven **nuru**.<sup>4</sup> In the *ilmu sembilan puluh sembilan*, ('knowledge of the nine hundred ninety nine') a numerical system widespread in the Ambonese region and beyond, the number nine is used to represent any totality and seven is one of the combinations of numbers used to represent social units, clans, rulers, bodies, etc. In that system, elements are grouped to form units. Each complete unit is counted as one element of its sub-units for it represents the totality of them (a body represented by its head). There is only one totality per unit. As a result, when units merge the final combination shows only one totality. Seven usually represents the merging of a unit

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<sup>3</sup>For example Piru, a powerful domain which resulted from the association of three settlements in the Eti river valley, was also called hatu Telu (the Three Stones).

<sup>4</sup>In the Javanese Monca-Pat system, seven is the symbol of the mountain, however this is not mentioned in Manusa.

of five [four elements plus one (their totality)] with one unit of three [two elements plus their totality]. When they merge, their two distinct totalities also merge in one. As a result the four and two elements join under one totality:  $4 + 2 + 1 \text{ head} = 7$ . Alternatively it could also represent the merging of two units each composed of three elements ( $3 + 3 + 1 \text{ head} = 7$ ) or, the most probable, a succession of several mergings.<sup>5</sup>

### **Latua telu, nurua hitu: 'Three latu seven nuru'**

Today fifteen **nuru** are represented in Manusa. In the narrative the group named its ritual centre Nuruitu (the Seven **Nuru**) because seven founding **nuru** sacrificed jointly in that place. The answer to the question of who they were is:

**Nurua hitu, latua telu.** 'Seven nuru, three lords'.

However, it did not seem possible, in collective discussions or individual interviews, to elicit the names of these three **latu** and seven **nuru** or how they were counted. Although the *Manoesamanoewé complex* appears in patrol reports in 1866 and 1906, not much administrative history of the *negeri/desa* can be traced further back than 1920. These three quarters of a century of 'official' history show that several structural transformations have occurred in Manusa. These could partly explain the confusion around naming the founding **nuru** and their three **latu**. However, I also believe that it is a feature of this *topoi* to be conceived in such a way that it is possible to subject it to continual readjustments without losing its initial intent.

The following is an attempt to expose and understand fragmentary data collected about the 'three lords' and the 'seven **nuru**'.

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<sup>5</sup>An example of a sevenfold combination of units is the domain of Hitulama (Ancient Seven) in Ambon. It started as Tial, a community of three ( $2 + 1$  head) units, which first merged with the tripartite community of Tomu ( $2 + 1$  head representing their totality). It became a fivefold unit ( $2 + 2 + 1$  head) as the two heads merged in one, known as Raja Hitu. Under Raja Hitu, the leader of the four units became the famous *Empat Perdana*, the four powerful rulers of the peninsula allied to the Ternatan rulers of Huamual. As the domain expanded, it incorporated three more units ( $2 + 1$ ), merging heads again and thus became the Uli Hitu a sevenfold unit ( $4 + 2 + 1$ ). This is not the pattern which is recalled in Manusa, however it exemplifies the possibilities which can be generated from the deceptively simple model proposed by the elders when they count the founding units of the **hena**. (Jansen, op. cit. 103-106.)

*Latua telu*

Nowadays in Manusa, only one **nuru** is regarded as **nuru ela'e** ('big/great **nuru**') or **nuru latu**. This is the **nuru** of the former *raja* who was chosen from the **nuru** of the ritual performer in accordance with the colonial policies of the 1920s.<sup>6</sup> According to the present lord of the land of Manusa, the three **latu** mentioned earlier in the narrative of the domain were his three ancestors. There were Latu Ela Mena, 'the Great Lord in the Front' and Samai, the 'Divider' (founding lord of the domain), who formed a pair of elder/younger brothers and their sister (**ana telale**: the middle child) Upu Anine, the maiden who brought fire and showed mankind how to cook **pia** 'sago porridge' at Sobain **latale**.

Asked the same question, as to who were the three **latu**, the elder of the **nuru ela'e**, (the **nuru** of the ritual performer and *raja*), and the elder of the **nuru** of the warlord, took another approach. The first elder, who was the most senior, began at Nuruitu. He confirmed its foundation by Samai, the younger brother, ancestor of the lord of the land and, following the narrative, said that Latuelamena, the elder brother, went to settle in Eti, leaving his younger brother in charge of the domain. Then, he said, the **nuru** of the warlord (Maslebu) joined the **hena** (where he is now represented by the second elder) and replaced Latuelamena. The third **latu**, was the ritual performer said the first elder, his own ancestor. His duty was to assemble the meat from the whole community to feed the pig stone in Nuruitu. Thus in this version the three **latu** of the **hena** were the lord of the land, the ritual performer and the warlord (replacing Latuelamena).

Although they seem to diverge, the versions of the lord of the land and the second version are not contradictory. The exegesis proposed by the lord of the land considers the foundation of the domain while the explanation of the elders of the **nuru** of the ritual performer/*raja* and the warlord recalls a previous social order of the community. Indeed, at two important turning periods of its recent history, Manusa was ruled by two members of the warlord's **nuru**.<sup>7</sup> Both elders paused after their ancestral history was told. They did not mention any of the other founding **nuru** of Nuruitu, the Seven **Nuru** since they did not own these **nuru**'s history.

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<sup>6</sup>Following Sachse's recommendation the children of ritual leaders (or 'good families') were educated in colonial schools and trained as village leaders to counterbalance and minimize the authority of the lords of the land. Manusa's first *raja* came from a junior House of **nuru** Matoke which was established in one of the child villages of the domain closer to the coast.

*Nurua hitu*

**Nuru(a)** are non localised origin groups.<sup>8</sup> The members of a **nuru** share a common name, a sacred place of origin and often, but not always, a single named ancestor. This shared origin is usually supported by a narrative. The House of a **nuru** which is regarded as its eldest core is called the **nuruwei** (**nuru uwei**), the 'source/core' of the **nuru**. As they expand, **nuru** often branch out, a process during which a sub-unit (**sanai**: branch) may change name or add a second name to its **nuruwei** name. This process favors the growth (**usu**: to 'grow' 'sprout') and diversification of the **nuru**, allowing units to branch out and settle in various domains of west Seram.<sup>9</sup> As they move into a new territory, branches frequently add to their narrative of origin another narrative acknowledging their arrival in the new place. If it is more advantageous, this new narrative may become the only narrative that is remembered. Because the **hena** regards itself as the origin of the original bifurcation of all groups (**sama uwei** the 'source/cause of the sharing') any unit of newcomers finds itself in a position in which it 'returns' (**leu**) to Manusa. **Uwei** the source/base/origin is a point from which something or someone was issued and may return.

Thus, according to the narrative, seven (unnamed) **nuru** (or branches of **nuru**) made up the **hena** at its foundation. With time, branches of **nuru** came and went. Some settled in and expanded (Ruspanah, Kapitan) others left, declined (Tosile) or became extinct (Tani'wel). Nowadays Manusa is made up of fifteen **nuru**. This figure remains provisory since three of them are made up of a single household which could disappear, and newcomers are still welcomed. Nevertheless the number of founding **nuru** remains fixed. But, while everybody agrees on that number, their names are never volunteered and, as in the case of the **latu**, when finally given, they vary according to the speaker. Precedence in Manusa is continuously challenged and re-formulated within the boundaries allowed by tradition.

However, although all agree on that number, no one clarifies why they have to be seven, beyond the justification of tradition. Who the **nuru** are (or were) does not matter as much as their number since this number is justified (and sealed) in the name of the ritual centre of the **hena**. Seven is also the number of functions and duties which order the ancient social

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<sup>7</sup>Nibulana Maslebu in 1933-35, and Daniel Wemai (**nuru** Maslebu) in 1969-78. It is the traditional duty of the warlord to lead migrations (gathering in new villages were organised during or under the leadership of Nibulana and Daniel).

<sup>8</sup>A is a plural marker.

<sup>9</sup>Incidentally a branch (**sanai**) may become more influential in the domain where it settles than its **nuruwei** in its place of origin.



organisation of the **hena** to make it a complete body. These are the positions/duties (*tugas*) of **hena upui** 'grandfathers/ancestors of the **hena**'. At the present time, the seven **hena upui** are recalled as follows:

**Latu ela mena**: ('Great lord in the front'), the leader/ruler/head, **upu tapele**: the lord of the land,<sup>10</sup> **maeta'e**: the ritual performer,<sup>11</sup> **ama lesi**: the warlord,<sup>12</sup> **ama nili**: the saniri elder, peace negotiator, **alamanane**: the spokesman,<sup>13</sup> and **ama tita**: the liaison agent.<sup>14</sup> These positions were traditionally held by specific **nuru**, and the duties performed by one of their members. However if a **nuru** became extinct or had no suitable heir, the function could be assumed by an **ana mulini**, 'younger child', a **nuru** who came afterward. The content of these positions has also shifted with time, and some **nuru** have managed better than others to 'recycle' themselves within the modern context.

Let us examine these functions more closely. **Latu** are not ordered in first, second or third position but I follow here the elder (ruler)/younger (lord of the land) order of precedence found in the the narrative.

## **HENA MANUSA: SEVEN POSITIONS, SEVEN NURU**

### **The seven hena upui and their duties**

#### *The leader: upu latu*

Everybody in Manusa agrees that the three functions of leader, lord of the land and ritual performer were filled by the three **latu**. However, in the narrative the first leader, Latuelamena, left at the foundation of the domain. Some elders support the case that he was immediately replaced by the warlord, others that his powerless representative (Tibali, nicknamed **ana sosi** 'the ignorant child') filled his empty seat while his function was assumed by others. This is where tradition and official history are interwoven. No one remembers

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<sup>10</sup>**Upu**: 'father', 'ancestor', 'lord', **tapele**: 'Earth', 'Land'. Tapele is paired with Lanite: 'Sky', 'Heaven'.

<sup>11</sup>**Maeta'e** refers to the task of bringing food to the pig stone (ritual performer).

<sup>12</sup>**Ama** 'father', **lesi** 'war.'

<sup>13</sup>**Alamanane** are also the traditional formal speeches chanted by these specialists.

<sup>14</sup>**Ama** 'father' **tita** 'liaison', 'to cross over', 'to visit' (and, by extension, 'to trade').

**Table 5.1 NURUITU: THE SEVEN DUTIES OF THE HENA UPUI**

Position	duty/role	traditionally in <i>nuru</i>	<i>hena upui</i> (ancestors)	field of competence
Leader, deputy <i>Raja</i> or <b>ba'ele</b> one of the three <b>latu</b>	village head representative of modern government	various (founding) <b>nuru</b> <i>raja</i> : Matoke (junior House)	Latuelamena (the 'Great elder lord'), eB ruler at the coast	returning outsider, male elder, Sky
Lord of the land <b>Tapele upu</b> one of the three <b>latu</b>	'breast and lap' land, traditional law health and fertility	Souwei (now Reane) ( <b>sou</b> : language/history <b>wei</b> : source/origin)	Upu Samai (the 'Sharer'), yB <b>hena's</b> founding ancestor	initial insider, female younger, Earth
Ritual performer <b>Maeta'e</b> one of the three <b>latu</b>	collected offerings fed the 'Pig stone' Kakehan priest	Matoke (senior House)	no named ancestor (title: <b>Pati Loane</b> )	inside & outside male, Sky
Warlord <b>Ama lesi</b>	leads war/migrations controls borders	Maslebu ( <b>ama</b> : 'father' <b>nebu</b> : 'fertilise')	Upu Siu Totole ( 'Small elbow')	periphery, forest, war wilderness, traditional law
Peace negotiator <b>Ama nili</b>	<i>saniri</i> man, peace negotiator	Neyte ( <b>ni'ite</b> : 'fermtree')	Upua Belena & Lelese (eB & yB)	periphery, foreign affairs domestic space, government
'Left hand' <b>Alamanane</b>	interpreter, spokesman assists ritual performer	Nyak ( <b>ni'awe</b> : 'snake')	no named ancestor	periphery, communicator ritual & traditional law
'Right hand' <b>Ama tita</b>	liaison agent messenger policeman	Matitale ( <b>ama</b> : 'father' <b>tita</b> : 'bridge/news' <b>ela</b> : 'great')	no named ancestor	village communicator law & order, government



who (other than Latuelamena) led Manusa before 1920, when colonial interference started to be felt and was documented. At that time, the lord of the land was nominated **ba'ele**: (or **mba'ele**) temporary office holder (*penjabat*) by the administration. Five years later the **hena** received a *raja pati*. Born in the **nuru** of the ritual performer, but from another village, he had been trained in a Dutch school. After his sudden death the warlord served as **ba'ele** until the *raja's* son became old enough to assume the function, which he did two years later and for the following thirty-four years. When he retired, as he had no male heir himself, the heir of the former warlord was elected **ba'ele**. The subsequent rulers were elected according to the modern *orde baru* system. In this 'new order' system the position of village head is assumed by an elected leader whose candidature is first approved (or suggested) by the regional government.

The most conservative elders consider that village government would be more stable and equitable if it was assumed by a member of **nuru** Matoke, even if this Matoke man was born outside the **hena**. As long as he 'returns', lives in Manusa and acts accordingly, say these elders, he will be acknowledged as a traditional leader. Interestingly, this sanction of Matoke as legitimate *raja* dates only from 1925. This line, a junior 'returning' House from a child village, was imposed as ruling **nuru** by a colonial government.

Narrative and reality both seem to set the leader in a *de facto* peripheral position *vis-à-vis* the **hena**. Indeed, the lord of the land, the only autochthonous figure among all the leaders, was appointed to that position by the Dutch, rather than meant to hold it by tradition. It is not known who ruled before him, but all the leaders after him were from **nuru** whose narrative of origin mention their 'return' (*leu*) to Manusa.<sup>15</sup> However what distinguishes a person or a group as insider or outsider is a fluctuating notion. It depends on contexts, attitudes and merits as much as on origin *per se* (a notion easily manipulated), although this is not forgotten either. In Manusa all the rulers were newcomers who have emphasised the link of their **nuru** to one of the seven duties of the **hena**.<sup>16</sup> The **nuru** which successively held this position were Reane, (a branch which links itself to Souwei, the **nuru** of the lord of the land), Matoke (the **nuru** of the ritual officiant), Maslebu (the **nuru** of the warlord), Kapitan (a branch that links itself to Latuelamena), and Neyte (the **nuru** of the peace negotiator). Thus the ruler in Manusa seems to have to 'return' from the outside in one way or another while still being connected to one of the founding **nuru**. The new ruler (1995-98), also a

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<sup>15</sup>Membership of the group is not so much formulated in term of where one was born. Legitimation through ancestry, behaviour and actual residence all combine to create a man's status.

<sup>16</sup>Between 1920 and 1995, every leader has belonged to one of the seven (or made himself appear so).

'returning' (*leu*) outsider, seems to be the first exception that may reveal a shift. Indeed his large *nuru* does not claim an ancient link with the domain, and its strength lies in its powerful allies in the modern provincial administration.

*The lord of the land: upu tapele*

Numerous authors have described the role of the lord of the land in Seram and the transformation of his function.<sup>17</sup>

Next to the head in each *negorij* there is a 'lord of the land'. Within the administration of the *negorij*, particularly with regard to customary law, he was the real authority above the head of the *negorij* and he represented the *negorij*, as it were, to itself. He is thought to be the descendant of the first person who settled in the place where the *negorij* originated, and in popular estimation he is nothing less than the owner of the territory of the *negorij*. He alone can allot land to the heads of families. At the present day he no longer possesses any power but he is nevertheless treated with distinction, and is consulted on matters concerning customary law and land.

This description by Van Wouden (op. cit. p.75) is noteworthy because it summarises the usual comments of most of the authors, touches on some points with accuracy and commits the same errors. I choose it, although van Wouden says he is describing the role of the lord of the land among the nearby Wemale of the North coast, because it is relevant to the Alune position.

In Manusa, the 'lord of the land' (*upu tapele*) is indeed knowledgeable and regarded as the one to whom to refer on matters of customary law and land tenure as long as they concern the 'land' (*tapele*) and the 'custom' (*atate*) within the *hena* itself. The *upu tapele* is the descendant of the founding ancestor of the domain. Because of this ancestry he has a privileged contact with the ancestors of the *hena* who dwell in 'we Tau, the 'wele wei (*air pertama*), the 'water of origin' of the *hena*, and is himself the *upu* of the river. However an *upu* is the lord, the custodian, the guardian, the person having duties and responsibilities toward something, but not its owner. Similarly, the *upu tapele* is not the owner of the land. In Alune, ownership is marked by a possessive. In Manusa no one owns land, one 'sits' (*due*) on it, i.e. watches over it, in accordance with 'customary law' (*atate*). This is a subtle nuance which makes a big difference when facing logging companies and transmigration projects.

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<sup>17</sup>Van Wouden 1968 pp.71-72, 75-76, 150-51; Jensen 1948 pp.75-76; Sachse 1907 p.83, and 1922 p.133; Tauern 1918 p.127-28, 138, 140; Duyvendak 1926, 41-42; De Vries 1927 p.140; Stresemann 1923 p.716-17, etc.

To call the lord of the land the 'real authority' or 'the real ruler' as most authors do<sup>18</sup> is also misleading unless one specifies what real or unreal power is about. There are different realms of power/skill/authority, and thus different functions and, although they can be combined, they are usually held by different elders. While the leader is associated with the government proper and the periphery or the outside, the lord of the land is responsible for more internal matters related to land and ancestry. In Manusa, the motto of the lord of the land is *Au meje mara 'anune lisia aia lolana 'webuta*. 'Anune is the woman's 'skirt', lolane, the tree producing the red dye for the fibre which women wove and 'webute is the 'rack' over the hearth. The 'webute ('webu: 'to smoke' 'cure') is the centre of the house where everybody gathers at night time. It is also the place where the wood is stored, the food cooked and where meat was cured and its 'essence' ('weini) shared with the ancestors.<sup>19</sup> The lord of the land also said that his *nuru* was the 'breast' (*susu*), he who holds on his 'lap' (*bitie*) and accepts guests. These metaphors depict a feminine role inside the house, and parallel the duty of the *upu tapele* inside the *hena*. The *nuru* of the lord of the land is Souwei and its illustrious ancestor Samai. Nowadays only *nuru* Reane, a distant branch of Souwei, is left in Manusa. However, Reane still claims Souwei as its *nuruwei*.

### *The ritual performer: maeta'e*

In Manusa, the *nuru* of the ritual performer *maeta'e*, and of the *raja pati* or *pati loane* (two different branches) was called *nuru ela'e*, the 'great/large' *nuru*, large in number and great in prestige (*nane mise*: 'good name', 'renown'). This is *nuru* Matoke.<sup>20</sup> No one in Manusa remembers the name of their founding ancestor. The function of *raja pati* (second class ruler in the Dutch system) remained in the 'branch house' (*luma sanai*). The task of the 'mother

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<sup>18</sup>According to Tichelman, G.L., even when he was not the official representative 'the lord of the land seems to possess the real power in the village.' (op. cit. p 717).

<sup>19</sup>The 'webute is the axis of the house. It links the households, which live on Earth, with their ancestors who dwell in the Sky.

<sup>20</sup>*Maeta'e* is the origin of the name of *nuru* Matoke. *Maeta'e* is the name of the textile in which trophy heads were wrapped. It means, said its elder, 'the one who brings the pack of food or the head wrapped in a cloth to the offering stone in Nuruitu' (other elders say that heads were never brought to Nuruitu). *Pati* is an honorific title (lower than *latu*). *Loane* may be a transformation of the Ternatan title of *kolano* in its early XVI century meaning. Like the *kolano*, the *maeta'e* or *pati loane* was respected for his talents as orator and diviner although he did not hold a position of direct authority. During the second half of the XVI century the Ternatan title of *kolano* was transformed under Islamic rule: some *kolano* were appointed sultan and their influence grew with the spread of Islam (cf. Andaya 1990). In the *hena*, the role of *pati loane* was also transformed when a member of the *nuru* Matoke was appointed first *raja* of Manusa in 1925, initiating a ruling line. This shifted the authority away from the powerful lord of the land distrusted by the Dutch (cf van Wouden p.75-76).

House' (**luma inai**), the senior branch, was the ritual feeding at the pig stone. The ritual performer collected the offerings of all the **nuru** for their common ritual centre on Nuruitu. He was also the ritual officiant of the Kakehan ('a'ehane) in the 'men's house' (**luma tutue**) before the prohibition of initiation and men's rituals in the 1920s, when the village officially converted to Christianity. Since then, the elders of this senior branch generally occupy a post of responsibility in the Church organisation and are highly respected in Manusa. Although a lot has been written about the Kakehan little is known about this men's cult, the role of its ritual performers, its initiation rituals and head hunting practices. The role of the brotherhood was certainly decisive in the cohesion of the federation. As pacification rendered the solidarity of men and groups less crucial, the dismemberment of the brotherhood by the Dutch rapidly brought the dismemberment of the federation.

### *The warlord: ama lesi*

Van Wouden attributed to the **malesi** the role of a 'champion' but also the duties of a diviner or an astrologer, an activity he did not investigate further.<sup>21</sup> Shamanism was a common practice among Alune elders before the conversion to Christianity. The shamanic aspect of the **amalesi's** charge applied in matters which concerned his field of specialisation i.e. warfare, head hunting, the movements of the group (he led migrations), protection or extension of the boundaries, and men's activities related to the forest. To fulfill these tasks a man had to be 'brave' (**mnehe**), 'strong' ('**uru**) and 'knowledgeable/clever' (**de'wa** or **re'wa**). In Manusa, the hero associated with the role of warlord (**amalesi** or **malesi**) is Siu Totole, an ancestor of **nuru** Maslebu.

The figure of Siu Totole deserves some attention as it depicts the full role of warlord. Siu Totole, Manusa's greatest head-hunter, is also a kind of trickster figure.<sup>22</sup> Siu Totole's skills rely on trickery but also on dexterity and bravery. During the conflict with Huku, Siu Totole is depicted as the warlord who initiated and led a retaliation raid on this neighbour community. A child of his **nuru** having been wounded, he killed a child of Huku in revenge. Deceiving Huku's people he beheaded their great warrior Pitan Matata<sup>23</sup> and led the attack

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<sup>21</sup>Op.cit. 68, 149. 'This somewhat vague figure is often ascribed priestly duties.' (p.151). See also pp. 68,70,76,149-151.

<sup>22</sup>**Siu** means 'bend' (or 'elbow'), **toto** small. It is a characteristic of the trickster figure that this hero is often deformed or has not attained full human stature.

<sup>23</sup>**Kapitan mata ata: kapitan** 'four eyes': he was Huku's sentinel as he had two extra eyes in the back of his head.

on their settlement. Manusa's people took over the land of Huku and built on it their main hamlet. The **amalesi** was the leader of all warlike undertakings and headhunting parties including the preparation of the youths for combat, which was part of their initiation, but his role extended further.

Having started as great head-hunter and warlord, Siu Totole acquired the traits of a transforming figure, a cultural hero who civilised Japio batai, Manusa's Wemale neighbours and favourite enemy. Carrying out the role of explorer, Siu Totole opened the way to the Uli river valley (Ulibatai), and, as he walked eastward, marked the land for his **hena**. He established contact with the people of Ulibatai and it was he, said the elders, who named their first village Bulune (a kind of 'fern', **bulu**: 'hair, fur'). Another well-known episode of Siu Totole's deeds, cheerfully described in Manusa, is the way he taught the poor ignorant people of Japio how to copulate. This, said an elder, was because the name Maslebu (Siu Totole's **nuru**) comes from **ama nebu** which means 'father' (who) 'fecundates', 'reproduces', carrying the power of making people prolific. On his way back from Japio, Siu Totole brought to Manusa a seedling of the 'damar tree' (**ai 'alane**). It produces a resin which is the main cash crop of the community and is used for trading with the coast. It is noteworthy that all the deeds of the **amalesi** have a link with the dealings the community has with the wild and the outside, even the plant he brought.

In yet another warfare episode with Japio Batai, in which his female relative Sapai had been beheaded, Siu Totole was caught in Japio where he went to revenge her death. The resourceful ancestor transformed himself into a 'civet cat' (**lau**) and escaped while the people were already celebrating his capture. Great warriors and warlords ancestors had the ability of changing themselves into animals to trick the enemy or move faster through the forest. Siu Totole's grave is on Maslebu's land at the spring of 'we Metena (Black river), a tributary of the Sapalewa.<sup>24</sup>

### *The peace negotiator: ama nili*

The function I call peace negotiator is **ama nili**: 'saniri father'. In peace time, his role was to head the 'village council of elders' (**nili**) and to act as the representative of the **hena** in the larger saniri (**nili ela**) of the river **batai**. As head of the elders' council he was expected to be

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<sup>24</sup>The realm of the dead is upside down and the opposite of the world of the living. While a river flows downstream, the ancestral substance returns upstream via the Three Rivers, to Nunusaku, Those of Manusa follow the Sapalewa.



knowledgeable in customary matters, more specifically in what concerned the administrative relationship with the outside, including land boundaries. His function, said an elder, was a recent institution and had never been one of the three **latu** at the origin of the **hena**. In Manusa, Belena, the ancestor who impersonates the **ama nili**, is renowned for his role as the peace negotiator who successfully negotiated the reconciliation treaty with Japio Batai. While Siu Totole is a lone character, the ancestors associated with the role of peace negotiator are said to be a pair of elder/younger brothers Belena and Lelese. The elder brother Belena (born around 1880) is also the only famous ancestor of the village to whom a link is still traced through a genealogy.<sup>25</sup> He also happens to be the ancestor of the largest and most powerful **nuru** of Manusa. It is noteworthy that the younger brother, Lelese, appears as a passive figure (he has no descent) and seems to be remembered mainly to repeat the model of elder/younger brother which stands at the origin of the **hena**. However, in that case it is the elder brother who remains. For some village elders, the function is regarded as a 'new' one.

To make their ancestor enter Manusa's 'history' (**sou**), the elders of Belena (and Lelese) **nuru** support the authenticity of their ancestors' deeds using a traditional pattern (the model elder/younger brother). They also emphasise the complementary nature of their ancestor's and the warlord's duties and contributions to the domain. Both dignitaries deal with the **hena's** external relationships. The warlord handles the wild, undomesticated world of the forest and its related traditional law while the peace maker specialises around the space domesticated and claimed by groups, negotiates with people and represents the **hena** at reginal **nili** assemblies.<sup>26</sup> In fact, Belena and his family were Wemale people from Sumite (Tala region) who were given the right to use some land and build a hamlet on Manusa's territory close to Japio Batai.<sup>27</sup> Speaking both languages and established between the two communities, Belena was an ideal intermediary.

The descendants of the warlord Siu Totole had brought their own part of the telling to the point where Siu Totole cleverly escaped Japio. Elias Neyte, the grand son of Belena, took it

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<sup>25</sup>His great-grandson was the village head at the time I was doing field work.

<sup>26</sup>Just as the **nuru** of the warlord claims to have brought the damar to Manusa, the **nuru** of the peace maker claims to have introduced the rice. Both plants come from the 'outside', but one from the forest, the other from a cultivated environment.

<sup>27</sup>In their long history of warfare and reciprocal conquest, Alune (and Wemale) domains have welcomed and assimilated each other's landless or defeated units. The Neyte were given asylum on the land of Manusa when they fled during the Dutch offensive on their territory in the years 1906-07 (see Chapter Two: The Tala campaign).

from there, introducing his ancestor in the history of the **hena**. As Siu Totole had escaped Japio and returned to Batu Mete (Black Stone, the hamlet of his **nuru**), said Elias, Belena went to **ulate** ('mount') Tobile (on Japio's territory) and negotiated peace with elders of Japio.<sup>28</sup> Thanks to Belena's skills (and to Dutch pressure), an oath of brotherhood (**pela**) was taken by the two communities in 1912. Broken during the events of the 1950s, this relationship is now renewed on a regular basis.<sup>29</sup>

Although the function of 'peace maker' is the less 'authentic' in the eyes of most Manusa elders themselves, it is the traditional position which has endured and adapted best to the modern system. Indeed, although they were complementary, the role of peace negotiator is certainly an image better welcomed and encouraged by both the present administration and the Church than that of a war leader.

### *The left hand: alamanane*

According to Tauern the **alamanane** were essentially spokesmen and translators.<sup>30</sup> They must have played an important role in the large saniri (**nili ela**) where the people of different valleys, speaking different languages, had to understand each other to hold their assemblies, promulgate laws and judge regional court cases. For van Wouden the **alamanane** are the 'spokesmen composers of quarrels and intercessors'.<sup>31</sup> It seems that van Wouden combined both the **alamanane** and the *marinjo* in a single role, something which might have happened in small communities and also served his theoretical purpose. However in Manusa their roles seem to have been clearly distinct. The name **alamanane** comes from **alamane**, the

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<sup>28</sup>The 'elder man' **ntuane** Moria and 'elder woman', **matabina** Ponani, who appear on a photo taken by Tauern (1918 plate 90).

<sup>29</sup>The word **pela** has two principal meanings: 'to finish/complete' and 'to share'. The **pela** treaty implies mutual support and an absolute taboo on blood contact and any form of violence between the partners. The taboo on violence was broken during the RMS time when Sakua, Japio's **pitan** (*kapitan*: 'warlord'), beat three people of Manusa. One of them was again a Maslebu, the **nuru** of Siu Totole. When, a few years later, peace was re-established, the leader of Manusa happened to be from that same **nuru**. It was not Siu Totole's time anymore so he did not kill anyone but he demanded, and obtained, that the villagers of Abio came to apologise in Manusa, crossing the village on their knees in their black Sunday Church dresses. Since then, ceremonies to renew the **pela** have been held at intervals of about three years (or more) alternatively in Japio, Manusa or one of their children villages. It ensures that everyone remembers and follows the prescriptions and prohibitions which are associated with it (total reciprocal hospitality, no marriage, no violence, no blood pollution, etc).

<sup>30</sup>(1918 pp.29,137-139).

<sup>31</sup>(1968 cit. p.72). See also van Wouden: op. cit., pp.72, 150, de Vries 1927 p.139-40, Tauern 1918 p.29, 137 139, 155, Sachse 1922 p.133.

ritual 'chanting' of an historical event. This establishes the main role of the holder of that function. In the village, the task of the **alamanane** was to assist the ritual officiant in diverse tasks; as spokesman, relaying messages or telling histories; as interpreter, translating visitors' sayings and as ritual assistant, placing people, cutting the meat, etc. The duty was described in Bahasa Indonesia as *juru bicara* 'interpreter' or *tangan kiri* 'left hand' i.e. the assistant on the left side, the side of the 'tradition' **atate**, (*tangan kiri pusat adat*). This function was traditionally held by someone of **nuru** Nia'we (Snake). Its modern equivalent is village secretary, a role still assumed by someone belonging to that same **nuru**.

### *The right hand: ama tita*

According to Tauern, the *marinjo* was a kind of civil servant, while Sachse describes him as a sort of watchman or policeman of the community.<sup>32</sup> His duty, writes Tauern, dated from the Portuguese time. His task was to keep law and order in the village, to carry out the orders of the regent and execute the punishments for which he readily walked around with a rattan stick. In Manusa the *marinjo* was called **ama tita**, **ama** means 'father', the verb **tita** means 'to cross over', to make the 'liaison' between two things/people. It also means to walk around, to go visiting, i.e. to carry the news, or to act as a liaison agent which was the main task of the **ama tita**.<sup>33</sup> The village head said that the **ama tita** was his assistant and the assistant of the **nili** elders, carrying out their orders, activities which describe the task of the *marinjo*. The duty was described in Bahasa Indonesia as *tangan kanan* the right hand, i.e. the assistant on the 'right side' (**ma'wanale**), the side of the government, (*tangan kanan pusat pemerintah*). This function was traditionally held by someone of **nuru** Matital (**ama tita**). There is no official modern equivalent for this duty in the small community of Manusa nowadays; however if the context calls for it, an elder of that same **nuru** will take on a task that falls under that description.<sup>34</sup> To summarise, the **alamanane** was the assistant in ritual matters and the **ama tita** was his equivalent in matters relating to administration or law and order.

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<sup>32</sup>Tauern 1918 p.128; Sachse 1922 p.82 112.

<sup>33</sup>**Titane** is a 'bridge', **butitane** the 'spine' of a human (or an animal) or the 'ridge' of a mountain.

<sup>34</sup>One evening, a small disturbance upset the village order. The elder of Matital immediately came to the side of the young village head and assisted him in re-establishing calm and settling the disagreement.

### Concluding note: Seven duties, seven *nuru*

Tauern, who visited Manusa (which he calls: *Manusa Manue* or *Massa Manohue*) during the Second Freiburg Expedition (1911-1912), writes that he was received by the 'regent' (*orang kaya*), the *latu* ('lord of the land'), the *anakota* (high priest), the **alamanane** ('spokesman' of the *saniri*), and several *soa* elders.<sup>35</sup> This assembly of 'village authorities' (the **hena upui**) fits the context of such a visit (Tauern wanted to be shown a sacred ritual object). It also supports Manusa's claim for its three **latu**: a ruler ('regent'), a lord of the land and a ritual performer. Tauern calls this last dignitary by the usual coastal term of *mauwen anakota*.<sup>36</sup> In such a circumstance as Tauern's visit, it was the role of the **alamanane** to act as 'interpreter'. It also tells us that at that time the ruler (not named) was an *orang kaya*, a 'rich man', a title given by the Dutch to the rulers they appointed at the lowest rank, usually to counter-balance the traditional sources of authority.<sup>37</sup>

The governing council of the negorij is termed *saniri hena* (...) At the head of the negorij stands a hereditary or elected official who is usually referred to as 'regent' (...) The indigenous name is apparently *latu* (...) Next to the regent (...) came the lord of the land (...) *Rajah Tanah* or *Latu* (...) The *saniri hena* was composed of the *mauwen* (...) the lord of the land, the regent and the various heads of the *soa*.<sup>38</sup>

Thus the model of the three **latu** (ruler, lord of the land, ritual performer) is also confirmed by van Wouden's compilation and analysis of the information available about the Alune region. In Manusa the *Saniri hena* is called **nili hena**, ('village council'). As seen in a

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<sup>35</sup>(1918 p.139-40).

<sup>36</sup>In archives, *mauwen* is usually translated by 'Kakehan priest'. Florey translate **mauwene** by 'clan leader'. In the Moluccas *anakota* refers to a boat captain. The *mauwen anakota* was the leader of the local unit of the Kakehan cult.

<sup>37</sup>The main criteria were that the person appointed spoke a little Malay and showed some desire to collaborate. This is why at an early stage, some **alamanane**, whose duty it was to facilitate communication with outsiders, ended up as village representatives. The three levels were, from lower to higher: *orang kaya*, *patih* and *raja*. The combination of traditional and colonial titles provoked some confusion at times. For example, in Manusa the rulers were traditionally named **latu** (lord). In 1925, when a *raja* was appointed he was referred to as both **latu** or *raja* but the first born man of the elder line of his **nuru**, who was the ritual officiant (*maeta'e*), was referred to as *patih*. Thus the colonial system was used to order them in a sequence of precedence. Terms of Ternatan origin had been adopted too, for example the *kolane* who became 'loane and later **patih 'loane**. To add to the confusion, the duties attached to their function also shifted.

<sup>38</sup>(Van Wouden op cit. p. 71-72, his italics).

previous chapter, on a larger scale this form of government was partly reduplicated at the level of the whole river **batai** when the groups held a general assembly (**nili ela'e**).<sup>39</sup>

Van Wouden opposes as complementary the functions of ruler and lord of the land or lord of the land and ritual performer. He also mentions the **alamanane** and the warlord, but he never refers to a sevenfold governing council found in the traditional Alune village government.<sup>40</sup> I have summarised the seven positions in Manusa, their duties, attributions and specificity in table 5.1: Nuruitu: the seven duties of the **hena upui** ('ancestor/grand father of the **hena**'). From this table, a pairing of these positions becomes apparent. Ruler and lord of the land have complementary duties, so have the warlord and the peace negotiator as well as the left and right hands. The duty that is left out is the position of ritual performer, whose spiritual role extends over but also beyond the **hena**. What has also become apparent is that most duties have remained fairly consistently in the same **nuru** for several generations. This may explain why founding **nuru** and founding duties coincide.<sup>41</sup> Seven ancestral duties (**hena upui**) are to be fulfilled by seven **nuru**. Thus it is not the number of **nuru** which determines the duties in the communities but the duties which determine the number of **hena upui** in Manusa, and this number is fixed by the tradition and supported by the narrative. It also implies that whatever the number of **nuru** represented in the domain, only seven of them at a time can hold one of the founding duties of **hena upui**. The Houses which do not hold one of the seven positions are the **ana mulini** those who came after, the 'younger children'. As 'younger children' build their reknown 'domain's grandfathers' have to sustain theirs. The history of the **hena** shows that several **nuru** that were once 'younger children', have through time and appropriate alliances, grown into 'domain grandfathers'. Since the narrative does not specify any **nuru** name, in principle virtually any **nuru** may achieve the prestige and power to claim (or buy) such a position.

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<sup>39</sup>On such occasions, all the **latu** of the river valley were recalled, ordered as **latu lete mulia - latu lau sawa**, 'lords up/inland, in the back/junior (the mountain domains) and lords seaward/at the coast'. This order mirrors the recurrent model of the two brothers found in Manusa in matters of government and administration: Samai, the junior in the mountain, and Latuelamena, the elder at the coast.

<sup>40</sup>Although she does not attempt to explain their number, Howell also reports seven priestly figures per village in Lio (Flores). She names and describes their main three functions: a 'priest leader of the land' (or 'trunk priest leader' who is also the 'head of the Big House'), a 'priest leader who stabs the pig' and a 'priest leader of warfare'. (Howell S. 1995 p.156-7.).

<sup>41</sup>In the *desa* most modern administrative functions are held by members of the **nuru** still regarded as **hena upui**. This, however is not the remnant of 'feudal practices' but merely the fact that some representatives of these Houses have the practice, the authority and the network of allies that allow them to perform their task. These positions can be, and are challenged by newcomers.

The position of village ruler is the most accessible. It has rotated among **hena upui** but it is also held by **ana mulini**.

The **nuru** which claim the positions of founding 'grandfathers' of the domain are also those who have claims on the largest sections of land in the **hena**. The **ana mulini** those who came after, the 'younger children', have claims on smaller areas. However they can receive land from the **hena** or another **nuru** if they develop enough to require it. Who is someone else's land giver and who was a **mena** the 'elder' on a piece of land is only forgotten if the group who watched over it, has become extinct.

### THE NARRATIVES OF SOME NURU

'Origin groups', **nuru**, the people who share the same name, also retrace the footsteps of their ancestors along paths recounted in topogenies. As they grow and diversify these ancestral groups extend their 'branches' (**sanai**) over different domains, each branch in turn setting forth differentiated 'Houses' (**juma**). When recalling the narrative of their **nuru**, the elders of some Houses of Manusa trace it back only to their mother 'branch', while others are able to follow the footsteps of their ancestors back to their initial trunk.

The topogenies of Alune domains provide for a social feature distinctive of this society: the sporadic arrival and/or departure of its units. In-coming units (segments of **nuru**) 'transplant' their own topogenies and 'graft' them on the origin structure of a domain. As units become associated with a domain, some affix their own narrative to its topogeny.<sup>42</sup> Also retracing the journey of a group, these narratives are shaped on the same structural model as the narrative of origin of the **hena**. They form what Lévi-Strauss calls *une histoire... en prise directe sur le mythe*.<sup>43</sup> In Alune terms **sou** the 'history' of a group, flows, uninterrupted, from a mythical origin along successive founding events and into the present. These topogenies both constitute the terms of a claim and justify that claim. The claims associated with these narratives have immediate social implications in the **hena** as they recall the function, rights and precedence of its units.

However, for the outsider, their close juxtaposition produces puzzling ambiguities, variations or even contradictions. These topogenies are usually kept separated, each unit

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<sup>42</sup>Units are included by following a migration, others by joining an established domain. Groups were also incorporated by conquest.

<sup>43</sup>Lévi-Strauss 1984. However Alune do not distinguish history and myth in that manner.

believing in the veracity of its own **sou**. But in time of disagreement (over land or another matter) they are brought in to clarify disputed matters. These narratives do not coincide to form a logical tapestry and their close juxtaposition does not provide a clear chronological history of the **hena**. Each ambiguity, variation or contradiction may have immediate social implications as narratives deal with the functions and precedence of the units (**luma** 'Houses') in the present social order of the **hena**. Indeed, one is sometimes left with the impression that a narrative may become a device to conceal or manipulate this chronology to obtain the most of the precedence it implies. The social order of the **hena** is justified but also grows and transforms on this fluctuating ground.

Fifteen **nuru** are now represented in Manusa in various proportions.<sup>44</sup> The following narratives belong to the Houses of some of these **nuru** now established in the **hena**. They recall the path of their own ancestors and the history of their insertion in the community. Narrating their topogenies, elders recall the various ways in which their unit founded or returned (**leu**) to Manusa. These narratives of in-coming **nuru** keep the history of the domain alive, relevant to succeeding generations and changing contexts.

### **Nuru's narratives of insertion in the hena**

A **nuru** is a non-localized origin group. It is characterized by a constant branching and sub branching process which allows its growth as well as the mobility of its members. Thus each **nuru** has its own topogeny to which each branch may add the variations of its own route. The branches themselves keep subdividing in Houses (**luma**), the smallest social unit being a **luma tau** ('house content'), an household. The first House of a **nuru** to arrive in a domain becomes the 'mother House' (**luma inai**) of its **nuru** in that domain. The Houses of the same **nuru** (same or different branch) arriving afterward are referred as the 'branch Houses' (**luma sanai**). Nowadays, although it retains an order of precedence, it does not imply obligation from the later House to the earlier one. Most branches and many Houses of a **nuru** recall having changed residence. Often (but not always) their narrative recalls an ancient tie with the domains where they resettled. This allows them to 'return' (**leu**) to a neighbouring community (domain) minimizing their undervalued position of outsider and newcomer. In **hena Ma'saman.uey**, the branches of **nuru** which claim to have 'returned' possess a narrative acknowledging the domain as an earlier point of origin (**Kapitan**), or insert themselves at a

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<sup>44</sup>For example Nuru Neyte has three Houses (in eleven households) while Nyak is now represented by a single House (in three households).

given *topoi* in the narrative of origin (Neyte). This justifies their claim for certain positions in the domain while acknowledging the precedence of the senior and founding **nuru** of the lord of the land. Significantly, newcomer **nuru** (sometimes established for several generations), which do not have a claim upon a traditional position or rank, do not link their **nuru** to the domain in their narrative (for example, Souhali, Akolo, Ruspanah).

The following narratives, all collected in Manusa, illustrate some of the ways **nuru** refer to their origin whether or not they regard themselves among the founding **nuru** of a domain. The elders of some **nuru** which constitute Manusa today told me these accounts. These fragments belong to specific contexts and were not meant to be artificially frozen as they are now for the purpose of this analysis.<sup>45</sup>

### *Nuru Tibali*

The origin narrative of the **nuru** Tibali gives an example of a topogeny in which the narrative also supports the claim to an earlier link with the domain. The last places recalled are the actual land boundaries of this **nuru** within the domain.<sup>46</sup>

From Huamual (the southern peninsula of Seram), Manala, Peliu and Eita, two brothers and their sister travelled by canoe to the mouth of the Nala river and went upstream until they met a rivulet which they called Sa Menena (Meneta?). They stayed there for a while. Then they went inland following the river to Puia and stayed there with their thirty 'dogs' (i.e. people). After that, they went up to the headwaters of the Nala toward the headwaters of the Tau (the ancestral river of Manusa). The three of them cut the bark of a **reale** tree, made a garden house and stayed there a long time. Then they moved seaward to the river Niuani (Niuane) and their thirty dogs had pups in the stump of a candlenut tree so they called this place Milu Uani.<sup>47</sup> They stayed there a long time. The pups had grown up by the time they left, walking downstream the Tau. They went down until they met the Sala'oai river. The dogs slept in the hole of a **salate** tree; this is why they gave that river the name Sala'oai, the 'hole in the **salate** tree'.<sup>48</sup> They stayed until more dogs had grown up (i.e. several generations). Then the three followed the range of hills up to the headwaters of the Tala river. Up there, their dogs chased a wild pig and they followed it

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<sup>45</sup>These narratives belong to people, they relate to their perception of origin and are heavily loaded with meaning which largely escapes us. Their partial transcription into 'texts' is an ethical question I am still debating.

<sup>46</sup>This is a shortened version.

<sup>47</sup>**Ai tutini**: 'stump' of a tree. **milu**: 'candlenut': Aleurites Moluccana, Macadamia Ternifolia (*kemiri*). Prestigious ancestors were also great hunters and had numerous dogs. Dogs sometimes also represent people, because good hunting dogs are to their masters like close members of the family.

<sup>48</sup>**Ai benai**: 'hole in a tree'. **Salate**: white wood used to make paper (Florey in Alunedic 94 has: **ai salate**: implement used in sorcery).



downstream the Tala. At that place, one of them jumped and his footprint is embedded in the rock with the mark of his spear. One can still see the prints of dog paws all over the rocks and up the hill where they followed the pig. They heard the dogs barking at the pig and followed them. However, by the time they arrived the pig had transformed itself into a sago tree, making pig grunts as it moved in the wind. Standing in front of it, the elder Brother opened his betel pouch and they chewed betel looking at the sago tree. His younger brother and his younger sister said: 'where is the pig?' 'There is no pig!' Then the two asked: 'maybe it is a bad omen for the three of us? So what is this?' The three said words (prayers). 'Well, let us stay here now.' As they were sitting down they saw people cutting reed leaves. These were the people of lord Samai, the founding ancestor, lord of the land of Manusa (or one of his successors and representatives). Having met these three, they returned home and said that there were people down there. 'Are they gone already?' 'No they are at the reed leaves.' So Samai went down there with his people. 'Where are you from?' Lord Samai asked the three: 'where do you want to go?' They answered that they were looking for a place to stay. Then lord Samai said: 'No more, the three of you just stay here. You came up to here. I do not want you to go any further. Don't go, just stay here' (*eu moneka, a due peneka*). So the three of them named that river Tala, which means to step over.<sup>49</sup>

This narrative supports a claim of relative temporal precedence. It presents the now familiar figure of a pair of older/younger brothers and their sister being given rights to a share of land on the *hena* by the lord of the land who founded the domain.<sup>50</sup> Coming with a sister provided the two brothers with the privilege of a wife giver, i.e. a potential access to the land of their wife taker. These three Tibali ancestors could also be representing two male and one female Houses. The narratives of a *nuru* have several levels of interpretation. In the narrative of Manusa, Tibali is the junior 'ignorant child' (*ana sosi*), left behind by Latuelamena when the ruler/older brother went to the coast. These first Tibali have no descendants in the *hena* say people; the Tibali now in the village 'returned' later. This implies that the three ancestors of this narrative 'returned' to Manusa from the coast where the older brother had gone. Thus, it is expected that when Samai knew where they came from, he told them not to go any further and gave them the custody of some land.

### *Nuru Neyte*

The *nuru* Neyte is the largest *nuru* of the *hena*. The name Neyte comes from *nikite* or *n'ite*: an edible 'fern' served with wild pig meat. It is their emblem plant. When the meat was shared between all the groups (in Sobain Latale), said their elder, their group was a little late and as there was no meat left they received *ni'ite*. When I was doing fieldwork, the Neyte elder (*luma inai*, junior line) was the *nili amai* (*nili*: 'village council', *ama*: 'father'), head of

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<sup>49</sup>*Sabu* :to 'cross over'.

<sup>50</sup>They received the land around Mount 'Wana Bubui the highest point on Manusa territory.

the *saniri* council as well as the representative of the village in *adat* matters when dealing with the outside. His son was the village head. Another of their elders (**luma inai**, senior line) was leading the Church council. Added to the number of its members, these foremost positions in government, Church and tradition made Neyte the most powerful **nuru** of the **hena**. Another of their strengths was to regroup all their Houses (11) around a single name (their **nuruwei** name), presenting a united front, although they are of three unrelated Houses (from different branches).<sup>51</sup> The ancestors of **nuru** Neyte are famous in the **hena** for their role as peace makers, directly associating Neyte to the renown of the community. As their elders admitted, **nuru** Neyte 'returned later'. However what they never mention is that their ancestors were not Alune.<sup>52</sup>

We came from the upper Tala, said the elder. We returned with Samai when he came back from the Eti (having agreed with Latuelamena that Samai would watch over the mountain). The **sisine** was not fully built yet. We added our post and the building was completed.

Here again the group uses the 'returning' model with its insertion point at Nuruitu. However it adds an essential event to it. The elder recalls the recent creation of the dignitary position (**ama nili**) held by his **nuru**, describing it as the last pole of the **sisine**, the 'meeting platform of the village council', symbol of its social order. The **sisine** (**sisi hena**), was not completely built says the elder. This is to say that the **hena** as a society was not yet fully constituted. Neyte having joined in and having erected its post, the building was completed, i.e. the society was fully established. This also implies that all the units of other **nuru** arriving after theirs can not be counted as founding **nuru** anymore and have to affiliate themselves to one of the seven or stand as a follower coming from outside.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>On the contrary and for a different purpose, Ruspanah, another large **nuru** in the **hena**, has maintained the distinction between its branches (see below).

<sup>52</sup>I traced their arrival in Manusa to around the turn of the century (between 1905 and 1908). They left Sumite Wemale when the Dutch occupation scattered their community (Sachse 1922 p.173). They were welcomed on Manusa Alune territory and established a hamlet in Puwela, (and later Bu'ela) not far from the boundaries with Japio Batai whose language they spoke.

<sup>53</sup>However when asked what were the first seven **nuru** in Manusa, the Neyte's elder did not list his **nuru** among them but mentioned alongside the three **latu**, names now extinct in Manusa.

### *Nuru Kapitan*

The **nuru** Kapitan (war leader) exemplifies an affiliation to one of the seven founding **nuru**. Kapitan is a large **nuru** in the region, or at least this name (not Alune) is frequently used. It originates from the title given by the Portuguese to leaders or envoys.<sup>54</sup>

The elder of Kapitan in Manusa was *raja* from 1979 to 1989. He bought with heirloom plates the right to use this title from the **nuru**ela Matoke. To justify his legitimacy to hold that position, he put forward the evidence that Kapitan was a branch of Tibali, the 'ignorant child' left behind by Latuelamena, the elder brother/ruler of the **hena** in the narrative of origin.

How distant or unlikely the link might be does not seem to matter as long as the claim is not openly rejected by the House chosen as mother.

### *Nuru Ruspanah*

The narrative of **nuru** Ruspanah illustrates the case of a **nuru** referring to a single site featuring rock, tree and water, three elements often present in origin narratives.<sup>55</sup> This exemplifies the type of narrative of a **nuru** without a claim of participation in the foundation of the domain.

A young woman was bathing in a river when a flower of the **pana** tree fell in the water. From this her **nuru** took the name **luma** Pana. It became **nuru** Lupana or Ruspanah.  
 - **Pana buai e atabola pomine i nuru-re Lupana:** 'The fruit of the **pana** explodes (making the noise of a gun shot) before (it liberates its seeds). This is **nuru** Ruspanah.'

This refers both to the gun of Lealata, Ruspanah's great war leader, and to the dissemination of seeds, a metaphor expressing fecundity.<sup>56</sup> The **nuru** Ruspanah has Houses from two of its four main branches in Manusa. They are ranked in an order of precedence in their mother House (**luma inai**), the first to have arrived in Manusa, and the branch Houses (**luma sanai**). Each of them links itself to the narrative of one of the four main branches that form the large

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<sup>54</sup>This is one of these **nuru** whose tree it is difficult to follow up because the name was frequently taken up by branches, either as a prestigious title or as a disguise in time of oppression, and later kept by their descendants.

<sup>55</sup>(...) 'Earth, rock, river, water....serve as markers for specific places'. (Fox, op. cit 1997 p.3.)

<sup>56</sup>Great warriors, who were also great head-hunters, are often renowned to have possessed supernatural powers associated with fecundity.

**nuru** Ruspanah.<sup>57</sup> To explain their arrival in Manusa they just say that Samai (i.e. the lord of the land) allowed them to settle but do not produce a narrative about it.

### *Nuru Akolo*

The narrative of **nuru** Akolo also refers to a site featuring rock and water. This **nuru** has no claim to the foundation of the domain either. Furthermore it maintains contacts with others of its branches and is the only one in Manusa to trace its genealogy back more than three generations. Akolo is a large **nuru** with several branches, and has branch Houses in various villages of the Three Rivers in both the Alune and Wemale regions. An ambiguity about their point of origin allows the Akolo to assimilate with either Wemale or Alune.

The **nuru** Akolo has two branch Houses in Manusa. Neither is large nor influential in the domain. One of them affiliates itself to Lumusanai, a prominent branch of Akolo in another domain. The narrative of this House does not claim an ancient link with Manusa. Its migration to the **hena** is set in genealogical time. The feature underlined in the narrative is that the ancestor of Akolo Lumusanai brought with him a prestigious magic power when he came to Manusa.

The Lumusanai of **nuru** Akolo came from the Tala river area. This place of origin is marked by a ring of stones at the junction of the rivers Tau and Tala.<sup>58</sup> The ancestor was the famous warrior Telia.

Another narrative about Telia was collected by Niggemeyer and Jensen in a Wemale village in 1939.<sup>59</sup> In that version, Telia is represented by the Wemale storyteller as a new-comer who had fled Huamual with his people to Tala (Wemale) and possessed the magic powers of invincibility. From his branch perspective, the Akolo elder in Manusa presents a version in which Akolo's origin place is also Tala. However he refers to the Alune Tala river near

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<sup>57</sup>These four main branches are: Lupana Mosole 'House of the forest **pana**', Lupana Laene the branch at the coast, Lupana Baralatu, in Lohia Sapalewa, and lupana Soi Puti which refers to Mulania, the 'White Areca Nut' from the Tala river which transformed itself into a human being. The names of the two large branches Lupana Mosole and Lupana Laene, House of the Forest/House at the Coast refers to the categories mountain/coast.

<sup>58</sup>This Tala river is a rivulet flowing southwest from Manusa, not the main stream of the Wemale area that flows south-east of the domain.

<sup>59</sup>Op. cit., 1939 n°51 p.107 collected in Japio Batai. Telia was a hero during the opposition to the Dutch. His prowess has some similarities with the adventures of a western hero, the Baron of Munchausen.

Manusa while the Wemale storyteller refers to the large Tala of the Wemale region. However their narratives have similarities.

From Tala, Tebalia, a descendant of Telia, went to Manusa. Like his ancestor, Tebalia had the magical power of invincibility which he brought to the domain in the form of a white stone and a black crocodile. These magical objects were used by the villagers during the events of the 1950s. Thanks to it, no one was wounded by gun or sword. Tauliela, the lord of the land, welcomed Tebalia and gave him a wife from his own **nuru**. Tebalia had two sons, Leminela and Lasaile, the fathers of the actual older living generation of the Akolo Lumusanai in Manusa.

Here too it is the lord of the land who gives the newcomer the right to settle. Tauliela was the first traditional dignitary to be appointed as a ruler by the Dutch in 1920-25. Tauliela also gave Akolo their first bride in the **hena**. Nowadays, Akolo is still among the followers of Latue, the *soa* of the lord of the land, a direct consequence of having married one of their daughters.

#### THE CONCEPT OF CENTRE

The definition of a centre, as found in the Webster, emphasizes the inward and centripetal movement toward a centre.<sup>60</sup> However, a centre is also 'a fundamental point with active dynamic properties where forces are concentrated and/or from whence they radiate'.<sup>61</sup> There is thus both a movement from and toward a centre. It is both a point of convergence and diffusion, of attraction and influence. Another characteristic of centres is their multiplicity.

Manusa takes as emblem the '**webute**, the 'hearth rack', from the motto of the **nuru** of the founding lord of the land. Manusa's elders represent their domain as a welcoming centre like the hearth of each house that radiates warmth and attracts dwellers. The domain is also a ritual centre, a '**webute**, the altar where the ancestors were fed the essence of the meat that was cured on it. As it appears in their narratives, for the people of Manusa there are several centres. Nunusaku is the centre of origin. Manusa, through its founding ancestor, is the

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<sup>60</sup>Centre: the point around which a circle or sphere is described... A point, area, person or thing that is most important or pivotal in relation to an indicated activity, interest or condition. A source from which something originates...To place or fix at or around a centre. To have a centre: focus, to gather to a centre: concentrate. To centre in on at around, to revolve around' (Webster 1983 p.220).

<sup>61</sup>Petit Robert ed.1979, p.274

centre of the dispersal of people and the repartition of heirlooms.<sup>62</sup> Nuruitu is the ritual centre of Manusa and the '**webute**' is the centre of each house. At another level, apparent in the regional social organisation, Manusa recognises coastal domains as centres of power, but as the **hena** sets itself at their respective peripheries, it locates itself at an equi-distant position between them i.e. in the centre. The topogeny of the **hena** emphasises this outward, radiating aspect. It encompasses the most important groups of west Seram and establishes Manusa at its centre. The inward movement to Manusa appears in the narratives of the **nuru** 'returning' (**leu**) to settle in the domain because the **hena** is the initial centre of sharing and dispersion.

### **The outward movement**

Significantly, the narrative encompasses the important groups of west Seram while setting Manusa in its centre. The region is called 'Wele Batai Telu: 'The Three Large River Trunks' referring to the drainage systems of the Eti river in the south-west, the Sapalewa river in the north, both Alune territories, and the Tala river in the south-east, mainly Wemale.<sup>63</sup> While in the traditional system, each domain (**hena**, **inama** or **anakota**) of inland 'Wele Telu' clearly belongs to one of the Three Rivers, Manusa positions itself in an ambivalent and central position which allows the **hena** to claim strategic ties with each of the three rivers according to context.

### *The relationship with Eti batai*

We saw in the narratives that, having walked with his people from Nunusaku, the origin place of mankind, Samai establishes a domain around a ritual centre: Nuruitu, with 'seven **nuru**' while his older brother Latuelamena, the 'Great Lord in the Front', settles in Eti. The older brother's group keeps the regalia of knowledge and rules from the coast (Eti). The younger brother's group remains in the mountains as custodian of its territory, watching over the Nunusaku and reporting to Eti on important matters.

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<sup>62</sup>**Ma' saman uey**: 'the place which is/the people who are' (**ma'a**) at the 'origin/centr'e (**uey** or **uwei**) of the 'distribution/allotment' (**sama**).

<sup>63</sup>The modern administrative division into *Kecamatan* roughly follows this tripartite distribution along the river valleys.

This acknowledgment of an 'older' power at the coast whose source of knowledge came from the mountain is a recurrent pattern in the region. It establishes the regional allegiance of the **hena** as a territorial group to a powerful political ally and exchange partner, while simultaneously affirming its internal ritual autonomy. This mountain/coast, (*gunung/pantai*) relationship also refers to a well documented regional set of semantic asymmetries, the opposite and complementary halves of a given body.<sup>64</sup> In the context of their political alliance, the powerful male coastal Eti is given the status of 'older brother' associated with precedence while the remote **hena** Ma'saman.uey is positioned in the deferential rank of 'younger brother'. This asymmetric relation between Masamanuwei and Eti, is however inverted and Masamanuwei assesses itself as the 'older' female when the context refers to the origin of the knowledge implicitly at the source of Eti's power. This agreement also suggests that even if the older power at the coast is powerful and dominant (Manusa has to report to it), the origin and the source of its well being and fertility is however from the mountains, i.e. in the custody of the 'younger brother'. This is an idea expressed by both mountain and coastal people who 'return' to their mountain village of origin with offerings and requests when they need the assistance of an ancestral power to enhance their fecundity, improve their health or increase their prosperity.

If the **hena** traces its origin back to the middle of the 17th century, something which is not claimed and rather improbable, the narrative could also imply that the group of Samai was acknowledged through Eti by the Ternatan government of Huamual, which ruled over a large part of the region until the middle of the 17th century.<sup>65</sup> Two centuries later, Piru, a harbour of easy access near the mouth of the Eti river, was also chosen by the Dutch administration to establish a permanent post in order to explore the region and enforce its control over it. However one can only speculate because the history of the interior of 'Wele Telu before and during this intermediary period (1656-1859) is not documented.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>(Jansen op. cit. 1933/1983, pp. 101-115).

<sup>65</sup>Several narratives (eg. Jensen 1939 p.128-29) mention that many people of Huamual were taken in by mountain villages when the Dutch depopulated the peninsula (thus, the **nuru** Makwabane in Manusa claims an ancient Huamual origin). They might have brought, or at least amplified and modified, the cult of the Kakehan in the mountains (this is recalled in narratives, eg: Jensen 1939 p.107).

<sup>66</sup>The VOC and later (1800) the Oost Indische Handel en Bezettingen maintained a tight control on the coastal populations, chiefly concerned with the enforcement of the 'culture system' policies. However, during the 17th and 18th century the population of the interior was left alone, although the Dutch were sometimes helped by mountain warriors eager to obtain heads or to participate in the looting of coastal villages (cf.: Rumphius ed. 1910 p.84). The mountain warriors also helped the Dutch in their campaigns against Banda, Hitu and Huamual, joining in the infamous *hong*i expeditions. As documented in a previous chapter, it is

In the oral tradition recorded in the narrative of origin of the **hena**, elder and younger brothers (Eti and Manusa) established a relation of precedence and exchange in which each should remain in its own territory with its own duties and the prestige of his own position. Having secured this agreement, the founding ancestor of Manusa returned to the mountains. The criteria of the traditional (**atate**) relationships between Manusa and Eti is defined in the narrative. Today Manusa is no longer under the administrative control of Eti but the little coastal town still offers opportunities (jobs, market) and the **hena** maintains, at least nominally, its ancient link with that domain and a prestigious bride is occasionally exchanged with a powerful ally in Eti.

### *The relationship with Sapalewa batai*

Although **hena** Ma'saman.uey belongs to Sapalewa **batai**, the trunk of the northern river, of which Lisabata is the main **kota** (i.e. the northern equivalent of Eti), when positioning themselves in the region nowadays, no elder ever mentioned an allegiance to Lisabata (a Muslim former dependency of Huamual). They just state that Manusa was part of the regional council of community elders, (**nili ela** or *saniri*) of this northern trunk. This is a source of pride since Sapalewa is regarded as a powerful region with a glorious history.<sup>67</sup> The institution of the large *saniri* was abolished by the Dutch in 1914 but meetings were still held every so often on a smaller scale until the 1950s. When an assembly of the Saniri Ela was held, gathering the representatives of all the three river trunks (the Eti, Tala and Sapalewa Batai), **hena** Ma'saman.uey was listed as a member of the Sapalewa which was led by the representative of Lisabata, itself in a female position toward the male Eti.

It is noteworthy that whether or not Manusa had been acknowledged by the Ternatan (or the Dutch) rulers, the narrative of the **hena** stresses the existence of a direct elder/younger brother relationship with the southern Eti **batai**, although it belonged to the northern Sapalewa **batai**. This is the equivalent of passing over Lisabata to make direct allegiance to

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only from 1859 that the policy of expansion of the colonial state aimed at putting the inland region of west Seram (and Buru) under Dutch administrative control.

<sup>67</sup>However it was for a while a centre of the RMS resistance and it still pays for it in terms of remoteness and lack of development support. Manusa, which is not better off although it supported the national forces, is not overly keen to be associated with it.



the chief centre of power. This shows that the degrees of precedence are not necessarily a rigid hierarchy. They may be by-passed by the groups or individuals who attempt to do so.<sup>68</sup>

*The relationship with Kairatu and the Tala batai*

A narrative describes how Samai, walking down to the south coast, establishes contact and starts a cycle of exchanges with the Alune village of Kairatu (in Alune: Alatu).<sup>69</sup> Kairatu was a rich village near the southeast coast of 'Wele Telu, regularly visited by the traders. Included in the trunk of the Tala river, it had numerous contacts and exchanges with the Tala people and the powerful domains of Sumite and Sahulau.<sup>70</sup> Nowadays it is the chief administrative township of 'Wele Telu, the harbour of the ferry to Ambon island. It is the main connection of the **hena** with the outside world, a place where mountain people go trading and send their children to secondary school. In this narrative, during the encounter of Samai with the elders of Kairatu, the **hena** is positioned as a community of people that stays in the mountains, bringing sago and receiving salt, textiles and tools in exchange. This same narrative also explains how post-houses and gardens were established on the way to the coast, the former to watch over the boundaries and the latter to provide the food and goods for trading. With time, these post-houses and hamlets became the large children villages of Rumbatu, Rumberu, and Kawatu. In the modern administration they are fully independent *desa* of the same southern *kecamatan*. However they are still regarded by Manusa as its children villages.

Thus the relationship of the **hena** with the southern coast has a strategic importance. It is of such significance for Manusa that a few years ago the **hena**, which as a *desa* had been included into the *kecamatan* Tani'wel of the northern Sapalewa region, obtained from the provincial government the right to be attached to the *kecamatan* of Kairatu. This request was substantiated by the claim of these ancient and traditional ties with the southern region.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>As one informant explained, a tip can re-attach itself directly to the trunk without inevitably passing by a branch.

<sup>69</sup>One version is in Jensen, op. cit., 1939 (narrative n°80 p.133).

<sup>70</sup>Kairatu was also a prominent domain with three functions in the the **nili** Tala (cf. Chapter Three: **nili** Tala).

<sup>71</sup>If Manusa had accepted its incorporation into the northern *kecamatan*, this would have definitively severed the link between the **hena** and its already overly independent children villages. Furthermore, the north is much poorer and more under-developed than the south.

Thus, Manusa which claims to be a '*pusat*' has indeed managed to keep a central position in the region. Politically part of the Sapalewa by tradition, a dependency of Eti by history and affiliated to Tala in the modern system, the **hena** has secured the best from each **batai** for its own prestige and access to commodities.

### **The inward movement**

In the topogeny, the groups depart from the initial centre of sharing to populate the Three River valleys in an outward movement. However, in order to establish and maintain a large and strong **hena**, some units have to remain with Samai, and new ones need to 'return' (*leu*). Souwei (the source/origin of history/language), the **nuru** of the lord of the land, founding ancestor and custodian of the water of origin, affirmed its prominence among the seven who remained at Nuruitu. Once the seven positions (the **hena upui**) were filled, said an elder, the community completed the meeting hall (*sisine*) of the **hena** i.e. the society was fully established.<sup>72</sup> At the completion of the *sisine* all the traditional duties were defined and limited to the fixed number of seven.

It remained for other new units (the **ana mulini**) coming to Manusa to integrate themselves in the **hena** through the narrative of their own journey. Because the **hena** is the initial centre of dispersal, any newcomer House is defined as 'returning', following an inward movement. In their narratives, these 'returning' **nuru** variously insert their groups within the origin structure of the **hena**. Some followed Samai, 'returning' with him to the **hena** at an early stage (Neyte, Matital) to become one of the seven duty holders; others affiliated themselves to a **nuru** which held one of these seven traditional positions (Tibali, Kapitan); others simply 'returned' by themselves (Akolo, Souhali) and were admitted by Samai or one of his representatives. Thus, a newcomer unit wanting to integrate in the **hena** today, has several alternatives. It may either chose to 'return' to one of the seven as a branch of it, associating itself directly with this founding core of seven duty holders (**hena upui**), or join as **ana mulini** 'younger children', 'returning' from outside. As descendant of the founding ancestor, the lord of the land is traditionally the dignitary whose duty it is to admit and welcome newcomers. However, this decision is now controlled by the state administration.

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<sup>72</sup>According to the Neyte it only happened after their arrival, i.e. five or six generations ago.

## CONCLUSION: PERMANENT PLACES AND MOBILE PEOPLE

Acknowledging that they departed together from a common central point of origin and expanded through multiple diversifications, the groups of the region identify themselves and recall their 'history' (*sou*) through various forms of topogenies. The *topoi* from whence they departed and the place where they are now are fixed spatial locations registered as such in their narratives. This immobility contrasts with the (former) mobility of their social units, the branches and Houses of **nuru**, that constitute the communities now established in some of these places.

Because units could move and were interchangeable, the **nuru** are not mentioned by name in the narrative of the foundation of the **hena**.<sup>73</sup> In Manusa, what is retained is seven positions of 'grand fathers of the domain', **hena upui**, symbols of seven initial **nuru** at the origin of the domain.<sup>74</sup> Although some of these seven duties have become obsolete, their memory still supports the social organisation of the domain. The order of precedence organised around these positions is still visible on the land and in the modern organisation of the **hena**. The capacity of the system to be bent according to context, while still keeping the core principles of its initial structure has, up to now, served and partly preserved a traditional form of social order. We saw in this chapter how this adaptability is also reflected in, and supported by, a living body of narratives which constitute, and continuously update, the origin structure of the domain. Together, the topogeny of the **hena** and the narratives of the in-coming **nuru** legitimise the past and present history of the domain, providing the foundation on which its social organisation is erected. This flexible and semi-open structure allows the essential insertion of newcomers who assure the continuation of the community.

The Alune and Wemale of 'Wele Telu claim as their common origin point (**uwei**) Nunusaku, the sacred banyan which symbolically encompasses the whole region. After various diversifications and distributions along their path from this initial source, the ancestral paths of the **nuru** which constitute Manusa today have converged or 'returned' to the domain.<sup>75</sup> The community has established itself as a fundamental point of diffusion and convergence in the region. Three major elements which justify the existence and present position of the **hena**

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<sup>73</sup>It is likely that variants of this model may be found in other domains of the region, but further fieldwork is required to check that point.

<sup>74</sup>However these early members are ambiguously identified, and the history of the domain can be updated to changing contexts.

<sup>75</sup>Each new-coming unit brings the narrative of its own ancestral path which is made to merge into the narratives of the domain.

have been asserted by the narratives. Firstly, its land was marked and secured by its first ancestors. Secondly, the initial deeds of its founding ancestor (the 'Sharer') ranked the domain in its own **batai** and positioned it within a regional precedence in the former **nili** of the Three Rivers. Thirdly, the **hena** is confirmed in its territory by its role of custodian of the Nunusaku, an office that Manusa shares with the Wemale of Japio, and for which the domain claims the accreditation of the coastal 'older brother'.

The seven duties, implied in the name of the domain's ritual centre, establish an ordered but flexible social organisation. It allows the indispensable insertion of new members in the community first as **ana mulini** 'younger child' but also as potential **hena upui** 'grandfather of the domain'. Every unit recalls coming from a specific place, but as it leaves this place of origin, a unit is a landless family which is welcomed into a new community. Their insertion in a domain provides those units with access to land and entry into a close knit network of exchange and alliance. As time passes and generations succeed one another, relationships are elaborated and contexts change. Some units become extinct while others flourish and strive for renown. This living history brings new elaborations which, in turn are reflected in the narratives and modify this highly accommodating origin structure.

Informed about its history (**sou**), we now enter **hena** Ma'saman.uey or *desa* Manusa Samanuwey.



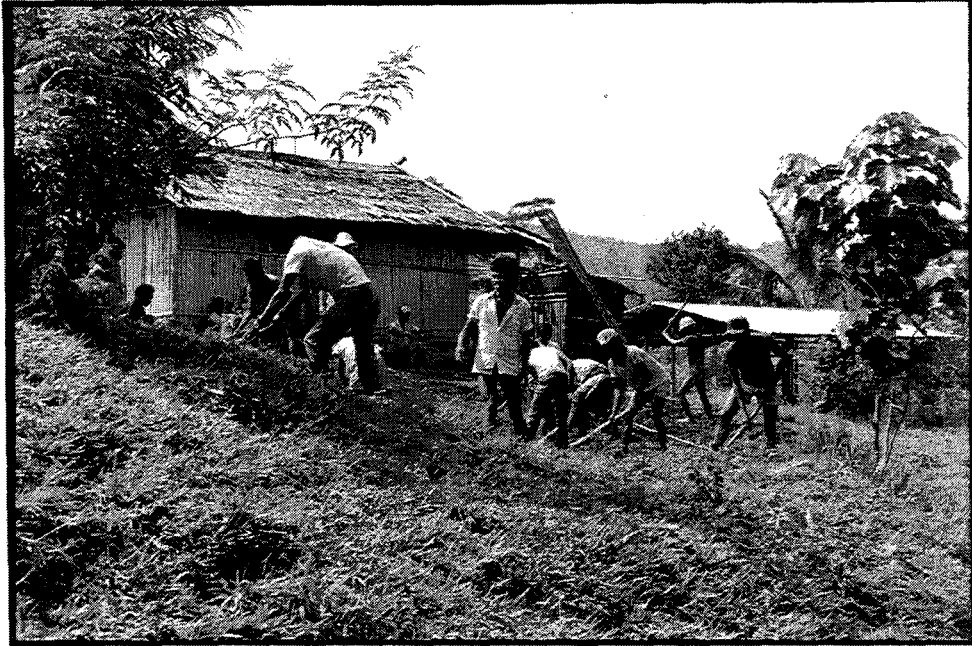


12 Hena Manusa (West view). From front to back: baileo, old church and school



13 Hena Manusa (East view)





14 Levelling the ground for a new house



15 Clearing land for a collective garden





## Chapter Six

### THE HENA AND THE SOA

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In this chapter I focus on Alune domains and on the main features which characterise **hena** Manusa. In the second half of the chapter, I describe the former *soa* system or **nuru ela**, a superstructure imposed for a while by the colonial system, and examine its implications. In appendix 1, I examine in further detail the successive form of settlement chosen by or imposed on the **hena**. I depict an important pattern of change which has affected the entire highland area of West Seram since the beginning of this century.<sup>1</sup>

The valleys of 'Wele Telu comprise delimited territories occupied by Alune or Wemale communities. In modern Indonesia they are categorised as *desa*. In colonial time they were designated as *negorij* (*negeri*).<sup>2</sup> In Alune they are called **hena inama**, **kota**, or **anakota**, (or **batai**), according to their position in the traditional **nili ela** organisation. I refer to them as domains. Alune (and Wemale) domains of each river valley (**batai**), although fairly independent, were loosely united by varied and changing alliances. A form of precedence organised the domains of each of the three river 'trunks' (**batai**) around a coastal 'core' (**niliuwei**).<sup>3</sup> The whole region constituted a federation of independent but inter-related domains: the 'Wele Batai Telu. Their unity, symbolised by Nunusaku, was demonstrated during large assemblies gathering the representatives of every domain.

The decision to concentrate on a single **hena** while in the field has restricted my knowledge about the present history and social organisation of the other domains in the region. However, several months in a single location has brought a deeper understanding of the structural principles underlying its organisation. In this chapter I focus on Manusa but I also

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<sup>1</sup>Having frequently lamented that previous investigators did not produced more case studies of the Alune I repeatedly use this approach (which I regard as the flesh and blood of ethnography) to describe as closely as possible the Alune units and their social organisation. However, this method generates long and detailed descriptions some of which I have had to put in appendixes given the requirement for a thesis of a specific length.

<sup>2</sup>Van Wouden 1968 p.71.

<sup>3</sup>It is unclear if tributes was paid to any of the coastal centres.

examine what can or can not be extrapolated about the other domains of the region from the understanding of one of them.

To talk about themselves, the villagers say **ami hena toini**: 'we, the group of the **hena**', (**toini**: 'group of', 'cluster'), the people who are from and live in the domain. The **hena** is a social unit aware of its origin, history, and ritual duties, all supported by specific narratives.<sup>4</sup> The narrative of origin of Manusa names the founding ancestor of the **hena** (Samai) but not his **nuru**. It establishes the ritual centre (Nuruitu), which implies seven ritual positions, but does not attribute these to any specific group (**nuru** or branches of **nuru**). The founder/progenitor is said to have allotted custody of sections of the land to incoming families but no hill tops or hamlets are mentioned as the specific settlements of given groups. In the mythical time of Manusa, a social order was established but no dynasty was founded nor any social stratification created, and the integrity/totality of the land of the **hena** remained undivided.<sup>5</sup> The groups now regarded as the founding fathers of the domain (**hena upui**), hold prerogatives and ritual or honorific positions which in practice, give them precedence over those who came after (**ana mulini**) and achieved a lesser status. These earlier and longer established **hena upui** also claim custody over a larger share of the land of the **hena** (See Fig. 6.1: The land and settlements). Thus, although not supported by an ideology which tends to promote equality, disparity is achieved in practice in Manusa (and other Alune domains).<sup>6</sup>

## HENA MANUSA

Manusa is a **hena**. The word, which in Alune means domain and/or village, is a reflex of the proto Malayo-Polynesian (PMP) term **\*banua**.<sup>7</sup> It implies a group, its settlement(s), its land and all the beings dwelling upon it. For the people of Manusa their **hena** is a territorial, social and ritual entity in its own right, a regional centre within the Indonesian nation. They have joint assets and interests but they also share a sense of common identity and similar values which derive from a strong awareness of the spiritual duties associated with their

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<sup>4</sup>Referring to the **hena**, van Wouden argues that 'a full social life can evidently be carried on within the bounds of this group' (1968 p.147).

<sup>5</sup>This is why, say the elders, no fence can be erected on the land of the domain.

<sup>6</sup>How ideological equality and achieved inequality can both thrive within a society is brilliantly depicted and argued by C. Sather (1996, pp.70-110).

<sup>7</sup>Reflexes of **\*banua** also refer to 'ritual territory', 'village', 'people of a settlement' or simply 'house' (see Fox 1993a: p.12).

**hena**, a historical domain of the region.<sup>8</sup> It is this entity, what Dumont would call *un tout*: 'a whole', consisting of the community, its land, hills, rivers, forest and all the dead and living beings it encompasses, all known, named, and narrated, that is traditionally called **hena** Ma'saman.uei. Although the **hena** is under the authority of the national and regional governments and relates to its region through a network of formal and informal links, it remains a distinct territorial, socio-political, economic and religious entity. This is sustained not only by a natural geographic isolation but also by people's trust in their unique historical identity.

### All the wealth of the world

This poetic description, said the lord of the land, is the *pasawari* of **hena** Manusa:<sup>9</sup>

Manusa sali wey, anakota mawene  
 Nurua hitu, batua hitu.  
 Latu Masamane, pati Masamane  
 Maka raka nunue, 'ay welu lhisi  
 Kay kwebute, ai lolane,  
 Luma upu Souwei, latu *pohon*, latu 'abale,  
 Mawene butusa lesine.

Manusa handle of the machete,<sup>10</sup> high dignitary of the Kakehan  
 Seven **nuru**, seven stones  
 Lord sharer, **pati** who distributes  
 The one who watches over the banyan, and the path to the mature tree.<sup>11</sup>  
 And hearth rack (altar), dye tree.<sup>12</sup>  
 Ancestral House source of history,<sup>13</sup> lord trunk, lord dry,  
 Sixteen ritual performers.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Great care is always taken to protect, and if possible to enhance, one's village's reputation as well as one's own when exchanging gossip about the wrongdoing of others.

<sup>9</sup>*Pasawari*. 'motto', 'anthem', the word is used in the whole region.

<sup>10</sup>Duty in the Saniri. However it was Lakaela's position, not Manusa's (unless they shared the duty, one at the coast one in the mountains).

<sup>11</sup>**Plisite**: 'ripe', 'mature', 'like a seed that is kept for planting, (it is) the path to everything', commented the elder who sang and translated this *pasawari*.

<sup>12</sup>Explanation of the elder: tree producing the red dye for the loincloth worn by initiated men (**wani**). **Kolane** is a high dignitary, a Ternatan title used in coastal Seram.

<sup>13</sup>The **nuru** of the lord of the land.

<sup>14</sup>This text compares to the shortened version used in the **tapea** (greeting of the **nili** Sapalewa) recorded by Tauern at the beginning of the century (see Chapter 3 n°9): **Manusa manue, Anakota mawen Lawalesi Makaruku lolane kai bebute, latua lua, Mawena butusa lisiin lua, latu lete mulia latu lau sawa.**

As its name states, **hena** Ma'saman.uey is 'the place/the people at the origin of the sharing'. The name of the **hena** proclaims its origin, ancestral role, and the *raison d'être* of its community. This name and its history belongs to all the residents of the **hena**. Heirs of the ancestor who distributed the wealth to the world, they are the custodians of its origin point. The lord of the land declared that individuals and segments of origin groups (**nuru**) may come and go but as a whole, the community could never leave Manusa. The **hena** has the collective responsibility of guarding the access to Nunusaku and its departure could jeopardize the natural flow of life, health, wealth, prosperity and reproductive power for the whole region.<sup>15</sup> However they also stress that they are custodians, not owners; this bounty is meant to flow out and away from its 'origin' (**uwei**). Only in due course will it 'return' (**leu**). As a consequence of the initial distribution of wealth performed by its founding ancestor and proclaimed by its motto, the **hena** claims a significant ritual position at the regional level. The lord of the land, descendant and representative of the founding ancestor, presented the **hena** as a female centre. Its duty, he said, is to provide care and food and it is the place where 'all of them return for help when something goes wrong'. **Au meje mara 'anune lisia aia dolana 'webuta**, which he rendered by 'I am the female who welcomes the guest, the mother with breast and lap'.<sup>16</sup>

Manusa is also a religious unit. In the past, the **hena** was a regional centre of initiation of the Kakehan. Since 1925, it is a congregation of the Reformed Protestant Church (Gereja Protestant Maluku: GPM). The collective conversion generated several substitutions. The community of Nuruitu, which was united around the stone of its ritual centre, is now centered around its Church. To a large extent, the Council of the Church elders has replaced, with comparable authority, the bygone assembly of the Saniri elders. The collective activities generated by this institution and the obligations it imposes on the congregation strongly contribute to hold it together. Yet, ever since the preacher of another faith passed through the village a few years ago, the community is struggling to maintain its religious unity against what most regard as religious deviance. Religious diversity is not welcomed within small communities. It is immediately perceived as a threat against their

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Manusa manue, Kakehan dignitaries Lawalesi [and] Makaruku (the notables of the time?) dye tree and earth shelf, two lords, twelve ritual performers.

<sup>15</sup>During the Dutch invasion of the region, Huamual and Tala people took refuge in Manusa but Manusa people never left their domain. Similarly very few fled when the Japanese moved into Manusa. A few years later, the community hid in the forest but remained on site and refused to be evacuated to the coast while the fighting between the Indonesian National Army and the RMS movement was taking place throughout their region.

<sup>16</sup>This is the *pasawari* of **nuru** Souwei. (cf. Chapter Five: The lord of the land: **upu tapele**).

unity. Indeed religious plurality has divided other (coastal) communities in the region. The unity of Manusa survived the transition from their ancestral rituals to Christianity because this transition occurred as a group conversion.<sup>17</sup> Reluctant 'converts' were left relatively free to live and die peacefully away from the Church as long as they kept silent.<sup>18</sup>

### Settlement and demography

'Wele Telu is now the most populated area of inland Seram, although only about twenty-five Alune and Wemale communities live in mountain villages. Their ancient pattern of settlement is poorly documented. Segments of origin groups lived in small hamlets scattered over several domains but, at the end of the 19th century, the Dutch patrols also encountered sizable fortified villages in the mountains.<sup>19</sup> During the years 1910-15, all the mountain communities were compelled to aggregate into more sizable settlements and to gather several 'groups of relatives' into one *soa*. Each new 'village' (*negorij*) comprised several *soa* which were both territorial and administrative units.

Before 1912 *hena* Manusa was composed of several hamlets and post houses scattered on its territory and along its boundaries (See Fig. 6.1: The land and settlements). Mapone was the main hamlet, residence of the lord of the land and his followers, where stood the *sisine*, 'meeting platform' of the community. Batu Mete was the post house on the path to the north coast held by Maslebu, the *nuru* of the warlord who had come from Alune Riring. The ritual performer had its quarters near the ritual centre of Nuruitu. Waiame and Buēla were the settlements of Wemale immigrants. They guarded the eastern path to Wemale Japio with whom Manusa shared tumultuous relationships. Usua was a swampy sago orchard surrounded by a few garden shelters. Rumbatu and Rumberu were 'children' subordinate hamlets which had grown around gardens and post houses initially established by the lord of

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<sup>17</sup>It was a practice of the Dutch colonial system to educate and convert to Christianity a descendant of the 'clan' from which village or religious leaders were traditionally chosen. Luhanela, who became the first *raja* of Manusa, belonged to *nuru* Matoke from which the ritual leader of the *hena* was traditionally chosen. Educated in a Dutch school near the coast he was appointed *raja* of Ma'saman uei. It was during his rule and with his support that the first Protestant *pendeta*, Bpk. Tuhekai, converted the *hena* to Christianity.

<sup>18</sup>It was, however, a choice that isolated them from the rest of the community. In a nearby village a family still unwilling to convert had to face pressure and ostracism until it finally left the 'Christian ground' of the parish to settle apart on its own land. Rumours say that the family members practice head-hunting and sorcery, and they are readily made responsible for any trouble which occurs in the community. This form of coercion, applied by Christians and Muslims alike, is successfully discouraging most people from freely expressing their ancient beliefs.

<sup>19</sup>I discuss further the question of fixed settlement in Appendix 1.

the land and his followers to trade with the south coast and watch over that path. By 1920 the land of Manusa had been 'distributed' (*sama*) between three *soa*. The population was gathered in Usua along a north-south patrol path which people had to open and maintain. In 1933 Rumbatu and Rumberu were declared autonomous settlements. Both villages had expanded, partly through outside migrations and partly because several Houses of Manusa moved in after a quarrel split the initial community. During the following years the population of Manusa moved back and forth between Usua, Mapone and their garden houses. In 1977 the whole community gathered at Tona where the present settlement was established.<sup>20</sup> The persistence of both the ancient model of social organisation (seven *hena upui*) and the superimposed *soa* system is still visible on the land of the modern *desa*.

### *Population data*

To prevent others from establishing themselves on its land, and to support a prerogative of seniority (precedence in time and space) an Alune group requires a measure of authority, strategic alliances and the ability to sustain its claim by putting forward a large number of affiliates.<sup>21</sup> However for at least the last twenty years the population (permanent residents) of the *hena* has been slowly decreasing.

Year	Manusa	Rumbatu	Rumberu	Source
1920	496	included in 'Manusa complex'		Sachse 1922 (p204)
1972	508	565	383	Manusa register <sup>22</sup>
1988	472	652	602	Florey 1990
1989	421	562	416	Taguchi 1989 p.56 <sup>23</sup>
1992	426			data from my fieldwork

<sup>20</sup>These various forms of settlement are described in Appendix 1: The successive settlements of Ma'saman.uey people.

<sup>21</sup>A modern alternative is to acquire costly land titles (if the land claimed by the group is not suddenly declared a timber concession or natural reserve by the stroke of a pen of a poorly informed or venal administration).

<sup>22</sup>When I asked the village head of Manusa the figures of the former census (1972) he gave a total of 1456 inhabitants. This data included the population of the children villages Rumbatu and Rumberu. However these communities are now distinct *desa*. This is an example of the strategy of reassertion of an older centre over its expanding children villages which sought (and obtained) their statutory independence.

<sup>23</sup>There is a discrepancy between the figures given by Florey for 1988 (her source: Kependudukan Kecamatan Kairatu) and those given by Taguchi for the following year, particularly for the children villages. It is likely that the later counted only the permanent residents.

Various decreases must have occurred this century due to epidemics (1918), out-migration after quarrels (1930), wars and insurrections.<sup>24</sup> Although the figures are not comprehensive nor reliable enough to demonstrate it clearly, the contemporary trend is for an increase of the children village's population and a decrease of Manusa's. There are at least two reasons for this. First, the temporary migration of young families to the coast tends to become permanent because they find facilities that are not available in the mountains. The second reason is a recurrent and unresolved problem on a much larger regional scale. There is a very high death rate in the mountains, particularly among children under three years old, many of which could be avoided. There are no official figures for this because births are not always registered immediately and not mentioned at all in the village or Church register if the child has died during the weeks following birth, which is often the case.<sup>25</sup> There are not many elderly women in Manusa either, for death in childbirth is also frequent.<sup>26</sup> Complications during and after childbirth, diarrhoea, respiratory illnesses and other diseases, most of them curable, take a heavy toll on the community and on its potential to endure.

The population of 1992 was distributed as follows:

permanent residents on the <b>hena</b> territory	372
semi-permanent residents spending more than 3 months/year on site (minister's family, young teachers, people living partly in Manusa, partly in Kairatu)	12
semi-permanent residents spending less than 3 months/year on site (children in coastal high schools and their families, timber workers in Wasarisa)	42
	—
<b>total</b>	<b>426</b>

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<sup>24</sup>More written records of the period 1910-1948 might be archived in Den Haag.

<sup>25</sup>Interviews revealed at least seventy-seven deaths of babies in the last ten to twelve years in Manusa alone, many of them never registered. The figure coincides with my fieldwork experience: seven young children died during that year. There is little chance that the so called 'safari' campaign for birth control will convince anyone to reduce the birth rate as long as people experience the necessity to have six or seven children to make sure that three or four will live long enough to help in the fields or care for their aging parents.

<sup>26</sup>The promotion of midwife 'kits' through the region might have given the required impression of modernity, but it has had a disastrous side-effect. The kit is basic, its main instrument is a pair of scissors meant to be kept sterile and used to cut the umbilical cord. However people believe (including the paramedical staff of the *puskemas* who come to visit Manusa once a year), that blessed water is a sterilising agent. Furthermore, these scissors, often the only pair in the village, are exposed to all sorts of uses. They quickly rust, causing more damage than good. Incidentally, the traditional way to cut the umbilical cord may have looked primitive but it is far less harmful. The birth assistant uses a fresh fibre of bamboo which can be detached without manipulation and is sharp as a razor. The cord, tied at the navel, is left a few cm long, and tucked upward on the baby's stomach where it is kept dry until it falls.



In 1992 Manusa comprised 75 *keluarga* or *luma toini* ('house cluster/group') 'households'. This figure includes the permanent and semi-permanent resident families. A household consists of two or three generations of family members living together in a single house under the authority of a family head. The modern model of a couple and their unmarried children is the norm but the household is often joined by a widowed parent, a sibling (with or without children) and short or long term visiting kinsmen.

### *Hena affiliation*

The privilege of membership is extended to almost anyone who can trace even the remotest connection to the **hena** through male or female ancestry, particularly if it is to the advantage of the community. However the **hena** is a territorial unit, and residence is what finally establishes someone's full membership. A newcomer only becomes an effective member after long term residence or at least regular returns to the community.<sup>27</sup> With a shortage of people to watch over the land, there is an eagerness to welcome newcomers who wish to settle and abide by the rules. In return for proper behavior, a newcomer receives access to the land and possibly a bride. This is how most Houses became established in the **hena**. It is in fact largely how Manusa has perpetuated itself as a community. In modern times the group has also shown some expertise in securing the membership of several young teachers from outside, providing them with a local wife, sizable land and multiple services.

### *Hena endogamy*

A majority of the marriages take place within the socio-political setting of the **hena**, where resident Houses exchange brides. When someone says 'we' gave 'them' a bride and 'they' returned one to 'us' this exchange usually involves more than two Houses. These 'we' and 'they' include all the Houses sharing the same **nuru** name in the domain. For example, in Manusa, Neyte and Souhaly have been exchanging brides for at least three generations. Although Neyte are more numerous, both **nuru** have three Houses (a, b, c) in the **hena**. Neyte (a) gave a bride to Souhaly (b) who returned one to Neyte (b), then Souhaly (c) gave another bride to Neyte (a) who returned one to Souhaly (a), etc. However the genealogies

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<sup>27</sup>An exception is made for rich or honorable members who may be a source of prestige for the community. In many ways it is the equivalent of our honorary membership, in which both the organisation and the member are supposed to be honoured in the agreement.

suggest also that the powerful Houses carefully select the partners with whom they exchange brides, particularly for the marriages of their first and last born (**ana mena** and **ana mulini**).

Although **hena** endogamy is not prescribed, marriage partners were and still are principally chosen within the community. As a new bride is received from or returns to the **nuru** of one of her mothers the renewed alliance consolidates ancient ties, maintaining or reversing a previous asymmetrical relationship. Looking for a bride and initiating an exchange with the outside may be more prestigious but it is also more costly than a marriage with a village's partner. This generation is shifting towards a slight increase in the number of marriages with outsiders. This may be due to the combination of three factors: the increase of communication with the outside, the reduction of the population of the **hena** —and thus of available partners, and the strategies of individual households. Contacts with the growing population of the coastal area have increased since young people go to school and look for temporary work at the southern coast. Unmarried young adults complain that the community of Manusa is so small and the kinship ties so intricate that they are running out of eligible candidates.

For an origin group, giving a woman to a distant coastal village is a means to establish wider regional alliances and to increase the potential independence and mobility of its members.<sup>28</sup> Traditionally, the ruling **nuru** established a systematic network of regional alliances based on that principle. Several Houses of the village are now doing it too. One could argue that they can afford this strategy since they have become less dependent on internal alliances under the modern national form of administration.<sup>29</sup> However, if Manusa women marry at the coast, few coastal women are willing to move to the mountains to what they regard as a backward and tough life style. Marriage and alliance are further discussed in a later chapter.

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<sup>28</sup>A woman married in a coastal village can host a younger sibling during secondary school or provide shelter for a visitor from the mountain. Married to a civil servant or a member of the military, she represents a potential tie with a useful ally.

<sup>29</sup>Bridewealth has been considerably reduced.

## The anatomy of the hena

### *The territorial unit*

**Hena** Ma'saman uei is a territorial unit. The claim of the community to traditional rights over some three and a half thousand hectares of land is supported by narratives and the uninterrupted customary use of this territory for numerous generations.<sup>30</sup> Walking the land and naming rivers and sites, the founding ancestor delimited the traditional boundaries of the **hena** and settled within it with seven founding **nuru**. More people progressively joined, said the elders, and received custody of sections of the land. Narratives vary, but in the Alune domains, where people have their land is always significant. Often, the location of a unit on the land reflects its ancient position in the tradition. It is also revealing of the relationships between units.

The whole territory of Manusa opened by its pioneer settlers is called **tape lale**: the 'land within' ('inside', 'in the middle'). It encompasses several categories of land. At the centre of this 'land within' is the new 'settlement' (**hena**). The site is called Tona (**tape tona**: 'swampy land', 'muddy ground'). The ancient hamlets were amalgamated in the 1920s and the whole population of the domain has resided in Tona since 1977.<sup>31</sup> The parcels of land set aside for 'gardens' (**mlinu**) and 'orchards' (**lusu** or **lusune**) by each of the Houses are called **lusua mena** 'initial orchards' or **lusun dati**. Most **lusu mena** have large sections of 'fallow' land ('**wesie**'), which makes excellent 'hunting and trapping grounds' (**tape a'lali**).<sup>32</sup> Ancient and well established Houses control large sections of **hena** land.

Also included in the 'land within' is the 'unoccupied land' **tape malenete** (*tanah kosong*), on which no one in particular 'sits' (**due**). It is also called **tape nusa** 'land of the island'. It is part of the historical territory claimed by the community but not by individual Houses. It is sometimes translated in Indonesian by *tanah sejarah* because it includes some historical sites of the **hena**. The major part of this 'unoccupied land' is located several hours walk from the new settlement (near Tasemane bubui, 'we 'Wana and 'we Tala). It is used as a

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<sup>30</sup>Some elders are of the opinion that the real land of Manusa exceeds 10,000 hectares since it traditionally includes the land of former children villages, now independent *desa*.

<sup>31</sup>This new settlement is described in further details in Appendix 1: The successive settlements of Ma'saman.uey people (see: the modern Manusa Samanuwey at Tona).

<sup>32</sup>See also in Chapter 1: Production and subsistence — Yearly cycle of the gardens.

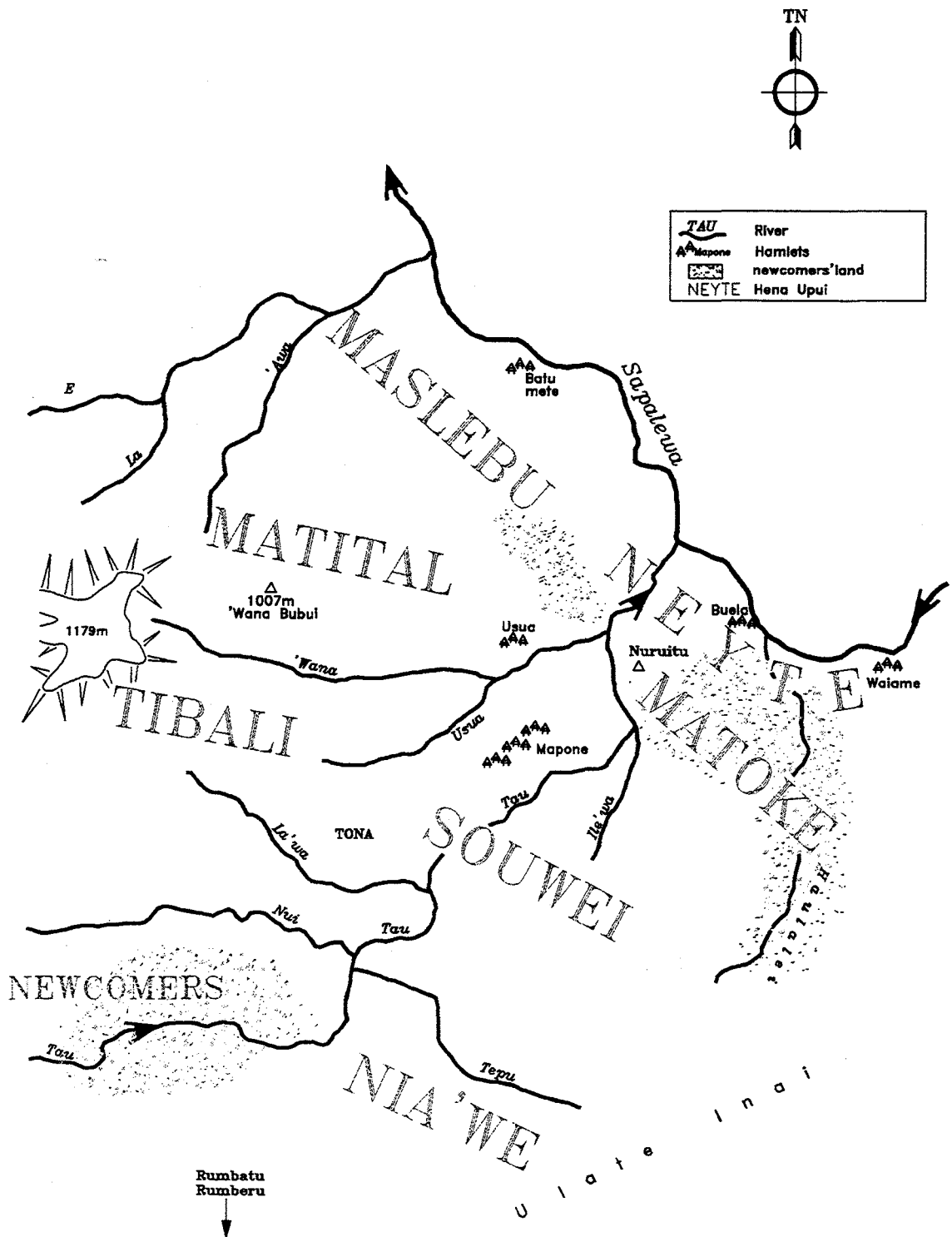


FIG 6.1 THE LAND & SETTLEMENTS



collective hunting, trapping and collecting ground and for communal projects.<sup>33</sup> Some of the **tape malenete** was also set aside for small gardens and orchards around the former *soa* settlements.<sup>34</sup> The land of extinct Houses, which has not yet been redistributed, is also included in the **tape malenete**. Outsiders (**tamata ma'ete**), refugees or newcomers may receive access to it. A newcomer who clears an area is given rights of cultivation on this specific piece of land. This land becomes his **lusun mlinu** 'garden and orchard' because it may become both.<sup>35</sup> If his children remain in the community they usually inherit these rights. A household with a shortage of land to establish short or long term plantations (**mlinu**: 'garden' or **lusune**: 'orchard') may also obtain a parcel from the communal **tape malenete**, which then is regarded as its 'garden and orchard' (**lusun mlinu**). Descendants inherit the rights to cultivate these parcels and the usufruct of the plantations.

### *The body of the land*

Knowing I was going to Manusa, my old time Alune informant in Ambon told me to look for 'the hidden body of the land'. When I asked what he meant he said that the land was a body<sup>36</sup> lying towards Nunusaku, but that it was an important and secret matter. Manusa elders did not mention a body image when talking about the **hena**, but they insisted on the inalienability of the land as a whole. No section of it may be divided up, sold or even fenced. The 'hidden body of the land' appeared when I drew a map of the **hena** and imposed upon it the respective parcels of land in the custody of the Houses who claim one of the seven positions of **hena upui** 'forefather of the domain'. Each of the Houses whose **nuru** holds a duty of **hena upui**, claims a share of the 'land within' (**tape lale**) the domain. This claim is embedded in village history and in the narratives of these **nuru** which recall their arrival or the contribution of their ancestors to the domain.<sup>37</sup> The location of these founding **nuru** on

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<sup>33</sup>Community cash crop plantations (cloves, cocoa, coffee, apple trees, garlic, etc), subsidised by the state or the Church, are regularly attempted on this ground

<sup>34</sup>Detailed in Appendix 1 (see: Usu Leini: 4 wards, 3 *soa*, 2 factions, 1 village).

<sup>35</sup>After clearing, the farmer establishes a garden and plants fruit trees within and around the parcel (banana, coconut, durian etc). While the garden is left fallow, these trees continue to grow, producing fruit and signaling the occupation of the orchard.

<sup>36</sup>**Patane**: 'body' (human or animal, alive or dead) from *badan*?

<sup>37</sup>See in Chapter Five: Nuru's narratives of insertion in the *hena*.

the land's body seems to coincide with an aspect of their ritual function.<sup>38</sup> Newcomers, allies, or affines are also inserted in the land and are given custody of a share of it.

The 'we Tau, the river of the ancestors, rises in the Matopitao mountain.<sup>39</sup> It flows across the land of the **hena** along a SW-NE axis (toward the mountain) as the backbone of a body.<sup>40</sup> In the centre of the **hena**, alongside the ancestral Tau river and encompassing the present settlement (and the former Kakehan house), is the land of **nuru** Souwei, **latu hena upui**, lord of the land of Manusa and trunk of the body. The sacred stones of Nuruitu, the ritual centre of the community, stand on a hill at the confluence of these two important waters. as the head of a body. Beside the hill of Nuruitu is the land of Matoke, the **nuru** of the ritual performer, **hena upui** (and one of the three **latu**) of the domain.<sup>41</sup> Toward the southern coast is the land of the **nuru** Nia'we, another **hena upui** whose function (the 'left hand') is to assist the ritual performer. Toward the northern coast is the land of **nuru** Matital, **ama tita**: the 'bridge father', (the 'right hand') whose main function is to carry the news throughout the whole body of the community. On the ancient path to Eti is Tibali, the 'young' **hena upui** representative of the **nuru** of the elder brother of Samai who left for that river Batai. Later came the Maslebu, from Riring. The group of the warlord received land from Matital and the duty to watch over the path to the north coast from their post house of Batu Mete. Then came the Neyte, whose ancestors negotiated peace with the Wemale. The Neyte watched over the path to that territory from their post house at Waiame.

Interestingly, the ruling function is not located on the body. The position of ruler (the third **latu**) being alternately held by dignitaries of different (founding) **nuru**, there is no such thing as the land of a ruling dynasty on the ancient body of the **hena**. In the narrative, the older and ruling brother leaves before the foundation of the **hena**. The body of the land is made of the land of the Houses of six **nuru**, holding founding duties (**hena upui**), plus one of them as ruler, making the seven **nuru/hena upui** of Nuruitu.<sup>42</sup> The lord of the land watches over the

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. table. 5.1 Nuruitu: the seven duties of the **hena upui**.

<sup>39</sup>Someone said that Ulate Matopitao 's name comes from **tou pita** the morning star (folk etymology?)

<sup>40</sup>Spirits of the departed villagers join the 'we Tau in its course to the Sapalewa (whose origin is Nunusaku). In the past no one used the Tau water for drinking or washing. Christianity has done away with these interdictions but it is still never used as a latrine and women do not bathe in its water.

<sup>41</sup>Nuruitu itself is on the land of Souhaly **luma inai**, a newcomer whose duty it is to watch over and care for it. Interestingly the origin place of the Souhaly happens to be the old Huku (near Nuruitu) now encompassed in Manusa. The lord of the land did 'the right thing' **mise**, when he gave that particular land in custody to the first Souhaly who 'returned' (**leu**) to the **hena**.

<sup>42</sup>The seven-fold division is essentially a six-fold division' van Wouden op.cit., 1968 p.152.

body along the sacred river. The ritual performer, whose **nuru** was for a while promoted *raja*, is near the head of the ritual centre (protected by Souhaly, a follower-warrior). The four members of the body are the warlord, the peace negotiator, the 'Left hand' (interpreter, spokesman) and the 'Right hand' (liaison agent). Of these four the first two are more prominent the latter two more ancient.<sup>43</sup>

### *The land of the hena upui*

My aim is here to provide an understanding of the topography of the **hena**. In this overview of the land distribution, I follow the axis of the 'we Tau rather than a specific order of precedence, which is, in any case, always subject to contention.

#### **Souwei**

The land of the **nuru** of the lord of the land is in the centre of the **hena**. Upu Tauli Ela **lum.upu** Souwei ('Great lord Tauli of the noble House Source of History') was the **tapel.upui** ('lord of the land'). His descendant says that Tauli distributed portions of the land to whoever came and asked to stay and thus gathered a lot of people around his House. The **luma botoi** ('hearth house') of Souwei, the ancestral shrine of their origin group in that domain, was in Peia. Their largest 'orchard' (**lusune**) is in Balalaia. The bulk of their land is between the 'we Ile'wa and Tepu.

#### **Matoke**

Downstream (**lolau**) the 'we Tau, toward the ritual centre of Nuruitu, is the land of Matoke. The elder House of the ritual performer has the bulk of its land at the 'we Name. Their **luma botoi** was at the headwater of the 'we Lalua surrounded by five banyan trees.

#### **Nia'we**

Upstream (**lora**) of Souwei (south) are the Nia'we (Snake). Their largest common orchard is at the headwaters of 'we Haulalei and along 'we Tepu in the south. Their ancestral shrine, guarded by two sacred snakes, was at Tenisana.

#### **Tibali**

Crossing over to the right bank of the Tau, upstream, is the Tibali House, which watches over Tape Amane, a section of unoccupied grassy land in the direction of Eti. The saying is that since the rest of their group went to Eti, various shares of this land were distributed to subsequent newcomers.

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<sup>43</sup>C.f. in Chapter Five and Figure .5.1 Nuruitu: the seven duties of the Hena Upui.



### Matital

Downstream from Tibali is the land of Matital. Their **nuru**, also an early settler, came from Tanjung Siang (the peninsula of Huamual). The shrine of their ancestor, Palewa, was near their orchard land of Loin.ului.<sup>44</sup> Formerly their land extended to the Sapalewa and the 'we E, including Mt. 'Wana Bubui. Their sitting/sleeping 'platform' (**sisine**), near the 'we Usua, was called Sisi.pale. When Maslebu arrived from Riring, recalled an elder, **upu** Simali, Tibali's ancestress, welcomed them and shared Matital's land with them.

### Maslebu

The Mother House of Maslebu has the bulk of its land at the 'we Lalua and up to the 'we E, downstream the Sapalewa. Their hamlet, with a large post house and **sisine** 'platform', was at Batu Mete (Black Stone) watching the path to Riring, where they came from, and to the north coast. Their ancestor, Siu Totole the greatest warrior of Manusa, is buried at the head waters of the 'we Metena (Black river).

### Neyte

When the Neyte came from Sumite (Wemale), they received land along the Sapalewa (upstream from Maslebu) with other Wemale immigrants. Some of them built a hamlet at Waiame, others at Buela. From there they watched the path of the Wemale domain of Japio, acting as a buffer between the two communities. The Neyte erected a shrine at Batu Marela (Opossum Rock). Their great ancestors, the brothers Mahone and Lilke, negotiated the peace between Japio and the hena.

Other Alune and Wemale units were welcome in the **hena** during and after the successive regional disturbances. The situation of the Houses of the follower **nuru** (**ana mulini**, the 'children in the back'), which came later and have no ritual function, is less clear. Different Houses of Kapitan or Ruspanah have scattered plots of land on the **hena**. The latest newcomers (Tosile, Makwabane, Akolo and Rumapasal) received land (from Tibali) on the southern tail of the **hena** near the path to the children villages, and others along the Haulalei river to the east of Nuruitu.

Finally, the *soa* division, which divided the Houses' territory into three sections, is still visible in the pattern of land distribution. When the territory of the **hena** is roughly cut into three sections perpendicular to the axis of the Tau river, the Houses of the **hena upui** of *soa* Wemay (Matoke, Matital, Maslebu and Neyte) have land in the upper section, the House of

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<sup>44</sup>**Loine**: 'leave', **ulu**: 'head', 'top': because the roofing leaves for the Kakehan house was taken from there.

the **hena upui** of *soa* Latue (Souwei) has land in the central section, while the **hena upui** of *soa* Nyak (Nia'we and Tibali) have their land in the lower section.

### The spatio-temporal orientations

In the Alune system of orientation, the north does not exist as a fixed compass orientation. The words north, south, east or west do not exist in the language either, not even to refer to the path of the sun. Since the mythical mountain is everywhere, but nowhere specifically, it can not be a topographic reference for the mountain people, like it is in Bali for example. In Manusa two ridges are of local importance: Ulate Inai, an east-west range which separates the **hena** from the southern region; and Ulate Mai, a north-south range which marks the border with Japio Batai, their eastern Wemale neighbour. However, these ranges do not constitute a directional reference as is the case in Tana 'Ai on Flores for example.<sup>45</sup> They are too far away (Ulate Inai can not be seen from the present village) and follow opposite axes (neither of them significant in the Alune directional system). Rivers wind their way in multiple meanders. However, walking downstream, one finally reaches one coast or the other, and upstream/downstream (**lolete 'wele ului**: 'up to the water head' /**lolau 'wele matai**: 'down to the water eye') remains a valid directional. If Nunusaku can not be located, the large permanent rivers that are believed to flow from its roots are clear topographical features. Although Manusa chose to be administratively re-attached to the southern kecamatan of Kairatu in the Tala river valley, topographically (and traditionally) the domain belongs to the Sapalewa river valley.<sup>46</sup> This river flows east-west through the **hena** before turning northward toward the coast, and the village looks over its valley.

As an informant explained: **ami lulu 'wele Sapalewa lolau**: 'we follow the Sapalewa downstream'.<sup>47</sup> For the speaker who is standing at a given location there are seven main directions: up-down, downstream-upstream, toward-away from the river, and centre. The first spatial axis considered is 'up/down': **mlete (lolete)/mpe (lope)** and the second 'downstream/upstream': **mlau (lolau)/nda (lora)**. The third axis is 'toward/away' from the river: **mpai (lopai)/ndi (lori or luri)** considered by a speaker standing 'within' (**lale**) a

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<sup>45</sup>Lewis 1988 p.312.

<sup>46</sup>For political and economical motives, **hena** Manusa opted to belong to the southern kecamatan of Kairatu which, in modern administration, represents the members of the previous southern Tala river batai.

<sup>47</sup>In Manusa, to paraphrase Lewis (op. Cit. p.312), any form of speech that refers to 'movement, activity, or place, compels a speaker to encode information about the deictic and orientational relationship between subject and object', in relation to the Sapalewa.

landscape. **Mlete (lolete)** 'up' and **mpe (lope)** 'down' function irrespective of river direction (**lope lematadje e suni**: 'down the sun is setting'). **Mlau (lolau)** 'seaward' (downstream) and **nda (lora)** 'landward' (upstream) do not refer to altitude. **Ndi (luri)** and **mpai (lopai)** take into account the direction of the flow of the stream considered, and downstream is the referent. Thus in Manusa village where the Sapalewa river is the referent, **mpai (lopai)** is toward this river (walking with downstream on one's left hand side) and **ndi (luri)** is away from it (with downstream on one's right). However, I believe that using right (**ma'wanale**) and left (**mapale**) as a permanent referent like Jensen does confuses the issue.<sup>48</sup> The Alune themselves do not. Indeed as soon as one crosses to the other side of the river, **mpai** is to the left and **ndi** to the right (since downstream is the referent). Both terms usually involve going across a given topographic feature (a river, a village, a yard, etc).

In Manusa, one talks of **ete lopere Rumbatu** 'over there down in Rumbatu', the child village on the other side of the southern range. Rumbatu people go **mpe Tani'we** 'down to Taniwel' (on the north coast) because they must first **sa lolete** 'climb up to' Manusa before they can walk down to Taniwel **bei mlete Manusa** 'from up in Manusa'. From Taniwel one comes 'from downstream' (Sapalewa): **bei mlau Tani'we** to Manusa. Going (from anywhere in the Alune region) to the island of Ambon one uses **lopai** because it is toward (and across) the water (**meite** 'salt water': the sea). Similarly neighbours go **mpe** (or **mlete**) to each other's house and one goes **mpai** (or **ndi**) from the kitchen to the bedroom. The same directional adverbs are used for very small distances as often as right and left are used in the western directional system. Thus within one's kitchen one says **dana sarije mpaije** (or **ndiye**): 'bring the machete in the direction toward (or away from) the river'.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>1943 pp.62-63.

<sup>49</sup>I spent considerable time while in the field and afterward, trying to make sure I understood the Alune system of orientation in space. However the data I present here are limited by my imperfect understanding of the use of **mpai (lopai)/ndi (lori or luri)**. The following are Some Alune deictic and orientational terms, based on Lewis (op. cit., pp.312-13), combining Florey's data (Alunedic 94) and mine. **Progressive verbs**: to 'go', to 'walk': **eu**, to 'travel around', to 'cross': **tita**, to 'come', to 'arrive': **busa, lua'e**, to 'arrive' (to a point): **doma**, to 'return' (home): **leu**. **Directional verbs**: to 'stand up' (on top or over something): **'ele**, to 'climb up', to 'rise': **sa, lea (lolete)**, to 'go up': **bua'e**, to 'go down', to 'descend': **dulu, musu (lope)**, to 'cross over': **tita** (a bridge), **loa**, to 'walk across' to the other side: **subu luri teba**, 'raised': **tetu**, to 'fall' from above: **tetue**. **Directional adverbs**: 'up' (to the top) **mlete (lolete)**, ('at the top': **mletere**), 'upward': **wata**, 'above': **babai**, 'down', 'downward': **mpe(i), (lope)** (opposite from **mlete**), 'beneath', 'underneath': **mpei lebu**, 'below': **lebui**, 'toward the river'(or to the right looking downstream): **mpai (lopai)**, 'right side' (hand): **ma'wanale**, 'away from the river' (or to the left looking downstream): **ndi (lori)**, 'left side' (hand): **mapale**. **Locative and directional**: 'at some distance': **lau'we, mlete muli** (lit.: 'up in the back'), **mpai** or **ndi**, 'very far away': **mlete nanu**, 'close, nearby': **teane, tetea**, 'here/there': **ete** (deictic marker) + directional +**re** or **je** (eg. **ete mlaure**: 'here seaward', **ete mpaije**: 'over there toward the river', 'just here': **ete meije**, 'to here': **lomei** ('eu lomei 'come here'), 'at': **mei**, 'there': **ete mere**, 'here and there': **lori lopai**, 'to the front', 'before': **mena**, a

Predecessors, ancient renowned leaders or simple forefathers are a **mena** 'in the front', 'first' or 'before' with the same ambivalence that this last word has in English due to its use for time and space. Consequently, people or events coming afterward are a **muli** 'behind', 'in the back', 'to the rear'. The first born child is **ana mena** 'child in the front' and the last born **ana mulini** 'child in the back'. **Mlete** 'up' may also imply a prospective temporal dimension: 'sometime in the future'.<sup>50</sup>

### The relationship with the periphery and with the outside

The space around the domain seems conceptualised as a concentric structure of which Manusa occupies the 'inside', the 'middle' (**lale**).<sup>51</sup> Although Manusa is one of the highest villages of its region, it refers to its periphery as **mlete muli**, 'up behind' or 'up in the back', (**mlete**: 'up' 'upward', **muli**: 'behind', 'in the back'). It includes the forest around the settlement, the neighbouring domains and the coastal area at the edges of the **hena**. Beyond these familiar surroundings, the more distant or unknown rest of the world is **mlete nanu** 'up far away', the outside, the foreign. In this section I examine how the space is ordered around Manusa and how the domain conceptualises its relationships with its periphery and the outside.<sup>52</sup>

#### *Mlete muli*

Manusa is at the origin of the three settlements which grew at its periphery, (firstly Rumbatu and Rumberu and later the coastal village of Kawatu) but in modern Indonesia these three villages are now large and independent *desa*. Manusa, who recalls how they

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**mena** (space and time), 'behind', 'following', 'rear': **muli** (space and time), 'at the back of': **muli** + directional (eg: **mpai muli** 'behind to the left looking downstream').

<sup>50</sup>Westerners, used to drawing a representation of time along a left-to-right chronological axis (past-present-future), are under the impression that the Alune vision of time draws the past in the front and the present behind it. Imminent or not, what is still anticipated is **mletere**: 'above', and the future is hanging 'somewhere up there'.

<sup>51</sup>**Lale, lalei, lai, or telale** has the general meaning of 'inside', 'within', 'in the middle'. E.g. Nuruitu is **molī lalei** 'sacred within', a sacred centre; **au lalei** 'my inside' refers to one's sentiments or emotions; **bala lalei** is the 'hand inside': the palm, (the 'back of the hand' is **bala muli**), the 'middle children' (not first nor last born) are **ana telale**.

<sup>52</sup>As Barnes notes in Kedang, the word translated by 'up' is often associated with right and highness. (Barnes, R. H. 1974 p.80). Similarly, in Alune **mpei lebu** ('beneath', 'underneath'), the contrary of **mlete**, 'up', may be used with a degrading connotation.

started as garden hamlets and post houses at the 'gates' of the **hena**, is keen to reassert itself as their old centre. The **hena** regards itself as their **hena ina** 'mother domain'<sup>53</sup> and refers to them as its 'children' (**ana**). However these settlements avoid acknowledging their origin. They expanded from Manusa a long time ago (Rumbatu became an autonomous *negorij* in 1933), gathered their own followers and are keen to sever an old link which their rulers regard obsolete. Yet the **hena** is their origin point. In Manusa's view, this explains why these villages are now more opulent and modern than their old 'source' (**uwei**). This is an irreversible order of precedence which entails that respect be duly paid to the progenitor 'mother village' (**hena inai**). It also encompasses these children villages in **mlete muli**, the close periphery of the **hena**.

Although the region was pacified and head hunting eradicated at the beginning of the century, tension between villages, or at least mutual suspicion, still endures.<sup>54</sup> This is perceptible during the reciprocal visits and sporting events between neighbouring villages organised by the Church on a regular basis. These competitive encounters channel mixed emotions and the prestige of the whole community is at stake when its clubs compete in singing hymns or playing football with a neighbouring village.<sup>55</sup> Gloomy stories of violence still abound, some of them quite real.<sup>56</sup> Yet, despite distance and distrust or the absence of modern facilities, an extended network of communication operates throughout the mountains where news, gossip and stories travel and transform effortlessly.

For the mountain communities, coastal villages act as buffers between the known periphery and the hazardous outside. An increasing number of villagers settle at the coast for short or long periods, providing their mountain kinsmen with a friendly house to stop by or stay for a

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<sup>53</sup>Or **inate** (mother). Florey has: **ina-'u ni-hena** 'my mother village', 'old village', 'original village site' (Alunedic 94).

<sup>54</sup>People avoid passing through a settlement where they have no kinsman. In another village, one only overnights in the house of kinsmen.

<sup>55</sup>Smoked game is accumulated weeks ahead of the feast to feed and impress the guests. Which community has more or better guitars or a bigger church bell is long debated and it is not unusual to see the young men spontaneously welcoming their winning football team with the war dance that once celebrated the return of victorious warriors and successful head hunters.

<sup>56</sup>In 1990 the minister of an adjacent Wemale village was wounded by some men from a child village of Manusa. Although the culprits were immediately jailed, the people of the mother and children villages had to walk a long detour to reach the coast safely, avoiding the Wemale village and its allies who threaten to take heads in retaliation. As 'mother village', Manusa had to disassociate itself officially from the action of its child village before its villagers could use the old path safely again. People from the children villages could not do so before they apologised and presented some form of compensation. Meanwhile the government and Church representatives were busy solving another dispute over the murder of seven people during a feud between two other villages in December 1991.

while. All the administrative, military, educational and medical centres are established at the coasts. It is also the source of market supply and the place where the mountaineers go to generate cash by selling a few products (Dammar, sago, medicinal barks, etc) or to find remunerative jobs.<sup>57</sup> However, it is also from the coast that most epidemic diseases spread into the mountains with disastrous effects<sup>58</sup>.

### *Mlete nanu*

**Nanu'e** or **nanu'we** means 'tall', 'high'. **Mlete nanu** means literally 'up high', i.e. far away, in the distance. In the mountains, the visitors from **mlete nanu**, the distant outside, are examined with suspicion and some apprehension. In the past, the experience of the villagers with these foreign and different people (**tamata ma'ete** 'other people') has ranged from the incursions of the Dutch army (which herded, registered, vaccinated and taxed villagers, imposing corvee, patrolling their land and confiscating their guns), to the invasion of the Japanese (who took their children to coastal training camps, and constrained the adults to farm their own land to feed their army). Later, the mountains became the battle ground of ten years of military confrontations. Although more peaceful, the present incursions of outsiders is not without demands. The modern state and the Church levy taxes and contributions, the development projects brought in by diverse associations mobilise people's time and labour without yielding much tangible result, and the medical *safaris* team lectures them on the necessity of birth control while their population is decreasing. All these visitors expect to be attended and fed, putting an extra burden on the community.<sup>59</sup>

Thus the relationship of the **hena** with the outside seems ordered in a concentric manner. The **hena** is **lalei** 'inside' 'in the middle', the close periphery is 'up and behind' (**mlete muli**), like the mountains which surround the domain. The outside, the alien, is 'high up' (**mlete nanu**), far in the distance. Its close and distant surroundings being 'up', the **hena** appears in a centered but lowered position. However lower is not necessarily inferior. In the mountains, the higher the position of a dignitary, the lower the chair or stool he elects to sit on. While appearing deferential toward outsider guests, this lower position takes him metaphorically closer to the roots (base, elder) side of the trunks on which dignitaries sat during former **nili**

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<sup>57</sup>The number of casual jobs for the local population is constantly shrinking as the number of transmigrants increases.

<sup>58</sup>For example conjunctivitis, impetigo, herpes, flu, cholera, meningitis and syphilis.

<sup>59</sup>For long time it was not clear either what was an anthropologist doing there, asking questions.

assemblies.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, calling the periphery or the outside 'up' **mlete** is not necessarily positioning oneself in an lower/inferior position. In Alune, no order of precedence is set along the spatial axis 'up' **mlete (lolete)**/'down': **mpe (lope)**. This precedence is provided by another axis: **mena/muli** 'in the front'/'in the back'. These complementary dual categories operate asymmetrically and recursively. Opposed to **ana mena**, 'first born', **ana mulini** has the sense of 'last born' or 'those who came after'. This reflects the position of 'junior' generally attributed to the immediate periphery (children villages), the people who are not foreign (**tamata ma'ete** 'other people') but not complete insiders (**hena upui** 'forefathers of the domain') either. Periphery and outside are often said to be filled with wealth initially obtained from Manusa, but also regarded as unreliable and potentially dangerous.

### *The pela*

The **pela** is a regional system of inter village alliance.<sup>61</sup> In a relationship of **pela lala'we** ('blood alliance'), the enemy or the outsider —with whom one exchanges brides between two quarrels, and sometimes makes peace between two wars — becomes one's brother forever. This is not an elder/younger relationship but is based on reciprocal behaviour and shared prohibitions. Each other's women are prohibited, antagonism or violence strictly proscribed, and the concept of property is abolished between the parties. A varying number of taboos are added in each case, individualising the bond between the communities which enter the pact.<sup>62</sup> Peace and unrestricted mutual solidarity are irreversibly sealed, and breaking the oath would bring disaster and death.<sup>63</sup> Manusa has several **pela** partners (Kamarian, Kawatu, Poklowone and Japio). However only the oath with Japio, (its closest Wemale neighbour to the east) is regularly revived and the relationship kept 'warm' (**musu**) i.e. 'potent', 'effective' and 'dangerous'. This alliance includes the children villages of both

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<sup>60</sup>Outsiders feel honoured to be sitting on higher chairs because it is their custom to seat high people on high chairs, explained an elder. I also encountered this custom in east Seram, a long distance away from Wele Telu.

<sup>61</sup>In Alune **pela** means to 'finish', to 'complete'.

<sup>62</sup>Usually any form of human blood letting is prohibited under any circumstances between the **pela** partners (although the blood of a maiden was sometimes part of the oath potion that was drunk by all the participants).

<sup>63</sup>These are the basic principles. How the region is criss-crossed by this network of alliances and details about them have been described at length by other authors. It is, for example, the subject of Bartels thesis: 1977.

Manusa and Japio, and is alternatively renewed in one of these settlements.<sup>64</sup> The oath of a *pela* is irreversible. It secures foreign and potentially hostile 'others' (*tamata ma'ete* 'person other': outsider, foreigner) as reliable allies.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, complying with obligations brings good fortune and abundance. As an informant put it: 'if my *pela* climbs one of my fruit trees, it will yield many fruits afterward, but if I do not allow him to do so, my tree will dry out and die'.

## THE SOA

### Overview

When I arrived in Manusa and asked about the difference between *soa* and *nuru*, most people replied that they were the same. In fact, the *hena*, which was made of the segments of at least seven and probably more *nuru*, was divided (*sama*: 'distributed') into three *soa* by the Dutch around 1915.<sup>66</sup> When I inquired how a *nuru* and a *soa* compared to the Ambonese *mata rumah* (origin group) and *fam* (ego's relatives, descendants of ego's parent's parents or parents' parents' parents), the answer was usually *soa* = *nuru* and *nuru* = *luma matai* (*matah rumah*) = *fam*. They are assumed to be similar for two reasons. Firstly, all these units regroup people who regard themselves as somehow related. Alune kindred, which is traced on both father's and mother's side, is rather inclusive. When a question or a doubt arises about a relationship, people rely on their elders to decide whether to allow a distant relative in or not, a marriage to be celebrated or a claim to be considered. Exceptions are dealt with case by case. Secondly, most coastal people (from among whom previous observers chose their Malay-speaking informants), only know vaguely the social organisation in the mountains. Similarly, when people of Manusa say *nuru* = *mata rumah* = *fam* they do not necessarily discern clearly the distinction between these last two (*nuru* can be compared to *mata rumah*, while *fam* usually includes affines).

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<sup>64</sup>During the first ceremony a table stone was erected to commemorate the event. The vertical stones represent the villages, and the table top their alliance. When they renew the oath, all the people from all villages concerned enter together in a large circle made with a long rope of thornless rattan (*ne'ute i'wale*) laid down on the ground. Anyone within the circle and all their relatives, present or not, are bound by the oath and fall under a threat of death if they break it.

<sup>65</sup>It also constitutes a means to neutralise the invisible boundary between *mlete muli*, 'up behind', the known although not reliable periphery, and *mlete nanu*, 'up far away', the foreign and predatory outside.

<sup>66</sup>This ordering and grouping of scattered 'family groups' into larger territorial units was implemented in 'Wele Telu during the years 1907 to 1916 (Ruinen 1929).



Groups are not similar if different names are required in the same culture to define them, and indeed with time, the nature of the *soa* became clearer. Since *soa* congregated several segments of **nuru** into one unit, the Alune took to calling them **nuru ela**: 'big **nuru**'. This was a first source of confusion. The second ambiguity was that **nuru ela** (*soa*) often regrouped under one of their **nuru** (because it was the largest, the most influential or the earliest settler), and the new unit simply took the name of that leading **nuru**. Thus, in Manusa for example, Ruspanah is the **nuru** name of several Houses, but in Rumbatu it is the name of a whole *soa* and includes the Houses of different **nuru**.

In Manusa, the *soa* was introduced as both a territorial and an administrative unit. It can be roughly defined as a group of **luma** which often exchanges brides and shares several claims on agricultural land and hunting territories. This system of social organisation originated in the northern Moluccan sultanates and was brought to the **hena** by the Dutch colonial administration.<sup>67</sup> Although the *soa* system was known in the coastal area of Seram that had ancient contacts with—or had become dependencies of—the northern sultanates, it did not penetrate inland 'Wele Telu before the beginning of the 20th century. The Dutch introduced it in the mountain area during the so-called pacification period. It incorporated the mountain area into their Ambonese realm where *soa* had long been integrated. Beside pacifying this remote region, the Dutch policy was also to enforce colonial administration over it. Larger sedentary clusters were easier to control, and simplified the census and tax collection. The introduction of the *soa* was achieved either by grouping several dispersed hamlets into one accessible main settlement, or by displacing insubordinate communities closer to the coast. For administrative convenience, and as a policy of modernisation, the colonial government insisted that various unrelated descent group (Houses: **luma**)—which were already (smaller) territorial units—relinquish their scattered dwellings on their own land and assemble in villages. According to Ruinen, the *soa* system was unknown in the mountains during his first stay in 1905. This author writes that it was introduced progressively from 1907, when new villages were organised on the Ambonese model. Ruinen adds that it had been completely accepted by the time he returned in 1916.<sup>68</sup> In Manusa it was introduced circa 1915 or a few years earlier, before or during the uprising of the Sapalewa valley (1915-16). It associated several **luma** under a single *soa* name, thus reducing the number of administrative units. All the **luma** of Manusa gathered in three *soa*, which they called **nuru ela** ('large origin group').

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<sup>67</sup>A description in English of the *soa* and its variations in the north Moluccas has recently been written by N. Bubandt, 1991 See also van Fraassen 1987. 2 Vol.

In Alune, the word **nuru** is also used to indicate the 'extremity', 'limit', 'bounds' (of a land, a hill). The Ternatan word *soa*, which means 'space or 'interstice', also contains the same connotation of boundaries or section of settlement.<sup>69</sup> In contrast with van Wouden, who describes the *soa* in terms of kinship and descent, Bubandt defines it as a territorial group and a politico-administrative unit.<sup>70</sup> He emphasises the spatial aspect of the *soa*, referring to it as a class of cultural institutions or a 'social space'.<sup>71</sup> The description that the people of Manusa give of their three *soa* also stresses the division of the village into sections and the partition of its population into politico-administrative units. People were ordered to regroup along the newly enlarged path linking the south and north coasts. The whole population of the **hena** was resettled at 'we Usua, near an unhealthy sago marsh where a few people had temporary shelters.<sup>72</sup>

As a consequence of the *soa* aggregation, some **luma** which had land adjacent to each other and were already in a relation of alliance, came to reside spatially much closer. This new settlement was organised into three *soa* wards. In Manusa it seems that the people were allowed to allocate freely their traditional units within the imposed superstructure. The result was that each of the three *soa* was composed of the Houses (**luma**) of six different origin groups (**nuru**) or of Houses from different branches or the same **nuru**.<sup>73</sup> Appropriate names were chosen for the three *soa* (**nuru ela**). The *soa* Latue took its name because the **nuru** of the lord (**latu**) of the land formed that *soa* with his affines and followers.<sup>74</sup> The name of the largest *soa*, Wemay, comes from the word Wemale because several Wemale Houses had been allowed to establish their hamlets on Manusa territory. When they were incorporated into this new settlement they gathered in that *soa*.<sup>75</sup> *Soa* Nyak chose its name because the

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<sup>68</sup>1929 p.228.

<sup>69</sup>Bubandt op. cit pp.1, 20-23.

<sup>70</sup>Op. cit. pp. 1-11.

<sup>71</sup>(Ibid. p.2). Condominas is the promoter of this concept (cf: Condominas 1957/1974 and 1980).

<sup>72</sup>These were working shelters, not an existing hamlet. But since Usua was nearby their path, the patrollers ordered the population to gather there. For further details see Appendix 1.

<sup>73</sup>For example, there are five households of one branch of **nuru** Ruspanah in *soa* Nyak (**luma inai & luma bina soi putih**), three households of another branch of **nuru** Ruspanah (**luma inai Pelatu**) in *soa* Wemay and two households of a third branch of that same **nuru** (**luma inai Ririne**) in *soa* Latue.

<sup>74</sup>The settlement was established on his (or Tibali's) land, and he is the first remembered official **n'tua baele** (regent or *wakil*) of the newly agglomerated community.

<sup>75</sup>A member of *soa* Wemay said that it took that name as homage to their warlord Siu Totole (Maslebu), who opened the way to the Wemale region.

elder of the large founding **nuru** Nia'we (or **Nyakwe**: 'snake') was the head of this third **nuru ela**.

Within a few years, the unusual proximity of residence caused frictions and divisions in the group. The sago grove near the settlement was farmed by a larger number of people and the garden land around the settlement had to be redistributed. The territorial implications of the *soa* division caused tensions within the community and brought about the departure of several branch Houses.<sup>76</sup>

In Alune a *soa* is called **nuru ela**: large **nuru**. Nevertheless it is important to keep in mind that their reference is not identical. A **nuru** is an exogamous origin group often scattered over several domains, while a **nuru ela** (*soa*) is a residential unit which is often endogamous. This double distinction was not identified by the authors who visited and wrote about the region prior to 1935. Furthermore, once the local term **nuru** was translated into Dutch or German the distinction was irrecoverable.

Sachse assimilates *soa* to family:

*de Alfoerenstammen zijn ingedeeld in families of soa die eenzelfde geslachtsnaam dragen... (1907 p. 64, my emphasis)*

The Alfure tribes are segmented in families or *soa* that each bear its own name.

Tauern refers to 'family groups' and equates them to *soa*: *Familiengruppen (Soa)*.

*In Westseram...bildeten die Soas ganze Dörfer. (1918 p.127)*

In west Seram... the *soa* constitute a whole village.

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<sup>76</sup>This overview raises a few questions about the nature of the *soa* system in Manusa. Some of these questions were also asked by van Wouden when he consulted studies such as Tauern 1918, Sachse 1922, De Vries 1927 and Stresemann 1923. Faced with contradictory data, van Wouden writes (p.74): 'One wonders what sort of group the *soa* is among the Alune'. Van Wouden's confusion is shared by anyone screening the same sources without a knowledge of the field. This is partly due to the fact that most authors omit from time to time to locate precisely the customs they describe. Apparently van Wouden (p.70) trusted Tauern's statement that in west Seram 'originally a *soa* formed a whole village' (1918 p.127). Van Wouden seems to ignore the fact that the *soa* system, although fully adopted by 1916, had only been introduced in the mountains of west Seram circa 1907-16, even though he knew that this had been the case nearby. On p.76, Van Wouden carries on with his description of 'soa as independant genealogical jural bodies' in the Amahai region (south coast of central Seram) stating that it was 'not to be confused with the later *soa* or wards...political groupings of territorial nature'. However it is precisely this last description that accurately outlines the Alune *soa*.

Although de Vries (1927 pp. 126-31) tries to distinguish Alune from Wemale, it is not always clear if he refers to the *loema inai* as a building or as a *familiegroep* nor what kind of 'group' this is. However he distinguishes exogamous **luma inai** from the often endogamous *soa*:

*Eveneens is het bloedschande als twee leden van één loema inai met elkander huwen. In dezelfde soa mogen echter wel huwelijken gesloten worden.*

In this context it is a disgrace for the blood (i.e. regarded as incest) when two members of one *luma inai* marry each other. In the same *soa* however marriage can be carried out. (De Vries 1927 pp. 107, my parenthesis).

Later, Jensen (1948 p.58-59, 61) interprets the Wemale and Alune **nuru** or **luma** as *clan* or *clanverband* ('clan associations'), and also equates them with the *soa*.

## Soa as residential and territorial units

### *Residence*

We know from the archives that the introduction of the *soa* system in the mountains modified the mode of settlement by bringing people from scattered hamlets into village wards. But no document tells us if the *soa* were only residential arrangements or if they also formed some kind of territorial units, nor if the *soa* aggregation reshaped the existing relationships of the groups. Hereafter I examine Manusa's case to explore some of the implications of the introduction of the *soa* system in the region.

The reports of military patrols quoted by Sachse designate Manusa as a village complex but do not provide further details.<sup>77</sup> Around Mapone, the former main hamlet of Manusa, the land is still parceled into small mixed plots of **lusun** of different Houses. When the *soa* system was introduced, people first gathered in four wards at the confluence of 'we Usua and 'we 'Wana.<sup>78</sup> The *soa* Nyak and Wemale settled near each other while the *soa* Latue established its two wards a short distance away (Fig. 6.2, Soa division and wards). The land nearby the settlements was also parcelled out accordingly.

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<sup>77</sup>Op. Cit., 1922 pp.244-277.

<sup>78</sup>The precedence on this land is claimed by both the descendant of the lord of the land (who can theoretically claim the whole **hena**) and Matital.

### *Territory*

At the introduction of the *soa* system, the **hena** was divided into three territorial units (Wemay, Latue and Nyak) that roughly divided it into thirds.<sup>79</sup> Each unit was made of the houses of six different **nuru**.<sup>80</sup> *Soa* Wemay consists of four **hena upui** (Matoke, Matital, Maslebu and Neyte) and the Houses of two **ana mulini** (Souhaly and Ruspanah). They all have their land in the lower Tau area, near the Sapalewa. **Hena upui** Souwei and five **ana mulini** (Akolo, Ruspanah, Makwabane Tosile and Latuelake) have land in the central third. They make up the *soa* Latue. Finally the **hena upui** Nia'we and Tibali and four **ana mulini** (Kapitan, Ruspanah, Souhaly and Rumapasal) form the *soa* Nyak. Their lands are in the upper Tau area. Thus in Manusa the *soa* territorial division (**sama**) simply superimposed a tripartition over the existing allotment, aggregating Houses that already had land adjoining each other.

The land around the *soa* settlements, including the large sago grove they surrounded, had already been divided into small orchards and garden land because it was near the ancient main hamlet of Mapone. The plots resemble an intricate puzzle.<sup>81</sup> These were, or still are parcels that people can reach quickly from the settlement to harvest tubers, vegetables, leaves, bamboo, etc, to prepare the next meal without having to go to distant gardens.

As with their settlements, the *soa* Wemay and Nyak commingled their small gardens in the lower Tau around the confluences with 'we Usua and 'we llewa (in the north east). More recently a large proportion of that same land was allotted to the powerful school head master (*soa* Nyak) and most of it has been left fallow. One of the oldest areas was re-opened by the youth club (*pemuda*) to plant a few cash crop trees.<sup>82</sup> The people of *soa* Latue made their gardens on the two low south western ridges which lie between 'we Usua, 'we La'wa and 'we Nui (in the south west). Some are still there because the land is close to the new village.

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<sup>79</sup>I only have contemporary data on land distribution. However no one in the **hena** remembers a drastic change in land allotment between the *soa* introduction and nowadays.

<sup>80</sup>As explained previously, six and one of them at the head makes seven.

<sup>81</sup>I walked the area, but trying to map precisely all the patches (now fallow) would have taken weeks, particularly if one was trying to sort out the disputes (land seems to be, almost by definition, an area of controversy).

<sup>82</sup>This is another example of an aborted good idea. One of the Social Projects planted coffee and cocoa trees on that land. However these do not grow well because no one instructed the people how to care for them. Since it is regarded as a collective plantation, young children feel free to pick the cocoa fruits, eat their sweet flesh and throw the beans away.

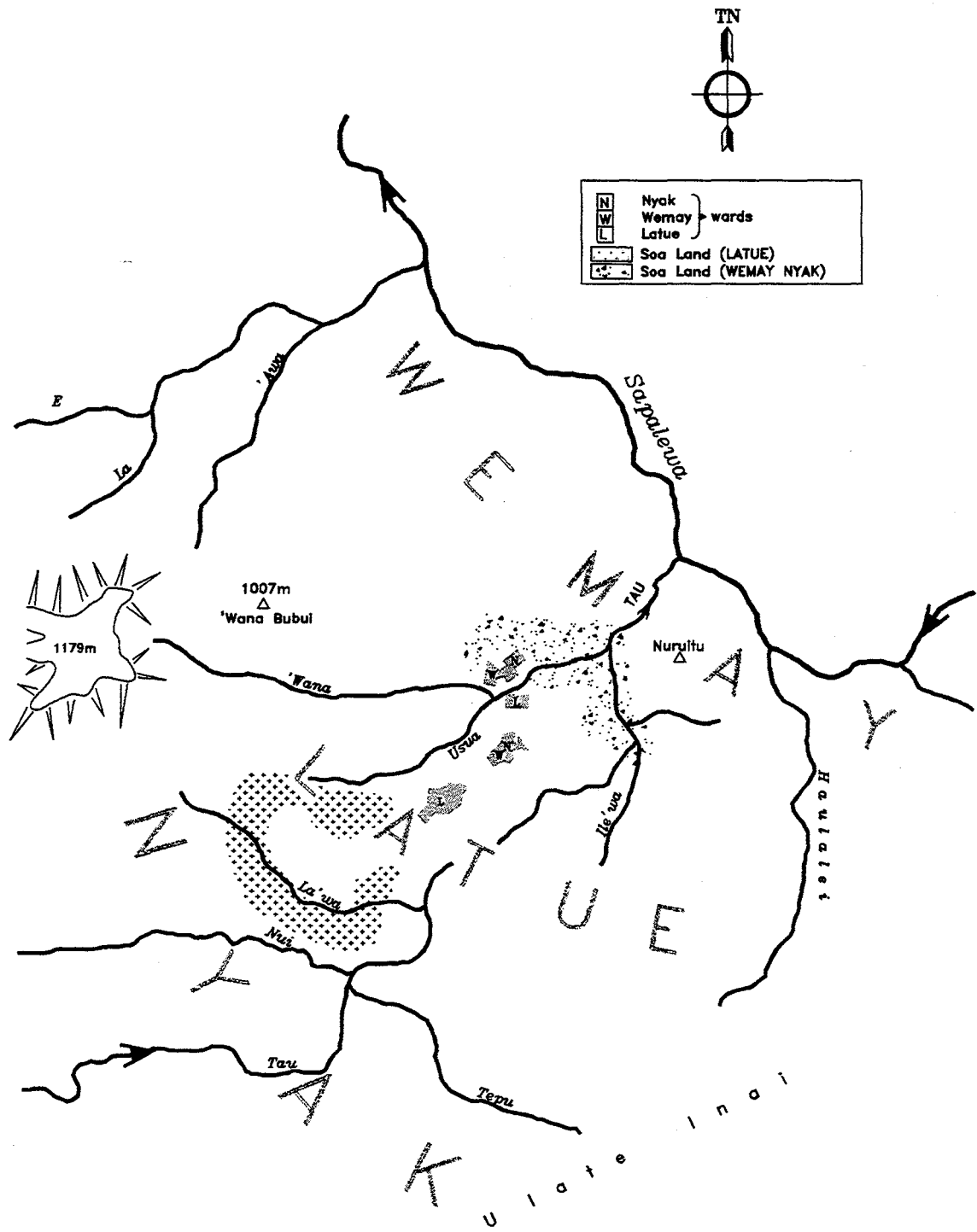


FIG. 6.2 SOA DIVISION & WARDS



The present lord of the land (*soa* Latue) claims that all the land on which the *soa* made their gardens was once in the custody of his **nuru**. The elder of Matital (*soa* Wemay) says that it was his **nuru** who watched over this land. According to the village administration, it is customary that land around the settlement becomes **tape(le) hena** (domain land, in Indonesian *tanah negeri*), irrespective of who had custodianship.<sup>83</sup> Knowing that repeated quarrels have arisen between the *soa* of the lord of the land (Latue) and the *soa* of the ruler (Wemay), we may speculate that the lord of the land did not relinquish without resistance his authority over land or people.<sup>84</sup> Even nowadays, no one in Manusa would deny that somehow all the land of the **hena** was once under the authority of the lord of the land, but it is regarded as something of the past, long disregarded by the colonial and modern form of government. The ambiguity about the custody of the specific section of land used by *soa* Wemay and Nyak lies here. The lord of the land claims it was from his **nuru**, the village ruler says it was under the usual traditional authority of the lord of the land, no more nor less than all the other land of the **hena**.

A recent event is significant in regards to the shift of influence on land matters. The authorisation of the lord of the land was not sought by Barito Pacific, the plywood company that logged large chunks of the surrounding forest. A little alcohol and food was brought to the village as a symbolic offering to the community, so that 'everything would go well.' It was the *saniri* man, father of the village ruler —not the lord of the land, who performed the ritual to obtain the consent of the ancestors.<sup>85</sup>

At first a superimposed residential arrangement, the *soa* system, allowed its dignitaries to extend their authority over land allotment, contributing to the modification of the ancient system. In the past, the land of the **hena** as a whole was under the jurisdiction of the lord of the land, for some ritual matters, when land had to be attributed to a newcomer, or in case of

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<sup>83</sup>However it gives Matital more precedence in his own *soa* (Wemay) if people believe they are farming his land and more weight to the lord of the land, leader of *soa* Latue, in the contest for prestige if the two other *soa* (Wemay and Nyak) admit being on his land.

<sup>84</sup>The first village head recorded in the village official history as a village deputy recognised by the Dutch was the lord of the land Tauli Ela who ruled between 1920 and 1925. However none of the following rulers belonged to the **nuru** of the lord of the land.

<sup>85</sup>The *saniri* man (from a powerful **nuru** of Wemale origin), used the opportunity to show that he had more seniority and prestige than the junior and less influential man who claimed the position of lord of the land.



disputes.<sup>86</sup> Once land had been attributed to a **nuru** by the founding ancestor (i.e. the council of the community elders chaired by the lord of the land) that group was relatively independent in regard to the management of the land. Nowadays these matters are in the hands of the elected members of the administration sanctioned by the regional government. Concessions for forest logging or land for transmigration settlements may be requisitioned at any time by the regional government or by government projects brought in without prior consultation.<sup>87</sup>

The *soa* system also brought into close proximity a sizeable group of Wemale outsiders who had been welcomed and allowed to settle on a distant corner of the **hena** territory. Their forced assimilation in *soa* Wemay (i.e. 'Wemale') led to quarrels, which may have precipitated the departure of a large section of the **nuru** of the lord of the land of Manusa. Nevertheless, as the present lord of the land (their 'younger brother' in the mountain) pointed out, they are nowadays doing very well (better than Manusa) in their child settlement.

## Soa as politico-administrative units

### *Administration*

For the colonial administration, the point of grouping people in *soa* was to sort out and record the population and their economic production in order to apply appropriate tax, health, educational and other administrative measures.<sup>88</sup> According to Tauern and Sachse, the position of *soa* head was hereditary. In Manusa this occurred because the *soa* (**nuru ela**) was generally led by the House (**Luma**) of a locally influential **nuru**. Although the institution is now obsolete, each *soa* of the **hena** still has a *kepala soa* (**nuru upui [ela]**).<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>In Manusa this form of traditional administration of the land disappeared rapidly. Since the modern policies of the state follow the colonial administration of the Dutch in that matter, aiming at its eradication, there is no one of enough renown to assert the traditional role of lord of the land in the community at present time. Indeed the group of the lord of the land departed, leaving behind only a junior House.

<sup>87</sup>In 1991 a plan for reforestation was proposed to apply to areas located up to 600m altitude in that region of Seram. Although it had not been found too high to be logged, the territory of Manusa was excluded. However, this might be just as well since (poor) reforestation usually means more (ruthless) logging to come.

<sup>88</sup>It was part of the standardisation of the regional administration under a 're-constructed' regional indigenous system.

<sup>89</sup>Since the office of head of **nuru per se** does not exist there is no confusion for the Alune to call the *soa* head **upu nuru** (lord of **nuru**). However it has also led observers to equate **nuru** with *soa*.

Interestingly, in Manusa these three dignitaries represent the three orders: the tradition, the state and the Church. The lord of the land heads the *soa* Latue, the former *raja* leads the *soa* Nyak and a Church dignitary, the *soa* Wemay. Formerly the task of the **nuru upui** was to help the village head fulfill his duties toward the colonial administration. The **nuru upui** collected the tax (which by then was levied individually) from each household of his *soa*. He also made sure that everybody was at home for the visits of the patrol, the census and vaccinations, kept law and order in his ward, supervised the management of his *soa*'s land and handled small disputes. Nowadays the *soa* land has returned to the administration of the village, and the position of **nuru upui** is chiefly an honorary one with precedence in sitting at public functions. They would be important dignitaries in the village council of elders if this assembly was still operating. However the *kepala soa* are usually invited by the administration team to take part in important village meetings.

### *Politics*

Beside being large territorial units, some *soa* became powerful socio-political factions. Some achieved renown and finally power through the strength of numbers, their alliances and the notables of their group who fulfilled important political positions within their settlement. Others left to achieve it elsewhere. In Manusa, the coalition of most of the others **hena upui** (in *soa* Wemay and Nyak) against the *soa* of the lord of the land resulted in the departure of a large section of that group.

The elders said that the composition of the **hena** in terms of the number of **nuru** and their distribution between the three *soa* had not changed much since the community first moved into Usua (circa 1910-15). They also maintained that once a segment of an origin group joined one of the *soa*, it remained with it. A branch of the **nuru** Tani'wel became extinct in Manusa and the **nuru** Latuelake and Makwabane moved in recently, but these are small newcomer families who have not yet gained influence. The situation in terms of the number of **nuru** (represented by their Houses) and their position per *soa*, is at present time the following:

### The 3 *soa*

Each *soa* comprises six **nuru** names.<sup>90</sup> However these **nuru** are represented by an unequal number of Houses and households, which also have unequal socio-political positions and influence in the domain.

*Soa* Wemay is the leading *soa*. It regroups the largest and most influent **nuru**, four of which are founding **nuru** of the **hena**. These four **nuru** hold the functions of ritual performer/*raja* (Matoke), war leader (Maslebu), messenger/assistant (Matital) and peace maker/envoy (Neyte).<sup>91</sup> *Soa* Wemay also includes two **nuru** of followers.

Ranking second in size and allied to *soa* Wemay is *soa* Nyak. It comprises two founding **nuru**: Nia'we holding the position of ritual assistant and later village secretary, and Tibali the descendant of the elder brother of the founding Ancestor. Both **nuru** are the custodians of large sections of the land of the **hena**.<sup>92</sup> *Soa* Nyak comprises four **nuru** of followers, two of them being large and influential in the modern administration (school and Church) of the community.

*Soa* Latue is now the smallest *soa*. It is led by one junior House (Reane) of the founding **nuru** Souwei, the **nuru** of lord of the land, descendant of Samai, the founding ancestor of the community. Nowadays, *soa* Latue comprises only five small **nuru** of followers and newcomers, none of them influential.

In the 1930s, after disagreements and quarrels, about which I could not obtain much detail, several households of the **nuru** Souwei and Neyte left Manusa for the southern children hamlets.<sup>93</sup> In Manusa, the coalition of *soa* Wemay and Nyak gradually overturned the authority of the *soa* of the old lord of the land. A large section of the group left.<sup>94</sup> In Manusa, the **nuru** Reane, Latue's **nuru** **upui**, still claims the title of lord of the land (**upu**

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<sup>90</sup>Cf. previous section: *Soa* as residential and territorial units.

<sup>91</sup>Notwithstanding the fact that this last **nuru** only acquired the status of 'founding **nuru**' recently in Manusa (this origin group originates from the Tala - Wemale region).

<sup>92</sup>I use the term custodian to translate the Alune **due**: to 'sit'. It also means to 'look after' (**due lei**: to 'sit beside') to 'watch over', to 'guard', to 'protect' (BI *jaga*).

<sup>93</sup>The Neyte named their branch Tenine: 'bamboo', they are now a ruling family in Rumbatu. The Souwei became influential in Rumberu.

<sup>94</sup>When the *soa* division was introduced this group settled in Putu Porole, apart from the rest of the community (see in Appendix 1: Usu Leini: 4 wards, 3 *soa*, 2 factions, 1 village). In this case, the group which left severed its derivation from Manusa and established itself on the southern land of the domain (on which it stood as lord of the land). Closer to the coast, this settlement drew many followers and became the present *desa* Rumberu.

**tapele**). Although this position has lost most of its former influence, especially over land matters, it still holds some weight in terms of fertility.

### **Soa affiliation**

When I laid out people's land on a map of the **hena**, the relation between the position of the Houses on the land and the pattern of *soa* affiliation became apparent. The Houses which had land in the north of the **hena** belonged to *soa* Wemay, the Houses with land in the centre to *soa* Latue, and the Houses established in the southern part belonged to *soa* Nyak. How much these affiliations came from the land allocation or the land allocation from these affiliations is not so clear since people kept coming (**leu** 'return') to the **hena** before, during and after the establishment of the *soa* system. Furthermore, it is most probable that each individual case of a 'returning' House was given distinct consideration.

Although the institution is now obsolete, most **luma** of the community are still associated with one of the three *soa*.<sup>95</sup> Individuals, born as members of the *soa* of their parents, could change affiliation later in life. In the past, when households or individuals changed settlement they did not change **nuru** but they often shifted to another *soa*. As a unit joined another House of its **nuru** or a mentor already associated with another *soa*, it usually affiliated in that same *soa*. This confirms that **nuru** are linked to origin and *soa* (**nuru ela**) to residence. While the affiliation to one's origin group (**nuru**) is inalienable, this was not so with the *soa*. A person or a House could shift *soa* allegiance, either within a village or by moving to another settlement and associating with one of the local *soa*.

Although the *soa* have lost most of their importance, **nuru upui**, the elders who represent the interest of (former) *soa* members in matters related to land, are still in function in Manusa and may interfere in cases of controversy or allocation of land parcels. These strategic 'affiliations' still occasionally occur in Manusa. The three following examples of integration show this process at different stages. One could also argue that these are in fact taking place at the level of the **hena**, but since it implies access to community land **nuru upui** (who are **hena upui**) are still being consulted.

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<sup>95</sup>What people emphasise is their affiliation in the **hena**, which they usually attribute to coming with Samai or being invited to stay by this ancestral lord of the land.

**Example one**

Sepianus (43), a mature bachelor, used to hunt birds in eastern Seram. A few years ago he came back to Manusa with three orphans, a young woman whom he had married and her two younger siblings (a female and a male teenager). Sepianus is from Nyak, the **nuru** at the origin of the *soa* of the same name. Sepianus said that his wife's siblings, who now live in his house, may choose to marry in Manusa. Providing the young man is diligent, there is enough land available in Manusa for him to make gardens and plantations. But Sepianus does not know yet where the young man will establish these gardens. Because he came with two sisters, several options are open to him. It will depend on whether he behaves according to what is expected in the community, and, following this, whose daughter he will marry. If he dutifully participates in the collective work and the social and religious activities of the village, he might achieve what Yance did (see below).

**Example two**

Yance's wife's father, the **nili** elder, gave Yance as a 'good example' of what a newcomer may accomplish. Yance is a teacher from a southern island of the Moluccas. He was posted to Manusa several years ago and married a woman from Neyte, the largest **nuru** of *soa* Wemay. Through his marriage, Yance became an affiliate of *soa* Wemay. As a teacher he is a prominent figure in the village and has access to communal land. As the industrious father of three children he has been allowed to open several fields on the land of his wife's *soa* (now village land). On good terms with his wife's father and brothers, Yance has also been given access to the hunting and plantation land of their **nuru**. If his children stay, or if they leave but return to Manusa, they will be given the opportunity to claim the usufruct of the trees Yance planted and access to the land he opened.

**Example three**

A third case, Y.L., shows a 'bad example' of behavior which was provided by the same **nili** elder. Y.L. arrived in Manusa twenty years ago from a nearby Alune village. He married a woman from *soa* Latue and was allocated a parcel of the village ground on which to build a house. However, he found a job with a lumber company (Barito Pacific) and has been continuously working away from Manusa, taking his family with him. They visit the village every so often, usually for Christmas. However, the elder, who is influential when it comes to land matters, said that Y.L., who does not do his share of communal work, is only

allowed access to land within fifty metres around his house as prescribed by Indonesian law. Since nothing can grow or be gathered or hunted on that ground, Y. L. has no means of long term subsistence in the *hena*.<sup>96</sup> This shows how important it is for a household to participate in communal matters. If one does not, the law becomes the rule. However, should Y.L. decide to return to Manusa for good he would certainly manage to negotiate an agreement.

Y.L. is Alune while Yance is a distant outsider from the south Moluccas. However the closeness of origin alone does not secure someone membership as much as residence does. Since the population is small, households are welcomed to join. As long as they become junior residents (*ana mulini*), this is to say abide by the rules and care for the common estate, they will be given some land to work and live off. A proper household is expected to *da'a lusune*: to 'care for', 'watch over', 'preserve', as well as to develop the common estate. Yance has grown his renown on such a base.

### Soa and identity

When the *soa* system was imposed, the Houses of several *nuru* in a domain aggregated into one *soa* with their affines, followers and allies of the same domain. Since people regarded the *soa* as a large *nuru* (*nuru ela*) they often regrouped under the name of their largest or most influent *nuru*.<sup>97</sup> People may use this *soa* name rather than that of their *nuru* when requested to give their individual identity. This had, and still has, several advantages. The availability of both names entitle any individual to a public (*soa* name) and to a more private (*nuru* name) and strictly Alune identity. Although the *soa* is now an obsolete institution, people still use their *soa* name usually to introduce themselves to outsiders and to register or enroll in the administration or the army.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Y.L. could try opening a shop in Manusa, but there is little cash around and each trip to supply the shop involves two long days' walk for a young man.

<sup>97</sup>This is the case for Nyak in Manusa, Ruspanah and Tani'wel in Rumbatu, Souhaly in Riring etc. This explains the confusion of Stresemann and van Wouden.

<sup>98</sup>It is more impersonal, since these names encompass many people of different origin. The outsiders recognize a regional name but the Alune identity, that comes with one's *nuru* name (and one's mother's *nuru* name) is not specified. During the *soa* time, in the old birth and baptism registers, many individuals were only recorded under their *soa* name. Those who did not remain in the genealogical memory of their descendants (seldom more than three generations) are now impossible to identify. Individuals still use their *soa* name to deal with the regional administration when they wish to affiliate themselves with a larger or more powerful group or to be less specific about their own.

The **nuru** name directly points to ancestral origin; the *soa* to administrative identity. It may serve individual strategies to cover one's precise origin and/or to be seen affiliated with a more renowned group. It is frequently used by soldiers and civil servant whose **nuru** name is not of special renown or simply difficult to spell. It may also be used to distract attention from a name after a political change. It also promotes egalitarianism. In a domain, small units of little renown which are affiliated to a large *soa* prefer using their *soa* name.

### Disruptive effect of the *soa* system

In a few years, the *soa* system in Manusa modified the pattern of settlement and the traditional balance of power. It divided the community over residence and land matters and split it into two factions. After some years of tension and rivalry a large group of people, some regarded as early settlers, left for the children villages, breaking away from the mother community.

According to de Vries's description, mountain Alune hamlets and villages (*kampong*), were small or large family clusters of houses irregularly built on hills and ridges.<sup>99</sup> When the *soa* system was brought to Manusa circa 1915 (or possibly as early as 1912) it considerably modified this mode of settlement. People assembled in a single village complex called Usua, in the vicinity of a sago marsh alongside the path between the coasts (see Appendix 1 for more details). The **luma** who had common land boundaries and were presumably already in affinal relationships joined the same *soa*. An elder said once that the **hena** formed three *soa* because it had three **latu**. However, if it occurred for that reason, the situation of one **latu** per *soa* did not last very long.<sup>100</sup>

Meant by the Dutch administration to bring some unity and uniformity to what was regarded as a disordered and confusing crowd of rival origin groups, the introduction of the *soa* system brought division and imbalance in the **hena**, producing an important shift in the balance of power within the community. The three *soa* rapidly broke into two factions of uneven size and power. Wemay and Nyak joined settlements at an early stage, while Latue kept its own wards apart (see Appendix 1.Usu Leini). Thus, nominally three, the *soa* in

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<sup>99</sup>1927, p.126.

<sup>100</sup>Who ruled the **hena** before 1920 is not named or not remembered. The first **mba'ele** (deputy) accredited by the Dutch administration was a lord of the land Tauli Ela 'the Great Progenitor' who is remembered as an **upu** rather than a **latu**. Four generations have passed since the events of that time, some of them painful to remember, and no archives were kept. However, large fragments of the **hena** history can be traced from circa 1918 to present time.

Manusa divided into two factions. In fact the official tripartition may be regarded as a bipartition: *soa* Latue versus the coalition of *soa* Wemay and Nyak. This division occurred at a time when the Dutch administration was still doing its best to counter and decrease the authority of the lords of the land (in *soa* Latue) by giving authority and power to regents and *orang kaya* (in *soa* Wemay and Nyak), whose loyalty they had often bought.<sup>101</sup> Although there was no shortage of land in the **hena**, the *soa* system raised rival claims of precedence over the land around the wards.

## CONCLUSION

Like all present Alune mountain communities, **hena** Manusa is a domain composed of several segments of origin groups (**nuru**). In the past, their units (**luma**) although residentially scattered in a number of hamlets, congregated around Nuruitu, the ritual centre of the domain (see Appendix 1: Mapone and the Manoesa Manoewe complex). Nowadays the inhabitants of *desa* Manusa are assembled in one larger village, the **hena toini**, the 'group'/cluster' of the **hena** (see Appendix 1: The modern Manusa Samanuwey at Tona). Nevertheless, most households (or group of related households) have kept garden houses, particularly those whose land is at some distance from the settlement. The land of the **hena** is regarded as an indivisible whole; House units have claims on specific (and unequal) sections of this land, parcels of which are distributed between their households. The common usufruct of the unoccupied land (**tape malenete**) and the forest is accessible to all.

Sharing a 'history' and common interests, the community is also largely endogamous. Today, 15 **nuru** are represented in the **hena**, among which seven hold a positions of **hena upui** 'grand-fathers of the domain'. The Houses that claim and perform these duties are associated with the foundation of the domain. The Houses which are not associated to one of these positions are the followers **ana mulini** 'those who came after', the 'last born'. Since the position of **hena upui** can only be maintained by a group with sufficient members and some political influence, it is not necessarily permanently associated with the same **nuru**. A group may become extinct while a strong **ana mulini** may arise to replace it as **hena upui**.<sup>102</sup> Circa

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<sup>101</sup>The opposition and political rivalries between the two factions may also be seen in terms of the opposition between resourceful outsider rulers and the insider lord of the land, a model not uncommon among Austronesian societies (cf. Fox, J.J. 1997a - First presented in Leiden July 1995).

<sup>102</sup>In Manusa their number seems limited to seven, the number of **nuru** stated in the narrative of foundation of the **hena**. Two of these positions (**latu** lord of the land and **latu** ritual performer) seems firmly associated with the two same **nuru** which have always made sure they remained represented in the **hena**. In contrast, the position of **latu** ruler has been, along history, assumed by the representatives of several



1915 the colonial administration introduced the *soa* system in the mountains. It added an extra level of administrative and political organisation, bringing the existing groups of the domain into larger territorial and residential units. In Manusa, it was largely assimilated within the existing structure before becoming obsolete in 1977.

In the following chapters I examine more closely the origin group (**nuru**) and the interactions of their units (**luma**) within a domain.

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different **nuru** (schematically, a lord of the land in early *soa* time, ritual performers under Dutch colonial administration, warlords in trouble times and peace makers under Indonesian administration).

## Chapter Seven

### THE ORIGIN GROUPS: THE NURU AND THEIR LUMA

**Nuru** and **luma** have been briefly introduced in Chapter 3 (cf.: The **nuru** and their **sanai**, the **luma**), and further circumscribed through their narratives in Chapter 5. In the present chapter, I describe them in further detail, relying on metaphors and case studies to adhere closely to the Alune's own categories.

#### THE NURU

Beside referring to the origin groups, in Alune, the word **nuru** also means 'extremity', 'limit', 'bounds'.<sup>1</sup> Used in daily context, the term may describe the whole of a **nuru** (all the people of the same name group), as well as its subsidiary levels of segmentation (**sanai** and **luma**).

#### The metaphor of the banyan

Alune use creepers as metaphors of social growth. When asked to describe the history of his large **nuru**, Ian drew a banyan, naming trunks and branches.<sup>2</sup> *Waringin* is the collective vernacular name given to several types of large *Ficus*, the banyan (or banian) trees commonly found in Indonesia.<sup>3</sup> The Alune call it **nunue**. Its striking size and usefulness distinguish this particular tree. In Seram, the large inter-spaces between its projecting

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<sup>1</sup>(Eg. of a land or a geographic feature).

<sup>2</sup>The 'gourd' (or 'pumpkin') **tu'une**, a creeper trailing on the ground, is the metaphor of a marriage prohibition. **Tu'une**: also means to 'sprout', to 'be pregnant'.

<sup>3</sup>Condit I. J. 1969: *Ficus The Exotic Species*, University of California: Division of Agricultural Sciences. p.131. The *Ficus*, commonly referred to by the name of the fruit it produces, the fig, is widely distributed in the tropical regions of the earth. Species of *Ficus* themselves may be 'approaching 2,000 even without splitting hairs on specific differences.' Merrill (1943 in Condit p.5).

buttresses provide night cover in the forest or shelters in time of war. Hunters say that its sweet little fruits attract game birds and bats.<sup>4</sup>

### *Origin development and ramification*

In the wild, a banyan tree originates either from a seed, e.g. a pollinated fig dropped by a bird in the fork of a tree (i.e. between sky and earth), or 'from the aerial roots of another fig which attach themselves to the bark of a neighbouring tree'.<sup>5</sup> These aerial or hanging roots are the shoots and suckers of the plant. They develop from the branches, grow down to the soil where they root and eventually mature into multiple secondary pillar-like stems and trunks, some forming props which 'support their parent branches'.<sup>6</sup> The new trunks either blend into the main trunk or grow into a new tree at some distance from this initial trunk. This principal trunk is sometimes 'masked by numerous aerial roots' so that 'eventually a single tree comes to look like a whole grove'.<sup>7</sup>

This peculiar vegetal development provides a metaphor for the origin, growth and expansion of a **nuru**, its branches and Houses. Like the seed dropped by a bird, the origin of a **nuru** is often linked with some supra-natural event, marking a specific place on earth where its growth initiated. **Nuru uwei** or **nuruwei**, the 'core/base' of the **nuru**, is the House regarded as the closest to the 'origin' of a **nuru**; it is its principal trunk. The 'branches' (**sanai**) and Houses (**luma**) of a **nuru**, like shoots and suckers, extend out from their mother trunk of origin and establish themselves at some distance. In a domain, some junior Houses (**luma sanai** 'branch houses'), similar to the pillar-like stems of the banyan, support their 'mother House' (**luma inai**) ready to replace it should this eldest House become extinct. If no male heir is born, a 'female House' (**luma bina**) may continue the line by blending into the main trunk, sometimes along several generations of daughters.<sup>8</sup> A House, or a whole 'branch', may also choose to sever the link with its initial trunk (**nuruwei**) and develop as a new **nuru**

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<sup>4</sup>The root fibre of some *Ficus* makes resistant ropes or fishing nets. The bark of others provides a good tapa cloth or produces a milky sap rich in latex. Leaves and twigs are used as fodder, containers or medicine. A brown red dye is also extracted from the leaves of some species.

<sup>5</sup>Australian Encyclopaedia 1925, Vol.1, p.458-9.

<sup>6</sup>Shorter Oxford 1956 p.143. Also : Webster p.119 & Condit op. cit.p.131.

<sup>7</sup>Condit op. cit.p.121 and p.131.

<sup>8</sup>A woman who has had many children and grandchildren is deferentially called **mata bina**: i.e. a woman (**bina**) who acted as a 'link' (**mata**) in the chain of life. It is the **mata bina** who assure that the flow of life is carried along further generations. The woman who initiates a **luma bina** is a **mata bina** per se. However, the **luma** she establishes will become a masculine line again as soon as her first male descendant has a son.

in another place. When a new unit arrives in a domain it can either blend into a 'mother House' (**luma inai**) of its **nuru** already established in that community, or put forth its new separate 'branch House' (**Luma sanai**).<sup>9</sup>

### *A strangler tree*

The banyan is an epiphyte, it derives its moisture and nutrients from the air and the rain and grows on another plant. Clinging tightly around its host, it progressively envelops it in its roots and strangles it, finally taking its place. Alune people describe the **nunue** as a 'murderer' (**ma'a bunu**), because, 'it kills people', (**bunu tamata**) i.e. other trees.<sup>10</sup> As Condit puts it (op. cit., p.129), banyan 'begin their life as epiphytes and develop as stranglers'. **Nuru** may also act as 'stranglers'. Coming as a newcomer in a domain, the enterprising branch of a **nuru** may expand and, with time, establish itself as a ruling House and become **hena upui** to the detriment of a group of earlier but weaker settlers.

### *Longevity and regeneration*

The rootstock of a banyan is very vigorous; a tree cut down will always sprout again. The tree regenerates continuously through a seemingly never ending cycle of new shoots, roots, trunks and branches, its majesty further enhanced by an evergreen foliage. Sharing that vigour with bamboo and banana trees, the banyan is often associated with vitality and fecundity and it may not be felled.<sup>11</sup> 'We grow like the Banyan Tree,...ever renewed by the fresh strength of new roots.' This statement (quoted by Condit op., cit. p.177), adequately describes the vigour and regenerative power of a **nuru**.

In the Mountains of Seram the banyan (mainly *F. waringiana*) is the largest tree of the forest and a meaningful symbol for the Alune, who link their origin to a cosmic banyan and

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<sup>9</sup>(see below: Luma inai and luma sanai: the origin group in the domain).

<sup>10</sup>Carrying the same ideas of both main trunk and powerful murderer, the title given to a high initiate into the men Kakehan's brotherhood was **nunuwei**: the 'core/base of the banyan'. To reach that level a man had to be a renown warrior and head-hunter.

<sup>11</sup>Tales about the longevity of *Ficus* abound. Condit (op.cit. p.99) recalls a Bo Tree (*Ficus religiosa* or pipal) planted in Ceylon in 288 BC about which T. H. Parson said in 1941: 'It is doubtful if the life of any individual specimen of *Ficus* exceeds 150 years in the tropics, but such trees are maintained by means of suckers and shoots, and in this instance it has no doubt been the case.' Condit adds that, 'these trees may live to be 2,000 to 3,000 years old.'

depict on its model the federation of their river valley and the development and growth of their origin groups.

### **Souhaly, an example of a *nuru***

To describe the features which characterise a *nuru* as closely as possible in accord with local understanding, I use as an example the case study of *nuru* Souhaly and its portrayal by three of its elders. Souhaly, a follower *nuru* in Manusa, is only represented by three Houses in this *hena*. However, it is a large Alune *nuru* with five main branches that ramify over several domains and beyond the island. Each of the informants had a different standpoint in terms of individual rank, domain of residence, generation and gender; thus their view of their *nuru* did not always entirely coincide.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, there is nothing like a single representation on which all the members of a *nuru* totally agree. Thus, although fig. 7.1 follows closely the sayings of these elders, I intend it as an illustration of the possible structure of a *nuru* rather than as an exact representation of *nuru* Souhaly.

#### *Name and origin*

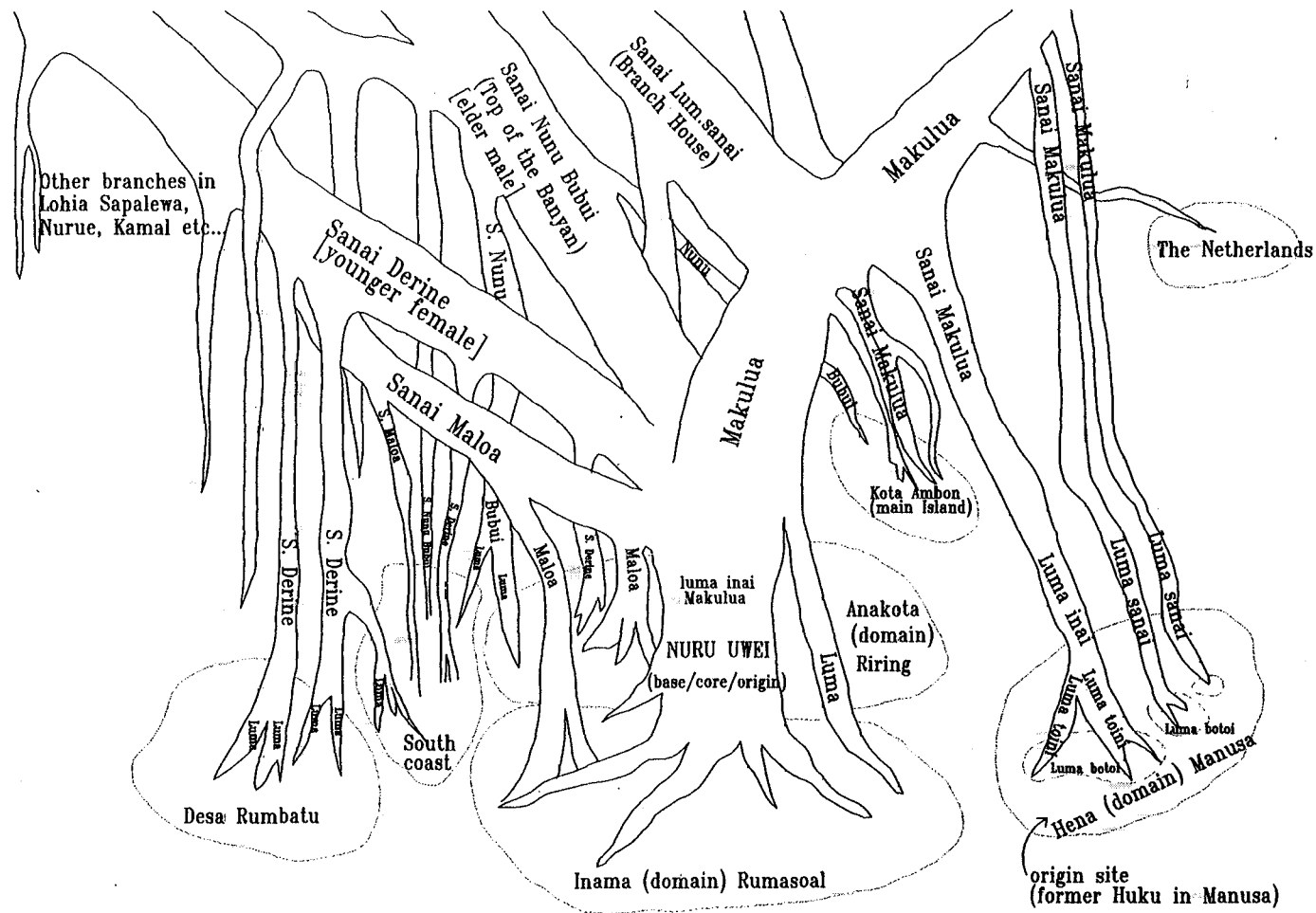
One cannot be Alune (or Wemale) without belonging to a *nuru* and expressing this identity by a name. Even affiliated to different 'branches' (*sanai*) and with only sparse interaction between them, all the members of a *nuru* claim a common derivation. This sense of belonging is based on the acknowledgment of a single initial 'source' (*nuruwei*) which translates in the sharing of a common name. Thus, if the members of a branch recognise this common origin they refer to the *nuru* name that identifies it. This name is the support of the 'history' (*sou*) peculiar to a *nuru*. Consequently, history is also often linguistically (re)constructed, particularly around the meaning of places's and people's names. For example. the folk etymology of the name Souhaly is: *sou hali e*. In this case, *sou* is translated into Indonesian as *perkara*: 'matter', 'case', 'fact'.<sup>13</sup> *Hali* means to 'turn upside down', to 'overturn', *e*: 'it'. It roughly translates as: 'the case of having it reversed'.<sup>14</sup> They

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<sup>12</sup>Mon was the eldest Souhaly man in the domain of Riring and a most respected dignitary in the region. Ian, one of Mon's distant relatives, was the Souhaly senior elder in Manusa. Both belonged to the branch Makulua. Sue, a Souhaly woman healer from the Derine branch, lived in the child village of Rumbatu.

<sup>13</sup>*Sou*, a polysemous noun, means 'language' (and language forms), 'history', 'case', or 'issue'.

<sup>14</sup>*Hali* 'overturned', 'upside down' is also the characteristic of the ancestral world, the source of fecundity. As a saying goes: *bulane e hali tamata boa*: 'moon overturned, lot of people': i.e. a moon eclipse forecasts many new born children.



Reference:



Places (domains, islands, country...)  
 S.=Sanai L. = luma

**FIG. 7.1 NURU SOUHAYL**  
 according to Mon, Ian and Sue



received this name because the roofing of their (first) garden house was made with leaves which were turned upside down.<sup>15</sup> This, said the elders, is the history of origin contained in the name Souhaly.

Like a living tree, the history (or histories) of a **nuru**, a component of its origin structure, develops and diversifies as new segments emerge. Parts may also shrink as 'branches' become extinct. Usually, but not always, all the members of a **nuru** share a common narrative of origin. When they do not, it might be because some members have forgotten their origin story or because their branch intentionally parted from its **nuru**. An origin point often features a rock, a tree, and/or a body of water. The name of a **nuru** is associated with this first site claimed by all affiliated members as their point of origin. **Nuru** branch out and their ramifications migrate to other domains. Usually large 'branches' (**sanai**) also have a name and a narrative. Like their **nuru**, many 'branches' list a succession of place names punctuated by events. One or several ancestral figures, **upu ela**, 'great lords', may also partake in the narrative in relation to these places.<sup>16</sup>

#### *The nuru uwei and the sanai*

**Nuru** have no overarching internal structure of authority. However, within a **nuru** the 'branches' (**sanai**) are ordered in a variable order of precedence linguistically constructed primarily by using the complementary categories **a mena/a muli** 'earlier/'later', 'elder/'younger'. This order is subjected to social competition and recognition by the other members of the **nuru**. Alone genealogical memory seldom exceeds three generations and genealogies are used to trace the origin of individuals but not to retrace the common derivation of a larger group to its founding ancestor. Therefore the **nuruwei**, the 'core of the **nuru**' its 'earlier', 'elder' and most potent 'source of continuity' is the group presently regarded as the largest or most renowned, but not necessarily a line that derives most directly from the founder. Indeed distant tips may 'return' to support or replace the initial trunk. Their relationship or closeness to the founder can subsequently be socially elaborated and inserted in the body of narratives which pertain to that **nuru**.

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<sup>15</sup>Building construction follows traditional categorical oppositions (see Appendix 3). Thus placing a roof thatch upside down (i.e. female thatching over male thatching) constitutes a "case" (**sou**). In this context it could refer to a supra-human originator or to a female line.

<sup>16</sup>As exemplified in an earlier chapter, once applied on a map, the succession of sites recalled in these narratives often retraces, along rivers, hills and rock formations, the path followed by the group or the landmarks of its territory.



Sometimes the **nuruwei**, the 'core', 'base', 'source of continuity' of a **nuru**, is still represented by one main **sanai** of that **nuru** in or nearby its origin place. However, the colonial and contemporary policies of relocating settlements have made this an exception.<sup>17</sup> The position of 'core' is usually attributed to a 'branch' **sanai** regarded as 'elder' a **mena**. This form of precedence attributed to a group (**sanai**) can be estimated in terms of time, rank, size or acquired authority. It lasts only as long as it is acknowledged by the other 'branches'. Nowadays people still rank the 'branches' of their **nuru** but they do not acknowledge a single House as representative of their **nuruwei** unless they have political reasons to do so (for example the House of origin of an important regional dignitary). The order of precedence of branches within **nuru** seems relatively constant (at least at both extremes) but new branches can emerge and develop into very large units while others become extinct.<sup>18</sup>

In 1992, the **nuru** Souhaly had five main 'branches', **sanai**. Souhaly Makulua was the 'older' one, the **nuruwei**.<sup>19</sup> Four other branches were remembered as having maintained their ties, still referring to themselves as Souhaly. According to the elders they were, in their older/younger order of precedence: the male branch Nunububui ('Banyan Top'), the Maloa branch, the Lumsanai ('Branch House'), and the youngest female branch: Derine (the evergreen that was laid upside down as roofing on the Souhaly's garden house).<sup>20</sup> Another informant also remembered Toweli and Lumbubui ('Tip of the House') as branches of Souhaly in the south (Kamal). For all the branches of Souhaly their **nuru uwei** is the name Souhaly itself. For the Souhaly Makulua of Manusa and the Souhaly Derine of Rumbatu their **nuru uwei** is represented by the Makulua branch of Riring-Rumasoal, half a day's walk from the origin point. However it is improbable that all the Souhaly would agree to designate it as the single representative of the **nuru uwei**.<sup>21</sup>

A criterion of prior establishment orders the precedence of the units (Houses) of each origin group in a given domain. The House regarded as the 'older' (a **mena**) of its name is the

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<sup>17</sup>Mobility is also discouraged by the policies of fixed settlement enforced by all successive governments since the beginning of the century.

<sup>18</sup>Elders recall that entire branches were decimated by epidemics (influenza, smallpox and cholera) at the beginning of colonisation.

<sup>19</sup>This is a large group which developed into several sub-branches. In the neighboring domain of Riring-Rumasoal, Souhaly Makulua stands as **upui**, 'grandfather'. In the past it gathered the Houses (**luma**) of several smaller **nuru**, leading a hamlet and giving its name to a larger unit (a *soa* or **nuru ela**).

<sup>20</sup>**Derine** leaves are very prolific; they are a metaphor of reproductive ability. One says: **nebu lupa derine**: 'to multiply like the (leaves) of the **derine** plant'. The reference to the roofing recalls the fact that the heirlooms and the offerings presented to the ancestors in the family shrine (**luma botoi**) had to be kept perfectly dry. The renewal of this roofing was a ceremonial task (performed by this group?).

<sup>21</sup>The Souhaly of Manusa are one of Makulua's numerous ramifications which returned (**leu**) to its origin point (a hilltop in Manusa) three generations ago. It is thus logical that the Souhaly of Manusa indicate Makulua as their **nuru uwei**.

'mother' House (**luma inai**). Junior (**a muli**) or unrelated Houses of the same name establish 'branch Houses' **luma sanai**.<sup>22</sup>

### *Branching out ...and returning back*

According to one of the informants, the place of origin of **nuru** Souhaly was the former Huku, a site conquered by Manusa and now within the territory of this **hena**.<sup>23</sup> As Huku people fled, the Souhaly disseminated over the Alune area and several of its branches became influential in other domains (mainly Riring and Rumasoa). Three generations ago, a House of the Makulua branch returned to Manusa where, says its narrative, it was welcomed by the lord of the land and allowed to resettle on the former land of its **nuru**. Although the Souhaly recovered some land rights in Manusa where its **luma inai** 'sit/'watch over' (**due**) the land which surrounds the ritual centre, they are still regarded as newcomers in that domain. However should one of the duties of **hena upui** be left vacant by a disappearing **nuru**, Souhaly (or any other **nuru** having a powerful and respected situation in the domain) could eventually hold that position.

The ramification of a **nuru** is an ongoing process. Some branches die, others develop, spread out and multiply their shoots, expanding near the main trunks or outward into other domains. Units can also return (**leu**) to their place of origin either physically, or by reincorporating their core name. As one informant explained, even the fruits at the furthest tips of the most distant branch still belong to the tree.

When a segment branches out of a **nuru**, taking a new name, one says: **i hetii bei lumare**: 'he moved away from his House' or: **i ese neka**: 'he already went away'. Traditionally, the departing unit can choose to keep its branch name, return to its original **nuru** name or take a new name. Thus, for example, a sub-branch of Makulua could decide to keep the name Makulua, return to its **nuru** name Souhaly or take an entirely new name.<sup>24</sup> In case of conflicts, a House may sever all links and forget its ancient affiliation and name. It then refers to itself only by its new name, virtually establishing itself as a new **nuru**.<sup>25</sup> However, a House, or an individual household, can always choose to reverse the process and return

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<sup>22</sup>While a 'branch' **sanai** is a whole segment of a **nuru** usually composed of several Houses often scattered over several domains, a 'branch House' **luma sanai** is a single House localised in one domain (i.e. a 'twig' of one **sanai**).

<sup>23</sup>(See in Chapter 4: 'Places, knowledge and identity' and 'Nili Hau at Lum.buini').

<sup>24</sup>Nowadays this last possibility is excluded but one still may use one's *soa* name in official documents or registering children.

<sup>25</sup>This is what the Tenine of Rumbatu did when they severed their links with the Neyte of Manusa. Under their new name, they developed into a large influential **nuru** in their new settlement.

(**leu**) to its original **nuru** or branch name. One can not change **nuru** but one may identify oneself by either the trunk name or by its branch name. These possibilities have multiple implications. The following case illustrates how one may swing back and forth between branch and trunk name and why it may be done.

When J. Makaruku (a branch of **nuru** Akolo) arrived in Manusa several years ago as a young single man from Riring, there was no-one of his branch name in the **hena**. He became a follower of another Akolo House (branch Lumusanai), and like them took to being called by their common **nuru** name only.<sup>26</sup> J. received access to some land, gained a respectable position in Manusa and married the daughter of a powerful House. A few years later, having five children and being well established in the domain, he decided to again use his branch name of origin. This branch has now a strategic affiliate in the person of a high ranked civil servant in the capital of the Province, a fact which enhances J.'s prestige. It may also offer more opportunities to his children should they go to study in town. His branch of origin being a political asset for his and his children's future, J. 'returned' into it. However this did not deprive him of his trunk name (Akolo), since it is implied in the branch name. In effect J. used for a while the support of the existing branch of his **nuru** in the domain, but as soon as he was well established he withdrew from that affiliation and put forth his own House.<sup>27</sup> Being the first one of that branch name in the domain also made J. the founder of a **luma inai**, a 'mother House'. Any subsequent newcomer of the same name will have to either blend into this initial mother house or start a **luma sanai**, a younger 'branch house' of minor status.

Thus, a certain mobility characterises small units. In a domain, the members of one branch can re-attach themselves to the House of an older branch. Providing they receive land, they may also establish themselves as a new branch in another domain. In this on-going process, branches become extinct while others develop into very large units. These large units eventually become **nuru** of their own or fragment into new branches, some finally loosening the ties with their **nuru** of origin. Those three aspects 1- the ramification from a main axis (the base or source of the **nuru**: **nuruwei**), 2- the extinction of certain lines or branches (**sanai**) and 3- the extension of others into new branches or autonomous trunks, are all intrinsic to the structure of the **nuru**. Because of this, the size of a **nuru** in a domain may vary considerably within a couple of generations. The **nuru** in the domain of Manusa are examples of this. Two **nuru** of newcomers (Neyte and Ruspanah), who arrived three generations ago, are now quite large and comprise several Houses. In their expansion, these lines have drawn towards them new affiliates and now hold influential positions in the domain. On the other hand, four other **nuru** (Reane, Latuelake, Tosile and Rumapasal) are

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<sup>26</sup>A **luma** can attract and assimilate followers from other branches of its **nuru**.

<sup>27</sup>Thus, if the Akolo Lumusanai had counted on J.'s children to become a support line of their own House, they lost that expectation when J. began his own mother House of Akolo Makaruku in Manusa.

now represented by only one household each. This is either because their line is becoming extinct in the domain or because they are newcomers who might later expand. In a small domain like Manusa, having several sons, an unmarried daughter and her male child, or an adopted member of the same line, may allow a branch to postpone and eventually avoid extinction. The following case is an example of adoption within the same **nuru** to avoid the extinction of a mother House in a domain. It also shows that the loose ties between members of the same **nuru** in different domains can be called upon if required.

Y.'s only son died before having children. Already an old man himself, Y. became the last of his mother House in Manusa. In grief, he cut all his coconut trees. When his sorrow settled down, he went to a nearby domain where he had relatives and encouraged Hugo, a young single man of his branch to settle with him in Manusa. They recalled a distant kindred and Hugo did not establish a new branch House. He was assimilated into Y.'s mother House where he replaced his son.<sup>28</sup> The elder said that the young man was going to inherit his house, continue his line and watch over the land after him.

#### *Nuru as exogamous units*

Alune origin groups have an ideal of exogamy. Two individuals who share the same name belong to the same **nuru** and share the same **nuruwei** ('core' of the **nuru**).<sup>29</sup> They should not marry and in practice they seldom do, even if they are unrelated and live in distant settlements. The memory of Alune ancestry traced through a genealogy seldom goes back beyond three generations. But even if the units or the individuals affiliated to a common **nuru** (having a common name) can not trace any kinship ties, they will say **ami 'wali beta**: 'we are brothers and sisters' and will not intermarry.<sup>30</sup> **Nuru** are perceived as exogamous units. As long as a branch of a **nuru** has not openly severed its link with its base (**nuruwei**) its members should not marry anyone from a branch that also claims affiliation to that same **nuru**.<sup>31</sup> However these marriages sometimes occur at the coast or in town where people loosen their ties with distant relatives, use their branch or *soa* names only, and do not have

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<sup>28</sup>In pre-Christian time he would have been incorporated into the ancestral cult of Y.'s House.

<sup>29</sup>Sometimes just referred to as **ai uwei** the 'core of the tree' the 'base' close to the roots, the 'bole' which is regarded as the origin of all the branches.

<sup>30</sup>**Wali**: same sex sibling, **beta**: opposite sex sibling.

<sup>31</sup>When a branch has severed itself from its initial trunk it becomes a **nuru** in its own right, i.e. members of the former 'trunk' and 'branch' may intermarry. The territorial *soa* groups (called **nuru ela**: 'large **nuru**'), were often named after their leading **nuru**, inducing the confusion found in the literature about whether or not **nuru** were exogamous (see previous chapter).

access to the oral knowledge about their origin.<sup>32</sup> The following is an example of such marriages and their outcome.

In the fifties, when they were only using their branch name, the (Souhaly) Makulua intermarried with the (Souhaly) Derine. They recall finding out through signs and bad omens that the ties between the two limbs were 'too close.' They did not have children or these were sick and died. This diminution of fertility affected not only the wrongly married couple but the whole **nuru**. To solve this dangerous situation they had to either sever these ties or cease to intermarry. They choose to re-activate their shared affiliation to their common origin (**nuruwei**), the large single **nuru** Souhaly; a decision which also re-enforced their strength at the regional level. After this, said the elders, they started to multiply again: **nebu lupa derine umu (ulu) mluti lupa tomole umu mluti**: 'multiply/fecundate, numerous like the derine leaves, (numerous) like the tomole leaves'.

The elders pointed out that this had happened because it was a time of instability when people were often away from their mother House. What was emphasized was not the poor health conditions and lack of proper food due to war time but the loosening of proper relationship between relatives. Awareness of a common origin is maintained by continuous relationships. A branch may choose to maintain, ignore or sever this connection to a common point of origin, but, when re-affirmed, the knowledge of sharing a common origin with other branches of the same **nuru** entails exogamy. Indeed one can not 'multiply and become numerous' within one's own blood (see following chapter). **Nuru** should seek brides between, and not within themselves.

The metaphors given by the elder points to the concern for a **nuru** to be prolific and to become large in the number of its members. It is a key element to gain or maintain status in the social and ritual spheres. It is also imperative for the Houses to keep expanding if they want to preserve their claim on the sections of land in the domains where they settled. This example also shows that the network of large **nuru**, although relatively loose, extends beyond a single domain. Alune society as a whole is made of these **nuru** and reproduces itself through the alliances and exchanges between their branches and tips: the Houses.

### *The 15 nuru of Manusa*

Altogether in Manusa in 1992 there were 15 **nuru** made of 36 'mother' and 'branch' Houses for a total of 76 permanent Alune households. The **nuru** which held the seven duties of the

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<sup>32</sup>Village elders complain that their town relatives do not consult them anymore about the appropriateness of a union before entering marriage negotiations, only coming when something goes wrong.

domain were **hena upui**; the others were a **mulu**, the 'followers', 'those who came afterward'. The composition of their Houses and households is further detailed in Appendix 2: The 15 **nuru** of Manusa.

The 15 <b>nuru</b> of Manusa		number of households	number of Houses
<b>The 7 hena upui</b> <sup>33</sup>			
I.	Souwei (represented by Reane)	1	1
II.	Latuelamena (represented by Tibali)	3	2
III.	Matoke	8	4
IV.	Nyak	4	1
V.	Maslebu	7	4
VI.	Matital	7	2
VII.	Neyte	11	3
<b>Nuru of follower</b> (Listed by size)			
VIII.	Ruspanah	10	4
IX.	Kapitan	7	3
X.	Souhaly	5	3
XI.	Akolo	4	2
XII.	Makwabane	3	2
XIII.	Rumapasal	1	1
XIV.	Latuelake	1	1
XV.	Tosile	1	1

## THE LUMA

In Alune the word **luma** has several meanings: it is a 'house', the physical entity that I document in Appendix 3, and a social unit of related people (which I write with a capital H). **Luma**, a word with feminine connotation (there are **luma inai**, 'mother houses', but no 'father houses'), also refers to 'home' as in the answer to the usual question 'where are you going?', **leu luma**: 'I am returning home'. **Luma** also means 'tamed', 'domesticated', as in

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<sup>33</sup>The way I order the seven **hena upui** is arbitrary. However I came to it by following the narratives and people's sayings. Follower **nuru** are simply ordered according to size.

**apale luma**: a wild pig captured young in the forest and trained to live in the village. It is these domesticated and social spaces that I examine in the following section.<sup>34</sup>

Like the word **nuru**, **luma** is used to designate the whole or its parts; in daily parlance it is not always clear when the word **luma** indicates a whole group (House) or one of its sub-units.

### **Mother and branch Houses: the origin group in a domain**

We saw earlier that there is no established precedence between the Alune **nuru**.<sup>35</sup> Within a **nuru**, an internal order of precedence is sometimes marked between its 'branches' (**sanai**) using asymmetric categories like elder/younger, core/tip, first born/last born. However this is not a rigidly set ranking. It is within the domain where they are established that an internal precedence is set between the Houses of a **nuru**. It is based on relative time but only differentiates between first/later arrival which is translated into a relationship of 'mother' and 'branch' House. The 'mother House' **luma inai** is the 'elder' of that **nuru**, 'the one who walked ahead' (**a mena**) in that domain.<sup>36</sup> All the 'branch Houses' **luma sanai** are the 'junior', the 'ones who came later' (**a muli**).<sup>37</sup>

Every House is a ramification of a **nuru** and consequently bears its name or the name of one of its branches. The first House of a given **nuru** to settle in a domain is the **luma inai**, the 'mother House' of that name in that domain. Newcomers (individuals or households) of the same name may be incorporated into this **luma inai**. In that case, the genealogical link becomes blurred within three generations and the newcomers are regarded as a line of this House. The **luma inai** Nyak in Manusa provides such an example:

All the Nyak in Manusa claim to be issued from a common set of male siblings at the generation of their fathers' fathers' fathers who are said to have been seven 'brothers' although no genealogical link can be traced between them. It is quite likely that some of

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<sup>34</sup>For lack of space, the physical entity of the **luma**, which is the logical continuation of the present chapter, is described in Appendix 3.

<sup>35</sup>However, some are more sizeable or more prestigious than others and acknowledged as such.

<sup>36</sup>**Inai** is a polysemous word. It means 'mother', as in **ina'u nihena**: 'my mother/origin village' or 'female' as in **apalinai**: 'pig-female', a 'sow', implying a source of origin. **Inai** is also a classifier for animate subjects (**ela inai**: 'big ones': elders, ancestors) and small round objects (**abelan inai**: 'nutmeg') including seeds.

<sup>37</sup>These same terms are used to differentiate 'first born' (**ana mena**) and 'last born' (**ana muli**) of the same generation.

these 'brothers' were relatives of the same **nuru** who were incorporated. This is a way to enlarge and re-enforce a 'mother House'.

Alternatively an entrepreneurial unit of that same **nuru** (same or different branch) may establish a separate unit which is then called **luma sanai**: 'branch House'. Some 'branch Houses' blend in the common **nuru** name, others mark the distinction by using a different 'branch' name. All the Houses of Neyte have chosen to blend under a single **nuru** name.

With eleven households in three Houses, Neyte is the largest **nuru** in Manusa. Its unrelated Houses do not distinguish themselves from each other by using different branch names. Rather they all regroup under their common **nuru** name. This way, they constitute a coherent and powerful group in the domain.

Marking the distinction between 'branch' name within a **nuru** at the level of a domain often signals the aspiration of a House to establish itself independently from the 'mother House' and rely on its own prestige to compete for the position of first settler should that mother House become extinct. Indeed, if the **luma inai** has no heir, one of the **luma sanai** may replace it becoming, at the next generation, the **luma inai** of this name in that domain.

In Manusa, Tibali is a **hena upui**. Now a minor **nuru** it is made of three households, one in the branch Turukai and two in the branch Soriale. Turukai and Soriale constitute two distinct Houses in the domain. Turukai claims to be the 'mother House' of Tibali because its House settled first, insisting that Soriale is a 'branch House' that came after. However Soriale claims to be the first 'mother House' Soriale in Manusa because the **sanai** (Soriale and Turukai) of their **nuru** (Tibali) are totally unrelated.

The distinction between 'mother' and 'branch' Houses of the same **nuru** in a settlement is based on the criterion of prior-establishment. The first settler is the **luma inai**, and all the later settlers of that **nuru**, who do not merge in the mother House, are **luma sanai**. Since each House has a separate claim on land and none has an overarching authority over the others, the position of 'mother House' provides little benefit in daily practice. However the prestige associated with precedence in time and space is highly valued by Alune. Thus everyone agrees on the principle that there should only be one mother House per **nuru** in a domain.<sup>38</sup> By putting forward a claim as a **luma inai**, Tibali Soriale tries to establish itself as the first Soriale while still trying to retain the name Tibali and the position of **hena upui**.

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<sup>38</sup>Elders were clear on that point. For example, there are three unrelated 'branches' of Ruspanah in the domain but only one House is their **luma inai**.



If Soriale was regarded as a **luma inai**, every newcomer Soriale would either be incorporated or become its **sanai** (rather than a **sanai** of Turukai). An elder commented that Soriale was likely to become the **luma inai** of Tibali in any case since Turukai had only one heir. Yet, it was regarded improper to try to accelerate this process by putting forward the claim of 'mother House' prematurely.

Usually, in a domain, all the households of the same **nuru**, i.e. all the lines of its various 'branches' are first labeled under their single **nuru** name. It is only when further detail is requested that the differentiation into Houses (and 'branches') is eventually provided. This promotes an apparent equality between the Houses and allows each of them to formulate its affiliation either to a 'branch' or to the 'core name' of its **nuru** according to its best interests of the moment.

In 1992 **nuru** Ruspanah was represented in Manusa by ten households. Further inquiry revealed that they formed four different Houses (one 'mother House' and three 'branch Houses') which belonged to three unrelated 'branches' of that **nuru**. Each of these 'branches' had also chosen a different *soa* affiliation (possibly to accentuate further their distinction).

'Branch Houses' may have initially issued from different 'branches' of their common **nuru** and migrated to the domain at different times. They may also be the result of the internal fission of an ancient single House of the domain. They may share the same partners of alliances and grow close to each other. Alternatively they may establish their own circle of exchange partners and grow independently or in competition with the 'mother House'. The 'mother House' represents the oldest among all the branches of its **nuru** in a given domain but this is a temporary position. Should a 'mother House' become extinct the next prominent branch House replaces it. Thus a House may establish its own renown and supplant or replace another one of its name in a domain. Lines similarly compete for renown within their Houses.

### **House and residence**

The people who claim membership in the same House live, at least sporadically, in a single domain. Each House is composed of one or several lines (sometimes including a provisory 'female line': **luma bina**). These lines constitute one or several households. Thus a House is composed of a minimum of one and usually several households. The inhabitants of one

dwelling form a **luma toini**: a 'house content': a household.<sup>39</sup> Nowadays, unless the group is very small, the members of the same House seldom all dwell in the same building, since each married man who has children becomes a *kepala keluarga* and is expected to build his own house. However relatives tend to build houses next to each other. A **luma** is thus usually made up of several inter-related **luma toini**, sometimes consisting of several lines. But even if the dwellings of its members are scattered over the village and the gardens, the House as such is inseparable from the idea of residence in the same domain. Indeed, if the group branches out and a section departs for another domain, it starts a new House or incorporates into an existing one. Thus the social group is roughly the equivalent of the residential one.<sup>40</sup> The main reason for this is the shared interests of its members in their common assets in the domain.

The Houses are also the territorial units of the domain holding claims on a share of its territory. These claims are attested by narratives recalling their arrival in the domain and how they delimited or received some land.<sup>41</sup> The **hena upui**, the representatives of the seven founding **nuru** of the **hena**, link their narrative to the narrative of origin of the domain, thus re-enforcing their claims over large segments of the domain's territory. However no House can enforce its rights without the number of members required to sustain it.

## House, land, assets and liability

### *Land*

All the territory of the domain is under the corporate care of the **hena**. A part of the land is collectively administered by the village, another is managed by the Houses and, within it, sections are under the custody of individual households. In the domain most Houses have corporate rights over the land they use for gardens, plantations, hunting grounds and fishing spots. One says that a House 'sits' (**due**) on a section of land and watches over its plantations: **da'a lusune**. 'to care for an orchard'.

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<sup>39</sup>**Toini**: 'group', 'clump', also 'bowl', 'content'.

<sup>40</sup>However some members may remain away from the domain for several years (for work, education of their children etc).

<sup>41</sup>(cf chapter 5 Nuruitu - Nuru's narratives of insertion in the **hena**).

The portion of land claimed for its own use by the House(s) of a **nuru** on the territory of the domain is called **lusun mena** (**lusune** or **lusu**): 'first orchard'. The term **mena** marks precedence in space or time.<sup>42</sup> The **lusun mena** is the common estate of all the associates of a House. Unrelated branches of the same **nuru** have separate claims. It is administered by a **ntuane lusu**, the 'elder of the **lusune**', who is consulted before new gardens are opened or plantations established on the common land. Rights to a specific share of the collective **lusun mena** are inherited by the households through the male line. The portions of land claimed by a household (part is often shared with a brother or a nephew) is referred to as **lusu are 'ue**: 'orchard my work': personal plantation.<sup>43</sup> The **lusune** of a household comprises not only its existing orchards but all the parcels and plantation land (already planted or not) on which the family may open gardens or fields or use as trapping ground without requesting permission from the **ntuane lusu**.

For generations, people have planted trees that bear fruits or leafy vegetables 'along the paths' (**am lalane**) to sago groves and hunting grounds so that no one would go hungry on the way to and from the forest. It also serves to remind outsiders that this is occupied land. As they go hunting or sago beating together, brothers-in-law also plant trees on each other's land for their children as a sign of conviviality. The person or the House owning a given tree is usually remembered. If no warning sign marks the tree, close and distant relatives or friends, (this is to say almost the whole village), can glean in moderation.<sup>44</sup> Usually coming back to the village the person will say to the owner, 'I was hungry, I ate from your tree.'

An individual owns only the usufruct of his own or inherited trees and plantations. Even the rights on this usufruct are not exclusive in as much as everyone is expected to share and nothing is fenced.<sup>45</sup> The land on which the trees of an individual are planted is in the custody of his House, but ultimately all the land belongs indivisibly to the community of the **hena**.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>It means: 'first', 'earlier', 'in the front' or 'before' (as opposed to **muli** 'in the back', 'after' or 'behind').

<sup>43</sup>Also called **lusune dati**. It refers to the plantations not to the land itself.

<sup>44</sup>The well documented Moluccan *sasi* signs are called '**wate** 'strong' or **soa** 'machete' in Alune. Since they are forbidden unless they are blessed by the Minister and a share of the harvest is donated to the Church, '**wate** signs are seldom placed in Manusa.

<sup>45</sup>'Gardens', **mulinu**, are 'fenced' with traps. As people say, since young shoots attract wild pigs, one gets the meat to go with the vegetable.

<sup>46</sup> This is to say that although different Houses have a share of its caretaking, no one owns any title to, nor can sell, any segment of land. This also means that when a lumber company came in to ask for the right to cut large sections of the forest in the southern part of the domain on the land of several Houses, it was the community, i.e. nowadays the civil servants representative of the government, who took the decision to agree (some owners of *damar* trees still await the payment of the promised minor compensations).

One may buy the use of valuable trees from the person who planted them. For example, a House of Kapitan bought sago trees planted by Lohia people in a grove at Welua with six plates, six pieces of textile and a machete (*soa*) which was meant to **tete ulute**: 'cut the roots'.

The Alune current management of the land shares similarities with the Moluccan traditions encountered at the coast and in Ambon.<sup>47</sup> The term *dati* (cultivated land) is also used in Manusa (**lusun dati**). It is an administrative unit of people in relation to service, tax and commitment on the one hand and to the use of land on the other. In the mountains, it is the members of one or several Houses of the same **nuru** who usually form one **dati**. A follower may also be integrated. The *dusun* (in Alune **lusune**) are long term plantations/orchards and groves. Every **lusune** has a name and belongs to a **dati**-unit.<sup>48</sup> A **dati**-unit encompasses all the adult members of the family branch which has rights on this specific land. At the coast, where there is a shortage of land, if a *dati* unit dies out or moves away, its *dati* and *dusun* return to the village communal land. In the mountains the principle is the same but exceptions are tolerated since there is less pressure on land.

I. S., an elderly man, was the last of his name in Manusa. To avoid losing his land assets, he designated a distant relative from another village as the representative of the rights of his branch on the **lusu mena** which his father had received from a former lord of the land. The **nili** elder of the village said that this might not work if the relative did not come to live in the **hena**. Nevertheless that same elder also said, on another occasion, that the land of the Tani'wele (extinct in Manusa for two generations) can not be disposed of without the agreement of a branch of that **nuru**. However, should they be asked, it would be almost impossible for them to refuse, particularly since they do not live in the **hena**.<sup>49</sup>

The **dati** stays in the family branch through the male line as the common land of all the affiliates under the arbitration of the **ntuane dati** or **ntuane lusu**. The **lusun dati** are the plantations planted by successive generations for their descendants. Theoretically, outsiders can not eat from it. Some Houses have little **lusune** land, and if their households increase, they might quarrel over the use of the usufruct of the trees of their common **dati**. A wise man, said an elder, should plant as many separate **lusu** plantations as he has sons so that each of them may add to his own **lusu**, and pay for schooling or buy what he needs with it.

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<sup>47</sup>Their pre-colonial mode is not documented nor remembered.

<sup>48</sup>In Ambon all **dati** and **dusun** are named and registered (since 1814).

<sup>49</sup>The difference that the **nili** elder seems to be making may also be based on the fact that he regards Tani'wele as a former **hena upui**, while the other case involves a newcomer.

Thus an individual has access to the communal **lusune** of his House and may nominally own some trees privately, but relatives can take some fruits. Yet there are restrictions: closer relatives have more rights to do so than others and only with restraint. This is definitively the case with the resin produced by damar trees (**ai 'alane**), one of the rare cash crops of the Alune people.<sup>50</sup>

Long established Houses which have a large portion of land may allot a section of it to a landless newcomer. Thus Matital, whose narrative says they received land from the lord of the land, claims to have given Maslebu the land occupied by this group. A **ntuane dati** may allow someone of the village or a newcomer to make a garden on the land of his group. It might be advantageous for all to do so.

As an elder explained, if a parcel of land is worked by someone, no outsider will try to settle on it. The **dati** group maintains precedence on that land and the **ntuane dati** dictates the terms of its use. Once given, this right is hereditary and needs not be asked again, but the **dati** group may recover the land at its convenience.<sup>51</sup> However, reclaiming a parcel of land can produce tension or hostility and the decision to allow an outsider on its **dati** is not taken lightly by a group. The user is generally only allowed short term plantations. If he plants long term plantations where he has not been allowed to do so, this is **sabu sasi**: 'to cross over a prohibition', and the **ntuane** is entitled to pull out the trees. Alternatively the **ntuane** may put a prohibition sign (**soa**) on the trees or on the whole parcel, thus denying further access to the abusive user.

Land is transmitted through the males, but an unmarried daughter may be in custody of her father's land until her son is of an age to care for it himself. Thus, the rights of one line of Matoke were transferred through their unmarried women for two generations until a male heir was finally born. A woman who marries out has still a limited access to the **lusune** of her House of origin but she can not plant long term plantations on it. Widows insist that they are dispossessed and landless. However they are usually cared for by one of their children or a relative, allowed to make a garden and to take a share of the usufruct of their children's plantations.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>If someone's tree has been overharvested, the word will go around the village that children, who are important fruit and vegetable gatherers, were the offenders, an indirect way to shame their parents.

<sup>51</sup>By planting long term plantations on that parcel the **ntuane dati** may at any time signify to the user's family that the group is claiming it back.

<sup>52</sup>A man who cares for his wife will leave instructions to his children concerning her up-keep.

### *Assets*

In the mountains, people have few material assets other than their rights to their plantations and garden land. Very few heirloom objects have been kept and their value is more symbolic than monetary. A widow usually withdraws from the position of family head in favour of a son.<sup>53</sup> As far as I know there is no definite rule nor practice to specify who inherits the house except that it is usually transmitted patrilineally and to someone who lives on site. In the two examples I witnessed it was a junior son. In the first case because the others were already married and had their own houses, and in the second because all the other siblings had left.<sup>54</sup>

Besides the house, the usufruct of specific trees, hunting grounds, fishing spots and land for clearing are also inherited. Some fathers are more organised than others and have planted orchards for each of their children. However, a large portion of these assets is corporately controlled by the whole House group. If there is a disagreement, the case will be brought to the **ntuan dati**, who has the last say. These conflicts were previously accommodated by consensus or, in the last recourse, brought before the council of village elders. Nowadays government representatives may interfere to settle matters of contention or discord about what is regarded as the House's corporate duties, capacities, rights or liabilities.

Besides those material resources, a certain amount of intangible assets are also highly considered. Traditional titles and offices as well as ritual knowledge are also part of the inheritance. Generally they also pass preferably to elder sons or brothers' sons, but not necessarily so in as much as an office is usually given to the person (if possible, a relative) who is the most capable or the best trained to hold it. Ritual or healing knowledge is also transferred from mother to daughter. The ritual knowledge that belongs to a specific House has to remain in it, while personal knowledge is transferred more freely between individuals. Some is also acquired through individual dreams, visions, meditation and other traditional practices.

Finally, most people inherit debts. The amounts of the bridewealths of two generations ago were so high that very few were ever fully paid. While it made sense in its own context, it is

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<sup>53</sup>There are of course exceptions. In Manusa I knew two strong widows of dignitaries who kept their husband's house and controlled their assets until their own last breaths.

<sup>54</sup>Just as narratives stress, often the elder son goes away either to earn money at the coast or because he marries and is busy with his own family. A younger child (often a daughter) stays longer in the house, 'just like the banana's shoots', caring for the aging parent(s).

more problematic nowadays as people are already heavily burdened by state taxes, education costs and Church contributions. Although these large bridewealth payments were officially abolished, old debts are still remembered and people are still subjected to some form of compensation as soon as they receive a sister's or a daughter's bridewealth or inherit something.

There is still a strong liability of the House, notwithstanding the modernising pressures against it. Usually the whole House tends to get involved and to answer in the name of one of its members, for example, in disputes with (members of) another House, to gather bridewealth, to organise funerals or to pay a fine. To the still largely communal management of its assets corresponds a largely communal liability on the part the House's members.

### **The luma in relation to its nuru**

The meeting for the first time of unrelated members of the same **nuru** (usually in town), resembles the encounter overseas of two people from the same province; they speak the same language, recognise a common origin (culturally constructed) and may even find a common distant relative or friend. This entails a certain amount of good will toward each other, but it may not endure. The enduring ties within and between **nuru** are developed by their **luma**.

A **luma** does not simply collapse into the **nuru** of which it is a ramification.<sup>55</sup> The botanical metaphor of the banyan depicts this process of growth and differentiation. Houses grow and expand near or apart from their trunk of origin. Most reach out and root themselves in different domains where they develop independently.

A **nuru** claims an origin point and sometimes its trunk or one of its branches still lives in or near that place. However, the **nuru** as a whole is a non-localised origin group because the people who claim to belong to it are usually scattered over several domains or valleys, and sometimes among different language group.<sup>56</sup> At the tips of this manifold process of growth and ramification, further divided by wars and displacements, some **luma** have forgotten their place of origin or the first ancestors of their name. Some have even lost the core name of

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<sup>55</sup>As S. Howell observes for the clans and Houses in Lio, '*clan*' and '*House*' cannot automatically be collapsed into each other. (Howell 1995 p.152).

<sup>56</sup>What all these members share in common is a name and its **sou** (language/history), the memory that pertains to it. Usually (but not always) the place of origin and/or the founding ancestor(s) are remembered.

their **nuru**, keeping only the name of the branch (**sanai**) from which they issued. However while the **nuru** is some kind of non-localised social group united under a common name, its 'tip', the **luma** is usually well rooted in the domain where its forebears established themselves.

Living together entails the shared interest of all the members of the House in the local subsistence economy. If a distant relative of the same **nuru** joins in (i.e. 'returns' **leu**), his incorporation has to be clarified either as member of (one of) the House(s) or as a founder of a branch House before he can start with long term plantations. It is the House which holds the rights and responsibility toward its land and assets, not the whole **nuru**. In a single domain, the unrelated Houses of the same **nuru** usually have separate lands and assets.

Houses are kin groups who trace relations among their members for at least three generations. The members of the same **nuru** living in different domains tend to call each other by generational kinship terms (father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, etc.) but this is done all over the Moluccas without implying more than a certain degree of respect (or informality) and a minimum of solidarity. It does not entail the duties and prohibitions (except for marriage) that are involved in the relationships between the members (real father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister) of the same House. Affiliation of one individual is first to his/her House of origin, with his/her **nuru** in the background.

Although **nuru** are the largest exogamous units (one cannot marry his/her own name), the **luma** (their lines) are the bride exchanging units. However it is the **nuru** who return brides to each other through the alliances of their Houses, becoming each others 'progenitor of origin' (**tauli uwei**).

There is not sufficient past or present data to ascertain if there was an ancestral cult at the level of the whole **nuru** but I doubt it.<sup>57</sup> It is also difficult to find out what the ancestral cult of the **luma** (and possibly of the branch) precisely consisted of since its rituals were prohibited in the region in the 1920s, before the birth of the present oldest living generation. Furthermore people are not very keen to talk about it because suspicion about such practices still takes the form of a witch hunt in Church sermons. Present day conversations mainly depict it as a life enhancing ancestral cult. The rituals were performed by the elder members of the **Luma** to promote their own fecundity as well as the fertility of their agricultural land

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<sup>57</sup>Jensen (1948) suggested that Wemale 'clan' members followed a common cult. However his definition of the unit 'clan' is too vague to assert if this cult concerned the whole **nuru**, a **sanai**, the localised House(s) or a *soa* groups.



and hunting grounds. If collective **nuru** rituals ever existed, it is likely that **nuru** and **luma** cults were distinct.

### The luma in relation to the hena

Acting as a residential and kin group as well as an exchange and alliance unit, any sizable House plays a predominant role in the social organisation of its domain. The Houses constitute the people who share a social life together, the kin groups involved in exchanging brides and the territorial units that control most of the domain's land. Nowadays, since the power attached to tradition (**atate**) has lessened, the House is only effectively encompassed by the authority of both the administrative system and the Church. In the domain, the Houses also form the basic units of political factions who ally or oppose each other one generation after the other.

### CONCLUSION

The members of a **nuru** acknowledge a socially elaborated common origin, primarily expressed through a common name.<sup>58</sup> However **nuru** have no overarching internal structure of authority. Through the out-migration of its sub-units, the 'core' of a **nuru** (**nuruwei**) grows and diversifies into 'branches' (**sanai**). In large **nuru** the **sanai** are loosely ordered in an elder/younger or male /female precedence, often subjected to contestation. As they settle nearby or move into another domain, some 'branches' affix an extra name to their group. A branch may also sever its previous origin and start its own **nuru** setting the 'core' **uwei** of its new **nuru** under its branch name, i.e. establishing a new trunk of origin.<sup>59</sup> The territorially localised kin groups, ramifications of the **nuru**, are the Houses, **luma**. Although a **nuru** retains the memory of its place of origin and may have kept one or several Houses near that site, often its Houses are bound to different domains where they are in custody of a share of land. Even if no genealogical link can be traced, all the **luma** sharing a common name claim membership in the same **nuru**. This entails the prescription of exogamy but little obligation between Houses unless they belong to the same domain. However it facilitates the circulation of individuals or the movement of a House from one domain to another as one is supposed to welcome one's own people. The first House of a **nuru** to settle in a domain is

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<sup>58</sup>Most **nuru** associate with this common derivation one or several ancestral figures and/or a site featuring some remarkable feature, water, rock and/or tree.

<sup>59</sup>A **nuru** may also have branches in both the Alune and Wemale groups.

the mother House (**luma inai**) of that **nuru** in that domain. Any following House of the same **nuru** coming in a domain will either blend into this 'mother House' or found a new branch house (**luma sanai**). Finally, there are no real indications from the present situation of whether, in the past, an Alune **nuru** acted as a ritual unit or if its Houses displayed some form of unity beyond the borders of the domain where they were settled.

In the following chapter I explore the ideas of origin and affiliation, before examining the relationships of alliance between Houses.





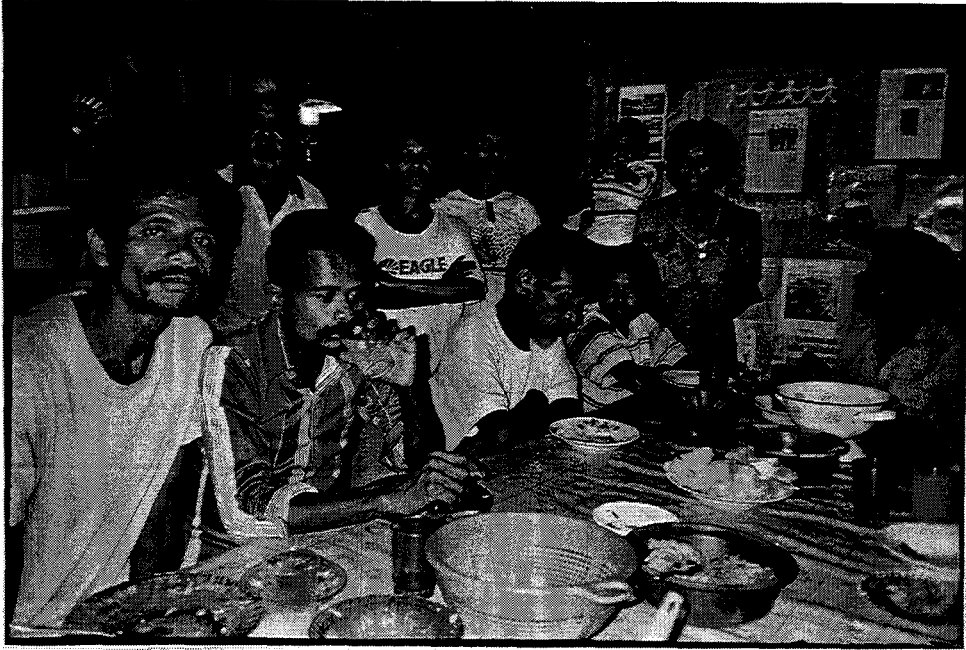
16 Cutting a pig.

Preparing a celebration:



17 Harvesting palm wine.





18 The table in the front



19 The table in the back

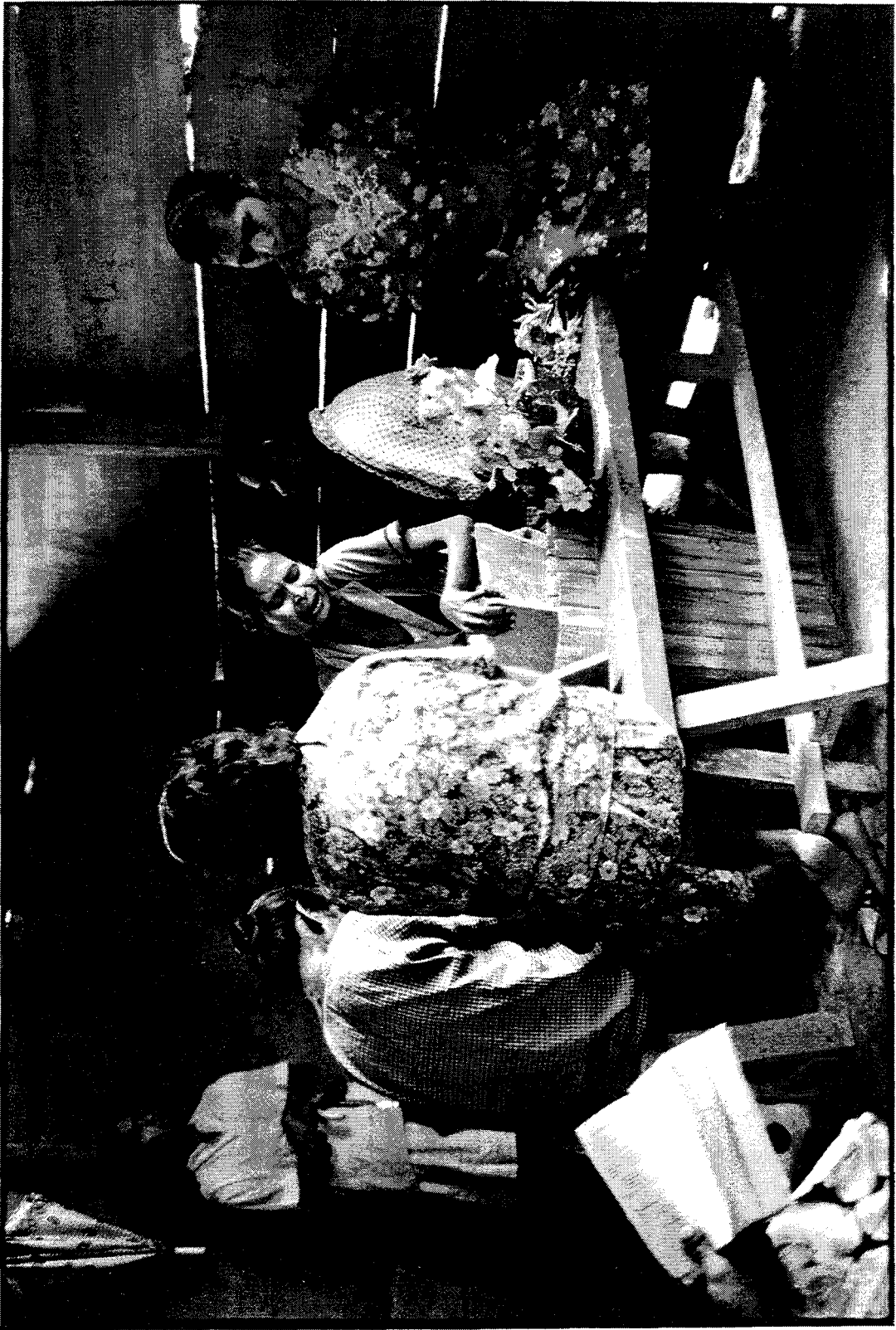




20 Blessing a new born







21 Mourning an infant



## Chapter Eight

### THE METAPHORS OF AFFILIATION AND ALLIANCE

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I examine Alune idioms and practices of affiliation, marriage and alliance. Alune are both hunters and farmers. In their ritual language (**lepa sou ela**), social relationships that deal with the identity and the reproduction of groups are metaphorically related and interwoven with gardens and forest. Fecundity and abundance follow both the rules of the domesticated and the order of the wild. To explore the nature of these relationships, I follow their 'trace' (**la'wai**) in the metaphors of affiliation and alliance.<sup>1</sup>

Usually, Alune children are affiliated to their father's group. This incorporation into a group (that can be defined as a line, a House or a **nuru**), is permanent. Even adoption does not totally reverse it. If there is no father rightfully entitled to claim the child or if the woman's House decides to retain one child, this child is affiliated to his/her mother's group. In that case the mother's line holds the positions of genitor and progenitor. Eventually the lines of these women's children, called a 'female house' (**luma bina**), are re-integrated within the male lines of their mothers' origin group.

Another form of derivation (**dulu bei**), relates a person to his/her mother's and mother's mother's **nuru** of origin. Following Fox I refer to this as the progenitor relationship.<sup>2</sup> In Manusa two generations of progenitors are acknowledged: the mother and mother's mother's lines. These lines are the 'progenitor of origin' (**tauli uwei**), who are the repository of a person's origin. By extension the entire progenitor **nuru** is regarded as the person's source of derivation, and he/she can not seek a marriage partner within it.

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<sup>1</sup>The present study is limited to my observations in **hena** Manusa. I would expect to find variations when investigating other Alune domains.

<sup>2</sup>Fox 1996 p.132-33.

Among the Alune, there is no categorical prescription of marriage. No specific marriage partner is designated in the Alune kinship terminology. At each generation, relationships of alliance are initiated or renewed between the lines of various Houses through a complex network created by former marriages. These relationships are established according to three main rules. The first rule sets the relationships within and between origin groups (**nuru**); the second codifies the relationship of deferred exchange between exchanging lines and, the third, a preferred practice, organises the relationships between the Houses (**luma**) of the community. The marriage proceedings describe how to 'follow the smooth path' linking two groups.

### EXOGRAMY

**Nuru** are exogamous origin structures. **Nuru** members regard endogamy within the boundaries of their common origin as improper and potentially dangerous. The occurrence of such marriages is attributed to ignorance.<sup>3</sup> Since transgression may compromise the fecundity of the couple and the potential for reproduction by the entire **nuru**, a ritual of severance has to be performed if a marriage occurs within the **nuru** (see below: **lea marele**). Yet there is some latitude for people to overlook a distant common origin. As long as everything goes well, **nuru** generally choose to ignore the improper character of a given alliance, particularly when this alliance serves another purpose. However, exogamy is a requirement to maintain the fecundity of a **nuru** as a whole. Thus, when a young man wants to marry, he can either consolidate ancient relationships or begin new ones with other **nuru**.

If **nuru** are exogamous, *a fortiori* so are their **luma**. If two young unmarried members of the same **luma** happen to have intercourse, it is regarded as incest between brother and sister. The culprits are reprimanded and separated and if possible the event is concealed. If it becomes public, it calls for an exemplary punishment and the offenders are castigated in front of the whole village. People say that if a child was conceived, it could not survive as it would not have the right 'mix' of blood. Therefore sanctioning accidental incest between these cousins by a marriage would be an unthinkable and perilous endeavour. Indeed the wrath of the ancestors could provoke heavy rain and flood the whole community.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>See Chapter Seven: **Nuru** as exogamous units.

<sup>4</sup>No one could recall having seen it ever happening. However, **Samai**, the ancestral figure who founded the domain before human time, may have married his own sister **Anine**. **Anine** is recalled as **Samai**'s sister, but the lord of the land said once that she was also his wife. However he also said that no children were born from that union. Marriage between ancestral siblings (or twins) are frequent in mythology. Such marriages

## THE IDIOM OF BLOOD

Among the Alune, an idiom of blood is used to define relations, bodily states and aspects of identity. The blood of men and women is also the vehicle of the flow of life. There are three types of blood: red, black and white.<sup>5</sup> Red blood (**lala'we**: **lala**: blood/red-'**we**: fluid/water) is the blood one shares with one's brothers and sisters (**ite lala'we mnesa**: 'we have the same blood').<sup>6</sup> Red blood (**lala'we**) rises or sinks within the body (**patane**) as it increases or decreases. When one is sick or works too much, the 'blood reduces' (**lala'we e runu** or **ruru**). When one rests or drinks palm gin the 'blood rises up' (**lala'we e sa**). While red blood rises throughout the body bringing strength and vigour, 'black blood' (**lala'we metene**) does not rise. When the blood turns black in part of someone's body, it becomes too dense, hindering the flow of energy in that organ and making the person heavy and feeble. When a person has died, all 'the red blood has sunk down' (**lala'we dulu peneka**), turning black and becoming like a stone inside the body. Black blood is dead blood. The 'white blood' (**lala'we putile**) refers to the fluids within the body including procreative fluids, perspiration and breast milk.<sup>7</sup> Red and white bloods run in parallel within the human body.

There is no danger of having too much red blood since 'one can not have more than one's own body can contain'. However one can accumulate an excess of white blood and this is regarded as a dangerous state of impurity (**mlopo**: 'dirty'). If a person has too much white blood, the person becomes too fat with a whitish face. The person may look corpulent (a sign of prosperity) but in fact he/she can not move fast and is quickly tired. Sweating a lot is also sign that someone has too much white blood and that the body is discharging it.<sup>8</sup> White blood in surplus may rise excessively, turn impure and obstruct the passage of the healthy

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belong to and characterise the time before exchange (and thus proper social relations) had been established between humans.

<sup>5</sup>My data on this complex matter are far from comprehensive and I intend to carry out further fieldwork to complete the basic material I discuss here. As Graham points out in her substantial work on the subject, people of the same society do not necessarily have 'identical understandings of reproductive biology' (Graham P. 1991 p.29). Most of what is presented here was collected with two informants, a middle aged midwife with several children (a **mata bina**); and a man who was a respected elder in the community.

<sup>6</sup>According to context, this notion of same blood may encompass a whole community. Here it is restricted to the actual siblings.

<sup>7</sup>**Tabu 'welini** ('penis fluid'): semen, **tilale 'welini** ('vagina fluid'): vaginal secretions, '**nati'e**: 'perspiration', **susu 'welini** ('breast, fluid'): breast milk.

<sup>8</sup> **Pahnalai**: 'to be hot and sweaty' (Florey Alunedic 94). A well balanced body sweats moderately because it has clean blood and does not need to eliminate excessive impurity.

red blood. The person becomes 'hot' **musu** and ill (**au patane musu** 'my body is warm' i.e.: 'I feel sick').<sup>9</sup>

There are two types of heat (**musute**) in relation to the human body. One may feel warm because one's body is saturated with red blood (**lala'we e penu** 'red blood is abundant'). Warm red blood is a sign of life: it keeps the body healthy, strong and 'closed', and therefore sealed from diseases.<sup>10</sup> The other form of heat, which involves an overflow of white blood, is a sign of sickness.<sup>11</sup> The body carries and accumulates heat, said the male informant, and 'a well warmed body is a good thing' (**badane musu 'oate e mise**). However, it seems to be a matter of finding the right tuning. An excess of heat from an abundance of white blood inside the body creates an imbalance causing subsequent overheating (**au musu pene, au tia** 'I am already heated, I am wrecked'). A man, continued the informant, has to go to the forest and work hard so that any surplus of stamina may flow out of his body.

**Putile**, 'white' also means 'clean, or 'pure'. 'White blood' does not necessarily imply impurity; it is only an excess of it which is regarded as dangerous. White blood in the form of semen and later breast milk plays an important role in the conception and early raising of a child. In her reproductive role the woman seems mainly regarded as a vessel harbouring and being filled with the developing foetus.<sup>12</sup> At first a child is only 'fluid' (the father's semen) accumulated in the mother's womb (**tampa anare** 'child place' or **tila basite**: 'vagina pouch') by repeated intercourse. 'It turns into red blood' (**e ono lala'we**) in the mother's womb and 'sits', (**e due**), becoming a child. When the woman stops menstruating this is the sign that the blood is 'already making a child' (**e ono ana pene'o**). From then on, further addition of blood is required which comes from the mother: **lala'we amare a mena lala'we inare a muli** 'first the father's blood then the mother's'.

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<sup>9</sup>The body is also called **nana'we**, e.g.: **au nana'we era** 'my body is tired'. Florey has **nana'wala** (Alunedic 94).

<sup>10</sup>The idea that a closed body is a healthy body has a parallel in the yearly ritual of purifying and closing the village (see Appendix 1: The new year ceremony - The space within the village).

<sup>11</sup>Most illnesses are regarded as an overheating of the body (**patane e musu**: 'the body is hot', i.e. the person is sick). Varied internal or external reasons provoke the white blood to increase and obstruct the passage of the red blood. The diagnosis consists of identifying the wrongdoing which causes this overheating and the cure to cool the body down accordingly: **e mutu hatidje** or **e mutie laledje** 'cooling down the inside' (*kasih dingin di dalam hati*). Since heat is believed to attract heat, one healing technique consists of going along the body from head to feet with a piece of 'ginger', **alia** (a hot substance), in order to draw the illness out. The piece of ginger is thereafter thrown away toward the sunset so that the illness, which follows it, is disposed of in that direction. Blessed (**mlelu ele** to 'blow over it' also: 'to cure it') water, oil or coconut water (not the milk) are also used for various cooling purposes.

<sup>12</sup>**Tauli** represents the progenitors' side.

Blood carries a potential of life, that can be obtained by the groups through the exchanges between their Houses, following 'proper' (**mise**) modes of alliance and affiliation. In the past it could also be appropriated through head-hunting.

#### AFFILIATION TO THE GENITOR LINE

Traditionally, but not always, the children of a married Alune women belong to her husband's group, partaking of the duties and rights of his House. Bridewealth prestations (**belini**) need not be exchanged as long as an agreement is reached by the parties. A child's affiliation to a group and to its name is secured shortly after birth by a ritual performed by an elder and witnessed by the midwife. This ritual is called **salie marele**: to 'cut open the opossum' (with a machete). To understand how this ritual allows a man to claim his children, (a feature of Alune practice that differentiates Alune from their Wemale neighbours), one needs to know the role attributed to the opossum.

#### The opossum

Besides being their most hunted animal, Alune say that opossums, (**marele** or **mare**: cuscus, *kusu kusu* or phalanger) are 'good mothers' who care for their young just as humans do.<sup>13</sup> They also multiply rapidly and their fecundity, which can not be controlled by man, depends on the Sky (**Lanite**).<sup>14</sup> But foremost, the opossum is the animal which taught the Alune midwives (**biane**) the knowledge that allows women to survive successive births. Thus, the opossum is at the origin of the multiplication of human beings. This midwife opossum is a specific opossum called **mare mone** (*Phalanger orientalis*), a greyish female which nests in tree hollows.<sup>15</sup> **Mare mone** (**moni** 'odour', 'scent') has a distinctive smell.<sup>16</sup> Women are

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<sup>13</sup>Their pouch is called **labate** 'carrying cloth'.

<sup>14</sup>The elder who instructed me in these matters said that Alune people distinguish two types of fecundity, one depending on Earth (**Tapele**) and the other depending on the Sky (**Lanite**). People can partly control the one which depends on the Earth. Thus, they can plant vegetables and trees on the land. Human fecundity is in the hands of the ancestors who live in the Sky but, said the elder, it still belongs to the Earth. Man has no control over the fecundity which fully depends on the Sky. For this one, he said, 'we can just beseech and wait'. This concerns the reproduction of the animals of the forest, particularly the opossum, the primary source of animal protein for the Alune. However the fertility of the Earth itself finally relies on the Sky which sends rain and lightning as manifestations of its essential fecundating action, also revealed by earthquakes.

<sup>15</sup>According to Florey there are two species of opossum in Seram, the spotted opossum (*Phalanger maculatus*) and the grey opossum (*Phalanger orientalis*) (Alunedic 94). Interestingly, Florey's classification



prohibited from eating that opossum because 'it is a midwife'.<sup>17</sup> If a man catches a **mare mone** in the forest, where the rules are the opposite to the ways of the village and the house, he may eat it on site. However he can not bring it home nor sleep beside his wife for three days, until the smell departs from his body leaving him 'clean' (**putile**).<sup>18</sup>

The following story belongs to women.<sup>19</sup>

At the time of **Tape Esa**, the First Land, the women could only bear one child because men had to cut open their belly to get the child out. So, each time they killed the mother. One day a pregnant woman, who was working in the forest, heard two opossums talking in a tree. They were saying that humans were crazy to kill their wife to get the baby because that way they would never multiply. She came closer and politely called the opossum, asking what else could be done. They laughed mockingly at her and she started crying. Taking pity, the two people came down the tree to comfort her (by then they had turned themselves into humans). They told her: 'just do like us!' But she kept crying because she did not know. So they said: 'when your time has come just return here and we will show you'. So she did and so she learned.<sup>20</sup>

This is why young children, like opossums, make little sounds at sunrise. This is also why, if the soul of a child seems to be willing to depart to the **nusa nitu matale** ('the land/island of

(scientific or Lohia traditional?) as to which opossum is the mate of another, and how their colours are perceived does not match Manusa classification.

<sup>16</sup>So do pregnant women.

<sup>17</sup>The prohibition applies only to that type of opossum and no opossum is the totem animal of any **nuru** in Manusa.

<sup>18</sup>Alune are very sensitive to odours. They maintain that they can smell if someone has been eating snake (an absolute taboo for all Alune and a delicacy for the Wemale) within the previous three days. Ancestors themselves crave smells and feed on the aroma or 'essence' ('**weini**) of the food (meat) offered to them before being consumed by the living.

<sup>19</sup> The lord of the land, whose **nuru** is female (epitomised as 'the breast and the lap') is also entitled to tell it.

<sup>20</sup> Jensen (op. cit., 1939 p.117-18) gives three versions of this narrative. Two were collected in Buria and Riring, in the Alune Sapalewa mountain region nearby Manusa, and a third one in Hatunuru a Wemale Uwin village now at the north coast. In the first one (Buria) the woman's mother is taught by an opossum in the forest how they themselves give birth to their young ones. When childbirth comes, the husband says that he can not kill his beloved wife himself and goes hunting in the forest. Meanwhile the mother applies the knowledge of the opossum, saves her daughter and becomes the first midwife of the community. In Riring the opossum itself acts as midwife. Hence, the wife begs her husband never to kill a female opossum again. In the Wemale version, on his way back from a war raid, a man finds in the forest a maiden from another village. (Not specified, but this is to say, not a witch. It could have been an opossum woman. At that time Hatunuru was already tightly controlled by the mission and the story translator might have censured this aspect). The man decides to marry her rather than killing her. When the time of childbirth comes, she tricks him into fetching water in a perforated bamboo to keep him away long enough so that he will not kill her. When he finally returns he finds both mother and child alive and so the villagers learned the knowledge of the midwife.

the dead souls'), the midwife calls the soul to 'return from the edge of the big rocks and the brink of the ravines' (**leu bei batu leini, nahi leini**), using the claw of an opossum.<sup>21</sup> Because of this long relationship between man and the opossum, when a child does not sleep well his mother gives him a little bit of water over which she has requested the opossum to give the child a good sleep. 'The opossum is mankind' (**marele mere tamata**). The rituals which have to do with the well being of the House or which rely upon midwives' authority, involve an opossum, not a pig.

### **Salie marele: to cut open the opossum**

When the time has come for a woman to give birth, the man entitled to claim the child for his **nuru** must find an opossum (any type or sex except **mare moni**). He can not receive it from anyone but has to fetch it in the forest alone or with friends while the woman is delivering.<sup>22</sup> The midwife and the elders of both Houses come to the man's House for the ritual of **salie marele** ('to cut open the opossum with a machete').<sup>23</sup> The man 'cuts open' the opossum's body from neck to tail in front of the guests who are eyewitnesses of the ritual. By doing so, he seals the affiliation of the child to his House. After a short prayer (**oti**: to 'request', to 'beseech'), the opossum is shared and eaten by all the witnesses.<sup>24</sup> This is not a large celebration; the child is still very small and vulnerable. Spirit women who died in childbirth look for new born children and their attention should not be called down upon the household. The child will always bear the **nuru** name of the man who 'cuts open' the

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<sup>21</sup>The claw of the opossum, a strong little hand with sharp long nails, is one of the cured parts that were offered to the ancestors on the wooden 'shelf' over the hearth (**webute**), the family altar in the **luma botoi** ('hearth house'), the House shrine in the forest.

<sup>22</sup>I was assured that there is no difference or special ritual involved in fetching that opossum (women can not accompany men on this hunting party). In day time, opossum are usually caught by climbing a small tree adjacent to the one in which the animal is asleep. As one reaches its top, the young tree can be bowed to catch the opossum before it awakes and flees. (Opossum are also trapped or, at night attracted to the ground by imitating the mating call of the female). Habitually the animal is immediately killed, gutted and, unless consumed directly, cured on site otherwise its delicate meat can not be preserved .

<sup>23</sup>**Sari**: 'machete'. When an opossum is cut to eviscerate it, one says: **bai marele**. In this ritual the opossum is usually already dead (and cured). This points to the fact that it is not a blood letting sacrifice.

<sup>24</sup>If the family still possesses an heirloom plate, the meat is displayed on it. Although this is not stated in the present Christian context, narratives inform us that it is an invitation for the ancestors of the House to take part in the ceremony by consuming its 'aroma' (**weini**) as a mark of their approval. After praying to the Christian divinity, the participants bind the agreement by eating the 'left overs' of the ancestors. Conversion has not fully eradicated spirits and ancestors from the depth of the forest, but it has officially banished them from the Christian ground of the village (in day time).

opossum.<sup>25</sup> After the birth, the man can not go hunting for forty days, the time it takes for the mother to become 'clean' again (**i puti pene**: 'she is already white/clean/pure'). After this mother and child can leave the birth place.<sup>26</sup> Until then the man can not catch any animal because he is contaminated by the woman's blood letting of afterbirth which makes him heavy and swollen and his machete useless. This is particularly the case if she has given birth in their garden with his help, as happens sometimes.<sup>27</sup>

When 'cutting open the opossum' is performed by the husband, the child receives his name and identity and is affiliated to his House and **nuru**. Such a child is referred as **ana luma** 'child of the House' or '**wete luma lalei** 'child inside the House'. Alune repeatedly emphasise that the transmission of name and status follows the genitor line, stressing the difference between them and their Wemale neighbours, who follow genitrix lines. Indeed, the child of a married Alune couple belongs to his father's House unless another agreement was made prior to the birth.<sup>28</sup> However, although this affiliation is said to be irreversible some adjustments can be negotiated *a posteriori*.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, for about 10% of the children the ritual of 'cutting open the opossum' is performed by an elder of the mother's House.<sup>30</sup>

### **Lara biane: to give the midwife her share**

Forty days after the birth, mother and child are bathed by the midwife, who attaches to the wrist of the baby the **seu tinai**, a thread with a fragment of an aromatic plant (sometimes

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<sup>25</sup>Although no further explanation than **Atate tinai** 'this is real custom', was provided for this ritual, it could be suggested that since men do not 'cut open' their wife in order to secure their progeny, they now 'cut open' the animal from whom they received the knowledge of multiple reproduction (the theme of autochthonous spirits sacrificed to assure human fecundity is widespread in the region). The ritual involves the living members and the ancestors of the House as well as the midwife. By eating together the meat of the offered animal they witness and seal the formal affiliation of the child.

<sup>26</sup>Birth-houses (**luma posone**) are not built anymore; nowadays, most women give birth in their village home where a bedroom is reserved for them and their baby during that period. (See appendix 3: The luma posone).

<sup>27</sup>The relationship to blood is complex and ambivalent. The contact with the blood of head hunted victims, one's own relatives, **pela** allies or women's menstruation and afterbirth is surrounded with strict prohibitions. In this case the man can not go hunting an opossum and the ritual is postponed. One may suggest that having delivered his wife himself he has 'cut' her (instead of the opossum) and has already established himself as the father since no other man would dare expose himself to such pollution.

<sup>28</sup>For example, returning a child to the mother House rather than paying the bridewealth is a Wemale custom occasionally practiced by Alune too.

<sup>29</sup> See below the example of Norce in: Children of a widow.

<sup>30</sup>This is examined below in: Affiliation to the genitrix line.

ginger) or a seed on which she has 'blown' (**mlelu ele**), as a talisman against sorcery.<sup>31</sup> After mother and child are blessed and declared 'clean' (**puti**) they can leave the birth place. The man and his relatives return to the forest to hunt more opossums in order to 'give the midwife her share' (**lara biane**).<sup>32</sup> The midwife who cut the umbilical cord, gave the child his/her ancestral name, and granted the blessing, will keep a lasting relationship with this child. She receives the body of a whole opossum plus the heart and guts (the 'inside' usually given to most respected elders), of all the other opossums distributed that day. The other birth assistants and the relatives who helped during the delivery (bringing firewood and water, assisting the mother) receive the limbs. The elder men of the family, invited to drink palm wine for the occasion, are served all the heads of the opossums to nibble with the drink.<sup>33</sup> During the following days the mother walks around the village and formally introduces the child to relatives who receive her in the front room of the house, serve her a collation and chew betel quids together.<sup>34</sup> Nowadays both ceremonies are often joined into one, the father cutting the opossum at the same time the baby is taken out. A few weeks later the child is baptised in church.

If the biological father does not perform the rituals of 'cutting open the opossum' and 'giving the midwife her share', the mother's father (or one of her male relatives) will do it and the child will belong to his House.

### **Lei marele: to sever the opossum**

If the affiliation (to the genitor line) of one or several persons needs to be symbolically severed, a midwife is asked to reverse the initial ritual by cutting the opossum again. Another opossum is hunted and cured, but this time it is cut into two separate halves (rather than just cut open) by the midwife, preferably the one who assisted the birth. This ritual is called **lei marele** 'to sever the opossum' or **lei ele mare leini** 'to sever the opossum in

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<sup>31</sup>The birth and subsequent seclusion of mother and child involve several other rituals and procedures not described here.

<sup>32</sup>As in the previous ritual, any opossum will do (except a **mare mone**) and no specific type nor any defined sex is required.

<sup>33</sup>When cutting and sharing the parts of a sacrificed animal, the heads are displayed on the table for the elder men to 'chew' (**losa**).

<sup>34</sup>This is exclusively done in day time because the bad spirits roam the place after 6 p.m.

halves'.<sup>35</sup> The midwife cuts the opossum from head to tail into two halves, separates them and, as she 'prays' (*oti*), reverses the halves passing one over the other.<sup>36</sup> The persons 'separated' by this ritual (*tebi'e* to 'separate', to 'differentiate'), take a half of the opossum to their house where they eat it with their respective relatives in full view of their ancestors. This ritual is performed to sever the origin of a person who would otherwise contract a forbidden marriage. For example when two brothers wanted to marry two classificatory sisters (the daughters of two brothers) the women had to be *lei lua* 'severed in two' and their common origin denied. This, said the midwife, is only done to 'fool' (*'lema*: 'to play', 'to trick') the ancestors and it does not change anything in terms of kin relation or access to land.<sup>37</sup> Yet, if the ritual were not performed the ancestors would curse this forbidden union and the couple would remain childless. The elders said that an opossum, and not a pig, is used in all these rituals because they are midwife duties and the opossum is a midwife.<sup>38</sup>

'This is the way we do it because our ancestors did so' is the usual way midwives explain both these rituals. To summarise: - 1) initially men had to 'cut open' their wives with a machete; therefore they could only get a single child - 2) the opossum (*mare mone*) acted as midwife teaching women how to give birth, and from then on people multiplied - 3) women are forbidden to eat that specific opossum (not the others), but men can do so as long as they eat it in the wild of the forest - 4) nowadays every man has to 'cut open' an opossum instead of his wife, to affiliate her child to his House, and has to offer prestations of opossum (not a *mare mone*) to the midwife - 5) only a midwife can reverse (and then only symbolically) the father's initial cutting of the opossum by dividing another opossum into two halves and reversing them, in order seemingly to sever someone's origin with his/her genitor line.

The offering of an opossum (a ritual cutting, offering, and allotment of its meat) is an absolute prerequisite for a man to seal the affiliation of a child to his ancestral group. The opossum is described as a compassionate ancestral figure who transferred to mankind the knowledge of midwifery in a 'former time', when the life of women had to be sacrificed in

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<sup>35</sup>It is also referred to as *sali e leini* 'to cut its sides'; *sali*: to 'cut' (lengthwise), *lei*: 'side', 'edge', or *lei lua*: 'two sides' i.e. 'bisect'.

<sup>36</sup>This ritual is part of a film soon to be edited about the relationship between the Alune and the opossum.

<sup>37</sup>The *lei ele mare leini* ritual by the midwife can interestingly be compared with another (much more drastic) ritual of severance documented by J. Platenkamp in North Halmahera. (1990. pp.84-91)

<sup>38</sup>Pigs also turn into men and vice versa, but they belong to and are shared during another type of ritual (cf. in Chapter four: Siwa/Lima at Sobain Latale and Nili Mai at 'we Porola).

order to obtain the life of their child. It is also thanks to the ingenuity of the ancestress who requested and applied this knowledge that mankind can now multiply.<sup>39</sup>

Some Church elders insisted that nowadays there is only one ritual called **sidi 'wete belue**.<sup>40</sup> Indeed some Christian families organise the baptism to coincide with the day the child is taken outside the house for the first time. That way they also combine the prestations to the midwife (it would be too hazardous to risk her curse) and a thanksgiving ceremony in the form of a single meal. It also costs less and satisfies the village's religious authorities who closely monitor all forms of ritual activities dealing with ancestry.

### **AFFILIATION TO THE GENTRIX LINE**

To avoid extinction, a House may perpetuate itself through the children of an unmarried woman. The affiliation is secured by the same ritual, but it is performed by the woman's father or her brother. Such a daughter's or sister's child creates a female line, **luma bina**, whose female origin will be forgotten after a couple of generations of male descendants. A child born out of wedlock is either called '**wete luma bina** 'child of a female House', **ana wesie**, 'child of the forest' or **ana mlalane** ('**wete amlalane**) 'child along the path'. Although they are differentiated, these 'children of the forest' (who have no genitors) are not discriminated against. The most famous '**wete luma bina** of Manusa is presently *camat* of the sub-district. Furthermore some children were intentionally conceived that way.<sup>41</sup>

### **When the bridewealth has not been settled**

Sometimes, the woman's House does not allow the biological father to claim her child, either because its members refuse the suitor or because the woman has not been formally requested.<sup>42</sup> If the terms of the exchange of prestations have not been previously agreed

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<sup>39</sup>In no narrative is the woman named. She is not a specific ancestress, rather she epitomizes the attainment of this knowledge for all Alune women.

<sup>40</sup>*Sidi* means confirmation, '**wete belue**: 'new child'. In this context it refers to the baptism of a young child. (In the mountains baptism is carried out at a young age, possibly because the death rate of infants is particularly high).

<sup>41</sup>Male or female infants are the object of a lot of care and pride. In this community, which hardly maintains the balance between its birth and death figures, there is no such a thing as an unwanted, abandoned, or 'illegitimate' child.

<sup>42</sup>See below: **Sa bina elane** 'to climb the woman's ladder'.

upon, the man has theoretically no rights over her child. If he wishes to marry the woman, his elders will try to negotiate an agreement with her family. However, they are not in a strong position to do so and might be shamed. No exchange—or a deferred exchange of bridewealth—can be mutually agreed to, as exemplified in the following case.

Thomas, a young man, lives with Ronita. They have a child together but Thomas can not afford a bridewealth.<sup>43</sup> Ronita is the daughter of the former *raja's* younger brother. Her own father also died. The family has access to a lot of land but is short of hands to work it. Thomas, Ronita and their child live in the house of her mother. Among the Alune the youngest daughter has a special status and duty toward her elderly parents and Ronita stays with her mother since her only brother has left for another island.

**Ana mulini** 'youngest children' (particularly daughters) are 'like the small banana' which remains on the cluster while all the elder ones are taken away.<sup>44</sup> When a younger daughter stays with her elderly parents, often having children born out of wedlock, she virtually rules the household. This is Ronita's case, and there are several others in Manusa.

Thomas cares for the women, watches over their land, hunts, processes sago for the household, and no one seems in a hurry to ask for a bridewealth exchange. Furthermore, Thomas was not allowed to 'cut open the opossum' and feed the midwife. If he was in a position to leave the house with his bride he would still have to leave his child behind to take care of the old lady. This *status quo* is likely to be maintained as long as it suits everyone. Ronita's brother being away, she is likely to inherit her parents' house with Thomas.

Since both are the heirs of important lines which are short of children, in the years to come, they might share the affiliation of their future children between their two Houses. This recalls the usual Wemale practice, and stresses the complementarity of the 'differences' that these two groups emphasise between themselves.

### **Children of a widow**

The children of a widow born more than nine months after the death of her husband are regarded as children born out of wedlock. They belong to the widow's father's House and bear the name of her **nuru** of origin even if her former husband had presented all the

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<sup>43</sup>Thomas' father, the former lord of the land, died several years ago. Thomas's father's brother's son (his classificatory elder brother and only male close kin) is a widower with four children and limited resources.

<sup>44</sup>Younger brothers are like the banana shoots which sprout and grow on site after the older trees have died or been cut and taken away.

prestations of her bridewealth (**belini**). The widow's father (or one of her brothers) 'cuts open the opossum' and makes the prestations to the midwife, performing the rituals that bring the child into his own House. A widow's children born without a formal father belong and return to her House of origin.<sup>45</sup> If a woman dies before any bridewealth has been brought for her, her parents can claim one of her children. However, in both cases a man (biological father or not) can try negotiating with the woman's **nuru** to adopt her child.

The family of Norce's father had not presented her mother's **belini**. When her father died and her mother remarried in another village, Norce stayed with her mother's parents because it was decided that she belonged to her mother's line. A few years later, after having a second child, Norce's mother died too. Norce's father's family, who lives at the coast, had kept contact with the child. As she was now eight, they asked to take her into their House and to send her to high school. Norce's mother's parents said that to do so her mother's **belini** had first to be exchanged. However, since both her parents had been dead for a while and the girl was offered a better education, the two Houses settled on half her mother's bridewealth.<sup>46</sup>

These forms of adoption *a posteriori* by the real father or his relatives can occur if an agreement is reached by the parties. It has to involve a **belini**, an exchange of prestations. In this case the negotiations were facilitated by the fact that in the meantime the younger sister of the deceased woman, who watched over her elderly parents, had herself born two children out of wedlock, who were now part of her father's line. Thus the House was no longer short of children. Furthermore, a young in-marrying woman had just had a miscarriage and keeping too many children born out of wedlock within the same line was dangerous as it may compromise the fecundity of the women who marry in.

### **Keeping a daughter's child as a son**

The father of the woman might want or need to keep a child of his daughter for his own House and make this point a part of a marriage agreement. In that case the woman's father performs himself the rituals of cutting open the opossum and feeding the midwife, and the

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<sup>45</sup>This is different from Buru where, according to B. D. Grimes (1990 p. 57), the House of a dead husband continues to hold the rights to the children of his widow as long as she is not remarried.

<sup>46</sup>Norce's father's parents should have brought the full bridewealth, as negotiated during the first exchange of prestations. Furthermore the family of the second husband of her mother should have presented it fully too because they also had a child. However it was also agreed that this family would also bring only (the other) half of the bridewealth and could also keep the child born of that second marriage. The exchange of prestations for Norce's mother is described below in: Rubu belini: 'to exchange the prestations'.



child belongs to his own House. The child bears the **nuru** name of his/her progenitor and his/her genitor's name is not acknowledged. However, the father is known and his origin and name is later taken into account to determine marriage prohibitions.

Erasmus' mother's father, the head of the eldest House of the ritual performer, had three daughters but no son. This line, a **luma latu** of Manusa, one of the three founding lords of the **hena**, was too important to become extinct in the domain. When his elder daughter became pregnant before her suitor's family had officially requested her, the old man did not shame them but he kept her son. The suitor of Erasmus' mother returned to the village, having studied at the coast, and his relatives made the proper demand for his bride. Her father agreed to the marriage under the condition that he would keep her son. The two families settled on no bridewealth and the woman left for the coast while the child remained with his grandparents, who trained him for his future responsibilities as the inheritor of important moral duties and as the custodian of a vast area of the domain territory.

Furthermore, although Erasmus kept contact with his mother (calling her **ina**, 'mother') his mother's father made him his only heir and raised him to the position of his own son. Thus he gained a generation in the order of precedence within his own **nuru** (becoming the classificatory brother of men who otherwise would be his father and the father of men who were in fact his classificatory brothers) and in the community, with multiple consequences regarding his and other's status.<sup>47</sup> Erasmus is now a respected young married man. Taking his birth into account, in a few years time, he will be regarded as a proper and legitimate candidate for the seat of *raja* (although the position is now obsolete, he will still be a favoured candidate for the position of village head).

For the same purpose, (i.e. avoiding the extinction of a line or a House), a line can be continued through a woman. It is said that the woman **due lusune** 'sits/watches over the orchard', (*jaga dusun*) because there is no male relative to do so. She generally has one or several '**wete luma binai** 'children of a female House', natural children who will belong to her parents' House and continue the line if the woman later marries in another House. Usually she stays for a while in her parents' house, caring for them (like Ronita or Norce's mother's sister in the previous examples) and her children are her father's heirs. If the first woman has only daughters, one of them will 'watch over the orchard' (**due lusune**) and try to

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<sup>47</sup>For example it elevated him to the position of classificatory brother of the local *camat* (also a child born out of wedlock).

have a male heir for her line.<sup>48</sup> It is a man of the progenitor line (usually the mother's father or brother) who performs the rituals that establish their line as genitor of the child.<sup>49</sup>

### **Keeping too many children in the mother's House**

As noted in Norce's case it is perceived as hazardous to retain too many children born out of wedlock in the progenitor house.

    Maria is the only daughter of a rich and powerful family. A few years ago, she became pregnant but her lover died before his family had 'climbed the ladder' (*sae elane*) of her father's House to request her as a bride. Maria's father cut open the opossum and kept her baby girl as a grandchild in his own House.

The father's father of the little girl, who lives next door, also acts like a grandfather, giving the child full access to his gardens and plantations although he has no claim on her.

    A couple of years later, Maria was pregnant again but no one had yet properly requested her. This time she had a baby boy whose father was a young man from the village. However Maria's father made it clear that he was not in favour of a marriage settlement. He kept his single daughter, and cut open the opossum for this second grandchild. Two years later, Maria was expecting another child from the same suitor. However, Maria's father again 'cut the opossum', ignoring village gossip.

When asked about marrying her lover, Maria said that she preferred staying with her elderly parents and caring for them, according to tradition.<sup>50</sup> Her father said that for the time being, things were all right as they were because a daughter, being precious, should be well married and not against her will.<sup>51</sup> When I asked him what he would do if Maria and her

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<sup>48</sup>For example Okniel Matoke, who is a daughter's daughter's son (mother's mother: Nabuna, mother: Naita), is the head of a **luma bina**, a 'female House'. However this distinction will disappear when his son continues his line.

<sup>49</sup>However here too the father is usually known, and his origin taken into account when the child marries.

<sup>50</sup>In fact her parents were away at the coast most of the time but she was not keen to go and live in the house of her lover where she would have to obey and work for his widowed mother. Staying with their elderly parents leaves a lot of personal freedom to young women and most of them are not particularly keen to get married too quickly.

<sup>51</sup>Interestingly, this same man hastily negotiated the forced marriage of Yerinai, the elder daughter of the lord of the land to his own son. He was well aware that she objected to this arranged marriage. However, her father having recently died, he sealed this union with her father's brother's son with whom he exchanged the **belini** right away because, for political reasons, it was in his own interest.

suitor had several more children together, he said that if they married, he would probably agree to negotiate the transfer of one or two of these children.

Alune emphasise the affiliation along the genitor line but allow for the possibility of keeping one or two children in the House of their mother, particularly if there is no son in that House. However Maria has three brothers. When an Alune woman becomes pregnant it is regarded as more proper to seek a marriage agreement because women are meant to have children outside of their father or brother's House. Yerinai, (the daughter of the lord of the land forcefully married to Maria's brother), was quite explicit about the rule that a woman's children should belong to her husband's House. Soon after the birth of Maria's third child, Yerinai lost her seventh child in a premature birth. Her mother attributed this miscarriage to the malpractice of the old man who, she said, was punished by the progenitors' ancestors. These offended ancestors did not allow a child conceived by his son with his legitimate wife to live because he had tried to keep too many daughter's children in his own House.<sup>52</sup>

## ADOPTION

### Adoption within the same House

Adoption is seldom practiced. If a man chooses this option he tries to adopt within his **nuru** (preferably from a related House) so that there is similitude of blood and no transfer of name to avoid the wrath of the child's ancestors. An adopted child is called **ana ma'a ota** (**ana** 'child', **ma'a** 'the one who', **ota**: to 'adopt') or **ana piala** (to 'raise', to 'care for').<sup>53</sup> The terms are not quite equivalent inasmuch as **piala** is often a temporary situation and has a lesser status. The easiest possibility of adoption for a childless couple is to request a child from a brother or an unmarried sister of the husband. In that case no prestations have to be paid, said a midwife, because it is the 'same blood' (**mnesa**: 'identical', 'alike').<sup>54</sup> In any case, a formal request has to be made by bringing a precious textile (**lapune**) or an antique plate to the parturient. If the demand is welcomed, the family of the woman keeps the gift and, as a

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<sup>52</sup>Proper exchanges imply not only obtaining 'new women' (**bina belue**: son's wife) but giving away one's own daughters. Yerinai also had another cause of concern. A brother is responsible for his sister and her children's well being. The products of Yerinai's gardens and the game hunted by her husband had to be shared with Maria and her children since she did not work a garden herself and had no husband going to the forest for her. This resulted in less food for Yerinai's children.

<sup>53</sup>Bahasa Indonesia: *pelihara*, Ambonese: *piara*.

<sup>54</sup>**Esa** means one. Florey has **sa'esa**: 'same, identical, only one' (Alunedic 94).

counter gift, prepare a celebration for which they provide meat and palm wine. This meal shared with the ancestors of the House seals the transfer of a child between its lines.

If a man asks his barren wife's family for a child, his request might be welcomed but he must bring larger prestations: as many plates, glasses, money and/or textiles as requested by the House that gives the child. Another alternative is to negotiate the claim to a child (preferably a distant relative of the man) before birth or before anyone has cut open the opossum. This can be done for example when a woman is expecting a child out of wedlock. The family brings presents (textiles: **lapune**) to the woman and if she (and her father) agrees, she accepts them and lets these relatives adopt the child. In any case the child stays with the mother until weaned or even longer and maintains contact with the mother's family. Elders insisted that an adopted child never forgets his **luma** of origin and still calls his real parents **ama** and **ina**. The 'adoptive parents' are referred as **ama ma'a ota** and **ina ma'a ota**.

**Ana ma'a ota** have inheritance rights within their adoptive family. Their mother's family might like to reserve them some rights too, usually access to fruit trees, usufruct of plantations (**lusune**), or hunting grounds. If the transaction happened between two brothers, the child is the heir of his adoptive father but usually he may still 'eat from the orchard' ('**ane lusure**) of his real father. Sometimes also a childless man adopts (**piala**) a younger distant relative as heir because otherwise his land would return to the village community at his death. The adoption is nominal without a transfer of affiliation. The young man may or may not stay with his adoptive father. He cares for him and his land and will inherit the usufruct of his plantations.

The man who marries a widow cares for her children but has no rights over them.

After her father's death, Deborah and her two younger siblings were adopted (**piala**) by the man who 'adopted' their mother. He took care of them and brought them up but was not entitled to affiliate them into his own House. Later he had no say in Deborah's marriage transactions, which were controlled by her father's brother's son (her closest male relative). As adoptive father, he and Deborah's mother received a plate from her bridewealth for the care they had provided.

Usually, the second husband of a woman takes her children in his House so that mother and child are not separated. This is also called **piala**, with the meaning to 'raise', 'care for' a child until adulthood. However these children belong to their father's or their mother's House (depending on their initial affiliation) and the **ama piala** is not granted the right to affiliate

them in his own House since one 'should not fetch someone else's blood' (**dana sai lala o ya'e**).<sup>55</sup>

However, said an elder, at the child's marriage, the groom and his bride should come to salute the elders. They bring a prestation for 'the pain in raising the child' (usually in the form of a textile, **lapune**) and receive their blessing. The prestations concerning adopted (**ota** or **piala**) children are more a matter of case by case negotiations than a set of definitive rules. However, insisted a midwife, some kind of prestation should always be exchanged because, if not, the child would die.

### **Ana buana: thrown out children**

If a child cries a lot or is always sick, the elders may decide to 'throw him/her out' (**buana**), particularly if the parents have previously lost children. This is intended to 'trick' (**lema**) the bad spirits and make them believe that the child has gone. The whole family claims loudly that they do not want this child anymore and walk with the baby to the rubbish tip of the village where they leave the child and return home. Relatives take the baby into their house for a short time and discreetly bring the child back to the parents' house through the back door (or window). Sometimes, the child is kept by his relatives for several years until his parents feel the child is really safe.

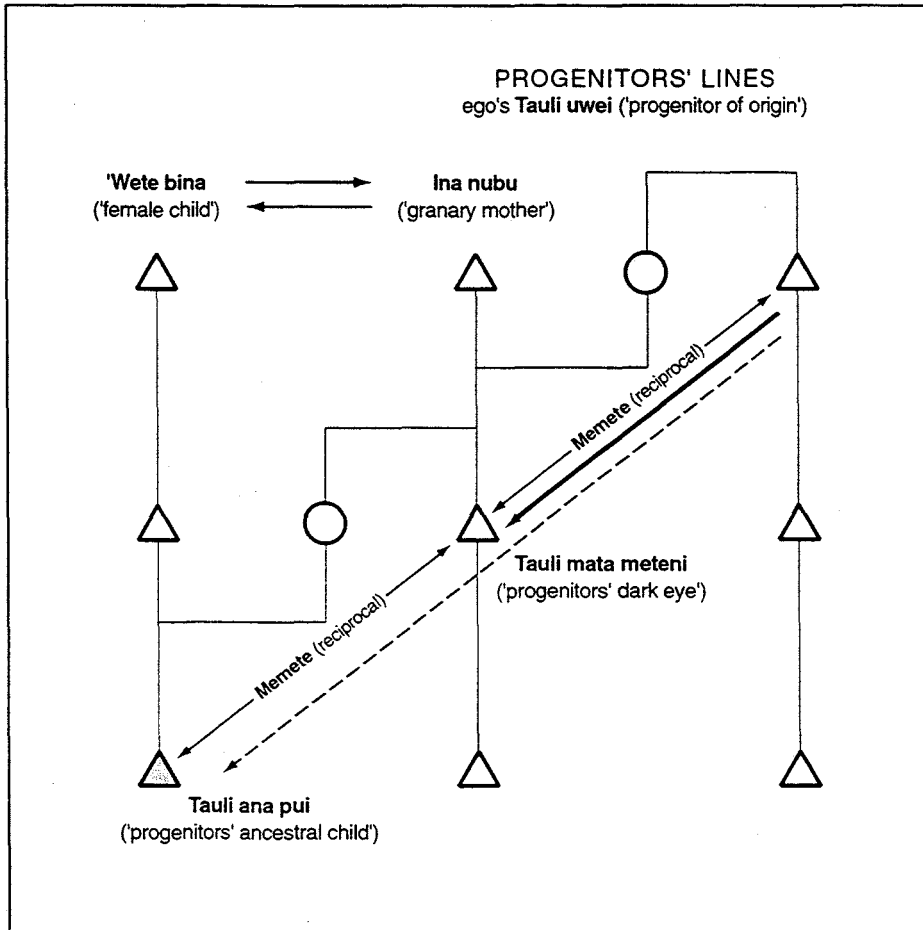
Another scenario can also be set up to fool the spirits who bother a child. Some distant relatives of another House bring a plate claiming loudly that they want to adopt the child. The parents say that they agree, and then give the baby through the window or the back door. The child is quietly returned the same way later on. There is usually no transfer of the child nor a change of affiliation, even if the child stays several years in the adoptive family (the child left the house by the back, not the front door).<sup>56</sup> Elders insisted that this was only **'lema**, to 'play', 'deceive' or 'trick' the bad spirits (or the angry ancestors) by distracting their malevolent attention away from the child.

I recorded only two cases of transfer of affiliation in Manusa. Both concerned children born out of wedlock. The first case was the gift to a father's **nuru** of such a child, Otniel, to

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<sup>55</sup>Fetching someone else's blood' is both improper and hazardous, an attitude possibly associated with head-hunting.

<sup>56</sup>The symbolism of front and back doors is discussed in Appendix 3: orientations.



**FIG. 8.1 EGO'S DULU BEI (DERIVATION)**



protect his well being. The second case involved the gift of a child, Simson, to his otherwise childless father.

Otniel was the '**wete am lalane**' ('child along the road') of Hermalina with Esau and, as such, the baby was affiliated in his mother's House. However Otniel became very sick and his mother's House, afraid he was going to die, decided that the baby should be given to his father's **nuru**, one of the most prominent in the village.

Keeping a child in the woman's house is also 'fetching someone else blood' and if the child presents signs of ill health it may signal the anger of ancestors claiming this child. In that case the child changed **nuru** affiliation and was adopted by a childless household of his father's **nuru**. The usual prestations were exchanged, the representatives of the father's **nuru** brought an heirloom textile and the mother's House organised the banquet. This transfer was definitive.

The adoption of a child by the genitor can also occur *a posteriori*.

Simson was the child of Piasa and Loanis, born out of wedlock. Loanis never married Piasa but when the other woman he married could not have a child, he turned to Piasa's parents with a prestation and obtained Simson.

## THE PROGENITORS' LINES

Every person is linked to his/her mother's House of origin which is this person's **tauli uwei** 'progenitor of origin'.<sup>57</sup> Once her bridewealth has been settled and the first prestations exchanged, a woman is incorporated into her husband's line (and **nuru**). Yet, the memory of the ancestry of her line is carried in her blood and passed on to her children. In Manusa two generations of progenitors are acknowledged: to the mother's and mother's mother's lines.

### Dulu bei: to derive from

The child of a married couple is affiliated to the father's line and bears the name of his **nuru**. But besides this **nuru** name, every person is also identified by his/her derivation: **dulu bei** (literally: 'to come down from') which marks this person's relationship to his/her mother's

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<sup>57</sup>**Tauli** 'progenitor' **uwei** 'origin/source/core/cause'. This is the line (and beyond it, the House and its **nuru** name) described by J. Fox as 'the line (or lines) that stands in relation to a genitor/genitrix line as "life-giving" pro(to)-genitor. (...) This line is the "origin of life" for another origin group.' (Fox. J. 1996 p.133).



line and her **nuru**. Thus, when asked about his identity, a man states his father's **nuru** name, a woman her husband's, but both mention their derivation (**dulu bei**) by giving their mother's brother's **nuru** name. The individual relationships of ego with his genitors and progenitors operate between lines (or Houses). However when referring to these relationships in general, what people mention is **nuru** names, not their specific line or House. Thus ego says: **Au X po au dulu bei Z**: 'I am X, (ego's father's **nuru** name), but I derive from Z', (ego's mother's brother's **nuru** name).

### **Tauli uwei: the 'progenitor of origin'**

**Uwei** means 'core', 'source', 'origin', 'cause', 'base' the point where something comes from (and returns). While in the field I thought that **tauli** came from **taue** which means to 'put', 'hold' or 'store' something inside a container.<sup>58</sup> However, according to Collins (1980 p.62) Alune **tau**: 'mixing bowl for sago gruel' reflects **\*\*ta(k,p)u** while **tauli** the 'bride giving side in marriage arrangement' reflects **\*\*ta(k,p)uli**'. Until further field enquiry, I translate **tauli** by 'progenitor'. The first recorded ruler of Manusa (a lord of the land) is not remembered by his House's name but by his title: **Tauli Ela**, the 'Great Progenitor' of the settlement. This 'progenitor of origin', **tauli uwei**, is the line (and by extension the **nuru**) of a person's mother and the line of the mother's mother.

### **Ina nubu - 'Wete bina: Granary mother and female child'**

A person's direct 'progenitor of origin' (**tauli uwei**), are his mother's father's and/or mother's brother's line. This maternal House is **ina nubu** the 'granary mother', to which that person's line stands in a relationship of '**wete bina** 'female child', (sister's child) i.e. progeny.<sup>59</sup> In an alliance between two lines, the bride's side is **ina nubu** and the groom's side '**wete bina**. The House, and by extension the whole **nuru** of the progenitors, is the **tauli uwei** of the first

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<sup>58</sup>Thus **tau inai** is literally a 'round thing that contains' or 'carries' something: i.e. a kind of 'container', 'pot', 'receptacle' or 'vessel'.

<sup>59</sup>The granary where 'seeds' (**bibite**, the metaphor for a bride) are stored is a powerful symbol. The shrine to the ancestors of a House, where offering and prayers were made to secure the fecundity of the group, was built in the shape of a granary (**nubune**), (see in Appendix 3: The luma botoi). Florey has also **anubu**: 'descendants' (Alunedic 94).

generation issued from that alliance. In this 'mother'/child' relationship, the **ina nubu** is given precedence over the '**wete bina** and its children'.<sup>60</sup>

Because brother and sister have the same blood, **ite lala'we mnesa** ('our blood is the same'), their bond is very strong. Mother's brother and sister's child call each other **meme** (or **memete**), a relationship which entails some rules of avoidance and prohibits any form of conflict or confrontation between them. Just as maternity can not be contested, a person's **tauli uwei** is never questioned. This indisputable **tauli uwei** provides a person with a maternal **nuru** name to 'derive from' (**dulu bei**), and a maternal line, the 'granary mother' (**ina nubu**) that holds his/her potential for fecundity and reproduction through the powerful **meme** (mother's brother/sister's child) relationship. This is a two generations progenitor line. It operates and is taken into account only for ego's generation and that of ego's children. The line (and by extension the **nuru**) of the mother's brother is the **tauli uwei** of a sister's child. These children are the **tauli mata meteni** ('progenitors' dark eyes') of their progenitors' line. The next generation of children are the **tauli ana pui** the 'progenitors' ancestral children'.<sup>61</sup>

The meaning of these names, which are metaphors for extended relationships of affinity, become apparent when marriage alliances are considered. Name and derivation are also taken into account in determining marriage preferences and prohibitions.<sup>62</sup> Cross cousins, who call each other brothers and sisters ('**wali**: 'same sex sibling', **beta**: 'cross sex sibling'), are prohibited marriage partners and so are their children. But the children of the **tauli ana pui** constitute a pool of potential affines with whom to renew previous alliances. This long term relationship implies various duties, restrictions and proscriptions between the members of the households concerned. The 'granary mother'/female child' relationship may give a child some favoured access to the usufruct of a mother's brother's plantations (which that child can 'eat from') but no rights to land proper. For an individual, the relationship to one's **tauli uwei** is better defined in terms of duties, avoidance and prohibitions than in terms of rights *per se*. The **dulu bei** or maternal affiliation of a child, is never a free choice nor can it be modified or relinquished.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Relying 'on elder/younger categories to distinguish genitor and genitrix lines and to order precedence among such lines (...) is a common feature of societies of eastern Indonesia...' Fox. J. 1996 p.146.

<sup>61</sup>**Tauli mata meteni** (**tauli** 'progenitor' - **mata** 'eye', **meteni** 'black' (i.e. these children are the 'apple of the eyes' of their progenitors). **Tauli ana pui** (**tauli**, 'progenitor' - **ana** 'child' - **upu** 'grand father/ancestor').

<sup>62</sup>People sharing the same progenitor of origin can not intermarry, and the mothers of the brides should not **dulu bei** 'derive' from the same **nuru** either, even from totally unrelated Houses.

<sup>63</sup>Even when a ritual of severance is carried out it is only meant to 'fool the ancestors' temporarily, e.g. to facilitate a strategic marriage alliance (see in this chapter 'to sever the opossum').

The relationship between two lines as 'granary mother' (**ina nubu**) and 'female child' ('**wete bina**) is not reversible before three generations have elapsed. However, their respective **nuru** may become each other's **tauli uwei** through other alliances between their different lines or Houses. Indeed when an alliance is initiated between two lines, other lines (of the same two **nuru**) may want to expand the alliance network, returning a bride, requesting another one, or doing both at the same time or at a following generation.<sup>64</sup>

#### THE EXCHANGES BETWEEN LINES OF AFFINES

I examine here the prohibition governing the relationship between the lines which are in a relationship of progenitor and progeny before examining its implication in the alliance between their Houses.

#### Apule bu'u telu : three sections of a pumpkin stem

E lupa apule: 'it is similar to a pumpkin'. The marriage alliance is compared to the pumpkin vine. This creeper of the gourd family (*Cucurbita*) trails on the ground and grows by segments, each 'sucker' producing additional roots, flowers and fruits. Although originating from, and linked to an initial stem each individual segment is also an autonomous entity.<sup>65</sup> One should marry beyond 'three sections of a pumpkin vine' (apule bu'u telu).

**Apule bu'u iti esa, lua mosa, bu'ta telu, ata 'ai lomai peneka.**

'First section of a pumpkin/squash (vine), second not yet, third sucker, (at the) fourth they can marry each other'<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup>However the 'rich and famous' carefully choose the Houses and lines of their alliances.

<sup>65</sup>It can be cut and transplanted to grow into an individual plant. To a certain extent, lines share a similar independence. They can develop as autonomous and influential groups by producing for themselves numerous children and/or entering in prosperous alliances. Providing a different imagery for a similar metaphor, in Lamaholot (east Flores), the squash vines evokes 'the notion of women linking and connecting the diverse trunks constituted by lines of men'. (Graham 1991 p.140).

<sup>66</sup>**Apule**: 'pumpkin vine', **bu'u** 'segment', 'section', 'knuckle'. **Esa** 'one', **lua** 'two', **telu** 'three', **ata** 'four'. **'ai** means to 'marry' (or 'and'), **lomai** is a reciprocal term (each-other). **Mosa** expresses an uncompleted action: not yet (*belum*), and **peneka** a completed action: already (*sudah*).

A 'section' (**bu'u**) or a 'sucker' is the metaphor for the span of one alliance. When a marriage occurs at one generation, the descendants of these lines may not intermarry for two more generations (ego's partner should be out of the bilateral kin group made of the descendants of ego's parents' parents). At the fourth **e liba nanu pene** 'it has crept far enough'.<sup>67</sup> It is **nanu pene**: 'far enough' (for kinship to be forgotten) and marriage is permitted (and preferred) between these two specific lines. This minimal distance is referred to as **bu'uti telu** (or **bu'u telu**): 'three sections'. **Bu'u** also means 'knuckle' of a finger and the metaphor can also be applied on the human body. An informant pointed at the three knuckles of his finger to show the duration and end of the prohibition, explaining:

*Kalau masih kenal, kalau masih lihat ceritanya belum habis, kalau masih tahu tidak bisa.*

When you still know, when you still see, the story is not finished, when you still know it is not possible.

This refers to the relationship of a man to his mother's mother's line, his **tauli uwei**. He is still 'too close', but his children will be the preferential partners if he wishes to renew an alliance. A man's kinsmen are his father and mother, their siblings and their children, his parents' parents, their siblings and their children, and his father's father's father and father's father's father's brothers. These are, or relate him to, the people with whom he shares a kin relationship. This kindred is called **luma tau** ('house content/bowl').<sup>68</sup> At ego's generation, identical kinship terms are used for the siblings and the maternal and paternal cross and parallel cousins. They are distinguished as being '**wali** (same sex), or **beta** (opposite sex). Some are further differentiated in each line by their birth order: **a mena** 'first born' **mulini** 'last born'.<sup>69</sup> These children of the second generation of an alliance, being all brothers and sisters, can not intermarry.<sup>70</sup> This rule excludes the possibility of cross cousin marriage between a mother's brother's daughter and a father's sister's son as proposed by van Wouden for the region.

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<sup>67</sup>**Liba** to 'creep', to grow over a surface, rooting at interval.

<sup>68</sup>In Ambon people use the Dutch word *fam* (*familie*). *Familie*, writes F. L. Cooley, 'is neither a residential group nor an ancestor oriented group but rather a bilateral kin group, the membership of which is aggregated through affinal as well as consanguinal ties. It is organized around an individual and consists of the living (...) descendants of the four great grandfathers of that individual.' (1967 p.142).

<sup>69</sup>All other children are **telale** 'in between'. '**Wali** and **beta** are followed by an inalienable possessive: '**wali'u**: my brother/sister (same sex) **beta'u**: my brother/sister (opposite sex).

<sup>70</sup>Father's father; father's mother; mother's father; mother's mother; and their siblings are referred to by the reciprocal term of **upu**, and their descendants are regarded as relatives.

Thus when two lines initiate a relationship of alliance, only at the third generation, 'three sections' (**Bu'u telu**) have unfolded and a bride can be taken or 'returned' (**leu**) in the same line. The diversification has been achieved and it is time to renew an alliance which otherwise could be forgotten. Meanwhile, Houses renew alliances and return brides to each other but they do so through different lines. In practice, these alliances are sought after since the previous marriage(s) has already initiated a network of alliance between the two Houses.<sup>71</sup>

### **Liba nanu pene: To trail far enough**

Exogamy applies to all members of ego's father's **nuru** but also to those with the name of ego's mother's **nuru**. Even if no kin relation can be traced between their mothers, two people whose mothers have the same **nuru** name are regarded as coming from a distant common 'progenitor of origin' and can not marry.

Jomes and Augustina's affection for each other was known by the whole village.<sup>72</sup> Although they were not related, the mothers of Jomes and Augustina belonged to different Houses of the same **nuru**. Thus when Jomes' father requested Augustina he was told that the distance between them was not sufficient and did not insist. Although unrelated, and both from respectable Houses, the lovers had a common **tauli uwei** and their union was prohibited. They were like brother and sister and no ritual could obliterate such a closeness between them. This was expressed by: **e liba nanu mosa** it had 'not crept far enough'.

To decide if an alliance may be initiated or renewed, elders first examine if there is a proper distance between the two partners. As well as their **nuru** names, one considers the **tauli uwei** of both bride and groom i.e. the **nuru** of origin of their mothers' and mothers' mothers.<sup>73</sup> The alliances must have 'crept far enough' **e liba nanu pene**, i.e. the bride and groom must not have a common name of **tauli uwei** within three 'sections'. Each section corresponds to an alliance which can occur simultaneously between the different lines of two (or more) Houses, or successively between two specific lines.

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<sup>71</sup>These lines 'return to the source House' (**leu luma matai**) to request a new bride or 'return a seed' (**leu bibite**) by giving a woman back, reinforcing the alliance between their two Houses (see below).

<sup>72</sup>Courting is normally rather discreet. The two might have deliberately publicised it to pressure their relatives into an agreement.

## THE EXCHANGES BETWEEN HOUSES

The practice indicates that marriages which sustain a long lasting relationship between Houses and frequent exchanges between their lines are the most valued forms of alliances among Alune. Their cumulative effect dissolves or reaffirms the prestigious position of 'progenitor of origin' **tauli uwei**, held by a House which can proclaim itself the bride giver of one (or several) others. Metaphors express these forms of exchange and their implications. When a House 'returns' (**leu**) to take another bride in one of the lines of a former donor House, this is called: **leu luma matai**, to 'return to the source House'. Alternatively when a House 'returns' a bride to a source House who gave a woman to one of its lines, this is called **leu bibite**: to 'return seed'. When, over several generations, two Houses (or **nuru**) 'return' brides to each other between their lines, this is called **sari e le lim tina, le lim tina**, to 'sharpen the machete on both sides'. The women of these renewed alliances 'walk back on the traces of a mother', **leu inai la'wai** to become themselves 'link women' **mata bina**.<sup>74</sup> In such alliances women are 'seeds' taken and returned (to granary Houses). When the relationship consolidates through renewed alliances, the **mata bina** who return on the path once opened by their ancestresses keep this path between their Houses open and life continuously flowing from —and returning to— its origin.

### Leu luma matai: to return to the source house

A man is entitled to look for a wife in the **nuru** to which one of his fathers (all the men he call **ama'u**) or father's father (**upu'u**) gave or took a woman as long as his potential bride is beyond **bu'u telu**. Between the two lines that initiated an alliance the relationship remains asymmetric for at least three generations. After that duration, the relationship of 'granary mother' and 'female child' can be either maintained or reversed. A man of the 'female child' may request a bride from the line of his mother's mother. When a line 'returns' to request another bride, one says that its men 'return to the source House': **leu luma matai**.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>However, as long as the mothers of the potential partners come from different **nuru**, their mothers' mothers may **dulu bei** from the same **nuru** name as long as they did not belong to the same House and were not regarded as classificatory sisters.

<sup>74</sup>**Mata**: the 'eye', the 'source' or the 'link' of a chain. Mata corresponds to 'a significantly interrelated family of concepts. Culturally, this family shows persistent connections with the idea of transition; and in this respect the word often expresses ideas of spiritual influence, growth and the general movement of life'. (Barnes 1977 Mata in *Austronesia Oceania* 47 p. 302 quoted by Graham 1991, p. 53).

<sup>75</sup>**Leu**: to 'return', to 'come back'.

Alternatively the relationship can be reversed, the progeny returning a bride to his former progenitor. When a bride is a returning woman it is she who **leu luma matai** 'comes back to her source House'. Meanwhile, the other lines of the same Houses may, and often do, 'return' to the same source to request a bride or 'return seed' to each other. The term **luma matai** usually encompasses all the lines of the same **nuru** in the domain, but it can also designate a single House if several branches are represented in the settlement.

### **Leu bibite: to return seed**

When a bride is returned to a previous progenitor's House people say that her father's House is 'returning the seed': **leu bibite** (**leu** also means to 'give back'). This form of exchange between Houses, in which 'seed' women are returned to the previous 'granary mother' by their 'female children', is widely practiced among Alune. It can be done in the same generation (between different lines or Houses) or be deferred (beyond 'three sections') between lines that are already in a granary mother/female child relationship.

The same principle also operates between domains. Pitorsina, was from Riring, and Sarah, her daughter, was given to Tanel in Riring. Although she did not marry into her mother's House of origin (nor even in the same *soa*), Sarah's brother said that he was 'returning the seed' to Riring. Recalling exchanges which occurred with another village in the past, what people usually remember is the *soa* from which the women came and to which a daughter was returned. For example Luis married a woman from *soa* Latue in a child village and returned Dabie, their daughter (named after her father's father's mother) to the same *soa*. When the *soa* system was introduced in the mountains of West Seram (1912-16), the Alune called it **nuru ela**, 'large **nuru**' and regarded it as such. The preferences in alliances which applied between **nuru** came to apply also between *soa*. Thus the concept of returning a bride to each other's group is not limited to exchanges between House and **nuru** but may apply between *soa* and domains.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>The elders said that Manusa decided to stop giving women to its children villages because they 'have not returned seeds yet'. This is also a way to position the domain as the progenitor (the initial source) of its children villages.

### **Sari e le lim tina, le lim tina: to sharpen the machete on both sides**

The renewal of this type of alliance in which Houses return brides to each other is highly valued because 'it sharpens the machete on both sides': **sari e le lim tina, le lim tina**, or **em tinale lua** 'it is sharpened twice' (both sides). This form of marriage is 'good' (**mise**) said an elder because: *parang tajam disini parang tajam disana juga, muka blakan tajam sama sama*. 'The machete is sharpened here, the machete is sharpened there too, front and back (become) the same'. Who gave a bride 'in front' (*muka: a mena*: 'first', 'elder') and who returned one 'in the back' (*blakan: a muli*: 'behind', 'younger') is still remembered between the lines which have exchanged brides. However the relationship is balanced *sama sama* between the two Houses (although the lines concerned will often contest it). The metaphor alludes also to the formal request for a bride in which the groom's side asks 'to cut (with a machete) a head (cutting) of taro' (**tete bera u.ui**) to plant in their own garden (see below).

The asymmetric relationship created by a marriage between two lines is reversible at the level of the House or the **nuru**. In practice it is continuously challenged by the principle of reciprocity expressed by the metaphor **sari e le lim tina, le lim tina**, regarded as the 'proper' thing to do. Although a House will attempt to establish itself as others' **tauli uwei** 'progenitor of origin', with precedence over its progeny, these progenies in turn, will attempt to return brides to the same House (or in the same **nuru**), thus consolidating and expanding a relationship of exchange, as well as challenging the previous order of precedence.<sup>77</sup> Although at an individual level the line of a 'female child' remains indebted to the line of its 'mother granary' for two generations, alternating and reversing the directions of the exchange eventually diffuses the asymmetric status of progenitor/progeny at the level of the exchanging Houses.

Renown and fecundity are matters of great concern. In Manusa, the **hena upui**, the long or well established Houses representing the founding **nuru**, have 'sharpened the machete on both sides' for several generations, giving, taking and returning 'link women' to each other. Through these alliances, the lines enhance or consolidate the renown of their named House (or **nuru**), maintain the flow from their source, and contribute to the source of future alliances.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, the renewed alliances of these **hena upui** with powerful outsiders

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<sup>77</sup>As B. D. Grimes notes for the *noro*, the origin groups of Buru 'the cumulative effect of bi-directional marriages between *noro* (...) allows two *noro* to see their overall relationship as one of symmetry.' (1996 p.208)

<sup>78</sup>For example, Souwei the House of the lord of the land was for a while reduced to one household. The only two women of Souwei in this generation were given to the elder lines of Neyte, the most powerful House in the domain. These alliances enhanced the prestige of both Houses, Souwei for being the source of



increase their personal prestige as well as the renown of the whole domain, sustaining its position of progenitor of prestigious lines in the region.<sup>79</sup>

### **Leu ina la'wai: to walk back the traces of an ancestress**

When alliances are renewed the women who are returned to a progenitor's House 'walk back the traces of an ancestress', **leu inai la'wai**.<sup>80</sup> Once a path of exchange has been cleared between two Houses, to keep it open, women have to walk that path back and forth along succeeding generations. They follow the 'trace' (**la'wai**) of other 'link women' (**mata bina**) to keep life continuously flowing between the two Houses which have become each other's source.

In the following section, I examine the procedure or 'path' (**lala**) to marriage.

### **LULU LALA MNEANE: TO FOLLOW THE SMOOTH PATH - THE MARRIAGE PROCEEDINGS**

The marriage proceedings may take several generations to complete. It is under the auspicious number three: **telu** (now said to represent the Christian trinity) and its multiple **siwa**, nine. **Siwa siba solie**: 'nine' 'brings out', 'continues', 'intensifies', 'penetrates'. Marriage implies three procedures 1) to request the bride, which includes the negotiation of the bridewealth, 2) the wedding ceremony and 3) the payment of the bridewealth.

There is a small number of **lai lemo mai** (*kawin lari*), in which the bride elopes with the groom to force her parents to give their consent. In these cases, the families negotiate the bridewealth and a fine afterward. This is called **lulu muli** 'to follow afterward'.<sup>81</sup> Proper

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Neyte, and Neyte for having obtained the two 'source women' of the **nuru** of the founding ancestor of the domain.

<sup>79</sup>When a bride of its **luma latu** was given to the *raja* of Piru the whole domain was regarded as Piru's progenitor.

<sup>80</sup>**Leu** to 'return', 'walk back', **ina-i** 'her mother', **la'wai** 'trace', 'record', 'imprint', 'vestige' or 'memory'.

<sup>81</sup>The term by itself expresses the inferior position of the groom's side. His representatives are a **mulu**: those 'in the back', those who 'come later' (are late), the 'junior ones'.

people are expected to 'follow the smooth path': **lulu lala mneane**.<sup>82</sup> Following the smooth path or 'following afterward', both lead to the bride's ladder: **sa elane** to 'climb the ladder'.

### **Sa bina elane: to climb the woman's ladder**

Alune houses are constituted of two parts: one public, the other intimate. In traditional houses the public part was the sitting platform (**sisine**) while the house proper was reserved for the family members.<sup>83</sup> Access to the inner intimacy of these houses involved climbing its ladder. The metaphor refers to the attempt by a potential '**wete bina** 'female child', the man's side, to be received in the house of a **ina nubune** 'mother granary', the woman's side, to obtain a bride, metaphorically referred as 'seed' (**bibite**). However this may or may not be the first time that these lines, Houses or **nuru** have climbed each other's ladder. Requesting a bride may initiate a relationship between the lines of the bride and the groom. Alternatively, one of their **luma** may have already taken or received a bride from the other, or their **nuru** may already be involved in a long standing relationship of exchange in the domain.

Marriages are concluded between lines but they entail the alliances of their mutual Houses and beyond them, their **nuru**. When the lines do not know each other, coming to request the bride is just called **sa bina elane** to 'climb the woman's ladder'.<sup>84</sup> **Sa** also means to request **sa bina**: to 'request a woman' (for marriage).<sup>85</sup> When the bride who is requested returns to the **nuru** of one of her classificatory mothers, i.e. when the **nuru** of the groom has previously given a woman to the **nuru** of the bride in the domain, the line coming to request her, 'follows the footsteps' **lulue tune** (**lulue**: to 'follow', **tunei**: 'heel'). When both **nuru** have regularly exchanged brides between the various lines of their Houses for several generations, the House of the groom says: **lulu lo ite** (**lulu**: to 'open up', **lo**: 'toward', **ite**: 'us') 'they are open toward us'.

But whatever their former relationship, the man's side should come three times, climbing the ladder and knocking at the door of the potential progenitors to 'request a woman' (**sa bina**).

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<sup>82</sup>**Mneane** is used to describe something regarded as 'smooth' because it is 'unequivocal', 'apparent', 'good-looking'.

<sup>83</sup>In modern houses front room and kitchen play these role (see Appendix 3: Inside the traditional house and Inside the modern house).

<sup>84</sup>In metaphoric language, a house on poles is regarded as the 'source' of its 'ladder' **elane uwei**.

<sup>85</sup>Florey has: **loa metu batai**: to 'cross the threshold' (cross-door-length) 'marriage in which the man's family goes to the woman's house to ask permission for marriage to occur' (Alunedic 94). This suggest that in Lohia the metaphor has adapted to the modern type of house.

After the first time, the representatives of the groom wait three days and return again. Each time they knock and introduce themselves formally three times, before the door of the bride's house opens.<sup>86</sup> The man's representatives are seated toward the outside, near the door, the woman's side occupies the inner side of the house. Young women and children remain in the kitchen, further inside the house. The elders converse, chew betel quids ('**ane soi**: to 'eat areca')<sup>87</sup> and smoke together, getting to know each other but no presents and no 'promises' (**nasi'e**) are exchanged yet. The bridegroom is never present at these meetings.<sup>88</sup>

Should the woman's family not want to give her as a bride they answer right away:

**leu mina i mo bina sua mo**: 'go home now our woman does not like it.'

However, the man's representatives may insist and bring their request twice more. If after the third time the bride's side is still not willing to give their daughter, the man's side can not insist anymore. However, one also says that if a woman has been asked three times her line should accept unless they have really good reasons to reject the request. To 'multiply' (**nebu**),<sup>89</sup> one should not refuse to act as progenitor. Like keeping ones' daughter's children, such selfishness may anger ancestors and bring bad fortune. If they agree, the elders start to negotiate the bridewealth (**belini**). Formerly the bride received, as a sign of the engagement, a turtle shell 'arm band' (**bobale**) and a necklace of red 'glass beads' (**porolinai**).<sup>90</sup> These had belonged to an elder woman of the groom's side, and the bride was later supposed to give them to the bride of one of her sons. The bride family returned a 'ring' (**sapu'u**) as a counter gift.

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<sup>86</sup>People say that the swiftness with which the woman's door opens indicates how welcome the request is. Unwelcome suitors or those who 'come late' (**lulu muli**) are publicly made to wait outside for long embarrassing minutes.

<sup>87</sup>**Soi**: areca nut, '**amu loini**: betel leaf, '**amu buai**: betel catkin, **lopone**: lime.

<sup>88</sup>Nor is the bride, but she and the other women are listening from the back of the house.

<sup>89</sup>The fecundity ritual performed in the **luma botoi**, the shrine of the **luma inai**, is also called **nebu** (see Appendix 3 the **luma botoi**).

<sup>90</sup>**Bobani** 'hip bone', **mata inare porole**: 'iris of the eye'. These preliminary gifts may refer to body parts. Alune equate with part of the body various objects which circulate in exchange (see below the bridewealth items).

### **Tete bera u.ui: coming to cut a head of taro to plant it in one's garden**

A group of elders said that the following was the traditional dialogue used when requesting a bride in Manusa:

Man's side: **Ami lomei tete bera u.ui (ului):** 'We are coming here to cut a head of taro.'

Woman's side: **Au bera ui mei po ema mise mo ('wana mo), po selui bei tana u ele mina:** 'I have a young taro but it is not good (/does not know),<sup>91</sup> but try to plant it first.'

Man's side: **mula mo au tana u ele, au lulu inai mei:** 'It does not matter, I will plant it first, I have prepared some land for it.'

Woman's side: **Selu bei i mine'a i mula le loho le ho e mise pise mo yo selu bei mine'a:** 'Then whether it becomes good or not will depend on you.'

The botanical metaphor of the taro (*caladium*) is used when asking for a bride. However when 'cutting a taro' in the garden, one just says **teta bera'ota** (*potong keladi*). To 'cut a head' is spoken of as: **tete ului (u.ui)**. In this context the 'cutting' ('**wawi**') of taro, the bride, is referred to as a head which is cut, and indeed people compare the taro root to a skull. In ancient times a head was sometimes requested by the bride's father from the bridegroom. It was to be hunted and hung secretly at the pole of the bride's **nuru** in the meeting house (**sisine**). Besides proving the courage of the young murderer and his potential as a bridegroom, the trophy head could be ritually consecrated to the renewal of people's fecundity and that of their land. This is recalled in the metaphorical dialogue when requesting a bride.<sup>92</sup> When they climb the ladder of a House and request to 'cut' a 'head' of taro, the bridegroom's elders are told that the plant is too young because one should not

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<sup>91</sup>Refers to knowing how to work properly.

<sup>92</sup>In Manusa heads could be appropriated by 'one who uproots heads' (**ma'subulu**), and used for ritual 'fecundating' (**nebu**) purposes. Once the celebrations were completed, the 'uprooted head' was referred to as a 'flower' and hung on the skull tree. The tree, now gone, stood along an affluent of the ancestral river. The dead, having roamed for a while 'toward the sea' (**lolau**) return **lolete** 'toward the mountain'. Along this river and upstream the Sapalewa, they journey to the invisible banyan that joins Tapele, the Earth where people live, to Lanite, the world of the Sky where dwell the ancestors. Were heads like the flowers on the orchard trees which bear the promises of fruits? Were the skulls offered to the dead on their path to ancestry? Was a 'flower' on the skull tree an offering to the world of the Sky where little (the skull) is perceived as a lot (the offering of a whole human)? Possibly for these, and certainly for many other reasons and purposes, were heads 'uprooted'. 'By offering human heads', writes Valeri, Huaulu 'feed the progenitors' who request heads because 'they eat humans'. These Huaulu progenitors are the Leautuam, a bundle of precious heirlooms kept in the village shrine, and 'ultimately Lahatala (the Sky) and Puhum (the Earth) themselves' (1990 p.64).

show any hurry to let a daughter go.<sup>93</sup> The man's side then insists, amplifying the metaphor, that they will take it as it is (i.e. that they regard the woman as a promising young plant) and that they have prepared land to plant it (i.e. that they are themselves a fecund ground). The bride's side then says that it is up to them to make the woman/plant grow well and 'come good' i.e. reproduce.

Sago is the staple food; taro forms part of the ritual meals shared with ancestors.<sup>94</sup> On festive days nubile maidens (ready to be 'planted') wore a head-dress made of taro leaves tied around their forehead. De Vries, who describes this custom among the Wemale, does not mention why this taro 'helmet' was worn (1927 p102). Several photos taken at the beginning of the century and earlier show nubile girls in ceremonial attire wearing a taro head-dress.<sup>95</sup> On Riedels' etching, naked lads are also wearing this head-dress something that is highly improbable.<sup>96</sup> As it is not worn by married women this certainly alludes to the metaphor used for future brides.<sup>97</sup> After this formal exchange, the elders of both parties sit down together to chew betel quids and drink palm wine. This visit has also to be repeated three times. If it was an arranged marriage (**remere sou ela'e**: 'the elders have spoken before hand') the parents 'consulted' (**tneuni**) the young woman.<sup>98</sup>

### **Amese'ele: to complete it**

Finally the parties **amese'e le**: 'complete it' (fix the bridewealth). **Amise'ele**: means literally 'to make it good', i.e. to fix something that has been broken or to make peace after a conflict. **Amese** and **amise** may derive from **mise** (or **misete**): 'good', 'fine', 'appropriate', 'honourable', 'proper', 'advantageous'. Indeed, a proper marriage is said to be **mise**. Furthermore a love affair between two youngsters is a potential source of conflict until it is

<sup>93</sup>Florey mentions a similar idea **buru'e**: 'to force someone to do something, to rush to give something, to give something unasked: e.g. in the process of marriage negotiations, to appear to want to give one's daughter away quickly'. (Alunedic 94)

<sup>94</sup>However both are eaten in ordinary and ritual contexts as well.

<sup>95</sup>Tauern 1918, *tafel* 49, De Vries, 1907 p. 61, 1927, fig.25, 26 etc.

<sup>96</sup>These photos and etchings are characteristic of certain representations of the time of so-called 'natives', in which accuracy is not always the main concern.

<sup>97</sup>Girls also put it on for performing the **maro maro**, danced to call on fecundity.

<sup>98</sup>If she had another lover, said an elderly woman, they put a magic charm called **mamau** ('slowly') on her food to make her forget him. Alternatively, if it was deemed necessary, they threatened to beat her until she consented. However, added this **mata bina** who was married against her will, these were things of the past; nowadays Alune women are seldom forced into an unwanted marriage.

properly approved by their lines. Thus to conclude the appropriate negotiations for their marriage, **amese'e le**, is a source of relief and satisfaction for both parties.<sup>99</sup> From then on, and before the wedding ceremony is held, the groom may come and sleep in the bride's house every so often or on a regular basis. The future bride (**bina belue**: 'new woman') visits the house of her future husband's parents, but she should not stay there overnight. This is 'the letter of the law'; however, in daily life various exceptions are tolerated. Little presents are exchanged but these are informal. The groom brings sago or meat to the bride's house (particularly if he stays there) and the bride may offer some fruits or vegetables gathered in her parent's plantation or from her garden.

Ancient bridewealth (**belini**) usually ranged from 30 to 50 plates, bowls and other items, but some added up to several hundred of them, accounting for the worth of highly valued women.<sup>100</sup> The number and quality was set by the bride's family, corresponding to the bride's mother's own **belini**. Nowadays the **belini** consist of white plates, simple glasses, red printed *kain* or white cloth and 'palm gin' (**tua lau'we**), all available at the coastal market, and Indonesian money. Once used as part of a **belini**, the objects, even modern ones, have a power of their own and can kill the children of a man who tries to obtain (or give) more than what was agreed upon.

### **Belini: The bridewealth items**

Nowadays the quotas are fixed and identical for all the villagers: one dozen white plates, one dozen glasses, one score of textile (a *kodi*: 25m) or 24 **lapune** (the Ambonese red *kain* with checked print), 3,000 Indonesian rupiahs and a bottle of palm gin. The bridewealth requested from an outsider is double that of a villager. It consists of two dozen each of glasses and plates; forty yards of textile (a *kayu*); two bottles of palm gin and 30,000 rupiahs. This larger amount of money is for the young men's club, the council of elders (**sanili**) and the village government to compensate for the village's loss of a maiden (**tiele bibite** 'to lose seed'). When it comes to bridewealth, the children villages Rumbatu, Rumberu and Kawatu are now regarded as outsiders.

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<sup>99</sup>Florety (in Lohia?) has: '**nasi'e**: to 'promise', 'pledge', 'make an agreement'; **nasi'e-ni**: to 'promise one's child as a marriage partner' (Alunedic 94).

<sup>100</sup>This is still the case in some areas on Buru although, like in Seram, a provincial decree has prohibited that custom (c.f. B. D. Grimes).

In the past, bridewealth was more elaborate and it could take a House the span of several generations of men to assemble the **belini** of a woman of high status. The man's side brought 'plates' and 'bowls' (**batu** and **piane**), and sometimes 'gongs' (**hu-inai**), 'machetes' (**sari**), 'textiles' (**lapune**) or canons. These same objects were also requested for fines and compensation after murders or as war tribute. Some of them were equated with parts of the body (plates for the head, gongs for the chest etc). The textiles were, and still are, given as compensation for the pain of the mother who raised the child and to replace those the bride has used during her youth. Some are set aside for the women who helped cook the banquets. The ancient textiles were not the traditional '**anune** woven and worn by women, nor the bark loincloth worn by men ('**wani**) but imported cloth **lapune** (*kain*).<sup>101</sup> Textiles were also worn by men as part of their ceremonial 'head-dress' the **pa**.<sup>102</sup> Others were used during birth, healing and funeral rituals or to wrap captured skulls. The woman's side returned counter gifts of smoked meat and vegetable food (sago, rice, taro).

In Manusa, the most important heirlooms were the 'plates' (**batu** or **piane**). Each of them had a name and a particular voice (the sound it made when tapped with the fingers), which it lost when it died (was cracked or broken). Some plates had also acquired specific powers. Most men had their own plate from which they ate during ceremonies, and guests were honoured by being served food on those antique heirlooms. Plates are still associated with life and reproduction rituals. They are the support on which offerings are made to ancestors and their blessings received.<sup>103</sup> The biggest item remembered by the elders was a stone plate of almost a metre in diameter. It was called **but siwa** (90,000) and belonged to Riring. Large Chinese soup dishes paired with a smaller bowl (the lid) were preferred bridewealth items. They were called **inai 'ai babai** 'mother and top' or **lebui 'ai babai** 'underneath and above'. They were well suited for the traditional meal of sago porridge (**pia**) which is served with a little sauce, vegetables or meat.

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<sup>101</sup>Like the *kain patola* (**obin ntola nudui**) or waist band (**ma'eita a'wa** : 'soft waist').

<sup>102</sup>For ceremonies and war or headhunting parties the **iehiati** (Florey has **ielobala**'), the turban that men wrapped around their hair, was adorned with feathers, beads or seeds.

<sup>103</sup>If the soul of a child wanders away, a new white plate is used for a ritual offering of food to the House ancestors. The ancestors consume the 'aroma' ('**weini**) of the food. Afterward the child eats this food which has become 'tasteless', having lost its essence, but bears the blessing of the ancestors. The child will keep this plate and eat from it all the time.

Dignitaries and great warriors were buried with plates to take with them during their travel so that they would also be rich and obtain a lot of meat in the other world.<sup>104</sup> Plates (**batu**) were also stored and used in the family shrine (**luma botoi**).<sup>105</sup> When rituals (**nebu** to 'fecundate', 'fertilise', or 'multiply') were performed in the **luma botoi** to enhance the fecundity of the **luma**, the dried meat was laid in these plates. It was offered to the ancestors on the wood rack over the hearth (**'webute**) where the meat is cured.<sup>106</sup> The ancestors, said the elders, did not buy these objects. They received them a very long time ago, when the heirlooms had been shared between men by Samai after the first ancestors had walked down from Nunusaku.<sup>107</sup> This is why these heirlooms were alive (**e ruhe 'wana sa, e mata mosa** 'it is still alive, it is not dead yet') and —providing the proper rituals (**nebu**) were performed— they had the ability to 'increase' themselves in number (**tapa**) like taro and mankind<sup>108</sup> The women circulated in the opposite direction to the plates in a continuous cycle of exchanges, some of them prestigious. Both meat and plates could be multiplied by prayer (**'oti** to 'request', to 'pray', to 'beseech') in the **luma botoi**, sharing a little meat in them to receive an increase from the ancestors.<sup>109</sup>

This was before an energetic *pendeta* from Nusalaut, remembered as a fierce man with a black beard and a loud voice, made a stormy entry in the community.<sup>110</sup> Elders recall how, having walked around the domain and set fire to their family shrines, he gathered his newly Christianized flock in a procession to burn the carved wooden poles of their initiation house.

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<sup>104</sup>However the upper world being the reverse of the human one, there was no need to give them the best plates, old and chipped ones or those which had 'lost their voices' were used since they turned into the most precious ones, once in the world of the ancestors.

<sup>105</sup>The **luma botoi** of a House was primarily the place where matters regarding human fecundity —and possibly also those concerning the fecundity of the land and of the animals hunted in the forest— were ritually secured with the ancestors of the group.

<sup>106</sup>Dried is equated to strong, imputrescible, so is the substance of the ancestors. Ancestors consume only '**weini** the 'smoke', 'vapor' or 'essence' of the food. When the meat is laid on the '**webute**, where it is usually stored, its '**weini** journeys to the Sky (Lanite) where dwell the ancestors, passing through the holes in the roof between the **bulen mo'wai** and the **bulene bina**, the male and female thatching (*atap*) which sit on the ridge of the roof. (see appendix 3: The traditional luma tetu & Inside the modern house).

<sup>107</sup>See Chapter 4.

<sup>108</sup>Since plate and meat were 'alike', they were also exchanged one for another. (see below: **subu lomai bei**: 'to pull each other out of flooding water').

<sup>109</sup>Commenting about this an elder said that it was just like the miracle of Christ's multiplication of bread and fish on the mountain except that the ancestors did it with plates and meat. Since in the upper world a lot is a little, men gave a little and received a lot while ancestors thought they had received a lot and were thus giving a little.

<sup>110</sup>One informant said in 1954-56 another one 1958-62.



Next, following government policy, he coerced the people into surrendering in church their valuable Chinese plates, dishes and bowls, replacing these antique heirlooms with cheap white plates from the coastal market. Some of these objects were worth tens of thousand of rupiahs. No one knows what happened to them. However not all the plates disappeared in the minister's hands. Some had already been hidden or lost during war time. Buried in the ground or concealed in hollow trunks, a few re-surface occasionally. Others have been bartered for coastal goods with dealers traveling through the mountains.<sup>111</sup>

Plates and bowls are sometimes said to be **mena 'ai muli**, 'ahead and behind' or **lebui 'ai babai** 'underneath and above' in relationship to each other, but they are not paired as male and female. The elders do not always agree on which one was paired with the other. Thus according to Pa Ian the plate **'olo Hitu** ('tribute from Hitu') was paired with its lid **Lamutule**. According to Pa Lambert **Lamutule** was a red brown plate which was paired with the lid **Nasabate**. Pa Ian pairs the **Nasabate** as a plate with the lid **lale mutule** (which could be the same as **Lamutule**). Thus there are disagreements about what was a plate and what was a bowl. However both were containers from which ancestors were 'fed' (**sopa'e**).<sup>112</sup> These containers were numerous, and some of their names are still remembered.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>111</sup>Until they were forbidden to do so (in January 1960), Chinese itinerant merchants came to Usua (the *soa* village) selling salt, textiles, dry fish or meat and sometimes buying or selling precious plates. The dealers I am referring to here were illegal traffickers who came later (and still do) selling anything from spoilt medicine, which they inject with the same old syringe, to adulterated palm or rice alcohol.

<sup>112</sup>They may have stood for the **luma tau**, 'house content/bowl', the household of the groom in a transaction where sacred 'containers' were exchanged.

<sup>113</sup>Here are some:

According to Ian:

plate/dish	translation	paired with bowl/lid	translation
<b>nasabate</b>	?	<b>lale mutule</b>	dry fly ?
<b>'olo Hitu</b>	Hitu tribute	<b>Lamutule</b>	?
<b>ólo tlale</b>	medium tribute	<b>popo' loini</b>	<b>popok(?)</b> leave
<b>utela bui (utui ela buini?)</b>	container	<b>utune bu'ai</b>	100 crocodiles
<b>ia matai</b>	kenari eye (?)	<b>naba</b>	?
<b>Buela ai</b>	place name -tree ?	<b>ali matai</b>	curved eye (?)
<b>Uwet lahai (la'ai?)</b>	place name (?)	<b>'o lale metene</b>	black medium tribute

According to Lambert:

## The wedding ceremony

I have not witnessed this ceremony; this is how it was described by elders. Having agreed upon the terms of the bridewealth, both parties assemble sago, meat, wood, vegetables, betel nuts and palm wine in the bride's house, where the food will be cooked. This meal, which seals their agreement, should necessarily contain meat and palm wine, and preferably gin and tobacco because their 'essence' ('**weini**) 'feed' (**sopa'e**) the ancestors who oversee the alliance. If the families are modest the meal is simple and the number of guests limited to the bride and groom, their elders and witnesses. If there are a lot of guests, a verandah is built next to the house where the wedding ceremony and a banquet will be held. The evening before, the groom brings one opossum and two lengths ('**wasai lua**: 'two sections of bamboo': *ruas*) containing sago, to 'feed' (**sopa'e**) the bride and her parents. He also carries the '**a'ele buini**, the 'betel-nuts container' of his family.<sup>114</sup> Like elsewhere in Indonesia, the betel-nuts container is a powerful family heirloom. Surrendering it to the bride's family the night before, guarantees the loyalty of his side. The containers of both Houses will witness the oaths they will take and could kill perjurers.

The following day the groom's family comes to the bride's house and knocks at the door three times. They are seated on the side close to the outside door, while the bride's side sits toward the inside of the house (formerly respectively seaward and landward, the directions associated with outside and inside). The bottle(s) of palm gin and both betel-nut containers

plate	translation	paired with bowl	translation
<b>lamutule</b>	red brown plate	<b>nasabate</b>	?
<b>osea'e</b>	?	<b>'olo tlale</b>	medium tribute
<b>lamutubue</b>	?	<b>utela bui</b>	container of ?
<b>lala'we inai</b>	mother blood	<b>lala'we anai</b>	child blood
<b>Lamutu 'lisa</b>	?	<b>lasa butelu</b>	30,000
	?	<b>lasa butlua</b>	20,000
	?	<b>pia manu ului</b>	sago bird head
	?	<b>'olo Hitu</b>	Hitu tribute
<b>'olo blata</b>	Dutch tribute		
<b>lale mutule</b>	dry fly ?		
<b>naba (pnaba)</b>	?		

Floreay (Alunedic 94) also gives several plate names from Lohia (some in common, some different).

<sup>114</sup>Or '**a'e buini**; this is usually a small woven basket with two or more compartments and a lid.

stand on a table, the container of the woman's House on the side of the groom and their container on the side of the bride. The young couple sit apart, their eyes lowered. Elders lecture them on their respective duties. Nowadays the benediction of the Church is also requested. The *pendeta* blesses the groom and bride, the betel-nuts containers and the gin and pronounce the couple married.<sup>115</sup> The containers go around, on each side, followed by the gin which should be drunk from a small bamboo vessel (*onate*).<sup>116</sup> After this, the guests are divided between two tables, the elders toward the inside and the juniors toward the outside. Bride and groom eat and drink out of the same containers, as she now belongs to his House and its ancestors. Traditionally people should sit on mats laid on the ground, drink from bamboo *onate* and eat from banana leaves.<sup>117</sup> By eating together men and ancestors ratify the engagement. When all the food, drink and betel has been consumed the groom's side takes leave and the bride is accompanied to the groom's house by her relatives. The bride leaves behind all her maiden dresses. They will be shared between her sisters because her husband is to provide her with new dresses. The following day, she returns to her parent's house from which she brings back taro and/or rice (no meat), helped by the women of her parent's House.

### **Bua'e bina belini: to raise the woman's bridewealth**

In Manusa **bua'e bina belini**, 'to raise the bridewealth' and **rubu belini** or **seli belini**: 'to exchange the payments'<sup>118</sup> may (and often do) occur several generations after the death of the bride for whom it is paid. This is due to the fact that one should always fully pay the pending bridewealth of one's forefathers first: **lulu ana mena**, ('in the first place, the elder ones').<sup>119</sup> Otherwise wrathful ancestors might kill the children of the family who pay a new

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<sup>115</sup> 'Ai to 'wed' (also: 'and'), PAN: \*ga(m)pit : 'press together' (Collins 1980 p.67). The village headman said that this is also called **tala'awe** or **tala'wase** which he translated by *kasih kawin yang dua* ('to marry the two of them') probably referring to the record in the village register of marriage (Florey has **tala'ase**: 'paper').

<sup>116</sup>When a beverage is shared with the ancestors who witness an event, it should be served in an *onate*.

<sup>117</sup>Formerly, the food was served on a long row of banana leaves **ma'ane la'wai**: 'food place' primarily disposed as offerings to the ancestors. Most of the time the bridewealth had not been brought yet and therefore there were no plates to fill up with counter gifts of meat. This was also a way for the parents of the bride to remind their **wete bina** of their debt.

<sup>118</sup>Florey has: **'selie** 1) to pay 2) to exchange; to change (e.g. clothing), to renew' (Alunedic 94).

<sup>119</sup>In Lohia Florey has: **dala-'e-le**: 'to cut the top hand of bananas from a stalk. Metaphorical usage: to pay in succession; to complete payment of bridewealth for one's children in the order in which they married.' (Alunedic 94)

bridewealth while leaving previous debts unpaid. As older men explained, this is where the difficulties start. Some **belini** were very high. Ancient or modern, once its terms have been agreed upon by both parties, a bridewealth is fixed and immutable. When the antique plates and bowls were seized their value had to be equated in terms of what was available. Thus each unpaid antique plate of ancient bridewealth is now worth between four and eight white plates. One man said that the modern equivalent for the **belini** still due for the marriages of his father's father and father adds up to more than seven hundred white plates but, he added, it is not a matter of real worry because most men in the village are in the same situation. The figures make it impossible for the debt to be covered; adding another twelve plates to it seems minor.<sup>120</sup>

Usually, the family of the man waits until several children have been born before trying to raise the bridewealth of their mother. If it has not been 'fully paid' (**otu batane**), the bride's side has the right to ask for a fraction of the bridewealth at each new birth. In the past the birth of each child called for a new exchange and could be worth between 50 and 300 pairs of Chinese plates and their bowls, their type being specified by the progenitor. An elder commented that, in these circumstances, a man needed the help of his relatives all his life. Each time the '**wete bina** brought some antique plates and bowls (**sie ono belini**: 'they bring the bridewealth'), the **ina nubu** reciprocated with a banquet, which celebrated and witnessed 'the exchange of payments' (**seli belini**) with the ancestors.<sup>121</sup> By feeding (**sopa'e**) his 'female children' the progenitor re-enforced his commitment to maintain their prosperity (**sopa'e** means both to 'feed', and to 'swear an oath'). The bowls had to be filled with 'sago porridge' (**pia**) and the plates with **utan misete** ('good foodstuff').<sup>122</sup> For each plate they brought, the '**wete bina** could ask to have it filled with whatever food they wished as counter prestations. The **ina nubu** who could not provide their '**wete bina** with all the foodstuff loudly requested was mocked and shamed, particularly if they had asked for a large number of plates and bowls.<sup>123</sup> Sometimes, the groom was also asked to replace the plates that his

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<sup>120</sup>Newcomers or outsiders who start with no pending debt and do not return a woman have an advantage and should pay more, said an elder (see below: A modern way to climb the ladder).

<sup>121</sup>One elder said that it was also called **sie ono loliba**. Florey (alunedic 94) has **totliba**: 'bridewealth ceremony and wedding feast'.

<sup>122</sup>Opossum, wild pig, deer, bats, cassowary, chicken, and other birds, eggs, eels, river shrimps, frogs and other edible animals all are **utan misete**: 'good foodstuff' (sea fish comes from the outside and is called **i'ane**). All the vegetables enter in the category of **utan loini**: 'leafy foodstuff'.

<sup>123</sup>The requests for foodstuffs were not formulated directly, **lepa sou ela**, the ritual language, was used (it still is sometimes) during these meals of counter gifts. For example if a '**wete bina** wishes to request river 'shrimp' (**nisa**) he says he has no 'chili' (**misa**), for 'eel' (**muria**) one asks for 'amaranth' (**mlabute**) etc.

bride had broken when she was a child. The more difficult and demanding the bride's side had been, the more food they were asked for (and the more specific were the requests). Men guests sat with a bamboo beside them, filling it up with food and asking for more. However, said the elder, the progeny could not make exaggerated demands nor shame their progenitors, since having many children meant getting a lot of plates later.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, offended progenitors and their ancestors could take revenge and 'blow' (**mlelu**) over the woman a spell of sterility.<sup>125</sup> At these banquets, the '**wete bina** started eating first, followed by the guests of the **ina nubu**.

### **Subu lomai bei 'wele belene: to pull each other out of flooding water**

Since a prestation of plates is reciprocated by a prestation of meat, formerly when large bridewealth exchanges occurred, plates and meat were also commodities bartered for each other. The plates were sacred living objects but, as an elder explained, they also acted in practice as a form of superannuation fund. Each marriage mobilised both sides' networks of alliance. Plates went around, passing from 'female child' to 'mother granary'. On the other hand, the **ina nubu**, anxious to gather enough meat to feed their '**wete bina**, could receive it from their own progenitors against the promise of surrendering some of the plates they would receive. Those who gave plates compensated for their individual debt but also contributed to the **belini** of another marriage. They were invited to the banquet and received their counter prestations of meat. As soon as a man had obtained a bridewealth for his own daughter, he dispatched the plates again, returning those due or borrowed or supported someone else, who in turn became his creditor. As these exchanges of prestations helped initiate new alliances, they also strengthened the ancient network of obligations and solidarity. This reciprocity was called: **subu lomai bei 'wele belene**: 'to pull each other out of flooding water'. In that way, added the elder, the old men who had plates but could not hunt very well anymore, could still eat meat. Nowadays, he added, relatives still help each other in the same way with the white plates but not to such an extent as formerly because

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(Alune **lepa sou ela** is based on homophony and substitution). The progenitor must find the foodstuff requested or be ashamed.

<sup>124</sup>If a man has many daughters he is rich because he will get a lot of plates. If he has many sons he is rich as well because he increases the strength of his House'.

<sup>125</sup>Like saliva in other societies (cf. P. Graham 1991), **mlelu ele** to 'blow over it' is a form of blessing. Healers and progenitors use their breath to 'blow' away an affecting illness or an evil spirit or to give their blessing (see below). This powerful ancestral medium can, with the same efficiency, cast a spell. Its practice, prohibited by the church, has been replaced by prayers.

large banquets have been banned. When a man needs plates to marry his son, said this elder, he first goes asking in his own **luma** and from all his '**wete bina** in his own village, then eventually to more distant allies. Outstanding debts of plates are remembered and may still be claimed three generations afterwards. Once the prestations for her marriage have been exchanged a woman belongs to her husband's House. Should she attempt to leave, her House would have to pay a 'fine' (**dubu**) as compensation.

### **Rubu belini: 'to exchange prestations'**

The **rubu belini** (or **seli belini**) the 'exchange of prestations' I witnessed was by the relatives of a dead man from another village, Ulin, for Augustina, a Manusa woman who had also been dead for several years. Before they both died, they had a child Norce who remained with her mother's parents in Manusa. After the death of her father his relatives requested to adopt Norce, but her mother's bridewealth was still due.

In 1990, Ulin's relatives came to request the child, who was seven years old at the time. Norce's progenitors insisted that her mother's bridewealth be paid before the child could leave.<sup>126</sup> Having gathered the items, in July 1991, Ulin's relatives returned to Manusa. They ceremoniously walked through the village, men ahead, followed by the women carrying on their heads large baskets filled with the bridewealth items. They knocked at the door of their **ina nubu** (Augustina's brother), which opened after the third time. As in the request and wedding ceremonies, the man's side stood near the door, the woman's side toward the inside of the house and the witnesses along one of the side walls. The eldest representatives of the woman's side were two brothers of Augustina's mother, in charge of overseeing the unfolding of the ceremony. The village head acted as main witness **selue lu'ue beli** (**selue**: to 'see', **lu'ue**: to 'support', 'hold', **beli**: 'payment'). This is an official role that is part of his duties as elected representative, and for which he gets a piece of textile and/or some money.<sup>127</sup> The minister of the Church, who had also been invited to give his blessing, sat among the witnesses. On a table in front of them stood a bible, a glass of water, a bottle of palm gin and the betel-nuts containers of both the bride and groom's side (the last one wrapped in a cloth, for they were taking a child). On another table toward the inside of the house was laid the bridewealth.

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<sup>126</sup>The case of Norce was examined above in 'children of a widow'.

<sup>127</sup> In Lohia the prestation for the village head is called: **hliba 'amale**: 'bridewealth to the village head' (Florey . Alunedic 94).

First the witnesses on the bride's side examined and counted the items in loud voices: seven plus five plates and six plus five glasses in the baskets, five plates and glasses too many but only ten rather than twelve **lapune** (modern *kain*) wrapped in a cloth. After a short discussion the elders agreed that it was satisfactory. As they pronounced their agreement Norce, the little girl, began to cry. The deal had been sealed and it meant that she would be going away the same evening. The whole assembly wept and sobbed for her departure to show how she would be missed while the woman's side took the bridewealth to another room. Then the minister prayed for the soul of the departed parents and for the well being of Norce at the coast. He also blessed some water that she would later drink.<sup>128</sup> During the minister's speech, the betel-nuts containers of both Houses were exchanged and circulated. The bottle of palm gin also went around, each of the participants drinking a little of its blessed content in a shared **onate** goblet. The ingredients of the betel quid taken from each other's containers and the gin drunk from the same container witnessed and sealed the agreement between all the participants, and the traditional form in which they were circulated assured ancestral approval.

Afterwards, the guests proceeded to the back room where two tables were laid side by side with covered plates and bowls of meat, taro and sago porridge. One table was the **mejare a mena** ('table in the front') where the guests of honour sat: the elders of the man's side (the progeny), headed by the eldest man of the woman's side (the progenitors). The other table was the **mejare muli** ('table in the back') around which sat the younger, female, and lesser guests, both sides mixed.<sup>129</sup> The 'table in the front' and 'table in the back' do not only refer to their spatial situation in the house but also to the precedence of the guests who sit around them. Puns, jokes, songs and stories accompanied the meal. It lasted several hours, food and gin being abundantly served. While at the 'table in the front' the elders were conversing and pleasantly competing in singing 'quatrains' (**patate**) or telling mottos, the 'table in the back' was unusually noisy (younger and lesser people are expected to be quiet and subdued). Displaying the expected arrogance of the man's side while their elders maintained a restrained attitude, the younger men were taking the opportunity to show their own talents in

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<sup>128</sup>Water blessed by the prayer of a respected elder (in this case the *pendeta*) is also a Christian substitute for the **mlelu ele** ('blow on it'). In the past, this protecting/blessing ritual would have been carried out by the village ritual performer (to whose House Norce's mother belonged).

<sup>129</sup>As in wedding ceremonies, in the past no tables (**meja** is a Malay word) were used. By blending together under the supervision of the women, the junior members of both sides can sort out who is, or is not, a potential spouse.

the art of rhetoric.<sup>130</sup> After the meal, guests and hosts returned to the front room where they chewed betel quids and smoked together. Meanwhile, in the rear of the house, the baskets brought by the man's side were filled with dry meat by their progenitors. Taking back their betel-nuts container the **'wete bina** ceremoniously greeted their **ina nubu** and left with Norce and the counter gifts. The little girl took no luggage. Now that she had changed **nuru**, like the bride (her mother) to which she had been equated, it was the duty of her father's family to provide her with everything she would need.

### **A modern way to climb the ladder**

In the following case several procedures were combined into one. It was, said an elder, a 'modern' marriage. It was, however, also regarded as a prohibited alliance in the 'tradition' (**atate**). This situation probably incited the elders to modify the usual procedure. However, I have not witnessed a **mise** 'proper' procedure so I can not compare the two. In this case the different stages of the procedure were condensed into one, the **'wete bina** 'climbing' at one time all the rungs of the 'ladder' of its **ina nubu**.<sup>131</sup>

The groom, Obadia, was a young Wemale teacher; the bride a young maiden from a rich and respected family. The teacher, who lived alone, had been seen with several women of the village and the elders decided that it was time to regularise this situation. The father of the girl, who was among the elders, was eager to marry her to a public servant. The village head, whose House was a progenitor of the bride's side, acted as intermediary to the teacher, whom he had more or less adopted when he had arrived in the village a few months earlier. Once the teacher agreed to the idea, everybody seemed in a hurry to get on with it, and the three traditional steps were condensed in one.

There was no **sa elane** (coming three times to request the bride). The bride was requested and the bridewealth negotiated in one session, and the bride went to live with the teacher the same evening.<sup>132</sup> As **tauli uwei** of the bride, the progenitors of the bride's father arbitrated and witnessed the negotiations with the new **'wete bina**. In this case, the bridegroom being

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<sup>130</sup>An ability as an orator is a highly respected and valued skill, indispensable for a man to establish himself in village politics.

<sup>131</sup>In Lohia, Florey proposes **Anamele** 'wedding feast' which 'traditionally occurs when bridewealth has been paid and all arrangements concluded.' (Alunedic 94) This may indicate a similar practice (or very wealthy villagers).

<sup>132</sup>This marriage and its negotiation were infringing upon tradition, and the transfer of the bride was discreetly carried out during the night.



an outsider, his representatives were the school headmaster and the other teachers (one of them being also a 'wete bina of the progenitor of the bride), and the ancient *raja* (a *raja* deals with communication with the outside). Acting as representatives of the whole community, the Church elders (modern equivalent of the *sanili*, the council of village elders), the lord of the land (a progenitor of the *ina nubu*), and the village head also witnessed the negotiation of the alliance.

The woman's side stood toward the inside of the house and the man's side near the outside door. In between them, in front of a table, sat the village head as arbiter. The groom was present, sitting silently among his representatives.<sup>133</sup> The young woman was hiding in the kitchen with her friends and the other women of the House. At the beginning only men were visible in the front room. It was important that the ancestors did not know that the groom was a person from Wemale. Thus the representatives of the groom stood up exposing their request in *lepa sou ela*, men's metaphorical language. Here, they said, was a 'dog' *asu*, (dogs, pigs and men can change into each other in the forest) which had come a long way from the other side of the mountain (Wemale territory). The dialogue went on for a while, each side showing its agility in the use of traditional speech to the great enjoyment of the audience, while the groom kept still, eyes down. By the time they started to talk about the bridewealth itself, half of the village was witnessing the elders' performance. The groom's side argued that, as a teacher, the man was already part of the village and it would be excessive to request the usual double bridewealth. They settled mid-way, and it was agreed that, because the groom's family was so far away, they would bring the goods when the wedding itself would be celebrated a few months later. The agreement covered also the groom's contribution for the wedding banquet, mainly rice because teachers receive a monthly allowance as part of their salary.<sup>134</sup> Coming from the Wemale region where no bridewealth is paid, Obadia started with no pending debt, and his representatives could proudly proclaim that he would pay the woman's bridewealth within the year, even though in his case the bridewealth was slightly higher than usual.

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<sup>133</sup>This is unusual; normally a young man does not take part in any of the negotiations. As a teacher, Obadia was regarded as a mature man and he had no local relative to defend his interests. However he remained silent during the whole procedure.

<sup>134</sup>In Manusa rice is regarded as a prestigious food because no one grows it anymore and it has to be bought at the coast and brought on men shoulders for a distance of 60 km.

## RESIDENCE

In the Alune marriage practice, residence is relevant at two levels. Although it is more a logical practice than a rule *per se*, when the Houses of two **nuru** have contiguous land (e.g.: in Manusa: Neyte and Souhaly, etc.), or when one received land from the other (e.g.: Maslebu from Matital) they tend to intermarry more frequently than if they live far apart. Similarly, the **nuru** which have land near a boundary also exchange women with neighbouring villages (e.g. Maslebu and Ruspanah exchange brides with Riring and Lohia).

Second, the outcome of previous relations is visible in the present settlement.<sup>135</sup> If a House requests a second woman from another House it is better that she belongs to a different line than the previous bride.<sup>136</sup> In the past she would also have resided in another hamlet, marking further the distance between her and the woman given before her (in former or in the same generation). Since almost the whole Alune population lives in modern settlements it is seldom the case now. However, in these new settlements, relatives tend to settle close to each other if the space available allows it. As a line renews its alliances, brides are requested from the lines of affines who have themselves clustered at a little distance. Thus, on a smaller scale, the tradition is still partially preserved, and new settlements consist in fact of clusters of related households.<sup>137</sup> Keeping the extended family together facilitates daily exchanges and the support network which traditionally exists between related households.

Residence has further consequences. If non-Alune wish to reside permanently in Manusa and be integrated in the community, they are expected to conform to local traditions, and this includes matrimonial matters. Thus when some Wemale Houses joined the community several generations ago, not only did they switch from the Wemale to the Alune language but, exchanging women with Manusa, they switched from genitrix to genitor lines and from uxorilocality to virilocality. As a result they forsook the very distinctions which mark

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<sup>135</sup>The pattern of settlement of the people of Manusa has changed several times since 1915 (see Appendix 1).

<sup>136</sup>A House may appear greedy coming to 'eat twice' ('**ane lua**) at the same source. It also ensures that the brides are **nanu pene** 'far enough'.

<sup>137</sup>For example the networks of Neyte-Ruspanah-Nyak; Matital-Kapitan; Matital-Matoke; Matoke-Neyte or Maslebu-Souhaly-Neyte.

identity between Alune and Wemale. What brought about the change was a change in residence.<sup>138</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The affiliation to the genitor line is the norm among Alune, even if an occasional practice of affiliation to the genitrix line is tolerated to assure the perpetuation of a House.<sup>139</sup> The membership of the paternal (genitor) group, and the **dulu bei** derivation from the maternal **tauli uwei**, are distinct and serve different purposes. Both are indispensable in the life of an individual. The first, more associated with the male aspect, has to do with a person's name, land, assets, social position and associated knowledge. The other, more feminine, has to do with ego's reproduction, nutrition, health and fecundity. Without establishing these relationships a person can not participate in the exchanges and therefore not reproduce.<sup>140</sup> Both the name (from the father's **nuru**) and the source (from the mother's **nuru**) are examined to decide if the right distance has been achieved between two persons before they can marry.

Metaphorical language (**lepa sou ela**) is the required mode of speech to request a bride. As a cutting of taro 'cut' like a human 'head' and transplanted in the groom's garden, the bride offers the potential to be returned as a 'seed' at a later generation. Renewing exchanges between Houses 'sharpens the machete on both sides'. The representation of a woman as a plant is widespread in the region, but in Manusa the young bride is also portrayed as a trophy head. Alliances were precarious and head hunting was previously a regular practice in 'Wele Telu. Houses consolidate when their lines keep the paths between them open, return 'seed' women and circulate prestations, instead of taking heads from each other.

As they flow jointly through the body, red and white blood carry life. Accumulated in the woman's womb the blood of a man and then a woman produce a child. The blood dripping from the head planted under the main pole of the ritual house flows through this pole and

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<sup>138</sup>Frequently the second generation of migrants in a country feel very much citizens of that country, if not more strongly so than the natives. So do these former Wemale in Manusa. Involved in every village event, they ostensibly conform to the models set out in the narrative of the **hena**.

<sup>139</sup>Genitrix lines (**luma bina**), which are issued from a potentially ambiguous form of affiliation that merges the positions of genitor and progenitor, have only a temporary status.

<sup>140</sup>Although they present a certain amount of constraint, these links on both genitor and progenitor sides provide the individual with the security of an extended network of support and strategic connections in time of need. This network potentially extends to other bearers of the same name and source in the region.

turns it into a living tree that supports the building more strongly than ordinary poles which are prone to decay. Blood carries the flow of life through the body. The head, said an informant, represents the whole body.<sup>141</sup> Groups obtain this precious 'commodity' by the way of alliances, exchanging prestations and securing wives from these relationships. In the past, this commodity could also be extracted from one another by the capture of trophies. A man could seek renown by being a great head-hunter or by securing a prestigious alliance; usually the first would procure the second.<sup>142</sup>

Plates and cured meat are symbolic objects which are enlivened by ritual action. This is stated simply by the people themselves: meat is offered on plates when a request is brought to the **upu** Lanite Tapele (the Sky-Earth principle) and the ancestors. Being 'fed' a little, the ancestors will return plenty. This is called **nebu** to 'fecundate' or '**oti**, to 'call', to 'beseech'. If these same objects did not circulate between partners to consecrate a relationship of alliance (or an adoption), the marriage would bear no children. When they enter the sacred space of the exchanges, the plates, even new white ones, become heirlooms. They bear witness to the time in which they were distributed to mankind by great ancestors. These sacred objects are employed to sustain the communication with the world where great ancestors and those of a man's House dwell. They act as compensation for a human head and have the power to bear witness to people's actions. Heirlooms are also the prestation to the progenitor who reciprocates, feeding the progeny with meat and dispensing fecundating blessings.

Meat is 'good food' (**utan misete**) compared to other foods which are all labelled 'leafy food' (**utan loini**). One type of food is exclusively the product of the forest, the other mainly extracted from gardens and orchards. The 'good food' is primarily animal rather than vegetal. In the forest, animals and mankind enter in relationships which are different from those of the House and the gardens. While man can intervene in the reproduction of the gardens, the abundance of animals in the forest depends exclusively on the benevolence of Lanite the Sky, the world of plenty where dwell the ancestors. When they are properly honoured and fed, these **upu**, the 'grandfathers' bestow 'a little' of their abundance on their grandchildren. These, in turn, celebrate, eat meat together, and ask for more, explained the informant.

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<sup>141</sup>It also does in the Siwa Lima system. How severed heads come to be seen as embodying some form of vitality, and the connection between violence and fecundity is a sacred matter among Alune. Its symbolic and ritual elaboration is not spoken of lightly if at all.

<sup>142</sup>J. Hoskins notes a similar idea in East Sumba where 'the blessing of fecundity, which is supposed to be given willingly by the bride's family to her husband's fields and children, can also be extracted violently by the taking of heads.'(1996 p.237).

When plates are presented, the 'granary mother' 'fills up' the containers of their 'female child' with counter prestations of meat. Progenitors 'feed' and 'fecundate', a ritual duty that can be seen as parallel to that of the ancestors. However, once the amount and type of items has been fixed, and the terms of these exchanges established, there is no need to honour the contract immediately. Plates are brought to the progenitor 'to express thanks and to ask for more' (when a child has been born, when some fecundating blessing is needed, and/or when plates have been received from another partner of exchange).

Celebrations often have complex content and meaning. In Manusa, preparing a celebration is not regarded as a small task and ought to be motivated by a certain purpose to obtain the collaboration of its participants. In the past, hunters reserved specific cuts of the game, the share of the ancestors, in an heirloom plate stored in the hearth house (**luma botoi**).<sup>143</sup> When many offerings had accumulated the group celebrated this abundance, eating together these 'leftovers' from the ancestors' plates. Eating together on consecrated occasions, the group reactivates its relationship and sustains the exchanges with the ancestral world. The ancestors who are invited to participate are guests of honour and they eat first. Men, who come afterward, receive only their leftovers. One should never boast about an abundance of food; by the time people eat together the food prepared for celebrations, it is only the tasteless small leftovers of the ancestors. Ancestors multiply the game in the forest for their children, men return its essence and beseech for a renewed fecundating action.<sup>144</sup> In narratives, all important events or decisions by the ancestors is marked with a celebration of food. Celebrations are also organised to seal or renew a commitment between participants. 'When an agreement is reached, we eat together'. The food, left behind by the ancestors, binds to their oath the participants who consume it.

Celebrations are also organised for special requests, for example, to obtain the well being of a household member. This is called '**oti** (to 'call', to 'request'). During one such ceremony I witnessed, the food was laid on the table and the elders stood around it, among them the midwife of the child for whom it was organised. The head of the household invoked the Lord in Christian prayers, mentioned briefly the **upu**, and stated the request. An elder of the Church added a prayer. Afterwards, the participants sat and ate together. The food brings blessings upon those who consume it. On another occasion the community held a large

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<sup>143</sup>As the meat is cured on the 'hearth shelf' ('**webute**'), its 'essence' (**weini**) is carried with the smoke to the ancestors who consume it.

<sup>144</sup>What is the 'essence' consumed by the ancestors and how their fecundating action operates require further investigation.

celebration for the visit of a guest who had brought a gift to the village.<sup>145</sup> The whole village was buzzing with activity for the next three days. Some men went to the forest to hunt and cure game, others prepared the setting. Taro and cassava roots were gathered from the gardens and children were sent to harvest leafy vegetables. The morning of the celebration, some young men killed the pig, and the assistant of the ritual performer carved and cut the meat into small pieces. Portions of these cuts were taken by women and part of the meat reappeared, cooked, several hours later. Equal portions of taro, leafy vegetable, and one or two cubes of meat, were distributed in dozens of small individual leaf platters, one for each villager, and laid on a long table in the *baileo*. The authorities of the village, the minister and the Church elders gathered behind the table. Their speeches celebrated the day, the guest and hosts, and clearly stated the other needs still waiting to be fulfilled. The whole community prayed, and the minister blessed the food which was distributed and rapidly eaten. After more speeches came time to sing and dance. Late in the night, three aged ladies were ushered in by the young men and cajoled into the idea of leading a **maro**. The **maro maro** is danced by both Alune and Wemale. People form a circle, their arms crossed behind each other's backs and loudly stamp the ground in a slow, circular motion while singing. We do it to 'fecundate' (**nebu**) said one of the elderly participants.<sup>146</sup>

These concepts belong to, and order, a complex vision of the world. What outsiders (**tamata ma'ete**: 'other people') can know and understand of these 'laws' with a superficial 'reading' of the Alune rituals and, in my case, only a limited understanding of the sacred language, is restricted to 'snap shots'.<sup>147</sup> 'People look for the hunter on the path but he is in the tree' my first Alune informant once said. I suggest that '**oti** to 'call', to 'request', or **nebu** to 'fecundate', which are part of both large or small rituals that involve an offering and consumption of food, are celebrations that sustain a relationship of exchange between men and their ancestors. I also suggest that a comparable form of relationship exists between progeny and their progenitors. These ritual celebrations of food keep the blessings flowing from the world of the Sky to the world of the Earth.

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<sup>145</sup>The visitor came at a good time. The village and nearby gardens were being visited by a wild pig which had been 'adopted' and semi-domesticated by one of the hunters, and people started to mutter that it was time to eat it before it did further damage. The visitor was made aware that if someone could buy the pig a feast could be organised.

<sup>146</sup>Dancing the **maro maro** also imitates the sound of thunder, a manifestation of the fecundating action of the Sky on the Earth.

<sup>147</sup>I filmed some of these rituals. These images await further study.



## Chapter Nine

### CONCLUSION

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In the first part of this thesis I have been concerned in establishing the historical antecedents of the region. I have presented both the outsiders' point of view, which can be gained from the examination of archival documents, and the local perception of this historical process. This double approach has revealed a situation more complex than previously described. The 'disorderly' proliferation of unstable and antagonistic domains had a dynamic of its own. Social life was indeed, between and within groups, a continuous process of 'partition', 'distribution' and 'bifurcation', the local perception of which is given in the narrative of Manusa. Head hunting raids and warfare were frequent between groups, and alliances often unstable, even those secured by marriage and **pela** brotherhood. However the riverine societies of 'Wele Telu' professed also an ideology of unity arising from a single base/origin (**uwej**) that encompassed this diversity.

Along the valleys, one level of unity was realised by the aggregation of segments of named groups in domains. Long before colonisation, some of these mountain domains, for example Buria, had assembled a population of several hundred households in fortified villages and were intensive dry paddy agriculturists. Others, further inland, like Manusa, consisted of smaller communities scattered in hamlets of a few households, united around one shrine. Their subsistence was more oriented toward the forest, although they also cultivated rice.<sup>1</sup>

Along the coasts down from each valley, large settlements of mixed population were controlled by Muslim rulers allied to Ternate. Eti in the Eti valley, Kairatu in the Tala, and Lissabata in the Sapalewa were such coastal centres in the nineteenth century. Through wealth, influence and politics, their leaders nominally controlled each valley (**batai**), heading large assemblies (**nili**) of the representatives of each riverine domain. Large celebrations opened and closed these assemblies and tribute was possibly levied. A close examination of

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<sup>1</sup>In Manusa, an early group of settlers, the lord of the land, established a ritual centre and the positions of ritual performer, ruler, warlord and other duties were created/distributed among the groups that acknowledged this centre.



the ancient records of these assemblies and the depiction of knowledgeable elders point to several symbolic elaborations associated with a river **batai**. These assemblies and the display of the leaders' valour constituted a unifying force between members of the federation. A greeting and a sitting precedence ordered these large assemblies. The coastal ruler sat first (**a mena**) at the base (**uwei**) of a ritually felled tree. Along the trunk (**batai**), 'behind' him (**a muli**), in ordered lower positions, sat the representatives of the riverine domains which acknowledged his realm. As they sat and debated, the coastal and mountain leaders were represented forming together the single trunk of their river tree. The centre of power of the **batai** had its base (**uwei**) at the coast and its ramifications in the mountains. Larger ceremonial assemblies were also held at federative level. They convened the warlords, leaders and ritual performers of all the domains which were members of the **Kakehan**. The male brotherhood demanded of its initiates a vow of secrecy in regard to their belief, their initiation rituals and head hunting practices. Infringement led to dishonourable death. This knowledge, which elders say 'pertains to Nunusaku', had its symbolic centre in the mountains among the black Siwa; the white Siwa being the populations at its coastal periphery.<sup>2</sup> There were thus different centres/peripheries and this polarity organised precedence at distinct levels in 'Wele Telu. Yet, internal segmentation, instability and warfare did not hinder the notion of cultural unity which is still present today. People express this as: 'we belong to Nunusaku'. This statement is the banner of a blurry reality. Nevertheless, Nunusaku, possibly served by its inaccessibility and polysemic nature, still endures as a meaningful regional symbol.<sup>3</sup>

This symbol is even more potent as it reappears in the representation of the origin of (named) groups. From an initial base/core **uwei**, the **nuru** expand their Houses in a domain and at its periphery. Large **nuru** send branches (**sanai**) reaching into distant groups where they enter into relationships of exchange, assimilate and sometimes rule. Manusa presents such an example of social practice. At the turn of the century, the lord of the land, Tauli Ela (the Great Progenitor), was also ruler of the community. In 1992, the largest and leading **nuru** of the domain was of Wemale origin.<sup>4</sup> The reciprocity and repetition of alliances promote the assimilation of newcomers and followers within the social fabric of the

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<sup>2</sup>However its supreme leaders were coastal dignitaries.

<sup>3</sup>The idea of sharing a common origin under the symbolic realm of a cosmic banyan is a recurrent theme on the island (and beyond).

<sup>4</sup>From the newly created position of peace maker (negotiator of the treaty with Japio) this Wemale group acceded to a ruling position in Manusa. Yet the general opinion was that they had abided by Alune tradition. They certainly did so in terms of alliance, residence and politics.

domains. It also compensates the fragmental tendency of groups. Groups, said my first Alune informant in Ambon, small or large, all abide by the law of **heka/leka**, 'diversification/unity'.<sup>5</sup> This expression was not known in the mountains, but the principle was at play. This, in other terms, recalls what McWilliam depicts in Timor as a 'dynamic ferment in which political communities struggled with two equally compelling forces of integration into larger federations and dispersal into multiple semi-autonomous entities'.<sup>6</sup>

In 'Wele Telu, some fragmentations and departures were caused by warfare or dispute but others were commemorated as expansionist migrations to new territories. The celebrations and sacrifice of pigs, mentioned in the narratives of Manusa at each bifurcation of the group, was a ceremonial which had its parallel among the Wemale.<sup>7</sup> As a group loosens the ties with its initial base to establish a new domain or to integrate into an existing one, a common name is retained and narratives are updated.

When Alune units integrate into a domain, they tend to affix their topogenies onto the narrative of the domain's foundation. Those who do so, acknowledge the precedence of the domain's origin and associate their unit to its renown. In the mythical time of Manusa, a social order was established but no dynasty was founded nor any social stratification created, and the integrity/totality of the land of the **hena** was undivided. However, the groups which are regarded as its founding fathers (**hena upui**), hold prerogatives, rituals or honorific positions which in practice give them precedence over those who came after (**ana mulini**) and achieved a lesser status. These earlier or better established settlers also claim custody over a larger share of the land of the **hena**. Thus, although not supported by an ideology which tends to promote equality, a relative disparity is achieved in practice. However the position of **hena upui** can only be maintained by a group with sufficient members and some political influence. As groups become extinct, strong **ana mulini** arise to replace them as **hena upui**.

Narratives sanction these social practices. They also support the dialectic of precedence which articulates the interactions between groups. Huaulu, writes Valeri, 'is historically and socially connected with certain people considered as either its *brothers* or its *children* (that

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<sup>5</sup>This law, he added, pertained to the ancient knowledge of which Nunusaku was the symbol. It was also aligned to the national motto 'One in Diversity'.

<sup>6</sup> McWilliam A. 1996 p.129.

<sup>7</sup>Jensen describes a celebration called *matunu babo* 'we roast the pig', *masama jamane* 'we divide the village'. 'This ceremony', writes the author, 'is organised in order to distribute between the groups, shrines, powers, rights and duties, the territory and the names' (1948 pp.189-91).

is equals or subordinates)<sup>8</sup>. For Manusa, Huaulu is a 'female child' ('wete bina), that is, in a position of progeny. The hena is a mena 'first' (i.e. at the beginning of things); Huaulu, at the distant Lima periphery, stands as a derivation and/or a potential partner of exchange. Japio, the neighbour with whom Manusa shares an historic past recorded in several narratives, and with whom a peace treaty was finally reached, is a pela 'brother'.<sup>9</sup> Eti, the coastal vassal of Ternate, is ana mena Manusa's 'elder brother'. In 'Wele Telu, relations are expressed in the terminology of kinship and alliance. Precedence is accordingly acknowledged.

Within a **nuru**, an internal order of precedence is sometimes marked between its 'branches', (**sanai**) using asymmetric categories like elder/younger, core/tip and first born/last born. However **nuru** have no overarching internal structure of authority. It is within the domain where they are established that an internal precedence is set between the Houses of a **nuru**. It is based on the criterion of earlier establishment but only differentiates between first/later arrival. This translates into a relationship of 'mother' (**luma inai**) and 'branch' House (**luma sanai**). The first settler is the **luma inai**, and all the later settlers of that **nuru**, who do not merge in the mother House, are **luma sanai**. Since each House has a separate claim on land and none has an overarching authority over the others, the position of 'mother House' provides little benefit in daily practice. However the prestige associated with precedence in time and space is highly valued by Alune and the object of fierce competition. Thus, the Houses of one name in a domain establish their own renown and eventually supplant or replace one another. Lines similarly compete for renown within their Houses.

These lines also enter into relationships of alliance with the Houses of other **nuru**. The asymmetric relationship created by a marriage between two lines is reversible. In practice it is continuously challenged by the principle of reciprocity expressed by the metaphor **sari e le lim tina, le lim tina**, to 'sharpen the machete on both sides'. Although a House will attempt to establish itself as another's **tauli uwei** 'source progenitor', with precedence over its progeny, these progeny in turn, will attempt to return brides to the same House (or in the same **nuru**), thus consolidating and expanding a relationship of exchange, as well as challenging the previous order of precedence. Although at an individual level the line of a

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<sup>8</sup>Valeri 1996 p.205. Huaulu is a small group (168 members) of forest agriculturists who live in Central Seram close to the Siwalima border in the Lima moiety. Their actual mode of settlement presents some similitudes with Manusa's at the turn of the century. 'There is one main settlement and several minor ones but the population often scatters on their lineage land for shorter or longer periods'. (1996 p.202).

<sup>9</sup>**Pela** partnership is a relationship of strict equality; marriage alliance, that creates asymmetric relationship between the partners, is prohibited.

'female child' remains indebted to the line of its 'mother granary' for two generations, alternating and reversing the directions of the exchange eventually diffuses the asymmetric status of progenitor/progeny at the level of the exchanging Houses.

Initiating an alliance metaphorically transforms a potential head hunter into the farmer next door who requests a cutting, and may one day return a seedling. 'Fecundated' by the progenitors' ancestors, a marriage and the exchange it initiates or renews produces for both partners fruitful results in the form of children and precious heirlooms, some of which were invaluable. In the past the circulation of women made Houses the partners of sumptuous exchanges accompanied by large celebrations. However, close to the paths opened between houses by their returning brides, were also hiding head-hunter warriors.<sup>10</sup>

Before attempting to examine the Alune society in a wider eastern Indonesian comparative perspective, some features in Seram, which could prove specifically Moluccan, require further investigation. 'The fragmentation of the population', writes Valeri about Central Seram, 'contributes to explaining the extreme cultural and linguistic diversity of this area'.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, in 'Wele Telu one can only very cautiously extrapolate from one domain to the whole society, in quest of 'the' Alune identity. Indeed, the data resists such a treatment since each domain is largely a society in itself. In this thesis, I have considered 'Wele Telu as a whole but my attention has focused essentially on Hena Manusa. However, this initially detailed account may now provide some comparative material for cautious examination.

I have tried to show how in 'Wele Telu, narratives are a record of the groups' origin and the chronicle of all matters of renown in which they take pride. Narratives authenticate the rights, precedence and duties of domains and groups. They are models of social behaviour and of relations to the environment, a living register of the intricate network of relations among groups. Most anthropologists who have worked in Seram, Jensen in 1937-38 and Grzimek in 1991 among the Wemale, or Valeri and Ellen in central Seram (see bibliography), and myself among the Alune, have all been confronted with the peculiar forms in which knowledge is transmitted in the Seramese society we study. One is drawn to investigate the complex corpus of signs, symbols, marks and 'symptoms' (in Alune: **sou i'ine**

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<sup>10</sup>Today exchanges are less dangerous but also less prestigious. Some elders associate the disappearance of the heirlooms to the eradication of head hunting. Both now belong to a past era of heroic deeds and mighty warriors (like Siu Totole whose House ruled Manusa in 1933-35 and in 1969-78).

<sup>11</sup>Valeri V.1996 p.202.

'traces', 'hints') through which knowledge is transmitted. A large and rich corpus of oral tradition still awaits further exploration in 'Wele Telu. However,

An oral historical tradition...is more than a reflection on the past. It is an image of a people expressed and projected in time.<sup>12</sup>

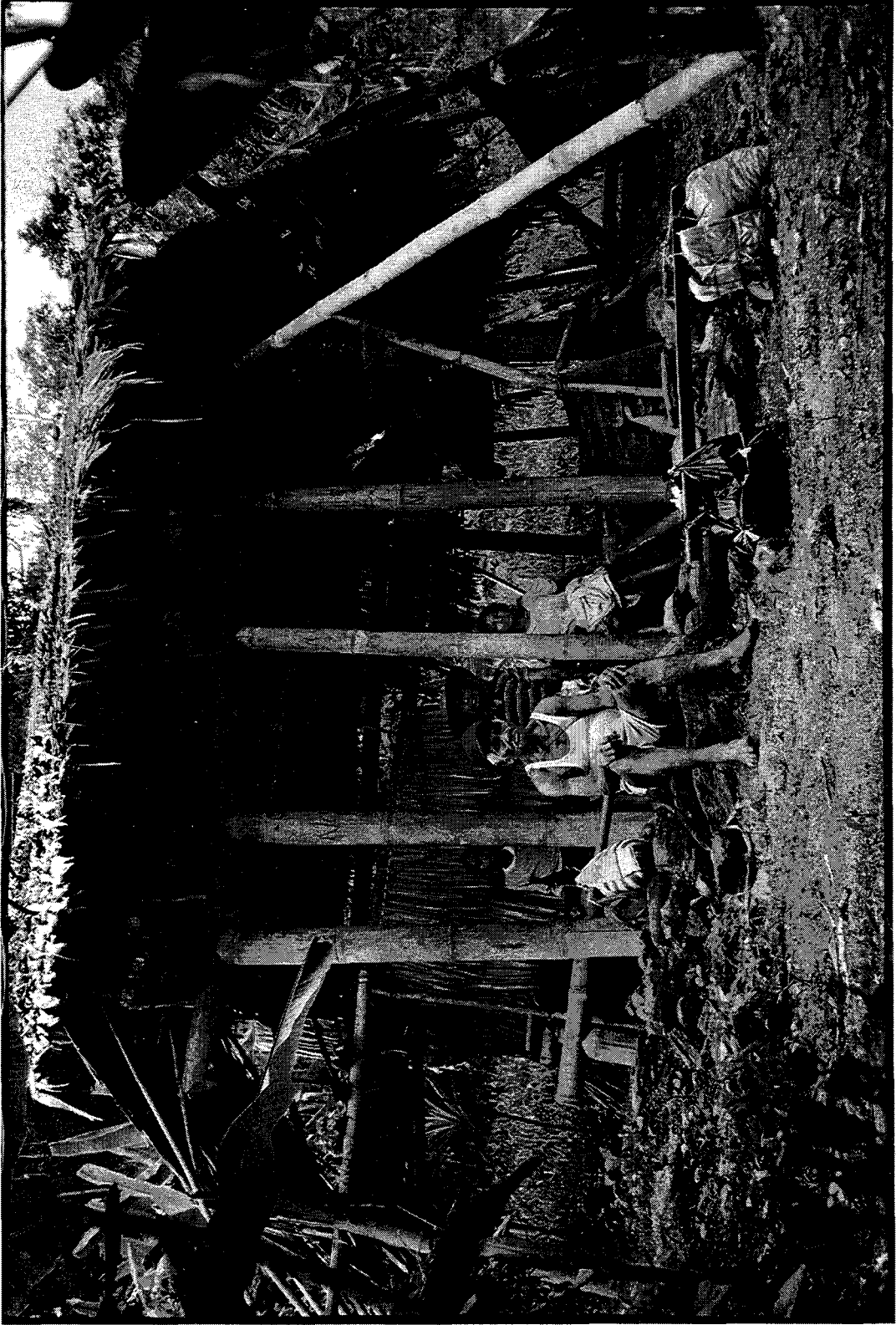
In Alune, *sou*, 'that which is spoken', 'history', belongs to ancestry, a topic from which outsiders (non-Alune speakers) are largely precluded. Among Alune themselves, the topic is rarely recalled and mainly in metaphors and euphemisms, by 'turning the language around' (*isa sou*). Speaking the 'great/meaningful language' (*lepa sou ela*) enlivens the power of this ancestral historic time. Elders do not talk openly about meaningful topics, rather, they leave, in names and places, *sou i'ine*: 'hints', 'clues', 'signs', 'indications', for listeners to seek.<sup>13</sup>

The whole (as yet largely unstudied) island of Seram is undergoing rapid transformation, which is causing its populations to drift away from their traditional practices. In the current process of their assimilation to the state ideology of 'modernity', the Seramese societies are left struggling to incorporate the dialectic of progress within their traditional vision of the world. In comparative geographic isolation, at the periphery of the regional centres of modernity, Manusa has maintained a vision of itself as a centre. Continued custody of the land of the domain by the ancient settlers is anchored in a living body of narratives in which newcomers are incorporated once they have settled in as affines. Those who accumulate prestige or wealth enter into strategic alliances and village politics. In this small and largely endogamous domain, the entire community is involved in a complex network of exchanges and reciprocity. Its relative self reliance in terms of both land custody and peace time partnership of exchange favours stability. It contributes to maintaining the domain's unity and its sense of identity while, at its periphery, the state becomes more and more intrusive.

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<sup>12</sup>Fox 1979 p.10.

<sup>13</sup>Huaulu historical narratives, notes Valeri, 'are kept secret from all outsiders' and 'are handed down only parsimoniously from seniors to juniors, because giving them means losing the power that goes with their possession. Moreover secrecy endows that knowledge with an aura that increases its value.' (1996 p.203). The pioneering research conducted in Seram by Valeri about Huaulu genres of knowledge and ideas about it, has opened comparative perspectives that will allow the identification of some systematic relationships and basic recurrent regional patterns.



22 A post house on the way to Riring





23 Traditional house on poles: Front view



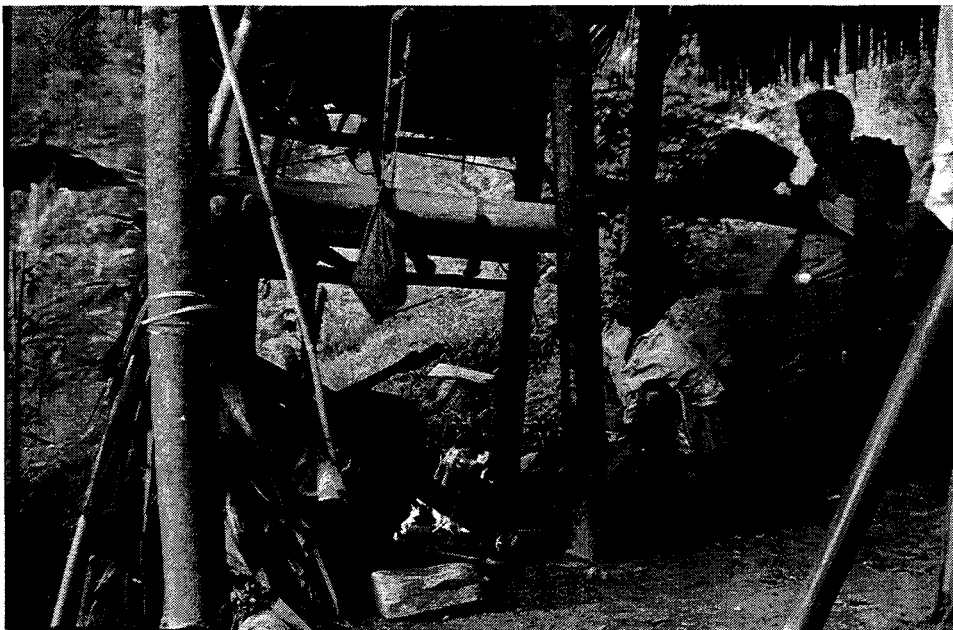
24 Side view







25 Village house and its rear kitchen

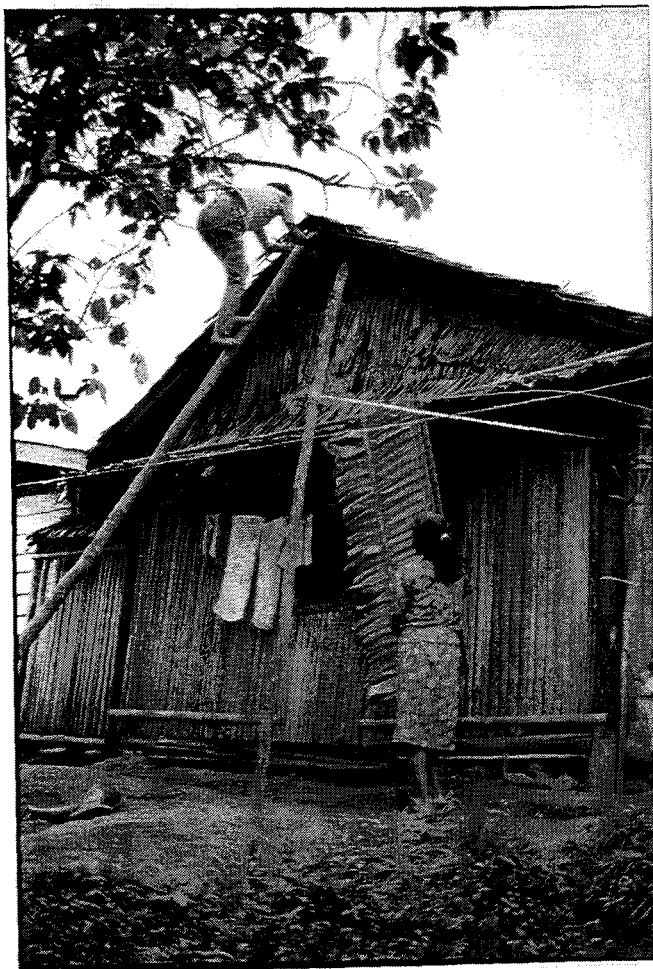


26 Garden shelter and open hearth





27 Putting a female thatch on the ridge of the roof



28 Renewing a male thatch over the opening of the kitchen roof



## Appendix One

### THE SUCCESSIVE SETTLEMENTS OF MA'SAMANUEY'S PEOPLE

#### INTRODUCTION

The specifics of the successive forms of settlement of **hena** Manusa is an example of a pattern of change that has affected the highland area of West Seram since the beginning of this century. As far as I know it has not yet been systematically described in the ethnography of that region.<sup>1</sup> My purpose is to put together the records I found in archives with the accounts of older villagers who lived or where born in the different settlements of the domain in order to complete the brief outline of Manusa's history written by Elias Neyte.<sup>2</sup>

#### **The question of fixed settlement.**

The Alune fortified mountain villages, erected on easily defensible hills, have all disappeared. Several villages have remained on or near their ancient location but their enclosures have vanished. Usually, these larger settlements consisted of a main lane running along the saddle of the hill lined by houses on poles and their granaries, and surrounded by thick bushes of prickly bamboo with one narrow entrance. Each sizable settlement had a central open space partly occupied by a communal meeting house.

Archive documents are not very helpful to find out if—and if so, for how long—the Alune of the mountain region of Western Seram in general and of **hena** Manusa especially, lived in fixed settlements before the beginning of this century. People themselves do not recall their ancestors' lifestyle further than their own parents or parent's parents. These, they said, lived

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<sup>1</sup>Roy Ellen (1978) gives an overview of the situation for the Naulu of central Seram.

<sup>2</sup>Elias was the acting head (**ntua ba'ele** in B.I: *wakil*) of the village between 1989 and 1994. He allowed me to read his account during the first week of my stay, but not to copy it, and declined afterward to take it out of his locked cupboard. It is a controversial document since not all the villagers agree with his vision of the **hena** history.

more scattered on their land than their descendants do. The population of an Alune mountain village now ranges from 200 to 600 inhabitants. In 1991, only a couple of Alune settlements had less than 200 inhabitants and Buria, the largest one, comprised more than 750 inhabitants, (compared to about 400 in the early 1920s). Although some mountain communities claim great ancientness, the situation prior to the late 19th century is basically unknown. Van Wouden writes, quoting Tauern (1918 p.127), that 'it has long been customary in western Seram to live together in villages'.<sup>3</sup> However Tauern relied essentially on coastal hearsay, which was not always accurate. According to Van Rees,<sup>4</sup> one of the larger Alune fortified mountain villages in 1860 was Buria where more than one hundred houses on poles and their rice granaries stood around a large ceremonial house, surrounded by an enclosure of thorny bamboo which, in places, was up to thirty *el* thick.<sup>5</sup> During the years 1910-15, after repeated Dutch military campaigns in the region, the population of Manusa was compelled, like several others small domains, to aggregate its hamlets into a sizable settlement. They gathered in three *soa*, each around the *sisine* of one of their *luma*. Nowadays, the three larger Alune communities of the upper Sapalewa valley are Buria, Riring (+Rumasoyal) and Manusa.<sup>6</sup>

Also contradicting Tauern, Ruinen says that before the *soa* system was introduced, the population of the interior of west Seram was divided into *verwantengroepen* (groups of relatives) called *loema inai* (**luma inai**). The *hena*, a *stam* or a *negorij* (a tribe or a village) consisted of several **luma inai** who had become inter-related.<sup>7</sup> De Vries (op. cit. 1927 p.125) writes also that people lived in small family groups on their land. However, it is likely that both types of settlement existed (Dutch patrols encountered large fortified settlements in the Alune mountains at the end of the 19th century). Settlements like Buria, Riring or Rumasoyal, which were relatively powerful domains, must have existed for some time. Furthermore, times of celebration or war have always brought people together while times of peace, seasonal work or epidemics have scattered them.

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<sup>3</sup>Op. cit. p. 69.

<sup>4</sup>1860 p. 153.

<sup>5</sup> 1 *el* = 70 cm.

<sup>6</sup>Riring and Rumasoyal are now assembled in one settlement that is almost as large as Buria. In 1991 Buria comprised 761 inhabitants, Riring 57, and Rumasoyal 172. (source: Kependudukan Kecamatan Taniwel Oct. 91).

<sup>7</sup>Ethnografische gegevens van West Seram in *Mensch en Maatschappij* 5e Jaargang 1929 n°1 p. 228.

The region still remains the most inhabited part of the interior of Seram. However the population is sparse and the villages isolated since only a few settlements have remained in the mountains (about fifteen Alune and about ten Wemale settlements may still be regarded as upland villages in 'Wele Telu). The movement down to the coasts was exacerbated from 1860 to 1916 during the Dutch military campaigns, or so called *excursiën* (Sachse 1922 pp. 244-277). The first expeditions were specifically designed to pacify the region and eradicate head-hunting practices. Many rebel settlements were burned down and their orchards destroyed.<sup>8</sup> By tradition the site of a defeat is regarded as cursed and seldom used again as a place of residence. The population fled to another domain or was rounded up and forced to settle near a path, close to a pacified settlement or at the coast. By 1916 the last rebellions had been repressed and the remainder of the mountain population dutifully registered, taxed and regularly patrolled.<sup>9</sup> Small settlements had been amalgamated into larger wards and put under the administration of a regent appointed by the colonial government.<sup>10</sup> The villagers were compelled to build and maintain a network of paths and carriage tracks which made their settlements easily accessible to patrols.<sup>11</sup> Pacification was achieved, opening the way to logging companies,<sup>12</sup> and overly zealous Ambonese missionaries. They brought with them the subsequent acculturation that affected the region during the following decades.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>8</sup>In military reports, the mountain people (*alfoeren*) are repeatedly described as insubordinate, robbers and murderers. The skulls hanging in their communal houses (*baileo*) were dutifully counted to demonstrate that point. Thus, to protect the 'peaceful people of the valleys' (who converted and paid taxes), the punitive expeditions systematically rendered the rebel mountain settlements uninhabitable. 'It was not a revenge or a barbaric urge to destroy that made the commander' (De Brabant) 'carry out such harsh measures but it was carefully thought as being for the best of the people in general.' writes Van Rees an officer reporting the campaign of 1860 (1863, p. 154-55).

<sup>9</sup>Sachse 1922, p. 188 writes that, as a punishment mountain villages had been destroyed or displaced and that some started to be rebuilt in 1916. Van Rees (1863, pp. 129-163) describes in detail the campaigns of 1860 against Kairatu, Hatusua and Waesamu in the south (now coastal villages) and Buria, Rumasoal in the north (both villages are still in the mountains).

<sup>10</sup>Tauern 1918, pp. 127-28. The movement of several mountain villages is also recorded by G de Vries (1927 p.11-13) and documented by A.D.E Jensen (1948 p.23-26).

<sup>11</sup>In 1860, the first military excursion to cross West Seram from north (Noniali) to south (in the vicinity of the present Kairatu) needed about three weeks to do so (8 Nov.- 1st Dec. Sachse 1922, p. 244). Once the tracks were built a patrol could follow the same route in four days (Van Hecht Muntingh Napjus 1912, p. 786). Paradoxically this is hardly the case nowadays as most of the mountain tracks linking villages to one another are not well maintained. Details of the ancient network of paths and tracks through West Seram during the years 1908-12 are found in Van Hecht Muntingh Napjus 1912 pp.784-86.

<sup>12</sup>In 1917, there were 20 concessions in West Seram alone (Details in Sachse 1922, pp. 240-41. The type of commercial trees and their use are listed pp. 289-90).

<sup>13</sup>The result of this missionary work, witnessed by Jensen during his fieldwork twenty years later, is bitterly described in his book *Die Drie Strömen* (1948, pp. 36-42). Sachse, who was the Lieutenant in charge of the military post of Piru in 1904-06 (and administrator in Wahai in 1902-04), commented upon the situation he had himself enforced in the following terms (1922, p. 190): 'The decree that banned their cults, their



latest turmoil occurred in the region during the RMS (*Republic Maluku Selatan*) uprising in 1950-62. During the armed conflict several Alune mountain villages were temporarily resettled along the coast and most of them have remained there since. The pattern of fixed and congregated residency has been reinforced by the modern Indonesian administration in the form of *desa* and *kampung*, supported by the religious authorities.

### Note on a 'Pindah kampung' chronology

Mapone, the main ancient hamlet of the **hena**, had already been established for several generations when the Dutch passed through the area for the first time in 1860 (and later in 1866).<sup>14</sup> In the colonial documents of the time, Manusa is referred as the *negeri* or village complex of *Manoesa Manoweoe*, but I have not found a description of the fortified village that the elders described. Between 1910 and 1915 the Dutch gathered the scattered population at Usua river along the new north-south track.<sup>15</sup> This became the three *soa* settlement. When it was already 'Dutch time', but before conversion (i.e. between 1910 and 1925), people had a house in the village but still spent most of the time in their gardens or in the forest. The region was more or less pacified and people could afford to stay on their land and only returned to the *soa* settlement of Usua to present themselves when the Dutch patrols were announced. In 1918 when the epidemic of flu decimated the population of the whole region, the people of Manusa ran away to the forest for a short time. They were also plagued with malaria since the settlement of Usua was next to the marshy area of a sago grove infested by mosquitoes. A Javanese general practitioner (Dr Korojo) who went with the patrols to inspect the mountain villages at that time, commanded their return to Mapone. Circa 1920 an Ambonese preacher utilised the epidemic as a sign of divine punishment to introduce Christianity in Rumbatu. Patrolling the region, he burned down all the family temples he could find. In 1925, the control of the colonial government becoming more manifest, the **hena** received its first appointed *raja*. He initiated a collective conversion to

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traditions, their ceremonies and their feasts, to which they were attached with heart and soul, was unexpected and abruptly carried out.... [although] the coarse and harsh way that ban was carried out is to blame ... we can not go back anymore'. (My translation).

<sup>14</sup>I spent a lot of time sorting out contradictory information and trying to figure out a precise sequence of the community's movements since the beginning of this century. The following chronology is the result of the compilation and cross cutting of multiple interviews, and is certainly not 'set in concrete'.

<sup>15</sup>According to some elders the hamlets were gathered together during the rebellion of the Sapalewa valley (1915), according to others it happened earlier. The latter might be right since the years 1906-14, writes Sachse, were characterized by constant patrols across the region, and we know that Usua, halfway between the two coasts, had a *pasanggrahan*, a rest house for these patrols.

Christianity and the first church was built in Mapone. During the 1920s or 1930s, the population was ordered back to Usua where the *soa* system was fully adopted by the community.<sup>16</sup> The imposition of a new system of close residence, added to the pressure of the administrative control and the processes of religious conversion, brought about troubles in the *hena*. It probably also created new inequalities which benefited some and were resented by others. After the death of their first *raja* in 1930, the tensions between the *soa* groups escalated to quarrels and led to the partition of the community. Between 1930 and 1933, a time when the *hena* had no official leader, a large section of Manusa departed to its children villages. Rumbatu received the status of independent *negeri* in 1933. In 1935 the son of the first *raja* succeeded his father in Manusa and ruled until 1969. During the Japanese occupation (1942-45), people returned to Mapone where they were assigned residence. During the years 1950-61 the insurrection of the RMS and its repression turned the region into a battlefield. Caught in the cross fire, the people of Manusa ran and hid in the forest for two years (1950-52). They call this time 'the years without fire' because lighting a fire would have signaled their position and made them a target for either side. At the end of 1952, they returned to Mapone which became a bivouac of the national army (ABRI) until the early 1960s. Some tension arose again in the 1970s as the *ordre baru* was being introduced and (again) resisted by some members of the *soa* of the lord of the land. When the village moved to the modern settlement in December 1977, the pattern of the *soa* wards was split up, and the headman of the time made sure that opposing members were scattered over the new settlement. This last move corresponds to the passage of Manusa to a modern *desa* organisation. It condemned the *soa* system to obsolescence.

Interestingly, when a young and progressive village headman endeavored to write the village's history in the late 1980s, he recorded that the *soa* partition was an initiative of Samai (the great 'partitioner') thus legitimating the *soa* system as an ancestral tradition instituted by the founding ancestor of the *hena*. On the other hand, elder informants corroborate the assertions of Ruinen about its late introduction. This shows, in its early stage, an example of assimilation of an imported design into the fabric of the *hena* history. And indeed it was probably the lord of the land of that time (i.e. the ritual descendant of Samai) who organised the sharing (*sama*) of the *luma* into three *soa* units.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>According to some elders this move occurred at the time of the first *raja* (1925-30), according to others when the second *raja* came (1935).

<sup>17</sup>Was something at stake for the village head that motivated his attempt to legitimate the *soa* system within the *hena* tradition? Or was his effort simply directed at incorporating an external input, and the imbalance it

In the rest of this appendix, I describe the settings of the successive settlements of Manusa from the beginning of the century to the present village. This approach contextualises people's ideas of what represents tradition and what characterises modernity in their present form of settlement.

## THE ANCIENT HAMLETS POST HOUSES AND WARDS.

### Nuruitu

The narrative of origin lists a succession of sites through which the group passed or halted for a while until they reached a hill they called Nuruitu, the Seven Origin Groups. In Nuruitu, says the narrative, they settled. However, these are memories for which there is no eye witness, no visible traces and no archival documents. Jensen refers to Nuruitu as the old village (*alten Dorf*) of Manusa Manue.<sup>18</sup> However it seems that Nuruitu was not a village site.<sup>19</sup> According to the custodian of the site, on a flat area on the top of the hill was the ritual centre of the community where the forefathers of the **hena** performed their pre-Christian ceremonies. The ritual performer brought food offerings at the pig stone around which the men danced. According to the elders, no Kakehan ceremonies were performed in Nuruitu. The cult and the initiation rituals of this regional men's brotherhood were performed on another site (near Tona, the present village), where the men's house was built.<sup>20</sup>

If they were not on Nuruitu itself, where did people live? Yes, said Ian they constituted a **hena** but not like now. People stayed around Nuruitu but in the bush, each on their land or in small hamlets. On these lands were erected the **luma botoi** ('hearth house'), the family shrines where the **upu hena** fed and revered the ancestors of their own origin group.<sup>21</sup> The

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generated, within the ideology and social order of his society? Probably both, since it supported the claim of precedence of the *soa* to which this ruler's **nuru** belongs, therefore reinforcing his own authority.

<sup>18</sup>1939, pp. 136, 133, 135, a German version of three narratives collected with the help of an interpreter from the coast.

<sup>19</sup>Indeed, there is no water in its close vicinity.

<sup>20</sup>By the end of the 1930s, both the ancestral and the Kakehan cults had been largely eradicated and most of their buildings abandoned or demolished.

<sup>21</sup>The **luma botoi** is also called **luma mlete muli** 'the house up in the back', referring to the outer periphery of the village, in the forest but still within the land of the **hena**. It was shaped on the model of a rice barn (**iubune**) (see Appendix Three: Ancient and modern communal and ceremonial buildings).

community expanded as newcomers were welcomed and each given a share of land in custody. This is how elders remember their parents' mode of settlement. Each **nuru** of the domain (i.e. one of its segments composed of one or several **luma**), was made up of a few households of brothers with their children, unmarried members, elders and eventually some affines. All lived in one or a few houses on the share of the land of the **hena** claimed by their **nuru**.

People also had gardens and hunter shelters (**tale** and **latita**) scattered on the territory of the **hena** and around sago groves. Such a grove was farmed by young unmarried men near a rivulet called 'we Usua, and they established temporary shelters in its vicinity. This site, named from the rivulet, became the **hena suie** (the 'following village'), the first *soa* settlements built circa 1910-14 under Dutch supervision. Mapone, the main ancient hamlet of Manusa (residence of the lord of the land), was established before Usua.<sup>22</sup>

### **Mapone and the Manoesa Manoewe complex.**

Sachse usually refers to Manusa as the *Manoesa Manoewe complex* (Sachse 1922 p.262). Although the first Dutch full crossing of the area occurred in 1860 (Op. Cit. 1922 p.244), his first mention of Manoesa Manoewé appears during the later expeditions (*excursiën*) of January 16 1866 (Op. Cit. 1907 p.32) and February 12 1866 (ibid. 1922 p.248). He also mentions patrols in Manoesa in September 1904, August 1905, August and December 11 1906 (ibid. 1922 pp. 261-264). In both periods, the military campaigns were aimed at controlling the unrest of the nearby **inama** of Rumasoa (Roemah Soal) and Sachse gives no details about Manusa itself or the composition of this *complex*.<sup>23</sup>

### *The History of Mapone*

The history of the foundation of Mapone belongs to the realm of narratives of the **hena**. The following historical narrative is a compilation of various episodes which, along time, were volunteered by several elders of Manusa. The narration is basically the same to the one told

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<sup>22</sup>According to the elders, Mapone predated Dutch time, but no one could say when it had been established nor recall the generation of its foundation.

<sup>23</sup>One would possibly find more in the reports proper, which are stored in the national archives in The Hague.

to Niggemeyer in 1937, adding only minor variations or details.<sup>24</sup> This narrative can be told by anyone but it belongs more specifically to the **nuru** Maslebu (the **nuru** of the warlord).

The people of Huku had their village nearby Nuruitu. The Tau river was the border between them. The children of Huku and Manusa used to bathe and play together in a small tributary of the Tau called 'we Name. Once, they played a war game with blow-pipes during three days. They got more and more excited with it and the third day a boy of **nuru** Maslebu, from Manusa was badly hurt. The child ran home and told his father. This was the great warrior Siu Totole; he said 'be quiet now, tomorrow we go.'<sup>25</sup> The following morning, the Maslebu men killed a child of Huku. All the people of Huku ran away and established a fortified settlement on the top of the hill now called Lum.buini (**luma buini**: abandoned house) where they built a new **sisine** (meeting house). A woman from Manusa called Silane (a kind of banana)<sup>26</sup> was weaving on the platform of her garden house. A man of Huku saw her from a distance. He said to his sons: 'go down there and bring me some banana **silane**.' The boys went down and did not find any banana. They were young and did not understand **lepa sou ela**, the men's language used when going head hunting.<sup>27</sup> Their father sent them again, and again. After three times, he went himself and brought Silane's head back to Lum.buini. Manusa had a great war leader called **pitane (kapitan)** Siu Totole, a man from **nuru** Maslebu. Siu Totole was very clever warrior who had great magic powers, he could make himself invisible or transform into any kind of animal. Because of this he won a lot of fights and brought new things and a lot of renown to the **hena**.<sup>28</sup> Siu Totole called his allies from the Sapalewa batai (the villages of the northern river valley) to help avenge Silane. They all met in Tisouwa where they cheered each other by firing their guns. A man of Huku heard this. Meeting another man from Manusa he asked if people had been firing, but the

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<sup>24</sup>Jensen 1939, p. 135.

<sup>25</sup>At that time, commented the narrator, the men still had the big long guns with which they hunted all kinds of game and killed enemies in war. Later the patrols collected them and the Japanese finally took the last ones away ('to throw in the sea' said the elder). Since the ban on guns has been maintained by the Indonesian government, he lamented, they now hunt only with spears or traps and have to climb trees to catch opossums.

<sup>26</sup>In B.I.: *pisan media*. **Silane** also means: lightning, gemstone, glittering.

<sup>27</sup>**Lepa sou ela** 'to speak language big', to use metaphors, is also used when asking for a bride or to conceal secret things from children or foreigners.

<sup>28</sup>Siu Totole, who also waged war against the Wemale of Abio, may have been from the same generation or the one before Belena and his brother Lelese Rumanikit, the Saniri men who finally sealed the peace with this same Abio in 1918. However, considering the number of actions attributed to Siu Totole and the Alune tradition of 'waking up' names every second generation, these deeds might have been performed by several bearers of this name, who belonged to **nuru** Maslebu.

Manusa man reassured him by telling him that they had just been burning dry bamboo (which makes the same noise as firing a gun). So, having barricaded their villages, the people of Huku started a big feast in their *sisine* to celebrate the capture of Silane's head. They posted their best warrior, **kapitan** Mata Ata (Four eyes) to guard the path to their village. The people of Huku felt safe because Mata Ata had two eyes in the front and two in the back of his head and could see anything and anyone coming from far away. But under a charm of Siu Totole, Mata Ata fell asleep and lost his head while the villagers, who did not suspect anything, were busy celebrating, drinking and dancing in their *sisine*. The ingredients of the betel quid went around (a sign to get ready for the assault) and silently the men of Manusa and their allies attacked the settlement of Huku and killed everyone except a pregnant woman who was adopted by the family Tani'wele, a man from Huku who had married in Manusa. Later that woman left with her son and found some Huku people who were in their gardens at the time of the fight and had escaped the massacre. Together they established the new villages of Huku Kecil and Huku Anakota in the south of Ote Batai.<sup>29</sup> The people of Manusa destroyed the village of Huku and named the site Lumbuini, 'abandoned house'. They seized the land, gardens and sago grove of Huku and established their village on Mapone hill.<sup>30</sup>

These events must have occurred before 1908. That year van Hecht Muntingh Napius positioned both the large (*besar*) and small (*kecil*) Huku on the south of the divide<sup>31</sup>

### *The main settlement*

Mapone, the main hamlet of Manusa, had three wards: Toule (*pohon galoba hutan*: 'wild *galoba* tree'), Ba'ele Batai (**ba'ele**: 'village representative', **batai**: a felled 'trunk' and the group that sits on it to deliberate) and, at the 'top end' of the settlement (**mlete nurui**: *ujung di atas*), Amahusu, also called Suia (**ama**: 'father', **suie**: to 'accompany', the followers), the residence of the *raja*. This third ward was only established at a later stage when the community had become larger and returned from the soa ward with a *raja*. Stretched along the narrow ridge of a hill, with three water points nearby, Mapone was regarded as the village proper. Like other fortified settlements in the region, it was fenced by a thick bush of

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<sup>29</sup>Ulate Inai, (Mother Mountain), the divide, is also called Ote Batai or 'Watai, **ote**: 'border', **batai**: 'trunk', large lying object, '**watai**: classifier for long objects.

<sup>30</sup>Version of I. Souhaly, whose ancestors came from the former Huku.

<sup>31</sup>Hecht Muntingh Napius 1912, p. 778.

thorny bamboo, leaving only two small passages that could easily be obstructed in case of attack. It had a **sisine** called Tebale Pasamoli Tutini<sup>32</sup> where men sat to hold meetings or celebrate, eat and dance when returning from feeding the stone in Nuruitu.<sup>33</sup> These festive days or when a head was captured, the whole village danced the **maro maro** in the **sisine**, loudly tapping their feet on the bamboo platform so that the echo would reverberate like thunder on the surrounding mountains.<sup>34</sup> Later, the first church was also built in Mapone.

Beside Mapone, Manusa has several other scattered settlements. People went back and forth between their various shelters and Mapone as they still do nowadays between the new village of Tona and their garden houses or sago shelters where they stay for an extent of time.

### *The other hamlets*

The Dutch literature refers to Manusa as a village complex without further details about the nature of this complex. The community could have comprised at least six or seven hamlets, and at times maybe more. Hamlets were as easily abandoned as they were built. However the sites of some former hamlets are still remembered. People like to go around sites and return to a place that was occupied by a previous generation if nothing bad happened there. The luma inai Maslebu and Neyte now have a garden House on the site of their former hamlets. Taking into account what people remember I have counted six (possibly seven) distinct well established hamlets: Mapone (Guava Garden) the main village near the ritual centre of Nuruitu; Batu Mete (Black Stone) the post house of Maslebu watching the path to the north; Rumbatu (Stone House) and Rumberu (New House) the post houses to the south coast and the Tala region; and finally, Buela (Large Book) and Waiame, the hamlets of the Wemale communities who had been allowed to settle on Manusa territory and were watching the eastern path to Japio. If we follow the traditional way of counting this make six plus one of them at the head: seven.<sup>35</sup> However, Matital had a large **sisine** (Sisi Pale) near 'we Usua that could also be regarded as a hamlet, and Mapone was made of two and later

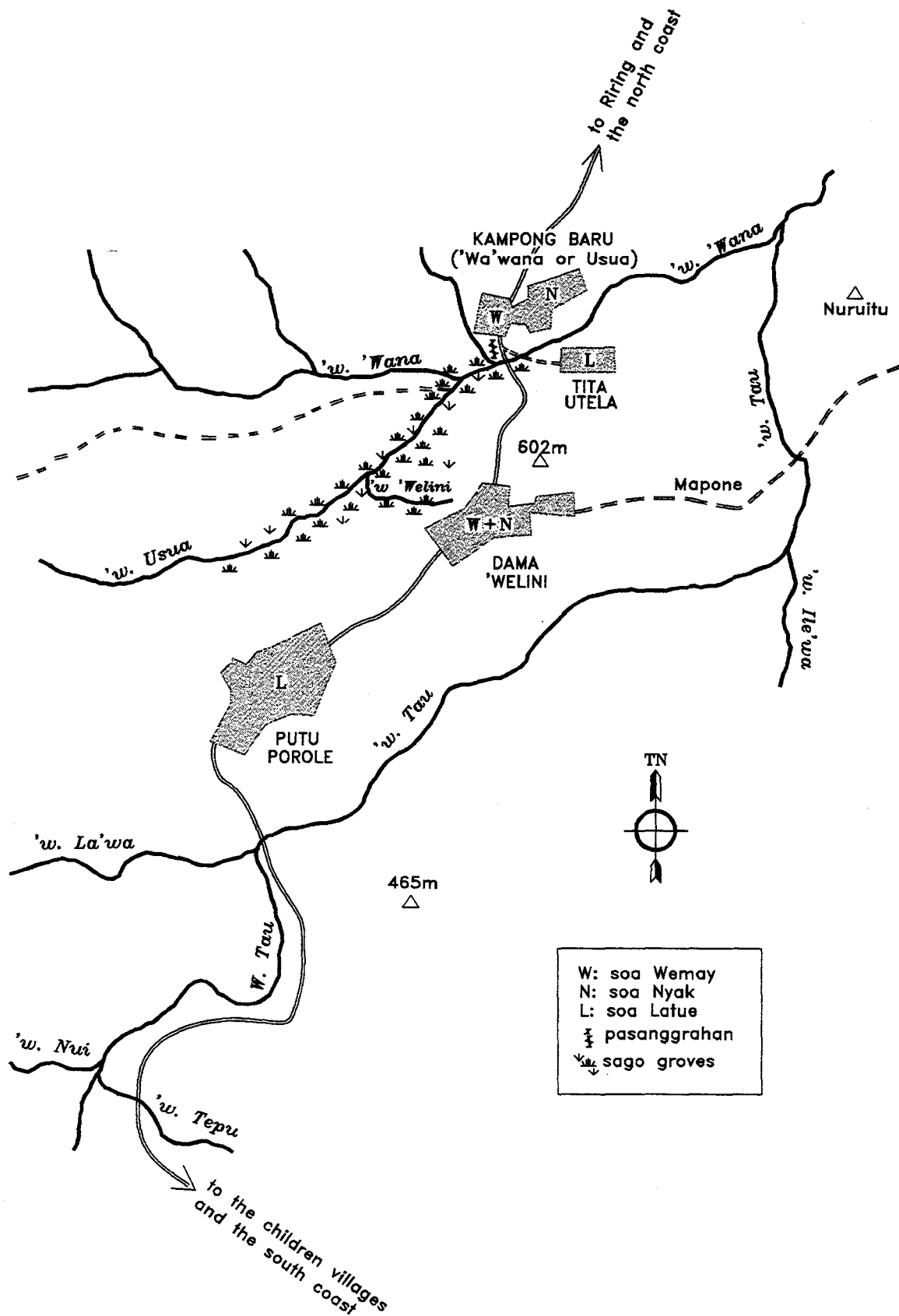
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<sup>32</sup>Tebale: 'twins', pasale: a kind of tree (? Associated with the origin of **nuru** Lumapasal), moli: 'forbidden', 'taboo' tutini: 'stump'.

<sup>33</sup>Some informants say that heads were also stored in that **sisine**, others that they were only hung at the trophy tree at the water point in the vicinity of the Kakehan house.

<sup>34</sup>Lightning and thunder are the ways Upu Lanite, the Sky, fertilizes the living beings on Upu Tapele, the Earth. Dancing **maro maro** is both to repeat and call for this deed.

<sup>35</sup>These 'seven' small settlements do not correspond to the seven founding **nuru** (that represent seven ritual functions). However some of the Houses holding a ritual function had established their own hamlets with a few followers (the lord of the land in Mapone, the war lord in Batu Mete, the peace maker in Wayame etc.)



APP. 1.1 THE SOA SETTLEMENT USU LEINI





three wards that could each also be counted as a hamlet. It is certainly because of this dispersed form of settlement that the Dutch referred to Hena Manusa as a village complex.

Of all these hamlets, two became the large villages of Rumbatu and Rumberu in the southern hills which branched out into a third coastal settlement: Kawatu at the coast. They started as garden hamlets on the path to the coast and developed into established villages. In 1933 Rumbatu became a *negorij*, independent from Manusa. The three are now autonomous *desa*. However Manusa still regards itself as the **hena ina**, the mother **hena**.

### **Usu Leini: 4 wards, 3 soa, 2 factions, 1 village**

When the soa system was introduced in 1910-15, the people of Manusa were brought together from their scattered Alune and Wemale hamlets into a single village called Usu Leini or Usua. It was made up of three *soa* wards established around an insalubrious sago marsh along the newly opened path from the south coast. Taking into account the irregularity of the terrain, it was the first settlement to follow as much as possible the squarely Ambonese model with the residence of the *raja*, the *sisine* (meeting platform) and the school/church/manse building in the main ward. Although people continued to spend long periods of time in their gardens or beside their other sago groves, they were compelled to be present in the village each time the patrol came. The elders remember that their fathers had to keep up the settlement, assure the supplies of the post house (*pasangrahan*) established by the Dutch for their patrols and maintain the bridges and sections of the paths that crossed the land of their **hena**. This system was continued during the Japanese occupation to allow close control of the population while people were forced to work in vegetable plantations. Most aspects of this mode of settlement and its constraints are still found in the model of village promoted by the modern Indonesian administration.

Reliable elders explained that *soa* was not *atate* ('tradition'), but that their forefathers of that time (1910-15) had *chosen* to split the **hena** into three *soa* when the system was introduced.<sup>36</sup> The following is a description of Usua, the settlement of the three *soa*. Remembering the names of each ward may be a little difficult, for clarity I number them Wards 1 to 4 from the main ward (in the north) to the remotest (in the south).

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<sup>36</sup>Regarded as a source of troubles, the *soa* were dismantled when the community moved to the modern settlement in 1977. It obviously left a trail of bitterness behind, and was an uneasy topic of conversation on which informants did not readily volunteer information.

**Ward 1-**

Usua or 'We 'Wana, at the confluence of 'we Usua and 'we 'Wana (or 'Wawa), was called by the Dutch: *Kampong Baru*, the new settlement. People also refer to it as **Hena Suie** (the 'following village').<sup>37</sup> Using the name of a part to designate the whole, as people often do, the entire settlement is occasionally referred to as Usua or Hena Suie. Initially (circa 1910-14), Ward 1 (and the others too) must have been very small, not really a village, said several informants, just a few garden houses. They returned to Mapone for a couple of years during the epidemics of 1918. During the 1930s Usua progressively became the main ward in administrative terms and possibly in number of habitants as well. It comprised the church and school in one building with an adjoining manse (the *guru* was also catechist), the rest house for the Dutch patrols (the *pasanggrahan* or *bivouak huis*), and the house and garden of the ruler. Mixed houses from members of both *soa* Nyak and Wemay, but the majority from Wemay, settled in Ward 1 and had gardens and groves in the surroundings. It was headed by the elder of Soa Wemay.

**Ward 2-**

Tita Utela ('utela?) (**tita** bridge **utele** or '**utele** the kind of wood used to make it?) was the smallest settlement, comprising only a few houses of the *soa* Latue. It was the settlement of the lord of the land, leader of this *soa*. It received its name from the covered bridge the Dutch made the people build across 'we 'Wana to join Wards 1 and 2. The *soa* Latue did not mix settlements as the two other *soa* did. As new people came in, the *soa* extended and lacked space. Quarrels also arose between Ward 1 and 2. For both reasons most of the *soa* Latue left Ward 2 and established Putu Porole (Ward 4), some distance away. Tita Utela the oldest ward of *soa* Latue was also situated at some distance from the patrol path, while the three other settlements were crossed by it.

**Ward 3-**

Dama Welini, the third ward, received this name because a **damale** leaf (**damale**: *ganemu* tree), was found on 'we Welini, the rivulet which crosses the sago grove passing along this

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<sup>37</sup>**Suia** is also at times used to refer to the higher ward of the old village Mapone which was extended after 1952 where some dignitaries of ward 1 resettled.

settlement.<sup>38</sup> Dama Welini was the ward of *soa* Nyak, but like Ward 1 the settlement was mixed Wemay/Nyak. During Dutch rule the **nuru** Nia'we, leader of the *soa* of the same name, was given the function of *merinjo* (duties: village messenger, tax collector, news and orders bearer). Ward 3 was conveniently situated mid way between the northern and southern extremity of the *soa* settlement. The leaders of **nuru** Nia'we (Nyak), as the representative of an ancient founding group (**hena upui**), also acted as mediators between the *soa* Wemay and Latue.

#### **Ward 4-**

The *soa* Latue established at a later stage this southern ward which was named Putu Porole, the Yellow Opossum Grass (*kusu kusu*). **Putu** or **putune** is a furry type of tall weed,<sup>39</sup> **porole** means 'yellow'. Ward 4 was the first settlement one would pass through when coming from the south coast. It was located in a broad area on the land of the **nuru** of the lord of the land. Like Ward 2, Ward 4 was exclusively occupied by the members of *soa* Latue and situated some distance from the others wards.

#### **The administration of Usu Leini**

An elder of the **nuru** Nia'we said that when important decisions had to be taken at the **hena** level, the elders of all the **nuru** met on the **sisine** platform in Ward 1, sitting behind their *soa* leaders. For matters concerning their own *soa* they usually met at the house of their *soa* leader (also a **nuru** elder). The house platform where the meetings of a *soa* were held was called the **soane**. Matters had to be discussed until a consensus was reached that satisfied everyone, and this sometimes took a lot of time. Some sessions were held for several days, said the elder.

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<sup>38</sup>This is one of the usual ways of naming a place. The **damale** is an important tree for the community. It is planted in every grove and along the paths because its young leaves and tassels make excellent vegetables. Another sacred place, along the path of the ancestors, also named after the **damale**, is believed to be the origin place of that tree (see chapter Four: Siwa/Lima at Sobain Latale).

<sup>39</sup>Florey notes that it is also the avoidance term for **eli** ('grass'), that should not be pronounced in the presence of someone called Elias.

Ward 1 was the hamlet of the *raja* Luhanela Matoke, who ruled from 1925 to his death in 1930, and also led the *soa* Wemay.<sup>40</sup> Ward 2 was the residence of the group of the first ruler confirmed by the Dutch, the lord of the land, Tauli Ela, who ruled from 1920 to 1925. When quarrels arose between the two groups, Latue moved away and built Ward 4, at the other extremity of the settlement. In between Wards 1 and 4 was Ward 3 of *soa* Nyak, which acted as messenger and moderator between Latue and Wemay, but was allied to Wemay with whom it shared settlements. Thus from 1925 to 1930 the whole community was administrated from Ward 1 (except when they returned to the old hamlet of Mapone during the epidemics). Manusa has no recorded ruler between 1930 and 1933. Nibulana Maslebu, from the *nuru* of the war leader in *soa* Wemay, acted as a *wakil* (*ba'ele*) during the years 1933-35 in between the two *raja* from *nuru* Matoke. Formally Matoke was the *nuru* of the ritual performer, but in the colonial process it became the hereditary ruling *nuru*: *Nuru* Latu.

Wemay became the leading *soa* with the largest and most influential *nuru* and numerous followers. Ranking second and allied to *soa* Wemay was *soa* Nyak. Originally the leader's *soa*, Latue became the smallest in number and influence, progressively overwhelmed by the coalition of Wemay/Nyak. Although the *soa* system only lasted from about 1915 until 1977 in Manusa, it led the community to irreversible changes. Its beginning and its end both correspond to a change of settlement.

### The years without fire

In 1950, remembers Silas, Moluccan soldiers from the separatist movement of the Republic Maluku Selatan (RMS) marched through the region and established a post in Riring and later in Abio. They requested the mountain villagers to provide them with processed sago. When some soldiers started using force to make people comply, the whole community of Manusa, *raja* Fredek and minister Latuni included, decided to run away into the forest as they had always done in case of trouble. Soon afterward came the Pattimura, a Moluccan battalion which had joined the TNI, the regular army of the newly proclaimed Republic of Indonesia. Using Dutch anti guerrilla techniques, they burned villages, cut down the coconut and sago trees and destroyed the gardens to make sure the rebels would not use them. However, recalls Silas, there were no really big fights at that time because nobody from

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<sup>40</sup>Coming from a child village and educated in a Dutch school, Luhanela was the first *raja* installed in Manusa.

either side was willing to take the risk of hurting a relative. Between the small fights, people and even soldiers left clothes, bits of soap or a little food here and there for the rebels. As they had been hiding in the forest for a while, the people of Manusa started running out of food, cloth and salt. The situation got ever worse when the national army started flying over the region dropping bombs.

In the cross fire of an ideological confrontation of which neither viewpoint really concerned them, Silas said that the Manusa people felt that their duty was to remain on their land as they had always done. They only made very small fires without smoke and under cover, keeping as silent as they could. Since the groves that had not been destroyed were closely guarded, they processed the sago from wild trees (*nurule: nibun* and *nau'wa: mayang*). It was difficult to keep babies from crying of cold and hunger. Many young children and elderly people died in the forest during that time. Like in the time of the rebellions against the Dutch, the Manusa people erased their footsteps, hid in hollow trees and organised watching posts from the top of large trees signalling to each other the movement of both sides.

In 1952, after almost two years in hiding, Silas went with the *raja* to Ambon to surrender and seek help. They obtained the privilege to remain in their mountains (most hill villages had been evacuated to the coast) and were sent a unit of Sumatranese soldiers. Moluccan and Sumatranese have a long history of trade and alliances and their rulers exchanged a few 'princesses'. The contact of this regiment with the people of Manusa has left friendly memories.<sup>41</sup> They established a post near the Sapalewa on the land of Neyte, and people slowly returned from the forest. Several regiments stayed in Manusa between 1952 and 1962. The last one was a Javanese battalion called Silawangi. By then everybody had returned to Mapone. It was at that time that people stopped planting rice. It was dangerous to go far away from the settlement to make dry paddies, plus there was no need for it since they had plenty of white rice. A constant supply was brought in by the soldiers. These needed the support of the local population and generously distributed food and other goodies. Most elders reckon that by then they were having a rather good time, eating well and dancing a lot of *maro maro* which they taught to the soldiers. By the end of 1962 the region was pacified again and the soldiers returned home. Two large garrisons were permanently posted at the end of the paths at both the northern and the southern coasts but

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<sup>41</sup>However an old man from the nearby village of Lohia Sapalewa told me that in his village they believed that they would be forced to convert to Islam and fled to the forest, where some remained for 13 years.

these soldiers were less friendly. The people of Manusa stayed in Mapone with their second *raja*, who retired in 1969.

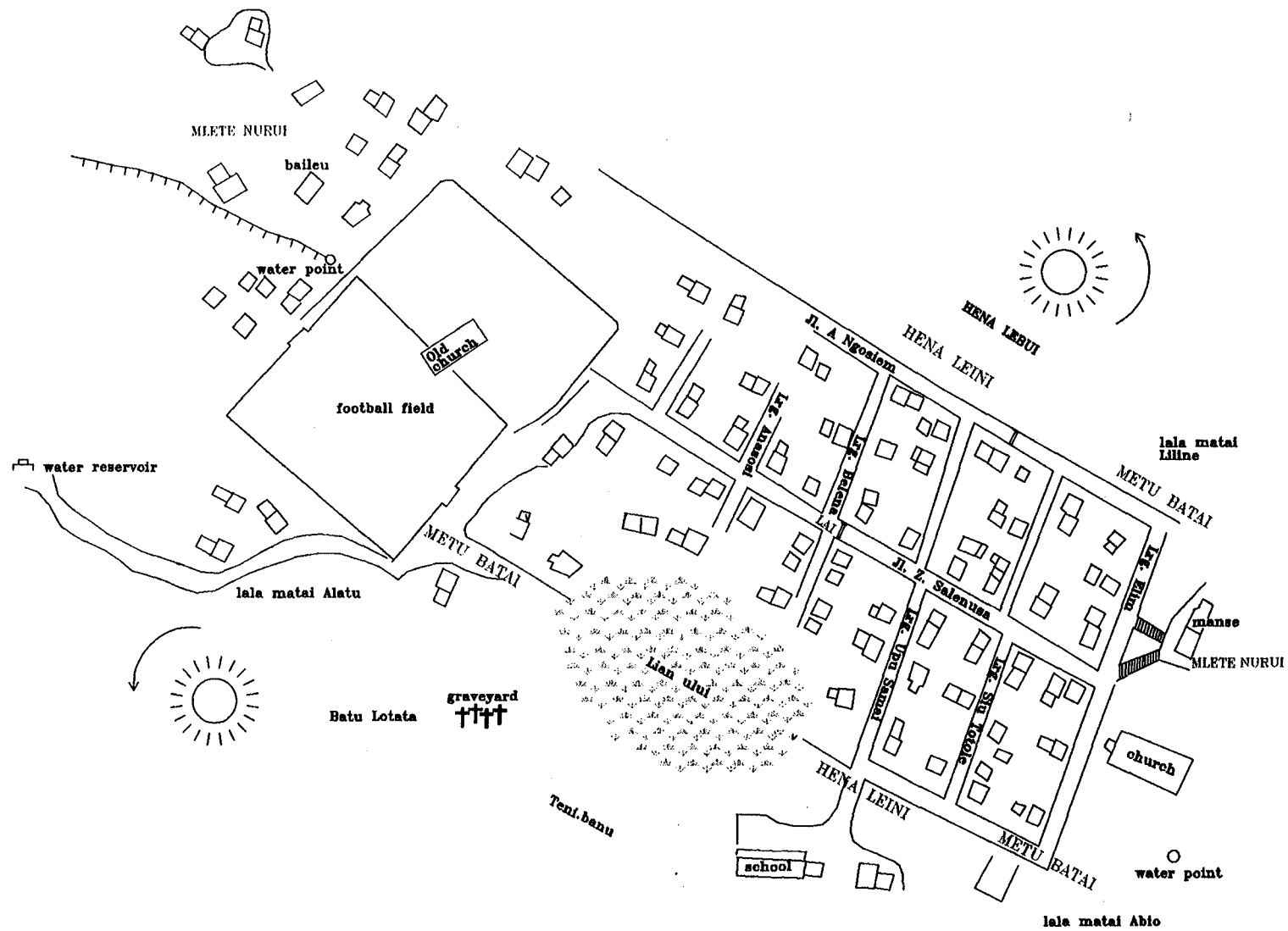
### THE MODERN MANUSA SAMANUWEY AT TONA

In December 1977, as the New Order was beginning to reach the remote province, Daniel, the progressive new village head (*ba'ele*), instigated the move to a new settlement at Tona two kilometres away from Mapone. Since the name **Tona** (mud or lair) was not very flattering, the village took the name of the **hena** itself with a slightly different spelling: Manusa Samanuwey. The first thing Daniel (Wemay) did was to break out of the *soa* system and its factions by 'mixing' people to overcome old tensions. At Tona, people were free to settle next to each other the way they wished, as long as they did not reproduce the *soa* wards. Instead, the council of Church elders established four prayer quarters. The result is that Wemay and Nyak (the dominant faction) now occupy the strategic centre and entrance of the village while Latue is 'neutralised.' It now has six houses scattered inside the village and six others on the periphery away from the formal village (but close to the 'proper' water point).

Both tradition and modernity have influenced the choice of the situation and orientation of Manusa Samanuwey, the names given to its streets, the spots where dignitaries built their houses, the pattern of settlement adopted by related kin, the access to water and the sites or buildings for communal and ritual activities (*baileu*, sports ground, churches, graveyard etc.) Ideas about what represents tradition and what characterises modernity and how they both have influenced people's choices will appear as I describe the setting of the village.

#### *The village site*

Manusa Samanuwey follows the traditional pattern of settlement along the backbone of a crest. The area, which is near the ancient ritual site of initiation (therefore no one's land in particular), was partially flattened by the caterpillars of a lumber company, supplying the village with a trapezoidal football field. In exchange for the concession the company also provided part of the concrete for the construction of the church, which was finally completed in July 1994. A rough track toward the coast was also cut through the mountains. However, since it barely lasted the duration of the logging, the only way to reach the top end of the roads (the only accesses to the coasts which are still 20 km further down), is to walk through hilly rain forest and river streams, either 30 km to the north or 40 km to the south.



APP. 1.2 MANUSA SAMANUWEY AT TONA





The lay-out of the village itself (see app. 1.2. Manusa Samanuwey at Tona) conforms to the main criteria of modern Indonesian villages: straight streets laid in a roughly square pattern, a concrete town hall (*baileu*), a church and a sport field, all reasonably well maintained.<sup>42</sup> On the village site, the main lane runs along the saddle of the hill coarsely carved through by the caterpillars. At both ends of the leveled area are two hills (*mlete nurui*: 'the raised edges'). On one of them stands the *baileu* and the house of the former *raja*, on the other the church and the manse with, at its foot, the house of the lord of the land. Two parallel lanes delimit the longitudinal edges of the settlement (*hena leini* 'the sides of the *hena*'). Perpendicular to them, seven 'avenues' define eleven blocks. Toward the sunrise is *hena lebui* ('below the *hena*'), the slope down to the former ritual ground of the men's house. Toward the sunset and the Tau river beyond Lian Ului (a marshy area) and below Batu Lotata, is the graveyard. On the little ridge of Teni Banu (a bush of bamboo) between the church and the graveyard was built the new school.

The lay-out of the village was apparently an exercise for three students from the social department of the University of Ambon, Capital city of the Province. The village lies beside a swampy area (Lian Ului) filled by underground water. The seepage turns part of the site into a muddy pit during the wet season. This is why it was called **Tona** (mud, lair). It was a place where pigs came to roll in mud, a good hunting ground and a ceremonial site, said an elder, but not a place to live. During the dry season whirlwinds blow off the ochre silt from the barren area, wrapping the village in dust. An expensive concrete water reservoir was later built at the village entrance. It leaked from day one and still lies empty while the water flows along the slippery path. Two main lanes bear small concrete bridges parallel to the natural flow of the rainwater they are supposed to facilitate the crossing of, and the football goals do not face each other. The students proudly gave their names to the three main streets, and the villagers their ancestors' names to the small side lanes where their descendants chose to build their houses. Thus the lane where the elder of **luma inai** Maslebu built his house was called *larang* Siu Totole, and *larang* Belena is edged by the houses of **luma ina** Neyte. Following the instructions of the administration, those who chose to build their houses within the boundaries of the blocks delimited by the lanes were entitled to a roofing of corrugated iron sheets. However, the initial supply was far insufficient for everyone to get a complete roofing. Thus, most houses follow a hybrid architecture that is a familiar sight in eastern Indonesia.

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<sup>42</sup>Following a provincial decree, large shady trees were cut down in all villages throughout Ambon and Seram because dead leaves made them look 'dirty'. The history of the church and communal buildings of Manusa is in appendix 3: The physical entity of the **luma**.

Like most Seramese settlements, Manusa Samanuwey lies on the right bank of the nearest river, in this particular case between two streams. Both the Tau, the ancestral river of origin ('wele wei) and the La'wa, one of its tributaries, flow the year around. Through an ingenious piping system, water is drawn from upstream to both ends of the settlement irrespective of the season. That is, when the system of open air bamboo conduits is not obstructed or broken and operates properly. It was built by the men of the village with the help of the engineering students of another social project.<sup>43</sup> As is usually the case, the water points are meaningful sites. The larger one is drawn from about three hundred metres upstream the La'wa where nobody lives. Water is piped to the hill at the entrance of the village in between the *baileu* and the houses of the former *raja* and the teachers. Most people draw their water from that place. Proper people certainly do. It is a meeting point from where one has a panoramic view over the village, seeing as well as being seen. Since there is no installation below to gather or store the water, it simply flows down the slope turning it into a mud slide when it flows well (which is seldom the case).

Washing and bathing is done at the La'wa river itself another three hundred metres downstream, outside of the village but far enough from its confluent with the Tau. It is a women's site. When men use the La'wa they do so somewhere upstream in the forest. The other fountain draws its water from a small rivulet of the Tau. The pipe comes out behind the new church but under the former site of the tree to which were hung the trophy heads. Furthermore it is downstream from the graveyard, and for some people this water is directly connected with the Tau, home of powerful ancestral spirits. The Tau is also the path of the dead on their way to the Sapalewa and beyond. This makes it a dangerous river, particularly for women who are prohibited to wash, bathe or cross it without reason. The 'people who know' do not use this water point unless they are very sure of the strength of their Christian faith. Having at least two and preferably three water points is one of the ancient regional patterns: one ancestral water, one drinking well and one washing place.

### *Mlete muli - The directionals around the village*

It is virtually impossible to use accurately the Alune directionals (others than *lora*: upstream, and *lolau*: downstream) without taking the spot where one stands as an arbitrary

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<sup>43</sup>This clever and economical system, which is also found in other rural settlements in the region, requires only split bamboo, wooden poles to support them at intervals and vegetal fibres to fix them, all materials readily available. Its maintenance is relatively simple as long as those who find a leakage bother to fix it.

fixed point of reference. The following are the main directions that matter for an inhabitant of Manusa. The axis of reference are the Sapalewa and the Tau rivers.

1- Downstream the Sapalewa (from the village toward the north west) is **lala matai Liline** (the head of the path to Riring), the ancient patrol path to the north coast through the main Alune villages of the Sapalewa Batai (Lohia Sapalewa, Riring, Rumasoa, Buria, and Tani'wel). It also leads to several gardens and hunting grounds. 2- Upstream the Sapalewa (toward the east) is **lala matai Abio** ( the head of the path to Abio), with more hunting grounds, sago groves and the border with the Wemale territory (Apio Batai). 3- Downstream the Tau (from the village toward the north east) is **mlete nurui** (up to the edge) the little path to the ritual centre of Nuruitu, former settlements, sago groves, hunting grounds and some communal plantations. 4- Upstream the Tau (from the village toward the south west) are hunting grounds, sago groves, and former dammar plantations (**ai 'alane**) which were felled by the logging company.<sup>44</sup> It is a direction that is mainly relevant in the narrative/past history. 5- Seaward (south) is the path to the south coast through the divide, passing through Rumbatu and near Rumberu (the children villages) before reaching the road at the Wemale settlement of Hunitetu. At the end of that road is the town of Kairatu (Alatu in Alune), the main centre of the *kecamatan*. It provides market, education, health, administrative, military and harbor facilities. Anything beyond this is **mlete nanu** up and far away.

#### *The new year ceremony - The space within the village*

The new year ceremony, which focuses on the cleaning and closing of the centre and the **metu batai** ('threshold', 'gates') of the village, also indicates the meaningful points in the settlement. Variants of that ceremony are found all over central Moluccas and beyond. Although it could be part of the Ambonese customs imported to Manusa early this century, it is regarded as a local tradition. Formerly, said an elder informant, four men knew the special invocations. At the end of the year they assembled all the rings and plates (heirlooms) that had been broken during the year and brought them to the Tau river to offer them to the spirits. This way the ancestors did not have to come to fetch them themselves, (bringing illnesses in the settlements). Each *soa* visited the others to make peace and delete the past. Meals with meat were served and people ate together with their ancestors. The

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<sup>44</sup>Since the passage of the loggers, people seldom use this trail, now obstructed by landslides and felled trees. It is much longer than the shortcuts through the forest and unpleasantly hot for having lost its shady cover. To reach Eti people walk south to the coastal road first and take minibuses westward.

village was temporarily closed upon itself while the rituals restored the unity of the community. Old matters were abandoned to the past to adopt new prospects of the present.

**lale belue lale ta'waline le'e le.**

To beget a new heart casting away the ancient feelings.<sup>45</sup>

Since no offerings are made to the ancestors or the spirits anymore, said the elder, people have to pray a lot to keep them at bay. The third week of December starts the physical and spiritual cleaning of the village. All the women are busy cleaning up and weeding the paths, the yards around the houses and the surroundings of the church, while the children are in charge of the yards of their school and their teachers' houses. There are daily prayer gatherings with the Church elders to cast away collectively the bad spirits and the sins or curses which attract them. Every household is visited by elders and teachers and lectured on the proper behaviours for the year to come. People confess their wrong doings, apologise for them, exchange forgiveness and pray together.<sup>46</sup>

The evening of the 30th of December everybody returns to the village (including those who work at the coast) and stays home behind closed doors. The time of the ritual, the unity of the village is again reproduced. Meanwhile, the council of Church elders and the village dignitaries (not the teachers) assemble in the church with the minister. They pray for the village to be blessed and protected from evil during the coming years. They also request divine strength for the spiritual barriers they are going to erect to keep the village tightly closed to outside dangers of all kinds. The council is divided into ten groups of two or three elders since there are ten points to be protected in the village. First the churches are prayed over by the minister and the deacon (during my field work there were two churches since the new building was still under construction). The main cross road at the 'middle' (**lai**) of the village is shielded by the village head, the other vulnerable points that are prayed over are the three 'heads of the paths' (**lala matai**) or 'gate' (**metu batai**) to the south, the north and the east, the school path with the school, the path of the graveyard, and the two water points.

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<sup>45</sup>Lit.: 'heart/inside new, heart old time disregard him'.

<sup>46</sup>These prayers are done at night for it is the time when the ancestors walk around (it is the day for them). It is more dangerous for the living but the communication is better and ancestors can witness that their children are doing the right thing.

The concept of centre and periphery displayed in the domain is also visible in the new settlement. The **hena** ('settlement proper') is bordered by the **hena leini**, the 'sides', and **mlete nurui**, the 'edges up' (the hills) where are located the water points, the tree of skulls, the graveyard, the manse and the churches. In Manusa the churches are not in the middle of the settlement but at its extremities, where they are not directly surrounded with houses. Like formerly in the men's ritual houses, some of the prayers and rituals (for example Holy Communion or this village cleansing exorcism) are surrounded with a secrecy which recalls former ancestral rituals.

### *Clusters of affines and strategic locations*

When building their houses, people tend to congregate among affines. When on good terms, the fathers and sons or the brothers and their sisters' husbands try to build their houses nearby for they have common interests and obligations to each other. For example Domingus, an elder of Nia'we (Nyak) lives with his son. Domingus's house is between the houses of his sister's husband and his sister's elder son. Another of his sister's sons and a half brother are nearby too. When his son is away in the forest for several days the old man will never lack fire, care or food, should he be sick or in need. He can see his grandchildren playing and all the activities going on between his relatives' houses. For similar reasons the members of the same **luma ina** settle on the same or on an adjoining block if they find the space to do so. Somehow this is a return to people's ancient pattern of settlement where they lived in small clusters of kin and relatives (the hamlets which were brought together by the *soa* system). It recalls the groups of relatives described by Ruinen (op. cit. 1928 p.228) as **luma inai**, the mother houses.

Another item of interest in the pattern of settlement is who settles where in the topography of the village. Since this settlement was relatively recent (15 years old) when I did field work, most of the dignitaries were still the same as at the time people moved in. The lord of the land had built his house right at the foot of the manse at the upper central cross road of the village. The dignitaries of some leading **luma inai** were in the alley that bears the name of their most famous ancestor, and the foremost *soa* occupied the centre of the village. The former *raja* overlooked the village from the top of the western hill at the entrance of the village and the church leaders (secretary and representative) settled in the block in front of the new church, each of them at a cross road. The importance of having a house on a cross

road to concentrate a confluence of power is acknowledged all over Indonesia.<sup>47</sup> For example Matoke, the **nuru** of the ritual performer and hereditary *raja*, occupies five corners and the top of one of the hills which faces the manse from the other side of the settlement.

## CONCLUSION

Modernism and tradition are interwoven in the fabric of the new village. The *soa* system which replaced the ancient hamlets did not provide any useful applications in the context of the concept of a 'modern village'. It was abandoned, but remains visible on the land. Once people moved to Tona, the wards of the previous *soa* system were overlapped by a new partition in religious quarters. However, part of the feature of living together which pertained to the more ancient **luma inai** returned in force in the new village, households building their houses nearby relatives when possible. This preserves the strength of the **nuru** and their **luma** and keeps the unity of their members while they pass through successive transformations and face the modern tendency toward individualism.

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<sup>47</sup>Gossips claim that the President's family bought most of the buildings at crossroads in the capital city.

## Appendix Two

### THE FIFTEEN NURU OF MANUSA

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My purpose here is to help the reader to identify the key social units which compose the community under study as I repeatedly return to them looking at their history, social relationship, land, etc.

#### MOTHER AND BRANCH HOUSES, SOA AFFILIATION AND LAND SITUATION

The **hena upui** are the **nuru** who claim a traditional ritual function in the community settled around Nuruitu (Seven Nuru), the ritual centre of Manusa. I call follower **nuru** the 'newcomers', 'those who came after' (**ana mulini**), who do not hold a traditional function, although they may have a modern administrative or religious role in the community. In 1991/92, when I did fieldwork, there were 7 **hena upui** and 8 followers **nuru** in Manusa.

Numbers **up to 79** correspond to household heads and their Houses on the village map (Appendix 2.1), 76 of them are of Alune origin. The numbers **over 79** are deceased (†) important former household heads (no house on village map).

#### Residence & affiliation

Many Houses have disappeared since the beginning of this century, decimated by epidemics (1918-20), wars and diaspora. Most **nuru** have Houses scattered all over 'wele Telu Batai, a region shared by two distinct language groups, the Alune and the Wemale. Within two generations (ego 's children), residence is the main determinant of affiliation into the language and traditions of one group or the other.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>When a House comes from another settlement I indicate its language group and river valley, according to its **batai**, river-trunk, e.g. Manusa (Alune Sapalewa), Japio (Wemale Tala).



## Soa

In the years 1910-15 the Dutch administration regrouped all the Houses of the 'Wele Telu mountains in *soa* (see Chapter Six) and gathered them in villages. The settlement of Manusa was made up of three *soa*. *Soa* are sometime referred as **nuru ela**: large **nuru**. Each *soa* grouped Houses of 6 **nuru**. The three *soa* of the Manusa were Latue, Nyak, and Wemay, abbreviated as L= Latue, N= Nyak, W= Wemay.

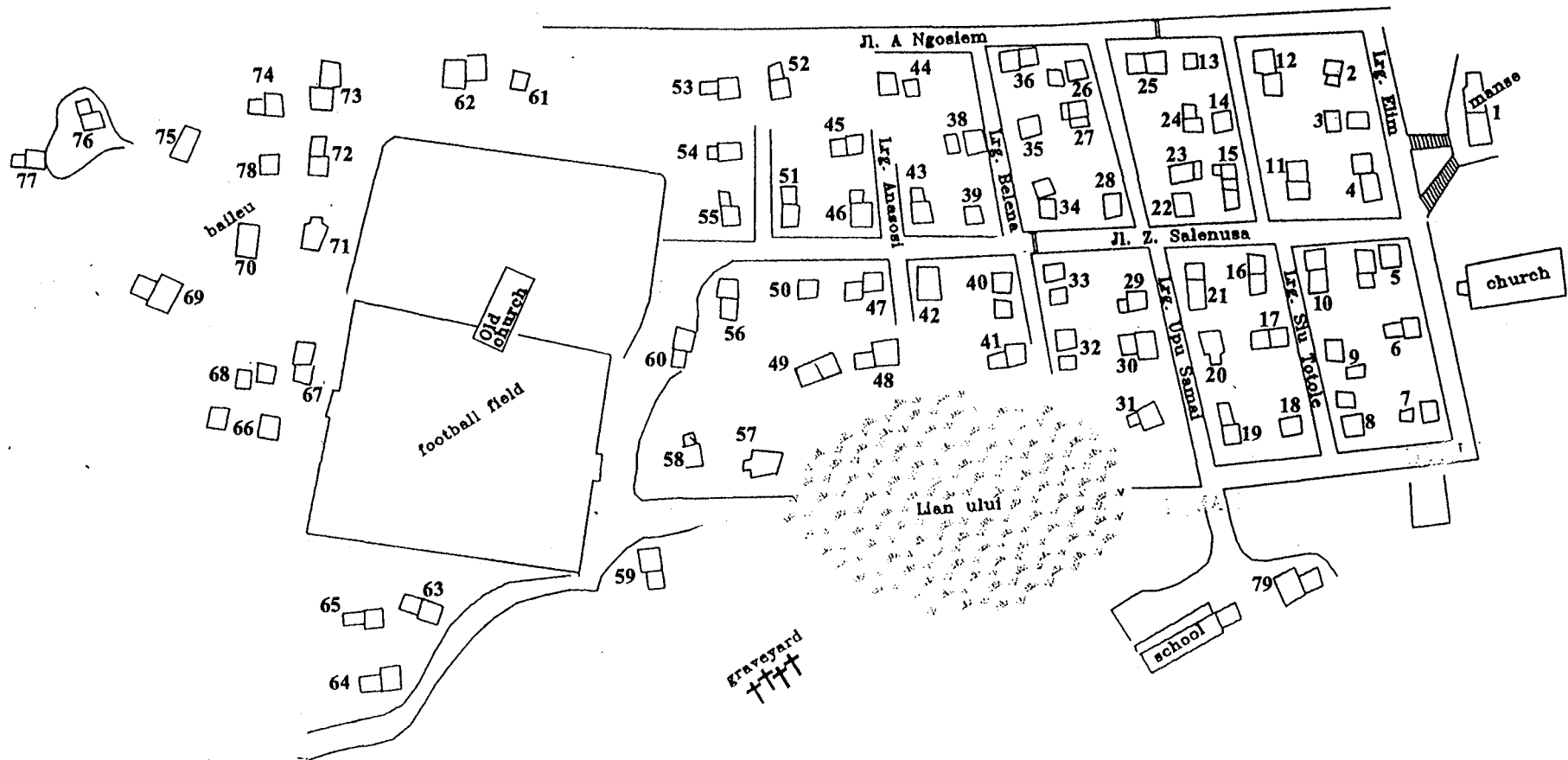
## Ordering hena upui, followers and Houses

The way I order the seven **hena upui** is arbitrary (no one gave me a specific order). However I come to it by following the narratives and people's sayings. Samai (Souwei) and Latuelamena (Tibali) were the original pair of e/y brothers, **latu** 'lords', and founding ancestors of the **hena**. Matoke was the third **latu** and ritual performer. Nyak was the right hand, assistant of Matoke and unchallenged autochthonous (the site of their hearth shrine is remembered on their land). When he came, Maslebu, the warlord, replaced Latuelamena as third **latu**. Upon arrival, Matital became the left hand (messenger). Neyte, the peace maker, was the last to arrive 'before the **sisine** (village meeting platform, symbol of the social order of the **hena**) was completed'. Follower **nuru** are simply ordered according to their importance in size.

Ordering the House of each **nuru** as first, second etc, is also a convention I use for the sake of clarity. I have ranked the mother Houses (**luma inai**) before the branch houses (**luma sanai**) following the elder/younger local system of precedence and then according to their importance A) because of their position in the village hierarchy (acknowledged e/y lines and functions in the community) and/or B) according to their size (number of members).

## Land

Finally, where people have their land in Manusa is significant to understand their relationships. The location of each **hena upui** on the land also coincides with an aspect of their ritual function. The newcomers, allies or sons-in-law are inserted on the body of the land and given a share of it in custody. The *soa* division is also visible on the land distribution. As I introduce each **nuru** I briefly indicate where it 'sits' (**due**) on the body and beside who (I am not using the Alune directional system).



APP. 2.1 VILLAGE HOUSEHOLDS



## THE SEVEN HENA UPUI

- I. **Souwei** represented by its branch **Reane** with one household (4), *Soa Latue (L)*
- II. **Latuelamena** represented by **Tibali** with 3 households (53, 65, 66), *Soa Nyak (N)*
- III. **Matoke** with 8 households (55, 27, 58, 76, 17, 21, 32, 31), *Soa Wemay (W)*
- IV. **Nyak** with 4 households (14, 26, 43, 49), *Soa Nyak*
- V. **Maslebu** with seven households (10, 16, 68, 13, 41, 57, 73) *Soa Wemay*
- VI. **Matital** with seven households (77, 51, 64, 46, 54, 22, 20), *Soa Wemay*
- VII. **Neyte** with eleven households (2, 7, 8, 11, 15, 28, 30, 34, 35, 36, 40) *Soa Wemay*

### I. Nuru SOUWEI

Reane with one household (4), head of *soa* Latue

Souwei (**sou** word, history, **wei** source, origin) is the **nuru** of the **tapele upui**, the lord of the land of Manusa and its children villages Rumbatu and Rumberu (Alune Tala). Its great ancestor Samai is the originator of the **hena** at the origin of its name and function in the region. Reane is one branch House of Souwei and, for the time being, its only representative in Manusa.

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
4	luma inai Reane	L	Ruben	Z in 65, FBD in 36

**Land:** Tauli Ela (Ruben FF), the first remembered ruler (1920-25) of Manusa distributed land to whoever came and asked for some, said Ruben. That way, he assembled a lot of people and it became a large **hena**.<sup>2</sup> The land of Souwei is the trunk of the body, lying along the southern bank of 'we Tau between Matoke (the ritual performer) and Nyak (the right hand). Their main **lusune** (or **lusu**: 'orchard', 'long term plantations') are in Balelaia, Ile'wa and Walina (where the roofing material for the men's initiation house of the Kakehan was always collected).<sup>3</sup> They also have several **mlinu** ('garden', 'field').

<sup>2</sup>This is why he is remembered as Tauli uwei: the Great Progenitor.

<sup>3</sup>The house itself was on **tana moli**, tabooed land. The detail is not trivial, the roof symbolically encompassed the whole house.

## II. Nuru TIBALI

3 households (53, 65, 66) in 2 Houses (*soa* Nyak)

Latuelamena (**latu ela mena** the big lord in the front), elder brother of the lord of the land, holds a prominent function in the narrative of Manusa. Turukai, the branch House of Tibali who is the representative of Latuelamena in Manusa, is nicknamed **ana sosi** the ignorant child.<sup>4</sup> His symbolic function now seems obsolete, but the **nuru** has still a claim on a large fraction of the land of the **hena**. Kapitan (see below) claims to be a branch of Tibali, severed a long time ago.

### *First House (luma inai)*

The branch Latuelamena (Ana sosi)

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
66	luma inai Turukai	N	Peneas	

### *Second House (luma sanai)*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
65	luma inai Soriale	N	Isaac	married 4 Z his S is ruler in Rumberu
53	luma inai Soriale	N	Samuel	65 F and 53 F were eB/yB

The Tibali Soriale came to Manusa from the south western peninsula of Huamual 4 gen. before n° 65. They have Houses in other villages in the region.

**Land:** the land of Tibali lies on the northern bank of the Tau, It is the ancient path to Eti, the river **batai** of the 'eB' (Latuelamena) at the coast, south west of the **hena**. Tibali assured the link with and protected the path to Eti. The present village settlement is on Tibali traditional land (this is contested by Souwei). On the body of the land, Tibali is between his 'yB' Souwei (the lord of the land) and Matital (the left hand).

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<sup>4</sup>The narrative is in chapter 3.

66 has a lot of **tape amane** ('empty land') because the Tibali are all gone.

### III. Nuru MATOKE

8 households (27 in house 31, 55, 17, 21, 76, 32, 58) in 4 Houses. (*soa* Wemay)

Matoke (**Maetae**) is the **nuru** of the traditional ritual performer of Nuruitu. (**maetae** refers to the offering to the pig stone and the cloth wrapped around the trophy head). Nobody in Manusa could/would tell me their narrative of origin.<sup>5</sup>

#### *First House (luma inai)*

Lumela'e (Luma Ela'e: Big House) is the elder House of Matoke in Manusa. The last ancestor remembered is the ritual performer † Pati Lolane Lumela'e Omoela. His son, † Hendrik (90), had only sisters and daughters. He adopted 27, his eDS to continue his line (and assume the function). His yZ had a natural child now *camat*.

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
27	Lumela'e	W	Erasmus	MZ in 35, WG in 30, MZD in 44 classif. FZ Dorina (with D in 22). 27 is in position of MBS (in fact MBDS) of the local <i>camat</i> his FFZS.

#### *Second House (nuru ela)*

The House of † Fredek (88), came from the child village of Rumbatu (Alune Tala). This is the line of the first and second *raja* of Manusa Luhanela (1925-30) and Hamina Fredek (1935-69). They claim to be related to the Lumela'e. The function of *raja* supports their genealogical claim although it can not be traced. Fredek' s line is regarded as the legitimate ruling House: **nuru ela**: 'great **nuru**' (*bangsa raja*).

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<sup>5</sup>The **nuru** has a branch among the Naulu people where (...) 'the Matoke clan ... has a particular status and duties by virtue of his patrilineal ancestor being the first mortal. In him is vested ritual guardianship of all land and sacred *suane*.' Ellen op.cit. 1978 p.15. *Suane*: ritual house of the Naulu village. I think that Matoke, a non Alune name (in Alune Maeta'e), is, like **latu**, a name referring to an honorific title. Matoke is the title given to the lord of the land by the Naulu.

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
31	Nuru Ela	W	Josina	Z in 47, HBS in 55, DH in 31
55		W	Max	Fredek S (88) FBW + FBD in 31, FBD in 47

Josina 31 (born Maslebu) is Fredek 's † BW Max oB is teacher at the coast and potential next *raja*. The function has been suppressed but people say they would elect him as village head if (only) he was returning to the **hena**.

(According to Silas Matoke 89, Fredek's line was a **luma sanai** and only the line of 90 is the real **latu nuru** i.e. the Lumaela'e).

### *Third House (luma bina)*

Matoke's function is too important in Manusa to let any of its House or line fade away. Beside the adoption practiced by the Lumela'e, some women of other lines without male descent had children out of wedlock who belonged to their House and acted as caretakers until a male heir could continue the line. The lines perpetuated that way (S of women) are called **luma bina**, female House. There is two **luma bina** lines Matoke in Manusa.

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
89	luma bina	W	Silas	89 is 21 F & 17 MMZS. (lives in 21)
17	luma bina	W	Okniel	MMZSS in 21
21	luma bina	W	Nikolas	FMZDS in 17, F in 21

Silas 89 is the eldest Matoke man alive (and one of my main informants). 17 MM and 21 FM are Z (D of Maitae), Matoke 17 M and 21 F are their children out of wedlock. Silas says that 27, 31,55,17 and 21 have a common ancestor at his MFFF gen. that would link them to the Lumaela'e of pati Lolane but he can not trace this precisely.

### *Fourth House (luma sanai)*

The branch House **luma sanai** Matoke does not trace any link with the other Matoke Houses of Manusa. The ancestors are only remembered until gen+2 (four brothers) of which only the last born, Iena F of Dobola, has descent in Manusa.

## Dobola Children:

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
58	luma sanai	W	Aser	B in 76, Z in 72 tua agama
76	luma sanai	W	Ruben ('tinggi')	B in 58, Z in 72 tua agama

Unidentified: (I am missing his genealogy, there are two Ruben Matoke in Manusa)

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
32	?	W (?)	Ruben ('pende')	WyB, WB in 33,

**Land:** the land of Matoke (**luma inai**), the ritual performer is near Nuruitu, the head of the body. It lies along both banks of 'we Tau between the settlement (where offerings were prepared) and the ritual centre (where the ritual performer brought them). The land of Matoke (l.inai) is adjacent to Souwei (the lord of the land), Nyak, its right hand and ritual assistant, and to several newcomers (Souhaly, Ruspanah, Kapitan).

1st House: 27 has its main **lusune** in Etena, Batu Mariak, Nulu Lima and Mapone (the former settlement of Manusa) and at 'we Name Matai (?).

2nd House: 31 and 55 still have land in Rumberu (the child village they come from), **lusune** at Nuname Batai, and trees at Palebutai (on Matital 's land).

3rd House: 89, 21 their main **Lusune** are at Lia'we (or Liawe), Name, Nahena, and Lele Bubui.

4th House: 58, 76 (?) (Matoke has also small pieces of land at 'we Malae on the way to Riring and at 'we Usu on the path to Rumbatu)

#### IV. Nuru NYAK

3 households (14, 26, 43) in 1 House (soa Nyak)

Nyak or Nia'we means 'Snake' (the utmost taboo for Alune). The **nuru** Nyak has two main branches in the region: Nyak Makarawe (extinct in Manusa but well represented in its child village Rumberu) and Nyak Mawene (**mawen:** ritual performer). The branch of Nyak in Manusa is Nyak Mawene. The Nyak Mawene have two branches, one Alune and one Wemale. To distinguish themselves the Nyak Mawene Alune call themselves only Nyak and the Nyak Mawene Wemale only Mawene.



*House Nia'we (luma inai)*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
43	luma inai	N	Sepianus	F & Z in 49 Z in 74
14	luma inai	N	Jonas	Village's Secretary MBS 43, MBD in 74, & 49
91		N	Domingus	village elder, live in 26
26		N	Stephen	+F 91. FZ in 35, 1/2 FB in
25				FZS in 27

All the Nyak in Manusa claim a common set of male siblings at gen. FFF of adults: They are said to have been 7 brothers but their birth order is not remembered. Two of these 7 brothers have male descent in the village today: 43 (and his father Marten) and his FZC :14 and 26 (and his father Domingus). One of the 7 ancestors has a SD married in 40.

43 and 14 called themselves **luma inai**, possibly because they are more influential than 26 or because their ancestor was the eB or because Jonas is the secretary of the village.

**land:** The land of Nyak is the right hand of the body, lying on the southern bank of 'we Tau between Souwei (the lord of the land) and the boundaries with the child village of Rumbatu. Nyak also has some land beside Matoke (of whom he is the ritual assistant). All Nyak share the same *dati* but each line has several **lusune** of its own.<sup>6</sup>

**V. Nuru MASLEBU**

7 households (10, 68, 16, 73, 13, 41, 57) in 4 Houses (*Soa Wemay*)

Maslebu is the **nuru** of the **amalesi**, the war lord, head of the war leaders, **pitane** (*kapitan*) of the **hena** and explorer of new ground. According to the lord of the land, when Latuelamena went away Latu Maslebu replaced him because there should always be three

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<sup>6</sup>At the coast, a *dati*, (cultivated land), is regarded as an administrative unit of people in relation to service (tax) commitment on the one hand and the use of land on the other. *Dusun* are long term plantations and groves. Every *dusun* belongs to a *dati*-unit. *Dati* and *dusun* are all named and are registered (in Ambon in 1814). A *dati*-unit encompass all the adult members of the family branch that has rights on this specific land. If a *dati* unit dies out or moves away, its *dati* and *dusun* land return to the village communal land. In Manusa, where shifting cultivation is the current practice, the concept of *dati* is also used but it refers to the land on which a family has shared plantations (**lusune**) and may make gardens. It is administrated by the **ntuane dati**.

**latu** (Souwei, Matoke, Latuelamena/ Maslebu). Maslebu's function is to watch the landward region of the **hena** (the branches of Matoke and Souwei in the child village of Rumberu watch the seaward). To do so, they had a large post house in Watului on the way to Riring (Alune Sapalewa) where they came from and with whom they still exchange women. Their famous ancestor was Siu Totole. Siu Totole, whose grave site is on Maslebu's land, is remembered as a trickster figure (see narratives).

***First House (luma inai)***

**Luma inai** : 10, 68,16,

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
10	luma inai	W	Daniel	
68	luma inai	W	Dobert	B in 16, FFZDS in 73, FFBSS in 10
16	luma inai	W	Arilius	B in 68, FFZDS in 73, FFBSS in 10

10 Daniel at gen +1 says he is related to 68 Dobert and 16 Arilius as they have a pair of B at FF gen.(+3). However it may be an error of Daniel (who was born after the death of his FB gen +2). Thus their rel. may either be made up or to be found at gen +3. 10 admits not knowing for sure the birth order or his F and FB but gives himself as eBS either because his FF was indeed the eB either because 10 was *pejawat* and is now Church secretary, the only permanent position of power in the village, which makes him a de facto elder.

***Second House (lumabina)***

Lumabina 93, 73

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
93 + 73	Lumabina	W	Obet + S Melchias	93

Obet, may be related to the **luma inai** as a FFZDS. He is an *anak luar* and makes a **luma bina**. 93 has given the role of household head to his S Melkias in house 73. In 73 lives 93 and his yD + H. All the members of that line who are living in Manusa are in house 73.

*Third House (luma sanai)***Luma sanai 13**

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
13		W	Simon	FZS 56, FZD in 66, FBDS 30, FBDS in 27

13 is **luma sanai** and does not mention a relationship with the **luma inai** (and vice versa). 13 has no relative in direct male line in Manusa (except his 2 young unmarried sons).

*Fourth House (luma sanai)***Luma sanai 41, 57**

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
41			Onesimus	1/2B of 57 M and Z in 59
57			Asperos	1/2B of 41 M and Z in 59

41 and 57 have the same father but different mothers. They are not related to the other Maslebu in Manusa.

There were also 2 women born Maslebu in 51 (Z and successive W of 51. When Norce the eZ died, Yuspina the yZ married her oZ H). They are not mentioned as relatives by 10, 68, 16, 73, nor 13 (the marriage of 2 successive Z with the same man is improper).

**Land:** the land of Maslebu spreads along the southern bank of the Sapalewa west of the Tau, watching over this northern region of the **hena** between Matital (the left hand) from whom they received land, and the boundaries with Riring the **anakota** of the Sapalewa **batai** where they come from. The other bank of the Sapalewa is **tape malenete** (empty land: i.e. hunting ground) and the contested boundaries with Lohia Tala. The two villages are not in a very friendly relationship.

**Luma inai :** **lusune** from 'we Malae to 'we 'E. Each line has its own gardens and plantations in that area. I do not know precisely where the **luma sanai** have their **lusune** and garden. Their *ntuan dati* is Simon 13 (a **luma sanai** who has land far away to the east after Neyte).

## VI. Nuru MATITAL

7 households (77, 51, 64, 54, 46, 22, 20) in 2 Houses (*Soa Wemay*)

The **nuru** Matital, **ama tita** (**ama**: father, **tita**: bridge/to 'bring news', to 'patrol') hold the position of **alamane** (*merinjo*) the liaison man and messenger between all the Houses of the community. The **ama tita** was also responsible for gathering the boys for initiation. Just as Nyak was the right hand of the ritual performer, Matital was the left hand of the Saniri. The elder (77) of the **luma inai** Matital in Manusa said that their House came from Lumoli (Alune Eti) before the meeting house **sisine** (*baileo*) of Nuruitu (i.e. the present social order of Seven Nuru) was completed. Thus they held a post in it (i.e. a ritual function in the community). Matital Houses were also found in Nuruwe (Alune Eti) and in Nusuali (Alune Sapalewa) (Jensen 1939 p.137). There was also a **latu** Matitale at Sohue (Tauern 1918 p.158) a community of Uli Batai (Wemale Sapalewa). Thus like Nyak and Neyte, the **nuru** Matital might have Alune and Wemale branches.

### *First House (luma inai)*

**Luma inai** : 77, 51,64 and their FBS: 46 & 54

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
77	luma inai	W	Derek	eB of 51 & 64 Z in 13}
51	luma inai	W	Mihuel	B of 77 & 64 Z in 13} FBS 54 & 46
64	luma inai	W	Yebta	yB of 51 & 77 Z in 13} FBD in 52
54	luma inai	W	Franz	eB of 46 } FeBS :77, 51, 64
46	luma inai	W	Hans	yB of 54 }FeBD in 13 Z in 52

### *Second house (luma sanai)*

**Luma sanai** : 22

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
22	luma sanai	W	Yance	

Yance †F was Lodik but no one knows 22 FF. The **luma inai** does not mentioned being related to 22. If he is related to them it is not before the gen of FFF siblings and it is not recollected. 22 has in his house his WM (M of the *camat*) and his ZC (*a. luar* who he adopted as he has no child) + ZH 18. (Should land become a problem he has given his Z Children the proper political alliances in the outside world.)

n° 20 Rupil is a new teacher with an outside wife (he was not mentioned by the **luma inai** as they would have, if he had been associated).

**Land:** the land of Matital is the left hand of the body, It lies around 'Wana Bubui (a high mountain) in the west of the settlement between Maslebu in the north and Ruspanah in the south. Matital has 6 main **lusune** (if one belongs to 22 I do not know which one): Loin Ului, Tasoia, and at 'we Lalua and 'we 'E. Yebta (64) is in Popota, Balelaia and Usuleini. Derek 77 is the *ntuan dati*. Matital claim they gave a share of their land to Maslebu when these arrived in Manusa as both were **pitane** (war leaders) (NB Maslebu does not contest this but who arrived first is discussed).

## VII. Nuru NEYTE

11 households (2, 7, 8, 11, 15, 28, 30, 34, 35, 36, 40) in 3 Houses (*Soa Wemay*)

In number of members, Neyte (**nikite** or **ni'ite**: 'fern tree') is the largest **nuru** in Manusa. Their ancestors came from Sumite (Wemale middle Tala valley). Their famous ancestors in Manusa are a pair of brothers Belena and Lilike who acted as peace makers between Manusa and Japio Batai (Wemale) in 1914 when the neighbouring communities were head-hunting each other. In Manusa, the Neyte claim the rights over a large section of the land of the **hena** (at the border with Japio Wemale). Their narrative says that the **sisine** of Manusa was completed with their arrival as **ama nili** (*saniri*) men. They were welcomed on Manusa Alune territory and settled a hamlet in Puwela.<sup>7</sup> In 1916, the *soa* system forced into a single settlement all the Houses of the **hena** that were formerly scattered in several hamlets. The *soa* Wemay (=Wemale) gathered the Houses of the northern part of the **hena** among which were the Neyte (still speaking Wemale at that time).

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<sup>7</sup>I have traced, in Dutch and German archives, their arrival in Manusa around the turn of the century (between 1905 and 1908). They left Sumite Wemale when the Dutch occupation scattered their community (Sachse 1922 p.173).

**First House (luma inai)**

**Luma inai** (34, 40 - 35, 36, 28 - 11, 2, 8)

The **luma inai** has 2 large branches (in that case lines): the descendants of † Belena and the descendants of † Amital. They do not recollect a common ancestor at Belena and Amital generation (FFF or FFFF gen) but nevertheless acknowledge all of the following as members of the **luma inai** (this makes it the largest and most powerful House of the **hena**).

**-First line**

Made up of the C, CC and CCC of Belena †

Belena had two S: eB Mahone † 95 and yB Lilike † 96

Mahone 95 had 1 S: Jusup † (Jussuf) who had two S: 34 & 40 and one D in 5 and one D in 56

Lilike 96 had 2 sons: eS: 35 + S 36 & yS 28 + D in 79

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
34	luma inai	W	Marten	B of 40 and of 5W} FBC of 28 & 35
40	"		Luther	B of 34 and of 5 W} FFBS of 36 & 79
35	(Pa Saniri)		Lambert	F of 36, oB of 28, FFBS of 34 40 5W,
36	(Pejabat 1992)		Elias	S of 35, BS of 28, FBS of 79, FFBS of 34, 40, & 5W
28			Bernard	yB of 35, F of 79, FB of 36, FFBS of 34, 40 & 5W

**-Second line**

Made up of the C and CC of Amital †

Amital had two S : eB Karel † 80 and yB Zakaria † 81

Karel † 80 had 2 S n° 11 & 2 and two D in 75 & 17

Zakaria † 81 had one S n° 8 [8 has a 1/2 Z Souhaly Adalaeda in 2 (a. luar)]

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
11	luma inai	W	Gerson	eB of 2, B of 33 W and 75 W
2	luma inai	W	Jacobis	yB of 11, B of 33 W and 75 W
8	luma inai	W		S of 81, BS of 80

There are two **luma sanai** (7 - 30, 15) that do not recall any common ancestor between themselves or with the **luma inai**.

One branch is Nehemia S n°7 and his Z in 22. The other branch is made of the sons of Pesai † (Petrus) who had two S n°30 + D in 27 and 15.

### *Second House (luma sanai)*

#### **Luma sanai (7)**

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
7	luma sanai	W	Berkolius	with F: Nehemia, W and 6 unmarried C. B of 22W. His yB Yotam works at coast

Berkolius is *wakil pendeta*, *Majelis* and *Kekes* combining 3 important positions in the Church. His childless sister is in 22 (strategic house), 8 of their siblings are dead (without children), his FB & FZ married out (in Lohia Tala and Kairatu - i.e. Berkolius has outside alliances and access) or died, but his †FB Hieronimus, had 4 children now with his remarried widow in 66. He is from Manusa but from a **luma sanai**. His W is Maslebu. With strength of numbers his descendants could become a strategic house, like 10 the power of his religious position is a way to compensate the default of number.

### *Third House (luma sanai)*

#### **Luma sanai (30, 15)**

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
30	luma sanai	W	Otniel	B in 15, D 27W
15	"		Albert	B in 30

The B Otniel 30 & Albert 15 (+27W) are from Rumbatu and form a **luma sanai**. Otniel was an *a. luar* of Esau Neyte (mother Hermalina Maslebu). As he was sick the Maslebu gave him to Neyte. However this is not what is shown in the genealogy he gave.

**Land:** the land of Neyte spreads along the southern bank of the Sapalewa mainly east of the Tau, watching over this eastern region of the **hena** between Souhaly (the present custodian of Nuruitu), Kapitan and the boundaries with Japio Batai (Wemale - upper Tala). The other bank of the Sapalewa is **tape malenete** (empty land) a vast and rich hunting ground. Neyte are also the custodians of some places along the path followed by the ancestors when they went down from the Nunusaku. These places are recalled in the narrative of the **hena** (see the Path of the Ancestors).

Thus "newcomers" like Neyte or Souhaly can be made the custodians of most autochthonous places, however only the Souwei (**sou:** history, language **wei:** source origin) may own the narrative, i.e. the history that is engraved in their name itself.

#### FOLLOWER NURU

Listed by size (with their *soa* affiliation).

<b>VIII. Ruspanah</b> ten households:	two (74, 75) in <i>soa</i> L, three (6, 56, 45) in <i>soa</i> Wemay & five (62, 42, 25, 38, 61) in <i>soa</i> Nyak
<b>IX. Kapitan</b> seven households	(24, 39, 69, 3, 18, 52) in <i>soa</i> Nyak
<b>X. Souhaly</b> five households	four households (5, 9, 19, 47) in <i>soa</i> Wemay & one (63) in <i>soa</i> Nyak
<b>XI. Akolo</b> four households	4 households (29, 49, 72, 33) in <i>soa</i> Latue,
<b>XII. Makwabane</b> three households	(67, 60, 50) in <i>soa</i> Latue
<b>XIII. Rumapasal</b> one household	(48) in <i>soa</i> Nyak
<b>XIV. Latuelake</b> one household	(44) in <i>soa</i> Latue
<b>XV. Tosile</b> one household	(59) in <i>soa</i> Latue

NB. while all the Houses (**luma inai** and **luma sanai**) of the founding **nuru** gathered under a single *soa* affiliation, the Houses of some following **nuru** spread over 2 or 3 *soa* (Ruspanah, Souhaly). This reflects later arrivals, disagreements between Houses or faction in the community.



## VIII. Nuru RUSPANAH

10 households in 4 Houses (*Soa* Wemay and Nyak)

Two households (74, 75) in *soa* Latue, + three households (6, 56, 45) in *soa* Wemay + five households (62, 42, 25, 38, 61) in *soa* Nyak

The Ruspanah of Manusa maintain they sprouted from 'we Pana in the Alune Eti region. It is a large **nuru** with many House in the Alune Sapalewa region (Manusa, Rumbatu Rumberu, Rumasoal, Buria, and mainly in Tani'wel and Murnaten). The name (**luma** Pana) comes from the **pana** tree.<sup>8</sup> There are (at least) six branches of Ruspanah: the trunk: Ririne (Liline: from the Tala region cf. De Vries 1927 p.203), Laene (**upu laene**: term used by elders to address a friend of the same age group), Pelatu (name of their ancestor), Baralatu (in Lohia Sapalewa), Pana Mosole (**pana** of the forest), Soi Puti (White Betel).

There are three branches of Ruspanah in Manusa: the **luma inai** Ririne, the elder one in the **hena**, the **luma** Pelatu and the **luma** Soi Puti. They form four Houses. The Soi Puti who branched from Pelatu (at FFF gen.?) became an influential House in Manusa and refer to themselves as a **luma inai** (since they maintain they are the first Soi putih and have a **luma binai**, a female house). However the elder from the first House said that in Manusa, when the **nuru** (Ruspanah) is considered, Ririne is the **L. inai** while all the others (Pelatu, Soi Puti and its L. Bina) are **luma sanai**. The new village head (1995) comes from that **nuru**.

### *First House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
74	luma inai Ririne	L	Albert	F of 75, D in 69 (Roni'W) + S, SW, + D & 2 DD ( <i>a. luar</i> )
75	"	L	Justen	S of 74, Z in 69 (Roni'W) + WyB

<sup>8</sup>A flower of that tree fell in the water while two of their maidens were bathing. The girls were petrified and their group received the name of the tree. Another version refers to the fruit that explodes and spreads its seeds (like their **nuru** which multiplied and scattered over the region).

*Second House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
56	L. inai Pelatu	W	Librek	eB of 6, MBS of 45, FFBS of 62 & 42 + D & DH, D in 56 (all S married out) he married 95D (of <i>soa</i> W)
6		W	Anton	yB of 56, MBS of 45, FFBS of 62 & 42 + S, SW & SS, D in 16.
45		W	Frankois	FZS of 56 & 6, FFZS of 62 & 42 Church treasurer and elder.

*Third House (Pelatu)*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
62	L. inai Soi Puti	N	Immanuel	FBSS of 56 & 6, 1/2eB of 42 (same F) School head master, Z is camat'W
42		N	Tonci	1/2 yB of 62 (same F) FBSS of 56 & 6

*Forth House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
25	L.Bina Soi Puti	N	Moritz	1/2 B (same M) of 26 & 35W F of 38 & 61, D in 48, 57, 71
38		N	Eliaser	S of 25, B of 61
61		N	Christian	S of 25, B of 38

**Land:** the first House, 74, 75, has its **lusune** in the south west at 'we Usua: Tibu, Tabatai, and their sago plantation at Ai Lebuinai with other people of *soa* Latue to which they belong.

The second House, 56, 6, 62 and 25, share the same **lusune** area at 'we Ma'noula in the north, the section of *soa* Wemay to which they belong and several minor **lusune** and garden. Librek is their *ntuan dati*. 'We Ma'noula area is beside Maslebu and Neyte (*soa* Wemay). All the S of Librek 56 are away; one of his D and her H (Tosile, who has little land) stay

with the elder couple to help them, which gives the young couple access to plenty of land and **lusune**. N°45, a child out of wedlock (**ana bina**: woman'child) has his own **lusune** in the north at Mlutuai ('we Tau near Marpone), Mluputi (White Eel) and Mutati.

The third House, 62 also claims some rights on Ma'noula. His **lusune dati** is at 'we Lata (in the section of *soa* Nyak to which he belongs) and his main **lusune** at liu Meneta ('we Tau). He also has other **lusune** at Wawa in the area of the former settlement of *soa* Nyak. However, as the village school head master (and affine of the *camat*) he can obtain as much land as he wants from the village land. Thus, he also has land at Name matai, Welua, Usumatai, Lituwe Bubui etc.

The fourth and female House, 25 and his sons have also their share of Ma'noula (in the *soa* Wemay section although they joined in *soa* Nyak).

## IX. Nuru KAPITAN

7 households in 3 Houses (69, 3, 24, 39 - 52 - 12, 18) (*soa* Nyak)

Kapitan (**luma** Pitane) claims to be a branch of Tibali severed a long time ago (in Manusa, they don't inter-marry, except one case of 'adoption' of a widow which is not regarded as a marriage). During the early time of *order baru*, Adrianus (69) became *raja* from 1979 to 1989. He bought with plates the right to this title from Matoke. There is some confusion between who is member of the **luma inai** and who is a member of the **luma sanai** because both branches have been using the same (individual's) names for several generations.

### *First House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
69	luma inai	N	Adrianus	FBS of 3, S of 83, <i>raja</i> 79-89 + S Roni (teacher)
3			Amus	FBS of 69, S of 82
24			Simson	adopted <i>a. luar</i> - F of 39 FBS of 69 and 3
39			Antony	S of 24



Largely represented in Rumasoal and Riring (Alune Sapalewa), Souhaly is also a *soa* in that last village. N°9, the elder and *ntuan dati* (my main informant), said that people gave Souhaly this name from *sou* 'history' *alie* 'to turn upside down', because they had covered their garden shelter with leaves that were turned upside down. Another interpretation (Florey Alunedic 94) refers to the taboo sign (*soa buaia*) that are put on trees, garden or path (equivalent of Ambonese *pemali*). According to 9, the *nuru* Souhaly has 5 branches: Derine (an evergreen plant) the female younger House, Lumsanai, Maloa, Nunububui (Top of the Banyan) the elder male House, and Makulua (the trunk mother House). Another informant gives also Toweli and Lumbubui as branches of Souhaly in the south (Kamal). All the Souhaly now in Manusa are Makulua but they form one *luma inai* (the first House to arrive in Manusa) and two *luma sanai*. They are unrelated and, formerly, did not share the same ancestors' shrine.

### *First House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
9	luma inai		Ian	WD (Reane) WDD, Z (spinster). no S

### *Second House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
47	luma sanai		Ferdinand	B of 19, 1/2 Z in 28 FBS of 5 2 positions in Church,
19	luma sanai		Joseph	B of 47, Z in 28 FBS of 5
5			Hermanus	FBS of 47 and 19

### *Third House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
63	luma sanai		Daut	+ ZS (from Riring)

**Land:** Ile'wa and Pasala is the *lusune dati* of all the Souhaly in Manusa (around and including Nuruitu). This is a large area at the confluent of the Tau and Sapalewa rivers in the north east. It is the most sacred land of the *hena*, and the Souhaly's duty is to watch over

it. Most of this land is the *dati lusune* and *mlinu* of 9. It is beside Neyte with whom Souhaly regularly exchange women and Matoke. 9 has also a *mlinu* in Lasa Ului.

47, 19 and 5 inherited only a small *dati* from their fathers ( a pair of B), people say that they sometimes quarrel for the usufruct of the trees. 47 is respected for his gift of speech (inspired preacher).

47: his *dati* is at Batu wei and Bulu. He also has new *lusune* and *mlinu* at Tontetu and Ume Putile (cf Kapitan 18).

19: has almost no *lusune* only a small one in Bulu with 47.

5: his *lusune dati* is at Batu wei and Bulu, his *mlinu* are at We Ti Taseae and Sulela.

## XI. Nuru AKOLO

4 households in two Houses: Lumasai (29, 49, 72) and Makaruku (33) (*soa* Latue)

Akolo is a large *nuru* with several branches in the region. The (contested) e/y order of the branches is the following: Makaruku, Liline, Makarawe, Tani'wele, Lemosole, Leite, Lumpasale (48?), and Lumasana. In places certain branches have severed (and forgotten) their link with their trunk and only use their branch name.<sup>10</sup>

Octopianus (72) the elder and *ntuan dati* of *nuru* Akolo in Manusa, says that the origin story of the *nuru* started in the upper water of the Lau, an affluent of the Tala River (this region is shared by Alune and Wemale). Their great ancestor was the warrior-trickster Tanko Telie famous in the Wemale Tala region. Three generation ago, their ancestor Tebalia (or Teli apa) came to Manusa bringing a magic spell (*mleure e moli*) of invulnerability. He was given land and a D from the *nuru* lord of the land (this is probably why the first House is in *soa* Latue, the *soa* of the lord of the land).

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<sup>10</sup>Like with Nyak in Manusa, *nuru* names were also used as *soa* names. In Riring, the largest House of Akolo was Tani'wele and although it was a younger branch, it formed a *soa*. Although Makaruku was the elder House of Akolo, they join in the *soa* Tani'wele (under their junior branch). In certain contexts, the strength of number overcomes the (loose) e/y precedence within a *nuru*. A narrative of Riring recalls how the Liline, a large family of newcomers (another branch of Akolo) gave their name to the settlement.

*First House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
72	luma inai	L	Octopianus	B49 }
49		L	Adam	B72 }29 is their FBS
29		L	Johanis	FBS of 49 and 72

72, 49 and 29 have a pair of siblings at F gen.

*Second House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
33	Makaruku		Julianus	Z in 12, 30, 32 a yB in 32

Julianus, a young man in his thirties, is an example of how a newcomer can insert himself (and his children) in the **hena**, give Z a and obtain a W, land, and respectability. Julianus F and M were from Riring (*soa* Tani'wele). When he arrived in Manusa Julianus associated first with the first House of Akolo, a respected branch of Akolo that had already been there for several generations. He gave a Z to 12 (Kapitan) in *soa* Nyak, and two Z to *soa* Wemay (Neyte and Matoke) and received a W from Neyte (2 and 11 Z). Then he decided that his children should bear his branch name again: Makaruku, the oldest branch of Akolo (older than **luma sanai**). Thus he is allied to two founding **nuru**, has a link with each *soa*, and returned his sons to their rank of precedence in their own **nuru**. He is also a respected hunter, a great source of prestige in Manusa.

**Land:** the first House has its main **lusune** at Olia ('we La'wa) in *soa* Latue area, beside the Souwei who, upon arrival, gave them a woman and some land. The land of the second House is in the south west of the **hena**, beside Nyak, at 'we Usu where Makwabane, another recent newcomer, has also been given land. This area of the **hena** territory might become included in the portion of the land that the village will have to hand over to a transmigration program. It is a bit far from the present settlement but on the path to the coast and to Rumbatu, the child village. This makes it attractive for the younger people who go up and down more often.

**XII. Nuru MAKWABANE**

3 households (67, 60, - 50) in two Houses (*soa* Latue)

The Makwabane (**Ama'wabane**) came first to Lohia S. (Alune Sapalewa) and later were invited to join in Manusa. Makwabane is a branch of the **nuru** Suplatu (from the southern peninsula of Huamual. **Supu** to 'find', **latu** 'lord') but in Manusa they stand as a **nuru** by themselves and do not refer to their **nuru** trunk anymore. Their name derives from the '**wabane** tree. Their ancestors cut a fruit of that tree and from there flowed the river Timoli (?), where their branch originated. They used the '**wabane** leaves as a loincloth ('**wani** *tjidako*) although it was normally made with the bark of the **ai lumute**. The fruit of the '**wabane** is taboo (**moli**) for that **nuru**. Their great ancestor was Paseue, the head of the Kakehan (men's initiation brotherhood) who sat at the central post of the **sisine** (men's house).

### *First House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
50		L	Matheus	Z in Rumberu

Matheus works and lives at the coast most of the time where his children are going to school. His only Z is in Rumberu and his FB died without descent. He has no direct relative in Manusa, where he is not present enough to be influential.

### *Second House*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
60		L	Lenos	F & M in 60. FZ and her two S ( <i>a. luar</i> ) in 67
67		L	Melkianus	M and yB Effradus in 67 (both B are <i>a. luar</i> ). Former house of 60 F

**Land:** both Houses have their **lusune** in the south west of the **hena** (upper waters of the Tau river, south bank) near Akolo (cf. Akolo second House). 50, who plans to retire in Manusa, has several **lusune** (Plauna, Tapeuela, Lianue). He also has trees near the rivers Amloia, Lilala'wa, Tobalele and Lasaria.



**XIII. Nuru RUMAPASAL**

1 household (48) in *soa* N.

The **nuru** Rumapasal is lord of the land in Lohia T. (Tala Alune). Their name comes from the tree **ai pasale** *pohon gubasa* (?). Their famous ancestor in the **hena** was **pitane** (*kapitan*) Sabuna, who was Manusa's leader in the war against the Wemale from Kamarian at the beginning of the century. (They could also be a branch of Akolo: Lumpasale, but when I asked, they did not recall it).

**House Rumapasal**

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
48	luma inai (?)	N	Sepnat	Z in 76, W from 25, has 2 unmarried C

**Land:** Although he is now alone in the **hena**, Sepnat inherited a substantial **lusune** from his forefathers between the Nui and Tau rivers, in the area of *soa* Nyak to which he belongs.

**XIV. Nuru LATUELAKE**

1 household (44) in *soa* L.

A newcomer from Niniari (Sapalewa Alune), Yance works at the coast where his children go to school. He married a widow of **nuru** Reane. The family returns to Manusa for vacations. If his son had survived, Yance had made the right alliances (his son was courting a D of Neyte **luma inai** elder line) to start a future in Manusa.

**House Latuelake**

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
44	luma inai (?)	Latue	Yance	his † son was the father of 35DZ (a strategic house), his second W is a Reane

**Land:** Yance is permitted to make a garden (short term plantation) on village land but not to have a **lusune**. N° 35, the saniri man, F of the village head and grandfather of the child of Yance S (who, bears 35 name) said that if Yance and his family stayed permanently in the village and participated in local duties, they would receive land.

### XV. Nuru Tosile

1 household (59) in *soa* L

The Tosile are regarded as the descendants of the only family of Huku who was spared by Manusa people during the war between the two communities, because their ancestor had married a woman from Manusa (cf. the narrative collected by Jensen 1938 p.135). The rest of Huku's people fled to the Tala region, and Manusa built Marpone, its first village, on the site of Huku's former settlement. Topilus F was indeed from Huku (Alune Tala) and his M from Rumbatu (Alune Tala, child village).

#### *House Tosile*

number	House	soa	surname	kin rel
59	luma inai (?)	Latue	Topilus	S in 56 (with his WF), D in 29

2 families live in this household: Topilus and his WDH: Latue Robi (from a child village) who married Maslebu Balandina, Topilus WD from a first marriage.

**Land:** the Tosile have some **lusune** between the Nui and Tau rivers, in the area of *soa* Nyak although they belong to *soa* Latue. 59 is beside Rumapasal in the southern part of the village land near the path to the coast, with other newcomers.



## Appendix Three

### **THE PHYSICAL ENTITY OF THE LUMA**

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In this appendix, which supplements Chapter seven, I am concerned with the physical entity of ancient and modern Alune houses and buildings. I examine their spacial organisation, the social values embedded in their structure and some of the ritual practices which are associated with their construction or, in the past, constituted their *raison d'être*. Several changes have occurred in and around Manusa since the beginning of the century. As people's mode of settlement was altered circa 1910, and again in the 1970s (cf Appendix one), so also was their form of dwelling. Besides, the Ambonese zealots who converted the community to Christianity circa 1925 and completed the task in the mid 1950s, made sure that the men's ritual houses and all the family shrines were burned down. As these buildings and the sacred heirlooms they sheltered vanished, part of their history and purpose was lost for ever. An examination of both people's recollections of these buildings and the transformation of the material aspect of the house through time and changing contexts points to the elements of continuity and identity in Alune houses.

In the past decade, several collections of papers have exposed, along different lines of approach, various aspects of the house in eastern Indonesia and beyond.<sup>1</sup> I intend this gathering of ethnographic data about the Alune house to contribute to this on-going wider comparative study of the Austronesian houses.

#### **ANCIENT AND MODERN DWELLINGS**

As far as I know, there is no systematic detailed description of the traditional Alune houses. In order to 'reconstruct' them approximately, I have looked at photographic archives and

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<sup>1</sup>To mention only a few: C. Macdonald et al (eds) 1987; J.J. Fox (ed.) 1993; J. Carsten and S. Hugh-Jones (eds) 1995.

patched together the information supplied by my elderly informants with those provided by several authors.<sup>2</sup>

### The traditional **luma tetu**

The traditional houses or **luma tetu** ('house above') were raised on posts or poles of iron bamboo, the height of a man. They had a large four sided thatched roof that sloped down almost to the ground and also covered a spacious 'platform' (**lamine**) under or beside the house (see App.3.1. Main types of traditional houses). According to de Vries (1927 p.133) the average house was five by eight metres. The roof was (and often still is) made of overlapping layers of palm leaves fastened to split bamboo strips (**ata**). The houses had a front 'door' (**metu**) and a back opening that did not face each other. Some houses had small window-like openings in the front and side. The house was accessed by a 'ladder' (**elane**), usually with four rungs.<sup>3</sup> A few families still build simple but rather similar houses in their gardens nowadays. According to Tauern (1918, p.126) there were three types of Makahala (Alune) houses. In the first type he describes, the large roof acted as walls on three sides of the house. The single front wall had a door in the middle and a front balcony.<sup>4</sup> The two others types mentioned by Tauern were similar but one had no platform while the other had a platform with a roof but no enclosed area. This last one was in fact a garden 'shelter' (**tale**) or a meeting 'platform' (**sisine**).<sup>5</sup> Before the colonisation policies reached the mountain area, the raised houses (partly reproduced in contemporary kitchen buildings) usually housed at least three generations of relatives. However the single room was seldom crowded since everybody was away in the forest most of the time or sitting outside on the airy platform. When they were home, the unmarried men and the guests 'sat' (**due**) and slept outside 'on the platform' (**me lamine**) under or beside the house. According to Sachse (1907 p.64) some

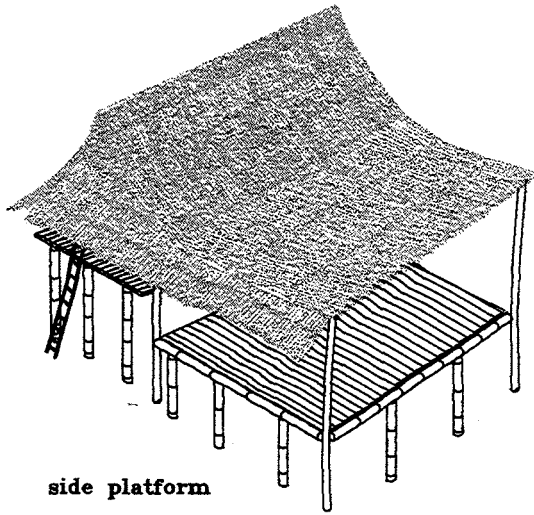
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<sup>2</sup>Mainly Sachse (1907, p.64-68); Tauern (1918 p 126.7 and plates 86-88); de Vries (1927 p.129-35) and Jensen (1948, p.31, 39, 40.,71,86- 88. and tables I-VII).

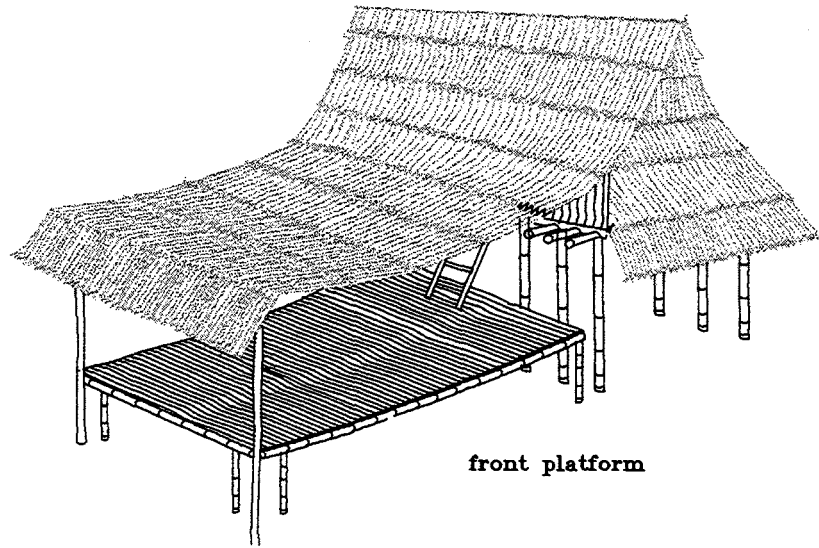
<sup>3</sup>Requesting a bride is **sa elane** to 'climb the ladder'. It implies entering within the house (and the House) further than on the outside platform where guests are usually entertained.

<sup>4</sup>This is a model I have not seen but it is documented (photography in Tauern 1918 plate 88) and also mentioned by Sachse (1907 p.64).

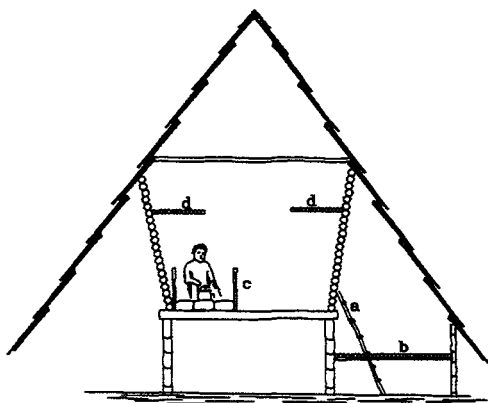
<sup>5</sup>This type of **sisine** can be seen in the foreground of photo n°36 in De Vries 1927 p.146.



side platform

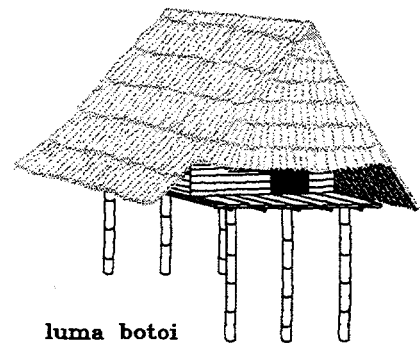


front platform



**Sectional view of a House in West Seram**  
(according to Sachse 1907 p.68)

a: ladder    c: hearth  
b: platform    d: shelf



luma botoi



large households had a separate kitchen which stood beside the traditional house. This side kitchen was used to host and feed the numerous guests and visiting relatives.<sup>6</sup>

### *Orientations*

The hearth should preferably be located 'seaward/downstream' (**mlau re**) since this is where the food should be prepared in traditional houses, while the sleeping area has to be 'landward/upstream' (**nda re**).<sup>7</sup> De Vries (1927 p.130) says that the hearth was on the side of Mt. Salaoewa, the dwelling of the spirits.<sup>8</sup> De Vries also says (op. cit., p.133) that people slept with their head upstream and their feet downstream.<sup>9</sup> Although some orientations like landward-seaward (mountain-sea) are relevant for the activities within the house, the building itself does not seem to have any clear nor strictly followed orientation, as is often the case in Eastern Indonesia. However the posts and beams that compose the house have to be oriented according to the position in which the tree from which they were made, grew. In the ancient house the vertical 'posts' (**lili**) of bamboo were planted 'base' side (**uwei**) down, 'top' (**bubui**) up. The elder in charge of the supervision of house building in Manusa said that formerly the horizontal 'beams' (**pelene** or **pelen.batai**) were set with base to the sunset and top to the sunrise. Later when the north-south direction was introduced by the Dutch, the top of the tree was oriented to the north if the house happened to be oriented north-south. The beams were also oriented so that they would not touch each other base against base or tip against tip but in a sequential arrangement: base, tip, base tip. Nowadays houses follow the street orientation, but posts and beams are still traditionally oriented (see figure App.3.3 Orientation of horizontal beams).

The house had, and still has, a front public 'masculine area' (**nia mo'wai**) where men sit, do little jobs, receive and honour guests, and a rear 'female space' (**nia bina**) where the 'hearth'

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<sup>6</sup>Beside their old fashioned raised house, which some elders of large families still keep on their land, is often built such a kitchen and covered guests' platform. However the house itself has its own hearth and rack in the usual place.

<sup>7</sup>*Masak di lau, tidur di darah*: 'cook seaward, sleep landward'.

<sup>8</sup>Mt Salahoewa or Solehua is a mountain ridge in the south of west Seram. For Manusa Mt Solehua is indeed seaward (to the south coast) but it is only one of the halts on the path of the dead where they stay until they are 'purified' enough to return to the Nunusaku. Close to the plywood factory of Wasarisa, Mt Soluhua is being systematically deforested by a lumber company. The elders who protested were accused of being 'communist' (or separatist).

<sup>9</sup>Nowadays the sleeping direction does not seem to matter much except for people still mindful of the traditions, but it is on the 'checklist' of the healer if someone becomes sick. Indeed, upstream is the direction to return to Nunusaku and only the dead should be laid down with the feet that way.



(**botoi**) is located and daily meals are taken, where most women's activities take place. However male and female orientations do not only refer to the activities performed in these different spaces.

An elder said that the 'door' (**metu**) used to 'go up and down' (**sa lolete, dulu lope**) to the raised house, is on the male side of the house and should preferably be oriented upstream (landward), while the other door on the female side, meant to 'throw used water away' (**honi'e 'wele**), should be oriented downstream (seaward).<sup>10</sup> Modern houses still have two doors. Oriented or not, one is male and located at the front male side of the house while the other one, at the rear, is female. These openings should not face each other. Failing to follow that rule would draw misfortune and loss into the house. Indeed, if the doors faced each other, a draft would continuously pass through the house and nothing would stay in. Furthermore, bad spirits, diseases or even death would also enter easily. Although the house is not clearly stated as being a living body, there are some parallelisms.<sup>11</sup> The elder said that in the ancient houses the back door had no ladder since it was not meant to be used to come in or out of the house but, like for the body, it was its evacuation place (to throw waters away).<sup>12</sup> Aggression is often directed at the house rather than directly at its owner. Cutting a house pole with a machete is regarded as a physical blow to the person himself, and calls for retaliation or compensation.<sup>13</sup>

### *Inside the traditional house*

The low walls linking the roof to the raised floor and the floor itself were made of dried 'sago midribs' (**punale**) or 'bamboo' (**tenine**). There was no bench or sitting platform within the house, but the floor could be covered with several layers of large pandanus 'mats' (**nianusai**) to sit or sleep on. Sometimes a narrow side shelf was fixed to the rafters. Over the 'hearth' (**au botoi: auwe: 'fire', botoi: 'hearth'**) was, and still is, a sizable 'rack' (**'webute**) to store wood and dry the meat. As nowadays, boiling and cooking was done in bamboo or in pots and woks traded by Chinese merchants. Under the ceiling, hooked to the rafters and

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<sup>10</sup>According to Jensen it is the opposite among the Wemale, although the orientation did not seem to be really strictly followed either, even in 1948.

<sup>11</sup>This is a recurrent model among Austronesian societies. For example in Roti (Fox in op. cit 1993a p.15). N.L. Kana signals also the image of a living being in the symbolism of the Savunese house (1980 p.228).

<sup>12</sup>A Dutch report mentions with some disgust how mountain peoples would simply use that door at night to relieve themselves.

<sup>13</sup>A spell may also be directed against a house to affect its owner.

posts, were stored hunting weapons, gun, **sari** ('machete'), **oi** ('spear') and hung trophies, 'winnowing baskets' (**'liline**) and a torch hanger.<sup>14</sup> A woven 'fish trap' (**bubuina**), a 'sirih basket' (**'a'ele**) several deep and shallow 'baskets' (**so'a, so'ate**) and bamboo containers were also found in the house. Sachse said that the heirlooms were kept in woven pandanus chests.<sup>15</sup> Near the cooking area stood several 'lengths of bamboo' to boil water (**tnela buini**), larger ones (**ole batai**) filled with water or palm wine, a pandanus container of 'compacted sago starch' (**pia tumane**), several small and large multipurpose 'containers' (**opatinai**) made from the base of the sago palm ribs, which are used to serve sago, carry or wash vegetables (or anything else, including babies). The tools would have been a few **ataninai**, the 'tongs' of folded bamboo strips used around the fire; a **tobinai**, the 'sieve' to filter the sago starch when making porridge; a little basket with a few spices and the salt container; one or two **'ata pia**, the 'forked implements' used to twirl the porridge and serve it; and possibly a **batu boini**, the 'clay mould' to bake sago biscuits or a **tau inai**, a deep 'ceramic dish' used for serving sago, (these last two objects traded from the coast). With the exception of a few modern metal or plastic implements and cutlery in the richest houses, this is still very much the picture one gets when entering a contemporary Alune kitchen.

### *The luma posone*

The **luma posone** was a small temporary shelter that was usually built nearby or annexed to the main house of a woman's parents when she was ready to give birth. Inside the hut was a hearth and a sitting/sleeping platform for the mother and her child. It was stocked with fire wood as a fire had to be kept going day and night to 'dry' the child and make him/her 'strong'.<sup>16</sup> Water and selected food were brought to the mother by her family. No men would come nearby as any contact would have weakened them or even made them ill. The mother and child stayed in the **posone** for forty days. The hut was destroyed when they left and a new one was built for each birth.

Since the **posone** were built when people had their own family houses in their gardens, the tradition was lost when they were brought to live in wards and villages. Nowadays some women return to their mother's house to give birth, others just stay home where they are

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<sup>14</sup>Damar or candlenuts are still sometimes used to make torches.

<sup>15</sup>These beautifully ornamented sets of chests are made and traded all over the Moluccas, where they are often part of a dowry, but I have not seen any in Manusa.

<sup>16</sup>For the association between dry and strong cf. Chapter four: Nunusaku.

cared for by relatives. Mature women who have already had several children and feel comfortable about childbirth often prefer going to their garden house to give birth. The garden house is quiet, and away from the social pressures of the village. They can easily store fire wood in advance and are surrounded with fresh food and water. Usually a female relative or one of the village's midwives assist the parturient. Although this was formerly unthinkable, nowadays some husbands assist their wife, particularly if the birth occurs in the garden. Once childbirth starts, it means that the child wants to be born in that specific place, thus the woman has to stay and give birth wherever she is. If this happens as she is walking in the forest she stays there and relatives build her a 'shelter' (**pasana**), bring her food and keep a fire going. Since men could not come in contact with menstruation blood either, women had a little shelter at the back of the house, called **luma mahono bina**, where they retired and conveniently rested during those days.

### **The modern luma tapele**

It is now a requirement of the administration that all the dwellings on the village site be of the Ambonese type promoted by the modernisation policies. Only under these conditions may a family obtain subsidised material like planks and sheets of corrugated iron to build a house. These modern buildings are called **luma tapele**: 'houses [on the] ground', to differentiate them from the traditional **luma tetu**, 'house above' (on posts). However since there is not enough subsidised material in Manusa, a mixture of traditional and modern materials is used to build all houses.<sup>17</sup> In 1992, about half of the 75 households could pride themselves in having a front room partly built with planks and covered with corrugated iron sheets. The rest of these constructions relied on traditional material cut in the bush nearby. Only a couple of houses of well-to-do families had glass windows. All houses had dirt floors. The modern houses are composed of two distinct and juxtaposed parts. A modern square building in the front and a construction including the kitchen in the rear part. A lean-to or a verandah is usually added on one side of the house. The modern front buildings are built with planks and roofed with sheets of corrugated iron while the others are made with traditional material. All the back kitchen sections of the houses have walls of sago midribs and a thatched roof of palm leaves. Thus even modern houses are made of a composite of both types of building material.

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<sup>17</sup>A large number of the planks meant for the houses are conveniently kept to make coffins.

### *Orientation*

Pa Anton Ruspanah, the elder who supervises the construction of most buildings in Manusa was my main informant for this section. He said that in the village modern houses are built according to taste, convenience or adapted to the availability of space, without specific orientation criteria. However elders say that within the building it is healthier to keep the traditional way of setting the cooking area seaward and the sleeping landward. This is something easy to achieve since the plan of the house is rather basic. Thus, as in traditional houses it is not so much the house itself that is oriented but its inner organisation, like a living organism in which the organs follow the same configuration whatever direction the body stands. Similarly, the plant materials that are used to construct the frame and roof follow the orientation of the street but the beams are still oriented base - tip - base - tip (see figure App.3.3) and the 'posts' (**lili**) made of bamboo or wood, are erected according to their natural direction, 'base down (and) tip upward' (**wei lopai bubui lolete**).<sup>18</sup> Indeed, if the natural direction of life was turned upside down, it would become the direction of death, a dangerous thing for the residents of the house. There is no criterion of special measurement related to the human body either,<sup>19</sup> but a specific numbers of posts, beams and rafters are used to build the house (see figure app.3.2).

In the past, by the time an extended family had cleared a large perimeter around its house(s) making one swidden after another, it was time to build a new one anyway.<sup>20</sup> As people moved from one garden perimeter to another they liked to 'return' and build their house where a forefather had established his own before. Nowadays houses are set once on a spot in the village and usually 'renewed' (**selie**) or extended on that site rather than rebuilt elsewhere.

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<sup>18</sup>Downward, below: **mpei**, upward (standing): '**wata**. The opposite direction of **mpei** is **mlete** (**mletere**: up there), which is also used to express distances (**mlete nanu**: far away) and time (in the future).

<sup>19</sup>Three measures are commonly used in Manusa: the 'hand span': **nasa**, the length from the middle of the chest to the tip of the fingers: **nanu ele**, (**nanu'we**: 'tall', 'long') and the span between the two extended arms: **leai** (which also means to 'expand', to 'augment').

<sup>20</sup>A swidden was used for three years maximum and was left fallow for 25 to 30 years. A house lasted 15 to 25 years or even more if well kept and restored.

### *Construction*

Once a space has been chosen and agreed upon by the village authorities, a few men clear, level and compact the ground that will make the dirt floor and mark the perimeter of the house. Building a house is a collective enterprise (**masohi**).<sup>21</sup> It requires the help of all the relatives and friends one can gather, who have all to be fed and encouraged with betel, cigarettes and refreshments. The construction described below is the building of a modern house with traditional material.

**Lupu ai batai mina**, 'first (we) gather the timber' said Pa Anton. The building materials used for the vertical posts and horizontal beams are the logs of hard wood trees like **autole** (B.I. *bitangur*), **mare** (*maron*) **bunite** (*maron merah*), **watale** (*nanyar?*) or **ai 'mama** (?). They are lopped, but usually left in their natural cylindrical shape. If needed, some sections are roughly squared or carved with a machete. The 'sago' (metroxilon palm: **pia**) is the subsistence crop of the Alune. The 'midrib' (**punale**) of its frond is used to make partitions or 'walls' (**norale**), 'attics' (**molate** or **lotene**) and 'platforms' (**sosale**). Its leaflets provide the roofing materials (**ate** or **bulene**).<sup>22</sup> Sago and bamboo are also used to make shutters and build furniture like sleeping platforms, benches, kitchen shelves etc.

Like for the ancient houses, great care is taken to orient the natural materials (timber, bamboo, sago palm, etc) according to their position in nature. If placed vertically the tree is oriented 'base' (**wei**) down and 'tip' (**bubui**) upward. If on an horizontal sunrise-sunset axis, the tip is aligned with the sunrise, and seaward if on a sea-mountain axis. If the north-south axis (not Alune) has to be considered, tip side will be oriented north.

Basically the **luma tapele** is a six post house (or more by a multiple of three). First the frame is erected. The six (or nine) wooden 'posts' (**lili**) are not 'planted' since timber decomposes too fast when buried in the ground. Three horizontal 'cross beams' (**pelene** or **pelen.batai**), called the 'shoulders' (**mala**) of the house, are set on the six vertical posts. The top of the posts are inserted in the cross beams using the tenon and mortise technique. Seven beams **nalute** (to 'reach across') are laid over the cross beams. Those at each extremity support the eaves of the roof; the others hold the platform of the attic. The weight of the roof is supported by three roof posts **buelene** or **bulen batai** (**bulen**: 'roofing' **batai**: 'length') that

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<sup>21</sup>This is a regional word assimilated by the Alune to refer to collective work.

<sup>22</sup>In the Moluccas, *gaba gaba* (**punale**) are the midrib of the metroxylon palm stripped of their leaflets and assembled to make walls, partitions, floors or platforms. *Atap* (**ate**) refers to these leaflets that are plaited and used as thatching.

are erected on the cross beams. The **bulen batai** are held in place by two lateral struts and support the six main 'rafters' (**asina**). On top of the three **bulen batai** is laid the ridge pole **nalute bulen batai** ('to reach across', 'roofing', 'length') that supports eleven 'spars' (**asa'we**) on each side. On each slope of the roof, midway between the attic beams (**nalute**) and the ridge pole, supporting the rafters, are two purlin beams called **mlaba titane** (**mlaba'we** 'rat' **tita** 'bridge'), for they are rats' favorite sidewalk. Under the whole width of the roof, to re-enforce its structure, are put several **to'ate** (or **toate** 'pole') in a chevron pattern.

In eastern Indonesia having a roof over one's head is not just a synecdoche.<sup>23</sup> We know very little about the roof of the traditional Alune house except that, as in many places in the region, it encompassed the whole house, shrouding it under its large thatching. However we can observe the modern one. An elder said that the roof is smaller than before but assembled on the same principle. The 'thatched roof' **buelene** is covered with **ate**. **Ate**<sup>24</sup> are made with the leaflets stripped from the midrib of the frond of sago palm. Plaited and dried they are used to make thatching, shelters or light partitions. A standard **ate** is made of thirty three leaflets (more if a longer one is required). Each 'sago leaflet' (**pia loine**) which constitutes an **ate** has a male and a female part. Like the trunk of a tree, the part of the leaf toward the axil is the 'base' (**wei**) of the leaf and is male, while the 'tip' part (**bubui**) is female. To make an **ate** thirty three leaflets are folded in two and assembled side by side slightly overlapping on a strip of bamboo (**mbe'ule**). All the female extremities are folded facing up on the **ate**. The leaflets are sewn with **nili** (fibre made of a strip of **loleba** leaves) under the **mbe'ule**. The leaflets are fixed together again near the female part (the tip) with another strip of **mbe'ule**. This 'closes' (**lobi.ele** or **obi.ele**) the **ate** making it impermeable to humidity and impenetrable to unwelcome spirits or spells. The female tips are left uncut. This is a 'male thatch': **ate mo'wai**. There is also a 'female thatch': **ate bina**. It is made in the same way, but only assembled at the top end to a single **mbe'ule**. The female tip ends are left loose but cut in a neat line at the bottom. Thus the **ate bina** is left open but the female tips are trimmed.

The thatch roof is made by overlapping rows of **ate mo'wai**, the male extremity inward (facing the interior of the house). Each **ate** is tied to the structure of the 'rafters' (**asa'we**) with a thin flexible strip of bamboo (**wala'we**) (see figure App.3.3, roof thatching). Formerly it was the House elder who affixed the first **ate** with an invocation to the

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<sup>23</sup>This has been recognised by several ethnographers of the region. Fox has outlined some of the main characteristics (comparative postscript of Memories of Ridge-Poles and Cross-Beams in op. cit., 1993 pp. 170-177).

<sup>24</sup>**Ata** means 'slope'. I do not know if calling the roofing material **ate** is a synecdoche (frequent in Alune) or if it is a translation of *atap*, the Indonesian word for it.

ancestors. At mid-height of the roof, at the level of the **mlaba titane** (the 'rats' sidewalk') a row of female thatch is inserted, tips (female extremity) inward. Once the height of the 'ridge pole' (**bulene**) is reached, another row (the one before last) of female **ate** is laid on the thatching. Finally, on top of the ridge pole is fixed a last row of male **ate**, covering and closing the preceding open female **ate**.<sup>25</sup> Thus, except for the middle row of **ate** and the one before last, most of the roof is laid male side turned inward and closed (or closing) and female side turned outward and opened.<sup>26</sup> The edge line of the roof is covered with the **mare basa'we** (**marele**: 'opossum', **basa'we** ?) or **mare bate** the 'beam of the opossum', a narrow piece of timber that lies on top of the thatching and closes it.<sup>27</sup> The gables are covered with the same sloped thatching. Once the thatch is laid it will be kept in place on each slope by a row of 'bamboo lengths' (**ole batai**) fastened together on top of the roof line. A slot is perforated at the end of one bamboo to produce the **ole bina** ('female bamboo') and a hook carved out at the end of the others to make the **ole mo'wai** ('male bamboo') and both are hooked one in the other over the **mare basa'we** (see figure App.3.3, roof thatching).

A similar smaller type of construction is usually built at the back of the house as a kitchen and dining area. It sometimes includes an extra sleeping corner. The 'hearth' (**botoi**) and its 'hearth rack' (**webute**) are assembled during the construction of the building before raising the walls.<sup>28</sup> An open space is left at the top of the gable on the side of the hearth for the smoke to escape. Once the emplacements of doors and windows are set, the 'walls' (**norale**) and partitions are erected with 'sago midribs' (**punale**) or planks if they are available. The same material is used to make doors and shutters. Most new houses also have an 'attic platform' (**molate** or **lotene**)<sup>29</sup> over certain sections. Shallow 'trenches' (**tete bolile**) are dug out around the house to drain the rain water.

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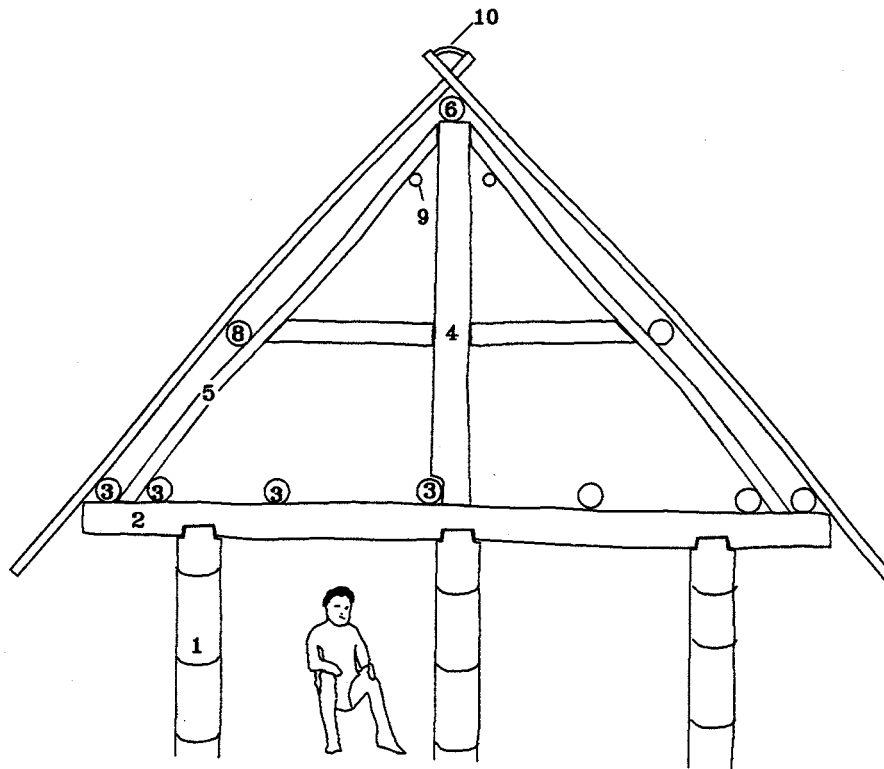
<sup>25</sup>The **ate mo'wai** is also called **bulen.mo'wai**: 'male roofing' and the **ate bina** is also called **bulen.bina**: 'female roofing'.

<sup>26</sup>The innocent anthropologist was told that there was no explanation for that custom since everybody understood it when seeing it.

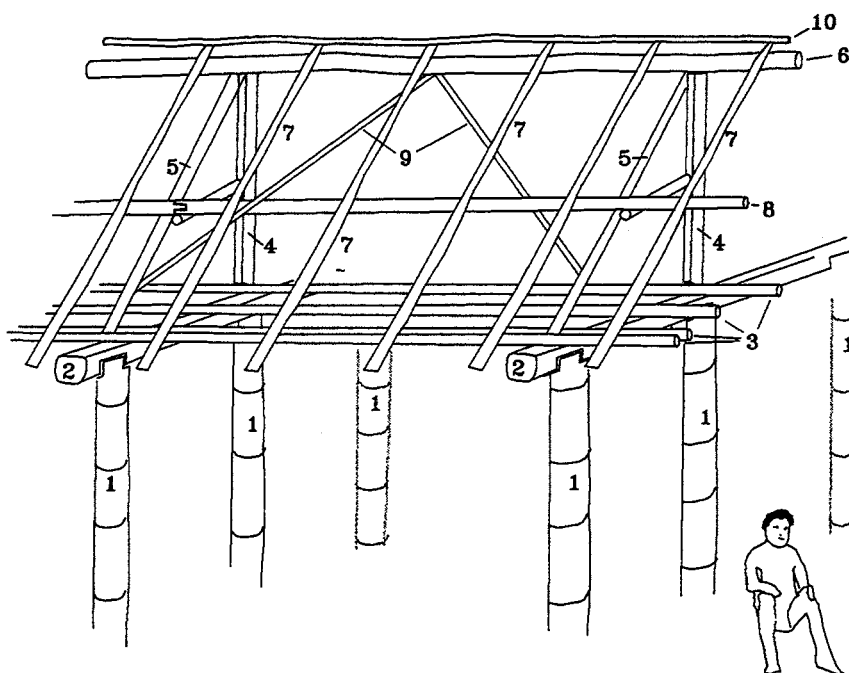
<sup>27</sup>Some foolhardy opossums might have used the rooflines of their hunter's houses as a walkway when these were built in the bush, but opossums are also ancestral sacred animals associated with reproduction (the **mare basa'we** keeps the male **ate** over the female one).

<sup>28</sup>Florey has **webu** and **lane**: wood rack.

<sup>29</sup>From the Malay *loteng*. The traditional houses did not have attics, some had a short storage platform under a section of the roof.



- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. lili                  | (x6) posts             |
| 2. pelene                | (x3) cross beams       |
| 3. nalute                | (x7) beams             |
| 4. buelena (bulen batai) | (x3) roof posts        |
| 5. asina                 | (x6) roof rafters      |
| 6. nalute bulen batatin  | (x1) ridge pole        |
| 7. asa'we                | (x22) rafters (spars)  |
| 8. mlaba titane          | (x2) purlin            |
| 9. to'ate                | (x4) interior supports |
| 10. mare basa'we (bate)  | (x1) ridge cover       |



**APP. 3.2 SECTIONAL & SIDE VIEWS OF A MODERN HOUSE**

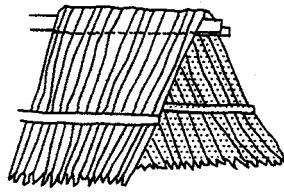




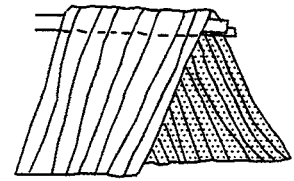
## ROOF THATCHING



1. Ate (bulene)  
(thatch)



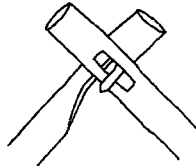
2. Ate (bina)  
(female thatch)



3. Ate Mo'wai  
(Male thatch)

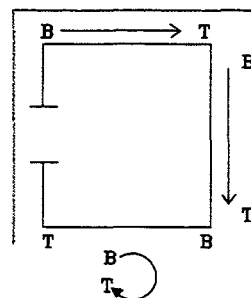
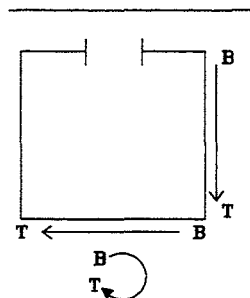
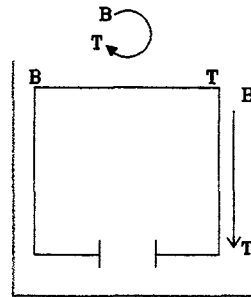
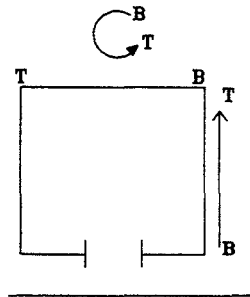


Ole Bina  
(female bamboo)



Ole Mo'wai  
(male bamboo)

## Orientation of the horizontal beams in modern houses



B: BASE  
T: TOP



### *Inside the modern house*

Several changes took place inside the Alune house when it had to be built on the ground. First the large open sitting and sleeping platform was eliminated. In practice, the house itself became larger and more airy but also much cooler and humid at floor level where most activities are performed. This is specially manifest between sunset and dawn during the wet season. Formerly one could stand on the platform during the warm hours and retreat inside the house at sunset when the mist fell. From a one room house with specialised but non-partitioned areas and a platform, it became a dwelling with a minimum of three and usually four rooms.<sup>30</sup> In fact the two traditional male/female halves of the house and its platform were virtually divided into two adjacent constructions, a front section and a back kitchen. By doing so, the sitting and sleeping areas in the front have been isolated from the smoke but also from the warmth of the hearth in the rear kitchen.

Even the smallest and simplest modern houses keep two essential parts: a front room and a back part. Somehow the new rear kitchen corresponds to the family room of the traditional house and the modern front room to the open platform. What changed the most is the sleeping pattern. Previously, for security reasons (among others) the men slept outside on the platform while women, children and older family members slept inside the single room house where the hearth was. Nowadays, to keep warm, the parents lie together with their younger children. The sleeping platforms are raised two or three feet from the ground and isolated behind partitions alongside the front room or the kitchen. When the children become teenagers the sexes are separated. Sleeping on open platforms is only done in the gardens.

The front room (a *mena*: 'in the front'/'before'/'elder') is the locus of male activities, including the reception of guests. Facing the village alley, it is the public part of the house. Its door and window(s) are left open in day time unless the inhabitants are not home. On one side of the front room are one or two sleeping platforms behind doorless partitions. At the back is the entrance to the rear kitchen. When guests are welcomed formally, the women of the household stand near that back door toward the inside female part of the room while the men occupy the centre. The guests are seated close to the front door. This is the case, for example, when the bridegroom's side comes to visit the bride's house or when a local dignitary is paying an official visit.

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<sup>30</sup>The number of rooms vary but the minimum is a front room, a kitchen and a sleeping area behind a partition.

The kitchen/eating room in the back (**muli** 'back'/'after'/'younger') is built in traditional material and annexed to the front building. This rear building serves as kitchen, eating, living and often sleeping area for the household. It is focused around the hearth, the different treatment of food, and is associated with women's activities. In many ways it reproduces the old house. It has two sides, a 'cooking' (**moa**) area with a hearth that is 'female' (**bina**) and, opposite it, a 'sitting' (**due**) and 'eating' (**'ane**) area that is 'male' (**mo'wai**). When food is served, the men sit in the male side of the kitchen, the women stand or sit closer to the female side. In the day time everybody is in the gardens or the forest. But in the early hours of the morning and when the sun has set, the family, relatives and friends, gather in this warmer and intimate rear house to share gossip and food while domesticated animals cling to the warmth of the hearth. It is the private part of the house open only to close relatives and friends, like the closed upper part of the ancient house was. A loft over a portion of the kitchen is used as storage for dry food and seedlings. I stayed with Yerinai, the older daughter of the former lord of the land and 'sister' of the present one. In her house the surrounding of the hearth (**au botoi**) was always kept very tidy.<sup>31</sup> The 'rack' for the fire wood (**'webute**), which stood over it, was constantly kept filled with layers of dried and drying wood neatly piled up almost to the roof. This is the way it ought to be and she was satisfied and proud of it. One day when the rain was particularly torrential she still insisted on going to the forest to refill the **'webute** although there was still enough wood left for several days. When I asked if we could not wait until the following day she said that a woman's reputation of might and competence is established by looking at the way she maintains her **botoi** and **'webute**. As we were fetching wood in the deluge she explained that the **botoi** is where food is cooked and the **'webute** where a share of it was formerly placed for the ancestors. Furthermore, her father's **nuru** had the duty of female keeper of the **'webute**. The lord of the land is indeed the designated communicator with the ancestors of the **hena**.<sup>32</sup> As in the old house, at the top of the kitchen wall in the nearest corner to the hearth, a space is left open for the smoke to rise. This path to the ancestors might not be used anymore but it is not closed.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Two large stones (or three smaller ones) are assembled to support the cooking pots; some hearths also have two iron bars.

<sup>32</sup>Ancestors were usually invited upon an offering of food. Since the **luma botoi** (see below) have been destroyed, the best place to do so is the hearthshelf.

<sup>33</sup>*Le foyer dans la maison, l'autel dans le temple, c'est le moyeux de la roue de la terre....le feu en est le feu vital. Et l'ouverture au faite de la demeure ....est le moyeux de la roue du ciel, son point median...[d'ou s'élève] le parfum des offrandes...porté sur l'axe d'une fumée ascendante du moyeux de la roue terrestre vers le moyeux de la roue du ciel*: The hearth in the house, the altar in the temple, are like the hub of the wheel of the earth [and] the flames like its vital fire. The opening at the top of the roof is the hub of the

Like the ancient houses, every modern one has two doors; one male, in the front room and one female, in the back kitchen. This is not to say that one is used by men and the other by women. Most of the time both doors are used by both sexes. However the back door is more used because there is more activity in the kitchen. As in the old houses, and for the same reasons, these two doors are never aligned. When sweeping the house, the dust collected in the front part is swept across through the kitchen and finally disposed of through the back door, the rear opening of the house body. In modern times menstruating women are not obliged to leave the house anymore but, during these days, they go out of the house through the back door since it is the direction for impurities to be disposed of. The absence of the front platform of the old house has increased the use of the kitchen and kitchen door. Thus in the modern house an outward movement is still maintained, but there is also inward activity through the back door (which formerly had no ladder).

It seems to me that it is not so much an inner female/outer male division of the space, the roof, or the openings of the house, but, each time the idea of a complete being, the union of its male and female parts, which is recursively elaborated. We have encountered this idea of a complete being before. It is associated with three and its multiples, of which three times three represent totality. The poles supporting the modern house have to be a multiple of three, as must the main rafters and the *ate* ('thatching'), which are made of thirty three leaflets. Similarly the front part of the house is male the kitchen in the back is female, but each is again constituted of a male, and a female section. So are also the opening/closing elements of the house: the doors and the elements of the thatch that cover the ridge of the roof. Looking at an Alune house wrapped under its encompassing roof, balancing male-female, closeness and openness, inner and outer components, I find it more befitting to suggest its completeness (in Alune terms) than to refer to the dichotomy of its constitutive elements and areas.

### *The consecration of a new house*

Although he does not state precisely in which domain he collected the data, De Vries (1927 pp.129-32) gives a description of the traditions surrounding the construction of a new Alune

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wheel of the sky, its axis [from which rises] the aroma of the offerings... carried on the rising smoke from the wheel of the earth to the wheel of the sky. (my translation, Cambell J. 1949 -ed. 1978 p.45. As far as I know the symbol of the wheel is not used by the Alune but they always bind together the (male) sky and the (female) earth: Lanite 'ai Tapele in oaths and rituals. (emphasised by Tauern 1918 p.138, see also Stresemann 1923).

**luma inai** ('family house'). According to him, the elder men and women of the House spent the night in the 'family shrine' in the forest (**luma botoi**) chewing betel quid and summoning the ancestors from 'landward' (**lori**) and 'seaward' (**lolau**). If they had a propitious dream the family could start collecting the construction material. It was a collective enterprise that required all the members of the House. An elder man was in charge of controlling the construction and saying the invocations. At each important stage (first post, first roof element, fire place) the ancestors were asked to 'come and stay until people's hair turned white and their teeth fell out' (so that the house would last a long time). Particular care was taken in planting first the main or 'elder pole' (**lili a menadie**) and setting the first row of roofing which was built before the walls. Finally the hearth was set up seaward, the direction taken by the ancestors. The female elder who had also been responsible for leading the women who assembled the roofing materials, brought in the first fire. She was followed by the other family members carrying in the family heirlooms, which were deposited on the side of the sunrise. Bananas were roasted. Some were shared with the ancestors who were invited to come and eat in the house, others were eaten by the people with opossum and palm wine. Finally some coconut water (a cooling element) was poured into an heirloom plate as the ancestors were summoned to come and live with their grand-children so that they would 'multiply like bamboo'. The water was then sprinkled on all the family members.

It is interesting to compare de Vries' description with the modern ceremony performed nowadays in Manusa.<sup>34</sup> Today there is no divination to find the proper place to build, or the best time to 'enter' (**usu**, formerly to 'climb' **sae**) a 'new house' (**luma belue**).<sup>35</sup> The modern ceremony combines the remnants of ancient **atate** 'traditions' with the Christian blessing of the house. First the 'master' of the new house (**ntuane luma**) sets a small fire in the 'hearth' place (**botoi**) and roasts some 'bananas' (**tema**). Then he 'hangs a banana at each bamboo rafter' (**eta tema buai pela asa buai** or **asa'we**) so that the 'house eats first' (**luma e ane mina**). This is done before anyone cooks anything else. Once a man has done this, it is his own house and he may not leave. After the house has eaten, people may eat. The women build a big fire and 'cook' (**moa**) a festive meal for the guests who will come to the blessing celebration. Elders, relatives, one or several Church elders and/or the minister come for the blessing of the house with holy water. The purpose of the ceremony is to close the house tightly against the spirits. The elder explained that this was formerly done with ginger and ritual 'blowing' (**mlelu**). The closing ceremonies performed on both the human body when

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<sup>34</sup>I witnessed one such ceremony and completed my notes with an elder informant.

<sup>35</sup>**Belue** means 'new', 'young' and is also used for a person, **ana bina belue**: 'child, female, new' is a young son's wife.

someone is sick, and the village at new year have a similar purpose. First the officiate prays at the 'main (elder) pole' (*lili a menadie*) of the house to give it strength. Having blessed the main pole, the officiate sprinkles holy water on the household members, at the threshold, in each corner and at every door and window to keep them cool and close them to the bad spirits.<sup>36</sup> After more prayers, a few hymns and sometimes a sweet drink with a dry biscuit, most people go home while only the closest relatives stay for a festive meal. Interestingly, while the ancient rituals were centered on summoning the ancestors to the house, nowadays these ancestors are included among the bad spirits and the ceremony aims at keeping them out. However the hearth and its rack, the opening in the roof, all are still there and the house still eats.

### The garden shelters

Although it is a little less used than it was formerly, the simple 'garden shelter' (*tale* - in Bahasa Maluku: *ana walang*) has not been much affected by modernisation.<sup>37</sup> Only during the Christmas and New Year period is the village occupied by all its inhabitants (including all the ancestors). The rest of the time people come and go continually in search of means of subsistence in the forest and in their gardens where they spend most of their time. Therefore every household has at least one *tale* built on the family land, generally close to the garden, made for one two, or a maximum of three seasons.

The *tale* usually takes the form of a raised 'platform' (*sisine*) built on iron bamboo poles and covered by a low leafy roof. There is no wall except sometimes a few *ate* patched together in the corner of the dominant wind. Although they are seldom built with much care, some *tale* feel very cosy. They are fresh and airy during day time and at night one can see the stars. The cooking is done a few metres away. In the rainy season a little roofing may be put over this fire place. If the *tale* has been there for a while, people turn their gardens around its perimeter. The little cleared yard around it (*tale uwei*: 'the base/foundation' of the shelter) is often planted with one or two coconuts, a lime, a few banana or fruit trees and spice bushes. If it is used on a regular basis people may keep a few chickens as well. They make sure that it is conveniently located near a water point, but on a raised spot and away from the sago

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<sup>36</sup>Some people also throw salt on doors and window openings because bad spirits dissolve at its contact, as salt itself does.

<sup>37</sup>*Tale* also means 'season'. I do not know if the meanings are related, but the *tale* is a seasonal shelter.



marshes that are infested with anopheles. It usually has a nice view as well. People do not bother building a **tale** if their garden of that season is close to the village.

The **tale** are several hours walking distance from the settlement, to which people only return once a week for the Sunday Church service. Far away **tale** have several advantages. They are closer to more abundant sources of food: forest products, hunting grounds and fishing spots (those nearer the permanent village are depleted). A family can work and watch over the gardens and plantations as well as directly eating their product without having to bring them back to the village where they have to be shared within the large network of obligations.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, children can escape school and adults are away from the constraints of the village community and its various civil and religious duties. This is probably why many people admit they like their garden shelter at least as much as their village house. For the same reasons, a few elderly couples with adult married children who feel like retiring from community politics, or independent widows who have given up their title of household head,<sup>39</sup> also stay in their gardens. They built it into a more comfortable dwelling, roughly on the model of the ancient **luma tetu**, and make it their main residence, walking their way back to the village only occasionally.<sup>40</sup>

#### ANCIENT AND MODERN COMMUNAL AND CEREMONIAL BUILDINGS

All the following buildings were somehow collective, and none was used as a permanent dwelling except the post house. Some were located away from habitation, others were inside the village. Some have disappeared, others have endured in an altered form.

##### Outside the settlement

None of the following three buildings are in common use anymore for their initial purpose. The family shrines and the men's house were burned down, and the post houses/hamlets have either grown into villages (Rumbatu, Rumberu) or shrunk into garden houses (Batu Mete, Wayame).

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<sup>38</sup>Someone said that some people make sure their gardens are too far for 'lazy' relatives, who stick to the village and borrow fruits and vegetables from nearby gardens rather than growing their own.

<sup>39</sup>If they have a married son and have not themselves remarried.

<sup>40</sup>Free spirits and cheerfully independent, some of them were among my best informants.

### *The luma botoi*

As its name suggests, the **luma botoi** ('hearth house') was the common shrine of a hearth group, the people who worshipped the same ancestors, whether or not they were their common forefathers. Such a group was at the minimum the size of an individual branch of a **nuru** established in the **hena**. The shrine was erected by their **luma inai**, the first house of their name in the domain. Asked about it, the elder of a founding family (**hena upui**) who had had its own **luma botoi** in Manusa, remembers only four of them in the **hena**. I mentioned earlier the importance of the hearth (**au botoi**) as a domestic *axis mundi* linking the human world on earth (Tapele) to the ancestral one in the sky (Lanite). Through the essence ('**weini**) of the offerings, kept dried, hard (i.e. 'strong') on the 'hearth rack' ('**webute**) of their **luma botoi**, the Alune maintained communication with their ancestors. This ritual offering was named **nebu**: to 'fecundate', 'fertilise', 'germinate', 'multiply', or 'reproduce'.

The elders say that the family shrine had the shape of a 'rice granary' (**nubune**).<sup>41</sup> Since Manusa people have stopped planting enough rice to need a granary, these also disappeared around the 1960s.<sup>42</sup> The shrines are barely mentioned in the literature (not by the name **luma botoi** but in their later version, the **luma inai**) and I have not encountered any photos that I could be sure represented either a **nubune** or a **luma botoi**. Thus I rely on the words of the elders who saw a shrine or a granary in their youth. Were they exactly similar? The elders say that they looked alike but that what made the difference was the site where they stood and the treatment of the main post of the **luma botoi**. Was any rice stored in the shrine? The elders said no. The staple food of the Alune is sago (**pia**) not rice, (**ala**) and although most **luma** had dry paddy in the past, rice was a festive food and would not feed the family the whole year.<sup>43</sup> In Manusa rice had its own rituals.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless the parallel between the two

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<sup>41</sup>Florey (Alunedic 94) has **nubune** 'small raised garden hut' (what in Manusa is called **tale**) and **lubune** 'rice barn'.

<sup>42</sup>Rice granaries are noted (but not described) by van Rees as standing in a village (Buria) beside the family dwelling (De krijgstogt op Ceram in 1860, in *Koloniale Jaarboeken* 3 (1863) pp. 65-86, 129-163 (Indisch Genootschap), p. 153). The 'granary' where rice (or millet) was stored, was usually a small elevated construction in the settlement (as in Buria) or in the middle of the garden area (in Manusa).

<sup>43</sup>The extent of past harvests are usually a little exaggerated, even so elders agreed that as an average, each family would have one and a half or two **lopale** of paddy, three at the most. This would add up to two or a maximum of three hundred kg.

<sup>44</sup>Assisted by the 'lord of the land' (**upu tapele**), the 'master of the House' (**ntuane luma**) prayed (**oti**: 'to request') and made a betel offering from the betel box of the family, in the 'middle of the swidden' (**sam lua mlinure**) over the seedlings **bini.wei** (the 'source of the seed'). The basket that contained the 'rice seeds' (**talasi** or **tala inai**) was supported by crossed sticks and covered with a **kakoya** 'mat' (**ile'we**) to keep it dry and hidden. The rice was first planted around this centre point and then from the 'edges' (**nuru**) of the field toward this centre. This was a joint activity of men and women. First the men stabbed the earth with a stick

constructions still remains worth investigating. According to the elders of Manusa, their **luma botoi** was the shrine of the House's ancestors where their elders went to feed the ancestors and make requests.

Never meant to be used as a residence, the **luma botoi**, was also called **luma mlete nanu** the house 'up in the back' (i.e. far away). It was situated in a concealed and meaningful site that had been selected and consecrated by a forefather of the group. These sites are still known and marked by prohibitions. All the **luma botoi**, said the lord of the land, were within the sacred land of the **hena** and there was none in the 'plantation' **lusune** and garden (**mlinu**). This is to say that satellite hamlets (now the children villages) had no **luma botoi**.<sup>45</sup>

Before building a new **luma botoi**, explained the lord of the land, the men of the **luma** had to cut a new head. The ground of the chosen location was cleared and a hole was dug for the 'elder post' (**lilidie a menadie**) of the **luma botoi**. At dawn (**lea matai bola**: 'hot, eye, rise'), the trophy head (preferably still bleeding) was placed in the hole and the main post 'planted' (**teha**) on it. So, said the elder, as the blood rose with the sun, the tree (pole) drank it from its 'base' (**uwei**) up to and out of its 'tips' (**bubui**). This way the pole became 'human' (**tamata**) i.e. alive, and the house was made indestructible.<sup>46</sup> All the posts of raised houses are made of bamboo (**tenine**: *bambu beton*); wood can not be 'planted', it would rot too fast. Keeping the post a living tree was also intended to postpone its decay. In the beginning of the century, the Dutch heard about this practice and forbade the construction of the family shrines, destroying those they found. Later, this practice was still forbidden but for a short time the people were allowed to rebuild their family shrine.<sup>47</sup> At that time the head was

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to make a hole (**mo'wai daba**: 'men stab'), then the women planted the seed (**binare bubu** 'women plant'). After this, a large meal was served near the newly planted field to all the relatives and people who had helped in the planting. It necessarily included as much meat and palm wine as possible, and the celebration went on late and loud into the night with songs and dances. Afterward, the rest of the process went on as silently as possible including the harvest that was entrusted to women. There was no celebration for the harvest (rice having been stolen from the sky, it was not wise to celebrate too loudly since the upperworld would have sent rodents). Regarded as a waste of time and commodities and as potentially dangerous because of what it implied of people's relationship with their ancestors (who were invited to the feast) these large collective celebrations were strongly discouraged by the colonial government and the Church. Later, rice diseases came in. Nowadays very little dry paddy is produced in the whole Alune region.

<sup>45</sup>This might have led some authors like Jensen to believe that there was a cult at the level of the whole clan (**nuru**) since the people of the hamlets had to return to their family shrines for the celebrations.

<sup>46</sup>For that reason this ritual was also performed for one of the supporting pillars of some bridges (it is believed to be still practiced for the large modern infrastructures built at the coast).

<sup>47</sup>Policies on that matter came from Holland and swung back and forth under pressure of the Church. Their actual implementation in the field depended on the officer in charge or, as in Manusa, on the authority of the teacher-preacher. Their last **luma botoi** were burned circa 1955.

replaced by a special stone or an heirloom plate, and people tried to combine the opening of a new house with the ceremony of the first cutting of a child's hairlock or cut a hairlock from someone asleep. At that time men still wore their hair long, wrapped into a 'turban' (**pa**). A part for the whole, the hairlock was hung on the main post or put under it as a substitute for the head.<sup>48</sup>

The family heirlooms were kept in the family shrine or buried nearby. We know very little about what exactly happened inside the **luma botoi**. Jensen (1948) mentions that the family shrine was made of a large roof and that the heirlooms were disposed in a specific manner but does not describe it further. The elders say that offerings of food were shared with the ancestors of that **luma**: a ceremony called **nebu**: to 'fecundate', 'multiply'. The offerings to the ancestors were called 'reminders' (**sis**a). A man 'smoked-dried' ('**webu**) the meat over the 'hearth' (**botoi**), requesting (**oti**) and 'blowing' (**mle**ru) over the 'sacred'/tabooed' (**moli**) parts of the large game (pig and deer) that he had hunted alone. The 'sacred food' (**utan moli**n) was the ears, the back of the head, the tongue with the larynx and the tail.<sup>49</sup> As they were hard and dried, the hunter shared little bits of them with his ancestors in the **luma botoi** asking them to help him to catch more game. Since the ancestors' world in the sky (Lanite) is the opposite of the one on the earth (Tapele), when they are given a little, they see it as a lot and will give back as much as they felt they received.<sup>50</sup> Later these bits, left over by the ancestors who had taken their 'essence' ('**weini**), were also eaten. According to some elders there was no cooking and no women or children were admitted in the **luma botoi**; according to others, some ceremonial cooking and eating was done there and women and children were allowed to enter. It seems that at least elder women could join in certain rituals in the **luma botoi**, for example when calling the ancestors before building a new house (de Vries 1927 p.129). However, everybody agrees that it was the place where the **luma upui** ('family elder') shared offerings with the family ancestors, requesting them to show their munificence.

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<sup>48</sup>Sometimes a fragment of an ancient trophy skull was also used.

<sup>49</sup>Opossum claws were also kept on the '**webute**).

<sup>50</sup>Several narratives collected by Jensen in the region present the same idea of 'sharing however only a little in order to receive a lot' (M. Erb 'Talking and Eating: Sacrificial Ritual among the Rembong; paper for the conference Sacrifice in eastern Indonesia Oslo June 1989, p.17.)

Manusa's last shrines were burned down by a zealous Church Minister in 1955-57 and all rituals prohibited.<sup>51</sup> Nowadays, the meat is still cut the same way, put to dry and kept on the 'webute ('hearth rack') in the house. When the hunt is good, little fragments are left there for a while. The skulls, jaws or antlers are hung in the kitchen on a pole near the hearth or on the top of the 'webute ('hearth rack'). As a hunter explained, man can help to assure the fecundity of the land by planting, but for game it is all in the hands of the ones in the sky. Meat and plates were alike, he continued, and formerly it was possible to multiply them by praying in the *luma botoi*.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, House elders also requested from their forefathers an abundant progeny.

As the name *mlete nanu* 'up in the back' (far away) suggests, the hearth shrine was on the family land but not in its cultivated gardens. This shrine, in a space in the forest that was not cultivated (*mlete nanu*) had to do with hunting, not agriculture, but as its shape seemed to indicate it probably drew a parallel between the two activities and the communication with the ancestors. This is also emphasised by the name of the ritual : *nebu* to 'fecundate'.<sup>53</sup>

When the *luma botoi* were destroyed, the heirlooms that had not been buried or confiscated were brought into the houses of the 'elder' (*luma upui*) of the *nuru* in the village. In some long established Alune villages like Buria, these houses became named, in the Ambonese way, *luma pusaka luma pusa'a* ('house of the heirlooms') or *luma inai* ('mother house'). Some of them still stand nowadays. In Manusa there was no *luma pusaka*. The objects that were not collected by the minister were buried or hidden in secret places and later sold to itinerant traders. According to one elder there was only one *luma pusaka* per *nuru*, in the source place of that *nuru* which contained its heirlooms, while there were as many *luma botoi* as branch Houses. However the *luma pusaka* is an Ambonese institution and I think the elder might have been referring to the house of the leader of the *luma inai* that was regarded as the *nuruwei*, (the source of that *nuru*) since precious or magical heirlooms of the *nuru* were kept in the houses of these elders.

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<sup>51</sup>Wherever they attempt to eradicate traditional religions, Christian churchmen usually start with the manifestations of ancestral cults and the belief in spirits, which they regard as manifestations of evil, overlooking the fact that some are safeguarding, 'sanctified' and benevolent beings in people's eyes.

<sup>52</sup>See Chapter 8: The bridewealth items.

<sup>53</sup>However, since I have little data on the matter this is only an assumption based on what one may expect in the area as documented in the rich literature about sacrifice in eastern Indonesia.

### *The men's house*

This building was called **luma kakehane**. The elders said that it was also the 'initiation house' (**luma sulidiba**). Each had its own sacred name (Manusa's was called: Li Sulidiba). Like the **luma botoi**, a head was required under the main pillar of the construction. In Manusa it was built on a **moli** place, a piece of ground forbidden to agriculture and habitation, which has now become the land of the Church. The elders said that men went there as they now go to church, to hold religious meetings, pray together and get strength from the great ancestors, Upu Lanite and Upu Tapele. Both had a pillar on which were carved male and female genitals respectively. Men gathered together to pray to them to obtain many children, lots of game and good harvests. Still nowadays, earthquakes associated with the female earth deity are a sign of a forthcoming good harvest while storms with much lightning, associated with a manifestation of male sky, promise a lot of game for the hunt in the coming season.<sup>54</sup> Men also regrouped in the **luma kakehane** before going to war to gather strength and magical power. This is also where the men's initiations **suli diba mo'wai tina** took place.<sup>55</sup> The objects used during the initiations and the men's ceremonies, like the sacred flutes (**suline**) and the sticks decorated with white and black feathers, were stored in that house from which women were totally excluded.<sup>56</sup>

The abundant archival material<sup>57</sup> on the topic usually gives the description of a semi-underground building specially built in a remote part of the forest for the initiations. It is difficult to say if the elder of Manusa is confusing something that he never witnessed; if different domains had different practices; or if the authors, who refer to a time when the initiations had already been forbidden, are describing the hidden manner in which they were

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<sup>54</sup>Sky and earth are always paired in the invocations, but there is no evidence of their association as a brother-sister pair. In South Central Seram (Tehoru) where J. Platekamp did some fieldwork in 1989, they are referred to as Father sky and Mother earth (personal communication).

<sup>55</sup>**Suli'e**: to 'bind', to 'tie together' (**suli asela**: 'affines', being relatives by alliances), **mo'wai**: 'man' **tinai**: 'true', 'real' (also 'flesh', 'insides'). The young men were swallowed by the **tuane baini** ('tattered Lord') and defecated three days later under different trees from which they received their age group name and a specific tattoo as **mo'wai na'wawei** ('man, *mayang* palm, source'), **mo'wai sehawei** ('man *salawaku* source'), **mo'wai weuluwei** ('man, *kasawari* source') etc. When they woke up they were 'soft like a newborn and had to dry and harden for three days'. They were accompanied by an elder initiated relative, the **maloe**, (**mawen**, **mauwene**) who went with them through the whole initiation and instruction ritual. This symbolic birth, in which the anus of the initiator figure stands for the female genitals, is a common feature of men's initiation rituals in the nearby Irian and PNG.

<sup>56</sup>See also Stresemann 1923 p.402.

<sup>57</sup>Von Schmid 1843, Het Kakhansch Verbond op het Eiland Ceram. *T.N.I.* 5-2: pp.25-38; Tauern (op. cit. 1918 pp.144-153); Stresemann 1923 (op cit); Duyvendak, J.P. 1926 *Het kakean Genoorschap van Seram*. Almelo:Hilarius (and its bibliography); Jensen 1948 (op. cit. Chap. IV) etc.

then performed. Since the beginning of the century, this tradition has been surrounded by a mystical mist of secrecy from which sporadically emerge a variety of 'reconstructions' proposed by insiders and outsiders alike.<sup>58</sup>

### *The post houses*

Like the communal sitting platforms, the post houses were also called **sisine** or **sosale**. They were pile houses with a large platform where guests and travellers could rest and overnight in a friendly and safe shelter on their way to somewhere else. Most of them have disappeared. They were built on the top of a ridge from where people had a wide view over the surrounding area and as far as the coast. Usually an extended family lived in it, making gardens around and watching the path and the activities in the surroundings. The children villages of Manusa started first as post houses. Rumbatu was established by the founding ancestor Samai as a halt on the path to the south coast.<sup>59</sup> Similarly the post houses of the Maslebu in the north, and of the Neyte in the east, were all guarding their section of the boundary area of the **hena**.<sup>60</sup> Boats coming in or people walking from the coast are still seen, and the news diffused, several hours before they arrive.

The Dutch version of the post house was the *pasanggrahan*, a rest house for their patrols. Like the network of paths and bridges they had been forced to build, the villagers had to maintain the *pasanggrahan* and keep it stored with fire wood and provisions. During World War II, the *pasanggrahan* of Manusa became quarters for the Japanese soldiers who controlled the region and imposed intense unpaid labour on the mountain populations to produce food for their troops based at the coast.

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<sup>58</sup>However this interesting topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>59</sup>Rumbatu is on the way to Watui the **inama sariwei** of the Tala river. It was the place for people coming up to stop and eat on their way to Manusa and for the people of Manusa to change clothes on their way down to the coast. From the coast to Manusa one says: **roro na'wa, roro tia**: 'a small cold sago porridge (*bakal*), [because one is] a little hungry'. From Manusa to the coast one says: **ma'a amala ile'we, abalo lopus metene** 'the one who comes with the mat against the rain, the thread of the black loom', **teture 'ai to'ane**, (raised and ?: was translated by *ganti baju*: 'changes clothes').

<sup>60</sup>On the way to Riring, such a post house was still occupied by an elderly couple in 1992.

## Within the hamlets

### *The sisine (lamine, sosale), soane and sisi hena*

**Sisi** means to sit down, and any sitting platform covered by a roof is called **sisine** or **sosale** (the material used to build the platform and by extension the platform itself). Every traditional house had its own sitting platform (also called **lamine**) but there were also covered platforms not directly annexed to a habitation. Some are still used nowadays. Besides the garden shelter, there are several types of **sisine** or **sosale**, small or large, basic or more elaborated, built within a settlement or in the bush. The smaller ones are temporary shelters built in a seasonal garden or along a path for hunters or travellers. Larger and more permanent **sisine** were built as meeting places, almost every hamlet had one. Often they were named. For example the **sisine** of Matital near Usua was called Sisi.Pale (**apale**: pig).

The **soane** was the **sisine** of a *soa* when the institution was introduced circa 1915. The term was used more by the Wemale, for whom it seems it was an equivalent of the Alune **sisi hena**. These were the meeting platforms of a ward in the previous settlements. Sometimes it was just the habitation of the *soa* leader, and the meetings were held on its platform.

The **sisi hena** or **luma sisine** which stood in the main hamlet was an equivalent of the Moluccan *baileo*, or the Balinese **bale desa**, the covered platform (or closed building) meeting place of the whole community. The proper ones, said an elder, stood on nine poles. In its closed part under the roofing were kept the community heirlooms, plates, regalia, sometimes heads (not in Manusa) and powerful magic objects.<sup>61</sup> One of them, wrapped in a bundle of vegetable fibres and hanging under the roof of the **luma sisine** seems to have attracted the attention of several authors.<sup>62</sup> It was a blue stone armband called either *mamacur* or **hatu** ('stone') or **tane** ('object'), **mamoni**.<sup>63</sup> Meetings and dancing were held on

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<sup>61</sup>In Manusa the trophy heads were hung on a tree called **lalu.wei** : **uwei** means 'source', base', **lalu** is a kind of shriek reproducing the mating call of the female opossum to attract the male ('**lema marele**: to 'deceive the opossum'. In search of the female, the opossum comes down the tree, where he is captured by the hunter). In exchange for offerings, the ancestors in the sky were expected to send a lot of game.

<sup>62</sup>Tauern 1918:138-39, Stresemann 1923 p.347.

<sup>63</sup>**Moni** means fragrant, however it is more likely to be **moli**: tabooed. Although Tauern mentions passing by Manusa to see one of them, surprisingly enough no one in the village nowadays seems to recall even the name of that object, let alone its purpose. According to Rhumphius, quoted by Stresemann (op.cit.) these powerful objects came from Karamande in India and were imported before the Dutch era. Stresemann writes that these objects had a considerable value (up to ten slaves) and great power. No meeting house could be consecrated without one, and villages fought among themselves to obtain one. Their motifs



the platform under or beside the attic space, where guests were also received and slept. The platform of the building was accessible to both sexes.

### **The modern administrative and religious buildings**

On the site of Tona, the new village of Manusa, the only prestigious building is the new church. The other communal buildings are the meeting hall (the Moluccan *baileo* or Indonesian *balai desa*) and the school. What labels these three buildings as modern is not that they are suitable to the place and effective for their purpose but rather the extensive use of cement in their construction.

### ***The baileu***

When I arrived in the settlement, the village head was away for a week. I met people mainly because they thought that if I had walked that far I must be a nurse or at least someone able to do something useful. Trying to find a way to introduce myself officially in the village, I kept asking when the next meeting of the council of elders would be. The answer was **mosa** (or **mosa**) 'not yet.' As an elder told me a few months later, even if there was a council, elders had not been asked to meet for several years. The traditionally public form of ruling by consultation among the village elders until a consensus is reached (the Indonesian institution of *musjawarah*) is obsolete in modern Manusa. There are no longer any large council meetings and no **luma sisine**, the traditional meeting platform that was the central gathering place of the villagers. The small village administration meetings are held in the house of the village head or the secretary. Indeed the new *baileu* in B.I.: *balai desa* of the village, a concrete mass located on a windy, muddy and peripheral hillside is far too uncomfortable to be used on a regular basis.<sup>64</sup> Instead, for a while, the men, on their way to or from the forest, met to chat under the roof of an unfinished house in the middle of the village, i.e. where the **sisine** should be. Then, the young owner of that house found the

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represented dragons and snakes. They were worshipped and regularly dipped in the blood of a sacrificed rooster. Stresemann writes that they were used for divination before head hunting by immersing them in water (incidentally this is surprising since ritual objects are usually carefully kept 'dry' to remain 'strong'). In case of a particularly bad infringement, notes the same author, the large council of the federation of the Three Rivers could confiscate this object from a domain; this being the equivalent of a 'suppression of civil rights' for the domain. It is surprising that an object of such significance is not remembered, while others of lesser importance are. This calls for further investigation among other Alune communities. (Huauulu call Leautuam, a bundle of precious heirlooms kept in the village shrine. Valeri 1990 p.64)

<sup>64</sup>It is kept for the reception of official outsiders, for example the so called contraception 'safaris'.

resources to complete it and the men then just paused under someone else's verandah. The community is so small and so intertwined that it is virtually impossible to conceal anything from anyone. Suppressing the meetings and the place to hold them has not stopped people from communicating, voicing their opinion, and using their influence. Having witnessed numerous attempts to organise community activities and the like, I came to the conclusion that unless a decision of the village government is approved by the majority of the community it will, somehow, never be implemented.

### *The church*

Designed for a community much larger than Manusa, the church is the object of much pride. It was finally inaugurated in July 1994 after some fifteen years of painstaking efforts and financial sacrifices which drained the community resources.<sup>65</sup> Somehow the church replaced the Kakehan house. An elder said that formerly Manusa had been the centre of initiation for several mountain communities and it was thus normal that it now had the largest church. The shrine may change but the spiritual centre remains. There are numerous examples of such a substitution.

The first time I saw, and later filmed, the Christian ritual of the Holy Communion in Manusa it strongly reminded me of the description of the interior of the Kakehan house of initiation by von Schmid (1843 op.cit., pp.29-38) and of the 'confession' of Kakiali, a dignitary of the Kakehan who converted to Protestantism before his execution.<sup>66</sup> I was also struck by the similarity between the way rituals were conducted.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore the Church is erected at the foot of the hill where the Kakehan house stood. On this exact spot is now the presbytery.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>The villagers carried a sizeable portion of the concrete used for the church in bamboo lengths on their backs up from the coast sixty kilometres away. For years, some 2,000,000 of the 3,500,000 Indonesian Rupiahs of village subsidy annually allotted by the state was budgeted for the church building.

<sup>66</sup>In Ludeking, E.W.A. 1868 *Schets van de Residentie Amboina*. S'Gravenhague:Nijhoff. Some fragments are also quoted by later authors.

<sup>67</sup>This was noted too by Cooley in Ambon about the Christian confirmation: 'The confirmation custom is Christian yet careful observing of it will reveal many features, in both the preparatory period and the ceremonies themselves, which parallel initiation rites (...) prior to the coming of Christianity'. Cooley F.L. 1967 Allang: A Village on Ambon Island, in *Villages In Indonesia*. Koentjaraningrat ed. Ithaca N.Y.:Cornell Uni Press (P.136).

<sup>68</sup>As an elder commented, only the strength of the Minister of the Church himself could neutralised the ancestral power infused in the place. Tona, the new village site, was formerly part of the *moli* ground of the kakehan house. This is remembered as soon as something goes wrong.

The following are a few points in support of this assertion, using the text of von Schmid in a free translation. One point of comparison —and surprise for one who has witnessed the same ceremony performed by a congregation of the Dutch Gereformeerde Kerk— is the elaborate preparation and secrecy that surround the distribution of the Holy Communion. The church is tightly closed with shutters, and the children, who are not yet initiated in the Christian rite, are strictly forbidden to come near its surrounding. Watching the ritual before being instructed and confirmed (*sidi*) could make them sick or even blind. This prohibition is inspired from the ancient ritual.

...It is forbidden to all the women and children to go to the forest (where the kakehan house is built) ... A fence is erected so that no one may see inside the building which is quite dark. (von Schmid op.cit. p.29-30).

There are also some similarities in the manner both the buildings and the ritual are set up. Some of the features described by von Schmid as pertaining to the Kakehan house and the initiation ritual, apply to the church of Manusa and to the proceedings of the ceremony:

The building has two entrances, one in the front one in the back. The new initiates enter through one door, the ritual performers and the initiated men through the other through which no one else may enter...The high priest is sitting to the right facing the main pole... (ibid, p.30)

When the ritual of the Holy Communion is held, the sitting pattern in the church is changed for the occasion and corresponds to the sitting pattern in the initiation house depicted by von Schmid. Flutes are played in both ceremonies. However, they do not carry the same power in the Christian rite as they did in the ancient one, and drums or gongs are now banned. Secrecy is scrupulously maintained.

They are threatened to be executed if they talk outside of what they have seen and heard inside (the kakehan house). (...) They have to promise to keep it totally secret (ibid, p.34, 37).

Similarly, it is strictly prohibited to talk about the ceremony and the sacrament in front of a person who is not *sidi* (confirmed in the Christian rite). Finally von Schmid's conclusion about the Kakehan is very true for the modern Christian faith in Manusa:

Those who belong to the congregation (...) are very attached to it. It has a very high value in their eyes, they honour it and make it their duty to be part of it. (von Schmid, Batavia, June 1843.)

## CONCLUSION

Ancient and to a certain extent, modern Alune houses (**luma**) are much more than their physical entity. The **luma** is a highly elaborated symbolic body. With its public and intimate part and its male and female elements interwoven throughout the construction, the dwellings symbolise a complete body.<sup>69</sup> The smoke of its hearth and the offerings laying over it, maintain the ancestral protection and prosperity over the house. The house and its dwellers are also closely associated: voluntary damage to a pole of the house is equated to harming the body of its owner. Built in the shape of a granary, but deep in the forest, the hearth house (**luma botoi**), its main pole a living tree planted on a human head, was the *loci* of the kin group's fertility rituals. A similar potent male and female unity was also at work in the men's house where the well being and fecundity of the whole community was preserved and enhanced. It is recalled today by the sitting pattern adopted by men and women in their Christian church.

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<sup>69</sup>It is not so much the idea of an androgynous body as the representation of the complete, and therefore reproductive combination of male and female, also symbolised by its nine poles (the number nine represents a fecund body i.e. the merging of a male and a female body : twice four limbs under one head).

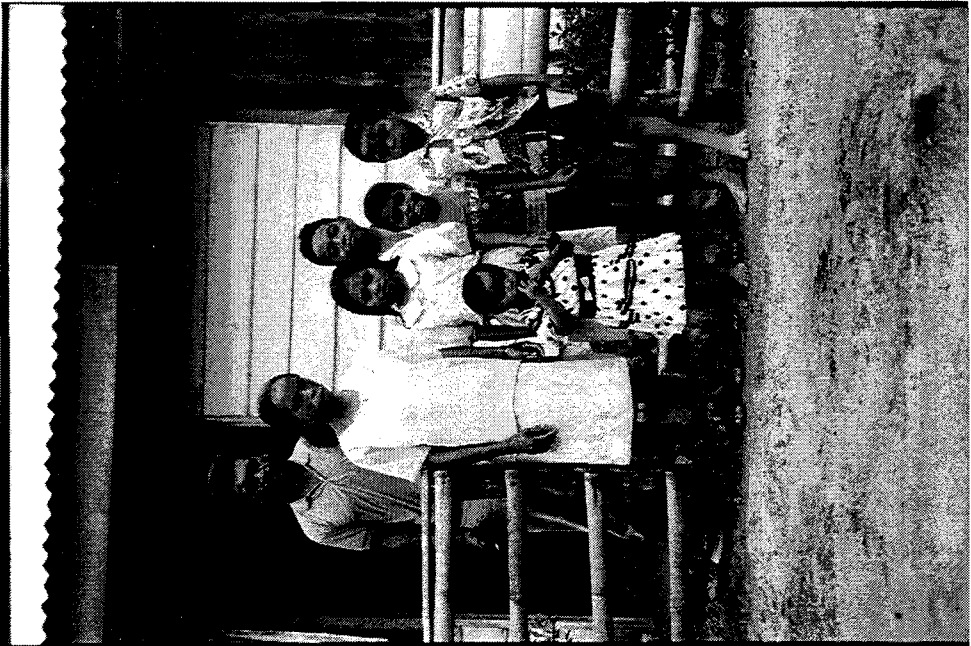




29-32 Family and friends











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- CNRS* Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.
- IG* *De Indische Gids, Staatskundig, (Economisch) en Letterkundig Tijdschrift*. Amsterdam.
- KITLV* *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*.
- Med. Afd. Bestuurszaken der Buitengewesten *Mededeelingen van de Afdeling Bestuurszaken der Buitengewesten*. Batavia: Dept. Binnenlandsch Bestuur.
- Petermanns Mitt. *Petermanns Geographischen Mitteilungen*.
- TAG* *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap te Amsterdam*. Leiden.
- TBG* *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. Batavia/The Hague: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen.
- TNI* *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*. Zaltbommel.
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