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RIVERS (W.H.R.) REVISITED: MATRILINY IN SOUTHERN BOUGAINVILLE

PART 1: INTRODUCTION, THE SIWAI, THE NAGOVISI

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Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to compare the matrilineal institutions of four linguistically related non-Austronesian-speaking peoples of southern Bougainville and to search for factors that might have resulted in their divergences from what may once have been a common form. Decades ago I wrote two papers comparing some religious and political institutions of three of them (Oliver 1943, 1971). For one of those, the Siwai,' the data derived from my own fieldwork, in 1938-1939. For the second, the Buin, I drew on published reports by Richard and Hilde Thurnwald. And for the third, the Nagovisi, I had to depend upon my own hasty one-month survey of them in 1939. Since I wrote those two papers, other anthropologists have carried out intensive field studies on two of those peoples: Jared Keil on the Buin (from 1971 to 1973), and Jill Nash and Donald Mitchell on the Nagovisi (from 1969 to 1973). In addition, Eugene Ogan carried out field studies, between 1962 and 1978, on the Nasioi, the fourth of the non-Austronesian (NAN) peoples of southern Bougainville, thereby enabling me to include them in this comparison. At the times of their initial field studies I was the academic adviser of all four of the students (which they then were), but I did not "advise" them on what to focus in their fieldwork or reports. Fortunately for present purposes, however, the topic of descent and de-

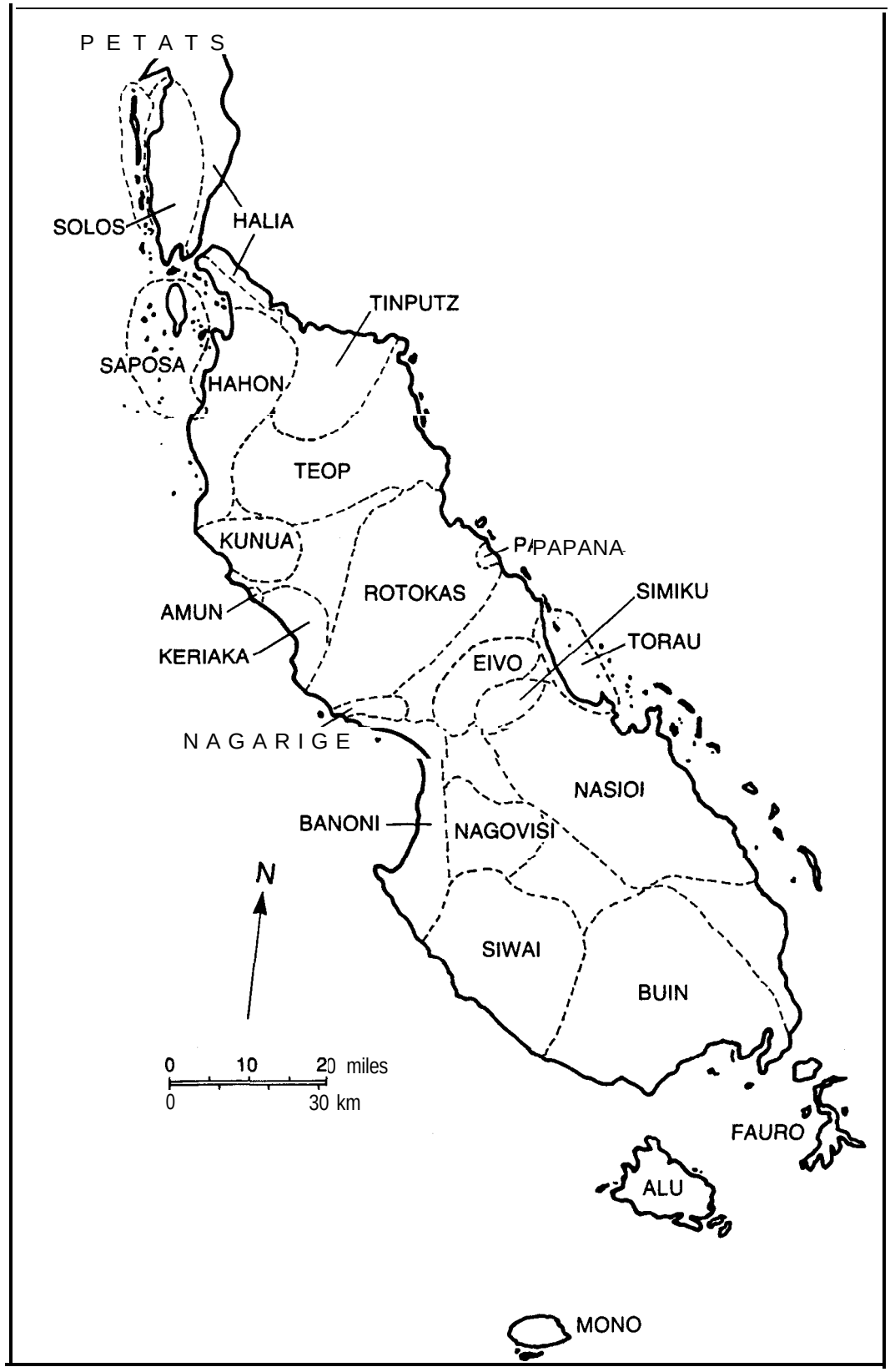

FIGURE **1. Language areas**

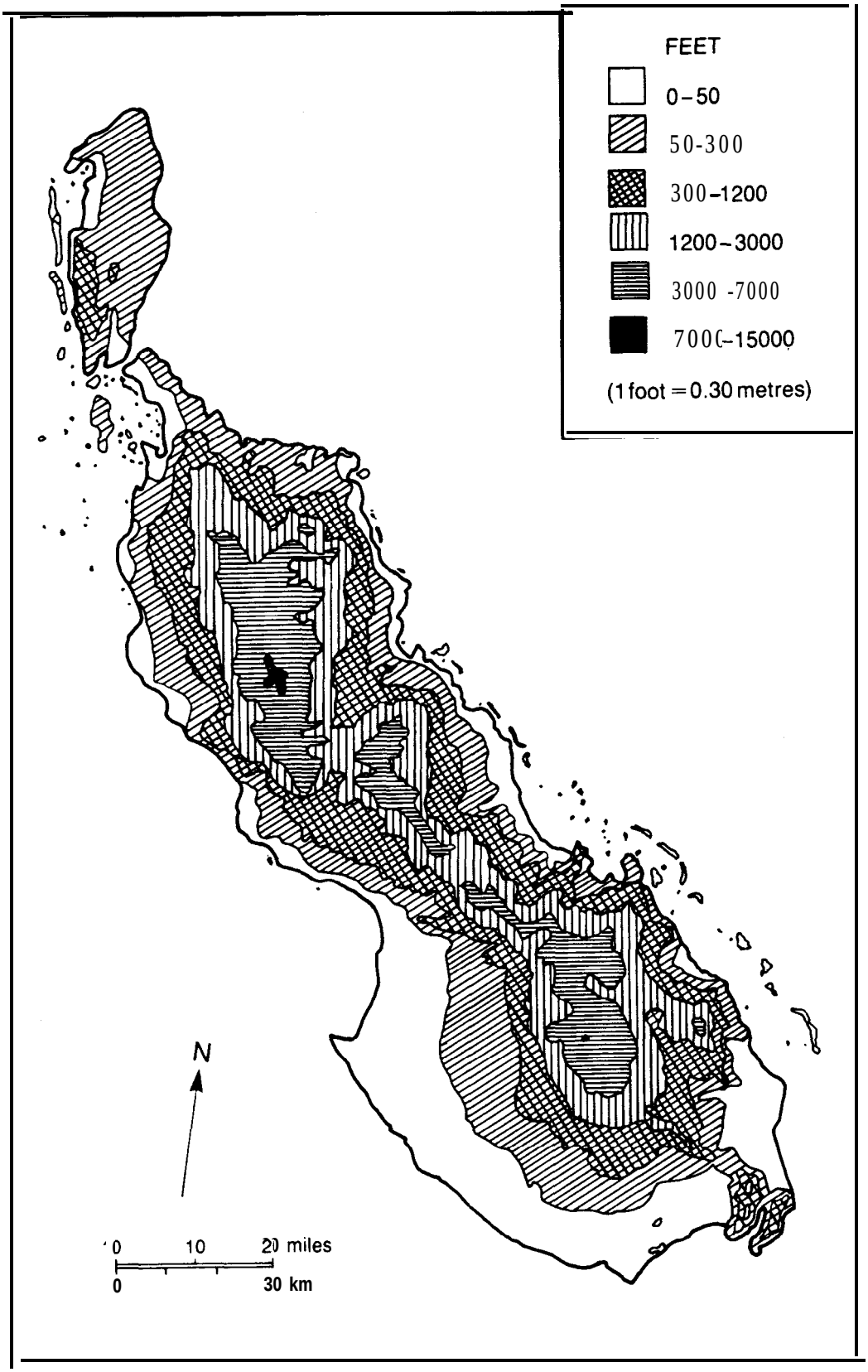

FIGURE 2. **Altitudes**

scentlike social units was, willy-nilly, central to their research, and thus their findings are suitable for use in this comparison.

I undertake this exercise knowing full well that its subject is currently superannuated. It is not only not "postmodern," it is not even "modern"; the genre it exemplifies became unfashionable at least seventy-five years ago. Not to worry: being myself superannuated, I can write with the comfort that comes from familiarity and with the fancy that my words may be of passing interest to other anthropologists of my chronological and ideological generation--or to historians of our discipline.

The rationale for this comparison lies not only in the locations of the four peoples--i.e., their adjacency--but, more crucially, in their historical--or, rather, prehistorical--cultural interrelations, as manifested in their profound linguistic similarities: their respective languages constitute all four members of the Southern stock of Bougainville's eight NAN languages. (Bougainville's four other NAN languages make up a Northern stock, while its nine, mostly coastal, Austronesian (AN) languages are part of a stock represented also on Buka Island and elsewhere in the region.) This classification, which was proposed in 1963 by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) linguists Jerry Allen and Conrad Hurd, was based on their version of the "shared-cognate-percentage" method popularized by Swadish. In their version the central dialects of the four Southern-stock NAN languages were found to share from 17 to 50 percent of cognates for words of their experimental test-word list. The same procedure showed the stock to be subdivided into two "families," consisting of Nasioi-Nagovisi (which share 50 percent of their test-list cognates), and Siwai-Buin (which share 34 percent of theirs).

Application of this method also showed all eight of Bougainville's NAN languages to share at least 4 percent of their test-list cognates and, thus, by this method of comparison to constitute a single "phylum." What's more, judging by the locations where these languages were recently spoken, their sharing of cognates probably derived mainly from "descent" from a common ancestral language rather than from interlanguage lending. Word sharing also occurs between certain of Bougainville's NAN languages and their neighboring AN languages (e.g., between Nagovisi and Banoni), but mainly, I assume, as a result of lending.

To the best of my knowledge, the languages of Bougainville's Southern NAN stock have not yet been subjected by linguists to the kind of lexical--that is, glottochronological--comparison that might provide informed guesses about how long ago their speakers have been effectively separated from one another. That could, however, have been a

very long time indeed. Recent archaeological finds on neighboring Buka Island indicate that pioneer settlements there, from the direction of New Ireland, occurred about 28,000 years ago,[2] and no presently known geographic barrier would have impeded the spread of the descendants of those and other early Buka settlers onto and throughout most of Bougainville, which is much larger and richer in food-getting resources and is now separated from Buka by a water passage only a few hundred meters wide. (In fact, subsequent to the pioneer settlements on Buka there were times of lowered sea level when the two islands were united above sea level [Spriggs 1992:279].) In the absence of credible glottochronological findings, it is not possible to say when the speakers of the Southern-stock NAN languages began to separate into their present fourfold division. But it is my inference that the process took place several millennia ago, long before the arrival onto the islands' adjoining coasts of peoples speaking AN languages[3]--some of the latter (i.e., the Torau) having migrated from Shortland Island only a century and a half ago (Terrell and Irwin 1972; Irwin 1973; Oliver 1991:1-13; Spriggs 1992). I do not mean to imply that the separation one from another of the Southern-stock peoples ever became complete; linguistic and other cultural traits doubtless circulated, from one language area to another, throughout the Southern-stock region and not just along their linguistic boundary zones. Moreover, throughout the present century, cultural exchanges (including marriages) have been taking place continuously between Nagovisi and Banoni, Nagovisi and Siwai, and Siwai and Buin. Also, oversea trade between Buin-Siwai and residents of Alu (Shortland Island) and Mono (Treasury Island) has been occurring for centuries.

In other words, although the four Southern-stock NAN-speaking peoples involved in my comparison doubtless shared a cultural ancestry and have been distinct from one another for a very long time, they have not remained wholly isolated--neither from one another nor from nearby and more "alien" AN-speaking peoples--a circumstance that might be said to have "contaminated" somewhat the "controlled" aspect of the comparison in this essay.

Another source of "contamination" derives from the circumstance that the field studies for this comparison were conducted at different times: those on the Siwai in 1938-1939, those on the Nagovisi, Nasioi, and Buin three decades later--decades during which several extrinsic events produced some major changes in all three societies, including devastations accompanying World War II, a blight-induced transition from taro to sweet potatoes in subsistence gardening, and, more

recently, the widespread adoption of cash cropping and a rapid acceleration of population increase (Oliver 1991: chaps. 6, 7, 9). However, the changes wrought in social organization by those more recent occurrences will not be treated in this essay.

The era selected for focus is the third decade of this century, that is, the period ***after*** European goods had begun to trickle into southern Bougainville and ***after*** the colonial authorities, first German, then Australian, had effectively outlawed local feuding, but ***before*** the Christian missions had effected radical changes in indigenous religions and choice of spouse. The selection of this era for comparison will necessitate some conjecture, thereby thickening the study's archaic patina.

Another circumstance that complicates the comparison to be performed is that most of it is based on data drawn mainly from one geographic subdivision of each of the four peoples--or cultures or language areas or ethnic areas--compared. Were each of the four "peoples" culturally homogeneous (especially with respect to matriliny), this circumstance would entail no problem. However, it is known that three of them--the Siwai, the Nasioi, and the Buin--had localized differences in some of their beliefs and practices relating to matriliny--although no intensive study has been made of the other locales. (Such heterogeneity may also have been characteristic of the Nagovisi, but that has not yet been reported in print.) In what follows most of the potential ambiguities arising out of this circumstance will, I trust, be resolved by context. In other cases, when a distinction is necessary I shall try to clarify by distinguishing between "study area" and "tribe''-between, for example, the Aropa Valley Nasioi (where most of Ogan's researches were conducted) and ***the*** Nasioi or the Nasioi ***tribe*** (i.e., as a whole).[4]

The hypothesis that motivates the comparison is that the four "tribes" once shared not only a single language but a common form of matrilineal institution as well. With the passage of time and the differentiation of the "ancestral" single-language tribe into four, the matrilineal beliefs and practices of the four also diverged--along with some other beliefs and practices. Meanwhile, certain other features of their cultures retained, more or less, their common "ancestral" forms, which will now be listed and briefly described.

Subsistence Technologies

During the 1930s all four tribes involved in this study continued to produce most of their food by the age-old method of long-fallow swidden gardening of root crops and plantains. The main crop was taro;

recently introduced sweet potatoes were also grown but in fairly small quantities. In addition, some food use was made of wild or semidomesticated coconuts, sago, breadfruit, and canarium almonds. Garden-grown tobacco was smoked--continually--in trade-store pipes, and domesticated areca nut was chewed, with lime and pepper catkins, almost as frequently. Much energy was devoted to the feeding of pigs, with enough garden produce to keep them domesticated. The few chickens present around most households had to fend for themselves; their flesh was occasionally eaten but rarely their eggs (which were in any case difficult to find). The rail-thin dogs that slunk around some households were used mainly in the hunting of possums and feral pigs. Occasionally, people engaged in stream fishing--with traps, bow and arrow, and hand netting--sometimes with, sometimes without stream damming.

All buildings continued to be made of wood and leaves. During this time most people past early childhood wore a trade-store calico lava-lava, but all other garments (e.g., rain capes, hats) as well as most other locally crafted items (e.g., weapons, sleeping mats, carrying straps) were still being made of wood or plant fibers.

By the 1930s the indigenous cutting tools of stone and bamboo had been universally replaced by steel ones--a few large axes but mostly machetes and adze-hafted blades--most of them bought in coastal trade stores with Australian currency earned by work on European plantations. These tools made men's work (land clearing, fence building, and house construction) easier and faster, but women continued to carry out their principal gardening jobs (planting, weeding, and harvesting) with their pre-European type of wooden digging stick.

A few coastside Buins and Nasiois made a little copra (dried coconut flesh) for sale to European or Chinese traders, but most of the Australian currency obtained by them and other south Bougainvillians during the thirties was earned with indentured labor on European plantations --and was used for paying official head taxes and for purchases of European tools, cloth, lanterns, kerosene, stick tobacco, and an occasional bag of rice and tin of beef.

Land Use

In all four tribal areas there remained large and virtually unused--and seemingly unneeded--stretches of primary forest. Clearing, however, was very arduous, even with steel tools. In view of the growth stasis of the population during that era, arable areas of secondary growth were

sufficient overall, but because of unequal ownership distribution some of those areas were the object of eager acquisition and of conflicting claims.

Settlement Patterns and Social Units

By the 1930s the colonial authorities had succeeded in persuading--or compelling--the members of all four tribes to build nucleated consolidated "line villages" for purposes of anticipated better hygiene (e.g., keeping pigs away from dwellings) and more efficient administrative control. Notwithstanding, most people continued to reside most of the time as before, in dispersed hamlets consisting of from one to about six families or households each.

Most hamlets of the thirties were also aggregated, socially, into distinct, indigenously defined "communities," which varied in size from two to about six hamlets each. Contiguity was one factor in creating and maintaining such aggregations, but not the only one. Kinship ties also served to promote community coherence--although some communities contained one or more hamlets unrelated to the others by any such ties, consanguineal or affinal. Indeed, the factor that served most effectively to bind hamlets into socially integrated communities--that is, into units whose members now and then joined together in some ***indigenously motivated*** collective action--was the presence there of one or two men who initiated and managed such actions. In precolonial times many such actions had to do with fighting; in the 1930s nearly all of them involved feasting.

In many cases there was a fairly close correspondence in membership between indigenous community and Administration line village--although there were some lines that contained two or more communities and some communities whose former constituent hamlets were assigned to separate lines. Also, there were a few hamlets that, although assigned to lines, were unattached socially to any community, except for the kinship ties that some members had with individuals elsewhere.

Communities, as just defined, existed in all four tribes. However, as will be described, there were some salient intertribal differences among communities with respect to how their leaders became such and how they functioned.

Kin Terminology

In most respects all four of our tribes used a set of kin terms that has been labeled "Dravidian"--that is, one that corresponds to a two-sec-

tion marriage system wherein a man's ideal spouse is a woman categorized as his "bilateral cross-cousin" and wherein a male "divides his society into his own [social unit] versus a [social unit] from which he receives a wife and to which he gives a woman from his own [social unit] in a system of direct exchange" (Ogan 1966: 179). In reality, except for a few atypical situations, the latter condition did not obtain in any of our four tribes, as will be described. But it is nevertheless interesting, and perhaps significant, that the kin-term system of all four tribes had retained their "Dravidian" characteristic despite divergences that had taken place in other aspects of their cultures. With that said, however, the subject of kin terminology will not be pursued in this essay. The arcane complexities of the subject would require another lengthy essay --which this writer is neither technically nor temperamentally qualified to write!

Religion

Although some beliefs and practices of Christianity had begun to penetrate southern Bougainville by the 1930s, much remained of the aboriginal religions: in tenets that consisted of a pervasive animism, including beliefs about--and appeals to but not worship of--anthropomorphic spirits, both ancestral and nonancestral, and in practices that included divination and magic, both "white" and "black" (i.e., sorcery). Religious specialists abounded, and their services were sometimes paid for, but they only provided such services part-time. Except for funerals (which included cremation), the most common kind of public magical rites were those that sought to benefit individuals in growing up, remaining healthy, and acquiring wealth.

Wealth and Renown

In all four tribes wealth, if properly used, was praiseworthy and was usually sought after and employed to acquire renown, which itself was an important requisite for enhancing one's social influence and political authority. To avoid convoluted debate, I will define "wealth"--arbitrarily and somewhat simplistically but adequate to the purpose of this essay--as an abundance of a people's most highly valued objects (i.e., amounts over and above those perceived to be required for ordinary purposes). Similarly, "renown" will be taken to mean widely expressed social approbation for owning wealth and for using it in certain prescribed ways. In former times "renown" doubtless attended the martial acts of ferocious warriors and men who sponsored and managed suc-

cessful wars, but with the effective outlawing of indigenous warfare, "renown" came to be acquired in other ways, as will be described.[5]

Throughout southern Bougainville "wealth" consisted mainly of an abundance of pigs and shell valuables. First, we will consider pigs--a priority that most Bougainvillians would probably also have acknowledged during the thirties.

In all four of our tribes people doubtless would have liked to eat pork every day--as a highly relished savor for their bland vegetable fare. In a very few households that might have been possible, but I never heard or read of it being done. Even in the wealthiest households such indulgence would have been considered foolishly wasteful. Pigs were meant to serve extrahousehold purposes--to formalize rites of passage, to reward cocelebrants, to pay for services and objects (including even land), to unite allies, to humiliate rivals, and so forth--some of which served the additional function of enhancing the renown of the donor (or purveyor or supplier) and therewith his or her social influence and, possibly, political authority.

The mixed-breed domesticated pigs of the 1930s were valued more highly than the "pure" indigenous breed. The latter were smaller, thinner, tougher--more "razorback"--and embodied much less of the fat that Bougainvillians considered especially delectable. In the thirties most of the indigenous breed were feral and were occasionally hunted--as much for sport as for meat. In contrast, most domesticated pigs of the thirties were products of mixture with European breeds and could grow to large size--some reaching or exceeding a full span (about five feet) in girth.[6] Usually they were allowed to forage for some of their food, but they had to be fed regularly, with cooked garden produce, to discourage them from breaking into gardens or going feral. When young they were treated as pets, in some households nurtured with humanlike growth magic. In fact, so personal and intimate were their relations with their owners that few of the latter were willing to kill and eat their own pigs--preferring to exchange them for someone else's if pork was needed for their own domestic celebration.

Most average-size households (i.e., a married couple and one to three children) could feed, comfortably, no more than about five adult pigs. To increase the herd beyond that called for more labor--in gardening, cooking, and regularized daily feeding--and that required one or more additional women (such as a second wife, a grown daughter, or a widowed mother). Pigs could also be and sometimes were purchased--which leads to some words about shell valuables.

In the 1930s shell valuables were owned by individuals as well as by social units in all four tribes. They consisted of bits of marine shells pierced and strung on plant-fiber cords usually about one span long. The individual "beads" varied--in variety of shell (and hence in color) and in refinement of manufacture (i.e., in thickness, diameter, and polish). In two of the tribes a string of unrounded bits of mussel shell, the least valuable type, served as the unit of valuation for all others. (For example, in Siwai a span of the smallest and thinnest red beads--one-sixteenth inch in diameter, one-thirtieth inch in thickness--was valued at one hundred or more mussel-shell units.) Virtually all of the shell valuables in the four study populations had been acquired, by trade, from one or another of the nearby AN-speaking peoples (of Shortland or Treasury islands or from Banoni). The four NAN-speaking peoples themselves could have acquired whole shells and made them into beads, but they did not do so. They did, however, occasionally restring them or cut them into shorter lengths--for less "expensive" transactions--or fashion them into necklaces or other ornaments.

Three of the tribes had come to have a distinctive set of shell-bead "denominations"-- each with its own, fairly unchanging, relative value. In two of the tribes the same two kinds of uses prevailed: some of the strings served as money (for buying pigs or other objects, for paying for professional services such as sorcery making or divination, for marital transactions, and so forth); others of them served as heirlooms. In three of the tribes the former consisted mainly of the lower-value denominations and were usually owned by individuals, whereas the latter consisted mostly of high-value denominations and were owned, corporately, by groups, whose leaders used them, most typically, as props and ornaments in the groups' ceremonies and occasionally to purchase something for the whole group.

As we shall see, the four tribes differed fairly widely in the amounts of wealth present. They also differed in the specific ways in which individually owned wealth was used for achieving or maintaining social influence and political authority.

Marriage and Matriliny

Finally, it should be recorded at the outset that all four of the tribes engaged in the institution of marriage and that all four of them had some beliefs and practices concerning matriliny. The differences among them respecting those two institutions were so wide that they require lengthy treatment--which I now undertake, beginning with the Siwai

(the tribe with which I was personally familiar and about whose matriliny the most information is available).

Siwai

Until about a century ago the people now called Siwai (by themselves and other Bougainvillians) did not conceive of themselves as having any kind of unity except insofar as they shared a mutually understandable language; indeed, for most of them their usual enemies spoke the same language as themselves. Some neighboring peoples speaking other languages called them "Middle ***(motuna)*** people" and their language "Middle-people talk"--perhaps because of their location between mountains and coast. Formerly, the word "Siwai" was the name of a cape on Bougainville's southern coast, where indigenes from Mono (Treasury Island) established a base for trading with Bougainvillians, especially with the "Middle people." During the 1880s, when European traders used to drop anchor there to barter European goods for copra, "Siwai" came to be applied by those and other outsiders to the whole of the adjacent hinterland, and by extension to the residents as well. Later on, this process of circumscribing and labeling--and conceptually unifying--was completed when males from Siwai went to work on European plantations, where they lived and toiled with indigenes from other areas, whose vernaculars they did not understand and many of whose customs they found to be ridiculously or obnoxiously alien.

In October 1938 the Siwai numbered 4,658 (2,355 males, 2,303 females). Previous censuses indicate that the size and sex ratio of the population had become relatively stable, having gone through the critical initial contact period without suffering the decline experienced by many other native populations in islands farther south and east. The land identified with the Siwai of the 1930s covered about 250 square miles, of which about 80 square miles were habitually used by the Siwai for residential and subsistence purposes, the remainder having been swamp and virgin rain forest (which, however, were used occasionally for hunting and collecting). These figures yield a density of 18 persons per square mile for the whole Siwai territory and 59 persons per square mile for the area habitually used.

In the 1930s the Siwai resided in hamlets consisting of from one to six families or households, and most of those hamlets were clustered, geographically and socially, into communities consisting of two to four or five hamlets each. In addition, all Siwai hamlets, like all other hamlets of south Bougainville, were assigned to one or another Administration-

created line village. Moreover, as elsewhere in south Bougainville, the memberships of lines and indigenous communities tended--but only tended--to correspond.

Although I moved about over most of Siwai and recorded cultural data throughout, the focus of my fieldwork was in the tribe's northeast area, which contained about one-fourth of the total tribal population of 4,658. It was from this study area that I collected most of the property statistics described below; however, by sampling elsewhere I became confident that those figures were not atypical of those for the tribe as a whole.

Wealth and Renown

In the 1930s the principal kinds of wealth throughout Siwai were pigs and shell valuables. In carrying out a property survey of 199 of the 248 households of northeast Siwai I recorded the following information.

Regarding pigs, the total number recorded was 740, worth altogether 15,990 spans of ***mauai***--the commonest type of shell valuable, which served as the unit for evaluating all other types of shell valuable and indeed for everything that was bought or sold (e.g., pots, food, weapons, and several kinds of services). The average number of pigs per household was found to be three to four. The range, however, was very wide: 8 of the households had none, 44 only one each, 53 three or four, and several from ten to seventeen. The numbers correlated fairly closely with the number of work-capable household members, especially females, because of the amount of garden produce required to feed pigs enough to keep them domesticated. (For more on the above, see Oliver 1949: paper no. 3.)

Regarding the shell valuables (general name, ***pesi)*** inventoried in the above survey, I recorded a total amount of about 78,000 ***mauai***-units of "currency"--low-value denominations in active circulation--plus about 41,000 ***mauai***-units of high-value shell valuables being held as descent-unit heirlooms or being held by individuals and used in certain formal, noncommercial transactions. For currency alone, there was an average of 392 ***mauai***-units per household but a range extending from 20 or so, for a few recognizably "poor" households, to a few that owned over 10,000 each. Some individuals also owned high-value denominations--including spans worth 500 to 1,000 ***mauai***-units each--but many such valuables served as heirlooms owned corporately by descent units.

In precolonial times each Siwai community was under the leadership

--in some cases weak, in others strong--of either a male ***simiri*** or a ***mumi. Simiri*** (firstborn) was the title given to the eldest male and female nonsenile members of any matrilineage (see below); the one referred to here was the male firstborn of a community's preponderant matrilineage. A ***mumi*** was a man who by personal wealth or managerial skill was able to draw together the community's other males to wage intermittent feuds with common foes. (In some cases a community's ***mumi*** was its leading ***simiri*** as well.) ***Mumis*** were not necessarily expert fighters or even tacticians, but they did possess the kinds of economic skills needed to amass or gain access to wealth and enough social skills to use that wealth to attract and keep followers for purposes of peace and war. After fighting was outlawed, most ***mumis*** and all would-be ***mumis*** retained (or gained) their renown (with its concomitant local authority and extralocal influence) by giving feasts, a strategy that culminated in competitive largesse matches with rival ***mumis*** of other communities and one that came to consume the energies and assets of many men (and of their families and loyal supporters as well). A ***mumi's*** followers were referred to, generally, as his "children" ***(kitoria)*** or his "friends/companions" ***(pokonopo).***

Every ***mumi*** and would-be ***mumi*** owned a clubhouse ***(kapaso)*** filled as much as space permitted with wooden slit-gongs (the beating of which, on the occasions of feasts, was described as "sounding the ***mumi's*** renown"). And in northeastern Siwai every highly successful ***mumi*** had his own ***horomorun,*** a demon familiar that dwelt in his clubhouse and protected him from, for example, sorcery attacks launched by envious rivals and other human enemies, and that rendered a clubhouse doubly dangerous to any female who might dare to enter (Oliver 1943).[7]

Marriage

The series of transactions leading up to and formalizing the marriage of previously unmarried females and of previously unmarried and some previously or currently married males included (1) a betrothal "gift" of high-value shell valuables from the groom to the bride, to be owned individually by her; (2) a payment ***(pu,*** the word also used for purchasing, say, pigs or pots) in ordinary low-value shell currency, from the groom to the bride's father, for use by the latter in purchasing pigs for the wedding feast; and (3) other pigs from the groom for that same feast.

There was no general prescriptive rule for marital residence, and

newly married couples took up residence, usually in their own separate house, in whichever hamlet they chose--their choice influenced by factors of many kinds (for example, the relative wealth and renown of their respective fathers, the relative sizes of their respective matrilineal estates, and so on). Even friendship was a factor in residential choice--that is, friendship between males. In a survey I made of 270 primary marital unions--that is, the first marriage of both spouses--9 of the unions involved couples from the same hamlet; of the rest, 176 were virilocal, 48 uxorilocal, 23 neolocal, and 14 ambilocal (i.e., the couples divided their residing between each one's premarital hamlet). These figures refer to hamlets; when the residential locus pertained to community (i.e., a unified cluster of hamlets), the figures were as follows: virilocality, 101; uxorilocality, 55; neolocality, 3; ambilocality, 14. Ninety-seven of the couples had lived previously in the same community.

Matriliny

The core of most Siwai hamlets was a closely knit segment of one or another of the society's six maximal matrilineal descent units, which I shall now label "clans" (and not "sibs," as I have done in previous publications). Each clan was divided into subclans and matrilineages, but in some cases one or more of a clan's first-order segments (i.e., subclans) were divided into intermediate-order segments (i.e., sub-subclans and so on) before reaching the segmentary level of matrilineages. In addition, in many cases matrilineages were themselves divided into two or more socially and symbolically distinguishable segments, which, following Nash's terminology for the Nagovisi, I will call "minimal lineages."

The differences among Siwai clans with respect to their segmentation structure were due to a number of factors, including dissimilarities in demographics, migration history, and intraunit harmony or conflict--as subsequent examples will reveal.

Nothing could alter a Siwai's born affiliation with the clan of his or her mother. However, some Siwai did transfer clan-segment affiliation. That occurred--although very rarely--when the members of a matrilineage, knowing themselves to be headed for extinction (having among them no more females capable of childbearing), adopted a young and presumably fertile female from a closely collateral matrilineage in order to continue its descent line and to preserve intact its tangible and intangible heirlooms--its land estates, shell valuables, and growing-up magic ***(maru).***

The Siwai had a general name, ***noroukuru,*** for what I label "matrilineal descent unit" but no distinctive generic label for "clan" or for segments of a clan.

Each Siwai clan was specifically named, was normatively exogamous, and was associated with at least one "primary" animal totem. And each clan had one or more versions of its "history." A résumé of the "histories" of two clans--in part obviously mythical, in part historically credible--will serve to exemplify. First, a condensed and fairly representative version of the origin and dispersal of the Danara (Giant Tree-Rat) clan.[8]

> When the land was new and humans had not yet been born, two sister ***kupuna*** [primal anthropomorphic spirits], Noiha and Korina, dwelt in the middle of the region where the Rugara-speaking people [now called the Buin] now live, at a stream named Sariai. At first they had no kinfolk. They did, however, possess a lot of high-value shell money ***(tomui),*** which they named ***sariai.*** They also invented their own ***maru,*** a distinctive set of ritual actions and props used magically to promote human health and growth and to assist humans in the acquisition of more shell valuables and other kinds of wealth.
>
> In due course the sisters married other ***kupuna,*** one Hukasa and the other Raimoro, and they accompanied their husbands to northeastern Siwai, close to the location of the present-day line-village of Moronei. Soon after arrival there the elder sister gave birth to a fur-covered creature, which she kept hidden in a cave until a feast could be prepared to accompany the infant's Washing ceremony ***(uharei).***[9] Accordingly, the infant's mother bade her husband obtain a pig. When he returned with one that was partly white, his wife refused to accept it and sent him for an entirely black one. That accomplished, she sent him again to obtain an opossum, then some coconuts, and so on until enough food had been collected for the feast. In the course of such work the husband became so weary and so annoyed by what he considered his wife's unreasonable demands that he cut off his own penis out of spite. Nevertheless, the feast was prepared, and the infant was brought out of Hiding and was about to undergo Washing (with the ***maru*** invented by his mother and her sister) when it scuttled off to the top of a nearby tree and announced to the amazed onlookers, "I am a giant tree-rat, your sacred ***(mikisa)*** Tree-Rat; you will endanger your lives if you continue to look at me." At that the frightened onlookers

> fled, leaving behind all the prepared food, including the partly butchered pig (which thereupon turned into a large stone and became a shrine sacred to all Giant Tree-Rat people).

In 1938-1939 some Tree-Rat people occasionally visited the stone, but not even the most Christianized of them ventured close to the nearby cave where the primal Giant Tree-Rat--their primary totem--was said to dwell, because they believed that seeing the creature would expose them to "near-death," a condition that would eventuate in their own death. And although a Tree-Rat member could look at an ordinary tree-rat with impunity, he or she was forbidden to harm or eat one--because, it was explained, all the latter were descendants of the primal Giant Tree-Rat and hence one of their clanmates. Now to continue the saga of the Tree-Rat people:

> From Rotunoua the ***kupuna*** sisters and their husbands moved to Motuna (between Mataras and Jeku villages). One day their husbands gave them a pig, which they had killed in the forest, and the sisters prepared to cook it. After it was butchered the younger sister, Korina, took the pig's liver to a creek to wash it, and while she was gone the elder sister, Noiha, selfishly ate all the fat from the pig's belly. When the younger sister returned and discovered this, she became greatly piqued and vowed never again to eat pig's belly-fat ***(kurommi).*** Then they parted, the younger sister going north to Rukruk (near Ukuntu village) and the elder sister staying behind. At Motuna, the place where this episode took place, there is a stone also called Motuna.
>
> The younger sister settled at Rukruk, reared a large family--of human beings, this time--and eventually turned into a stone. Her descendants became known as Belly-fats because they respect the taboo of their ancestress toward this delicacy. Now, if any of these people happen by accident to eat some fat from a pig's belly, they will become seriously ill unless they perform an antidotal rite. The stone into which the younger sister ossified has a hole in it; this is the vagina of the ***kupuna,*** and it is claimed that menstrual blood flows from it at regular intervals. Also, whenever a Belly-fat is born, the stone can be heard to moan in pain, Blood will issue from the hole if one pushes a stick into it. . . . This ***kupuna*** used to use ***irisia*** leaves to wipe away her menstrual blood, and that is why these leaves are red and why no Tree-Rat person may touch them.
>
> Meanwhile, the elder sister remained around Motuna, gave

birth to several human offspring at a nearby place called Kiaman, and eventually disappeared into a cave there. Her descendants became known as Left-behinds ***(Si'nomui),*** because their ancestress stayed behind when her younger sister went north. Left-behinds do not taboo pig's belly-fat. Elder sister still inhabits the cave at Kiaman, and Left-behinds are afraid to go there lest they become near-death. If a Left-behind must go to Kiaman to procure some water from the sacred spring there for use in performing ***maru,*** he (more often, she) can counteract the deadly effects of close contact with this dangerously sacred place by carrying out an antidotal rite. The descendants of the elder sister scattered over all the land between the Mivo and the Mopiai rivers; they were the first to occupy this land, and in those times it all belonged to them. Eventually they divided into these branches [the Siwai use a tree-branching metaphor when explaining this process]: the Kakahaiia, with its center near Mataras village; the Harukamunai, with its center north of Tupopisai and east of the Mivo River, hence in Terei [Buin]; etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

For a while Rukruk was the only home of the Belly-fats, but later on men from neighboring settlements married Belly-fat women and took them to their own homes. One woman, Monai, moved to Korikuna in central Siwai, and from her descendants several branches developed: the Tumoreku, the Rupommoi, etcetera, etcetera.

With several exceptions members of all these branches preserve the taboo on pig belly-fat. For example, only males of the Rupommoi and Pokuonoku branches need regard the taboo, but a pregnant female member must also avoid eating pig belly-fat because of the possibility that the infant in her womb might be a male. Other branches of this central Siwai line have become established in Banoni and Nagovisi, through women having married and gone to live there.

The branching of the Rukaruinai and the Kukumihnonai from the other Belly-fats took place in the following manner: Long ago two Belly-fat "sisters" used to walk about along the banks of the Kuru creek. The younger sister filled up her carrying basket with coils of the ***kukumih*** vine, believing it to be money. One day her older sister looked into the basket and, seeing only vine there, exclaimed: "Alas, younger sister, someone has deceived you into thinking that you have lots of money,

> when actually all you possess is vine." With this she threw out the vine and gave her younger sister some real high-value shell money and then went to Rukarui to live, leaving the younger sister at the place where the vine was thrown away [***Kukumihno,*** "at-the-place-of-the-***kukumih***-vine"]. The elder sister owned large quantities of high-value shell money, and her descendants became rich and powerful.
>
> From such beginnings as these the Tree-Rat people became numerous and spread throughout the land. The name for all of them is ***Ta.*** (Based on Oliver 1955:47-49)

Another clan represented numerously throughout Siwai, especially in the northeast, was that of persons whose primary totem was the Hornbill ***(huhu).*** Their founding ancestress, the ***kupuna*** Sipikai, first dwelt on some shoals south of the Siwai coast. From there she moved to the coast, married, and gave birth to the first Hornbill, to the first Crocodile, to a female ***kupuna*** named Uka, and to a male ***kupuna*** named Nonun:

> When Sipikai gave birth to Crocodile, she told her husband to fetch a pig. He found one and brought it to her, but she would not accept it because one of its legs was white. Then the husband brought a solid black one and that was all right. Sipikai then sent her husband after wood to make a bed for Crocodile to lie on. When he brought some wood, she would not accept it because it was too short. Then the husband brought some longer pieces, and she made a bed and placed Crocodile upon it. After this Sipikai wanted to go to the stream to bathe, so she told her husband: "You remain here and guard the Hidden-one [an infant not yet baptized and hence restricted to the house], but do not go inside the house to look at it, for that is forbidden." After Sipikai had left, her husband said to himself: "What sort of infant is this that I should wear myself out working for?" Whereupon he took his ax, went into the house, and hacked it to pieces; then he ran away and hid. When Sipikai returned from the stream and saw what had happened, she wept and joined Crocodile together again. Then she carried it to the river and left it there in the water, telling it: "You must stay here in the river and not go into the forest. Then one day when your father wishes to go to a feast, I shall cause him to decorate himself with red flowers, and when you see a man with red flowers

crossing the river you can kill him." Later on it happened as Sipikai had said. When Crocodile killed his father, the latter's companions shouted: "Hey! Crocodile has caught him." Before this occurred, the crocodile had had no name, but when he killed his father, people called him Crocodile; that became his name. After that it was forbidden for any of Sipikai's descendants to eat the (red) ***kamarao*** fish, which formed out of the blood flowing from Crocodile's wounds.

When Sipikai's daughter, Uka, became an adult and was walking along the shore, she came across a leaf of the ***kinkirisu*** palm and another one of the ficus tree. Being curious to see the trees from which these leaves had come, she carried them and walked inland along the banks of the Mopiai River. After searching for a long time, she finally matched the leaves with trees growing on a place called Totokahao. She settled down there, married a ***kupuna*** named Nohun, and gave birth to five offspring. One of these was a pair of demons joined together at the back. This pair now roves about tracts of land associated with Hornbill people; sometimes it transforms itself into a stone by the name of Hokuhko, which is located near Kapana village. Uka's second offspring was the demon Pakao, which now inhabits the forest around Mataras village and is the most powerful demon there. The third offspring was the female demon Paivo, who used to dwell with Pakao until he killed her. (One day Pakao wanted to kill a flying fox, which was sitting on top of a wild banana flower. Paivo drove away the flying fox to save its life and Pakao killed her in anger. Neighboring ***kupuna*** were about to cremate her near Mataras, at Pimonna, but Pakao was still angry and drove them west, first to Jeku, then to Kinirui, and finally to Tohu at the extreme western border of Siwai, where they succeeded in cremating her.)

Uka's two other offspring were female human beings, and from them were descended all the Hornbill people. The elder of these two sisters gave birth and had a pig slaughtered for a feast to accompany the infant's baptismal ritual. She then sent her younger sister to the stream to fetch drinking water, and while her sister was gone, she ate all the pig. When the younger sister returned and discovered how she had been deceived, she wept and vowed never to eat pig again. She kept on weeping at the thought of never again eating pig, until she conceived of the idea of performing a Climbing ceremony ***(kinamo)*** to remove

> the taboo on eating pork. She constructed a high platform, climbed to the top of it, and ate some pork while repeating a magic formula ***(korona),*** and this removed the taboo. She carried out this Climbing at a place called Pookai, east of Konga; this was the first Climbing, and it was invented by this ancestress of the Hornbill people. (Members of other clans followed her example and adopted Climbing as a means of removing taboos that are not too strong. Since that time many other Hornbills must taboo eating pork until they have performed Climbing.) After the younger sister had performed Climbing, she set out in search of canarium almonds, and, having discovered some at Paramoni and at Rukarui, she settled down there, eventually turning into the stone Paramoni.

As noted earlier, stories about clan origins had several versions. For example, in another one about the Hornbills their founding ancestress, Sipikai, lived originally in Nagovisi rather than on shoals south of the Siwai coast. Nevertheless, most of the several versions of each clan's myth were alike with respect to the kinds of incidents having to do with its totemic affiliations and with the causes and order of its branching.

The mythical accounts of branching reveal not only the imaginative inventiveness of Siwai cosmogonizing, but also the streak of humor that enlivened this and other expressions of their thought--such as, for example, an episode in the saga of the Eagle people ***(Monko),*** who originated at a place on the beach near Hiruhiru, called Mitahu.

> From Mitahu several Eagle ***kupuna*** sisters went to central Siwai and had a feast at the stone named Nukui. Instead of a pig they butchered and cooked a frog. One ***kupuna*** ate the head ***(puri)*** of the frog and settled down near Kupingku village; her descendants became known as Head people ***(Purinnai).*** Another ***kupuna*** ate the middle of the frog and settled down near the present villages of Sikurai, Kontai, and Kinirui; her descendants became known as the Middle people ***(Motunon).*** The third ***kupuna*** ate the legs and settled at Hari village; her descendants became the Legs people ***(Hipanopo).*** A fourth ***kupuna*** took one look at the roasted frog and became afraid and ran away; she settled at Tokunotu, and her descendants are the Runaways ***(Morunon:*** I ran away). Since ***morokin*** (flying fox) sounds much like ***morunon,*** the Runaways decided to taboo flying foxes in addition to their original totems of eagles and frig-

> ate birds *(kerai).* Another *kupuna* had never seen a roasted frog before and asked: "What is it called *(ua toŋunom)*?" She settled in eastern Siwai and in Terei [Buin], and her descendants are known as the What-is-it-called people *(Tonuno).* Another *kupuna* arrived after the frog had been eaten and complained: "If I had only been here *(nukui)!"* She remained weeping at the site of the feast, and her descendants settled there, becoming known as the If-I-had-been-here people (Nukui). The *kupuna* who arrived last of all at the feast got nothing and went to live at Korikunu and Kaparo. Her descendants are known as the Late-arrivals *(Romotaku,* since-she-arrived-afterwards). Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

Each of the six exogamous clans represented in Siwai in 1938-1939 was identified mainly by its principal totem, Tree-Rat, Hornbill, Parrot, Crane, Eagle, or Kingfisher. And although no two clan cosmogonies were alike in narrative content, they all resembled one another closely with respect to certain of their themes (and with the practices associated with them during 1938-1939). The most significant of those themes were as follows:

1. Each *kupuna* ancestress gave birth to certain demons, human beings, and animal archetypes, thereby linking them by special (i.e., totemic) ties.
2. Although the *kupunas* withdrew from mundane living, most of them remained near the scenes of their earthly activities, in the form of stone-demons or bush-demons; and in such transformations they were more dangerous than beneficent to their human descendants.
3. Primary totems--that is, descendants of the animal archetype siblings-require kindly treatment. Above all they must not be eaten by their human relatives; anyone breaking this taboo invites certain, automatic death, there being no magic antidote to save him or her.
4. Secondary totems--those acquired by other than genealogical means--are not as stringently protected from eating or handling.
5. The *kupunas* of several separate clans independently invented (a) a sacramental ceremony (Climbing) for the express purpose of lifting secondary totemic taboos and (b) magical rites *(maru)* to insure the health, growth, and well-being of clan members.
6. The *kupunas* of several clans also discovered and acquired sacred hoards of high-value shell money *(tomui, pata),* which they passed on to their human descendants, mainly for use in ceremonies.
7. During their wanderings around Siwai the *kupunas* tarried at cer-

tain places long enough to consecrate them in some manner; for example, at some of these shrines ***(urinno)*** the ***kupunas*** deposited sacred water from their homes for use in connection with clan ceremonies, while others were consecrated through the continued presence of the ***kupunas*** in the form of stone-demons or bush-demons. These shrines are dangerously sacred ***(mikisa)*** to associated clan members, who may safely visit them only on certain occasions.

8. All the myths relate how the "scattering" of the ***kupunas*** and their early human descendants resulted in the fission of the clans. Conversely, the myths of some clans contain implications that parts of certain clans became linked with parts of others (see below and Oliver 1955:59-60).

I shift focus now to the social aspect of Siwai clans--to their composition and subdivisions, and to their members' shared rights and duties. The case of the Tree-Rat clan can exemplify those matters.

In dogma shared by all Tree-Rat people (and known to many other non-Tree-Rat Siwai), all living persons believed to be descended matrilineally from one or the other of the two ***kupuna*** sisters, Noiha and Korina, were members of the same clan. As such they were forbidden to harm or eat any ordinary tree-rat, owing to the circumstance that all of them were descendants of the primal Giant Tree-Rat, who was, like their own human ancestress, an offspring of one of the two ancestral ***kupuna*** sisters. Should any member of the clan kill or eat a tree-rat, even unwittingly, retribution would occur swiftly and automatically in the form of death, there being no effective antidote or penance.

Neither Noiha nor Korina (nor the primal Tree-Rat) was worshiped or prayed to, although all Tree-Rat members regarded the large stones at Rotunoua and Motuna to be associated with their "history" and as such to be "sacred" ***(mikisa)*** to themselves. Another exclusive possession of the Tree-Rat people as a whole was their ***maru,*** the distinctive combination of magical words and nonverbal actions believed to have been invented by their ***kupuna*** ancestresses that was performed by one of themselves on a fellow clan member to promote the latter's health and well-being--the performers usually being elderly, practiced female members of the subject's own matrilineage subdivision of the clan (see below). One ingredient of Tree-Rat ***maru*** (and of the ***maru*** of most other clans) was water taken from a spring or stream near a clan ***urinno,*** some place made "sacred" by one of its ***kupuna*** ancestresses. And although water from any of the clan's several ***urinno*** would have served the purpose, that used in a ***maru*** rite was usually taken from one more-narrowly associated with the subject's and the performer's subdivision of the clan.

A somewhat different position was occupied by the heirloom shell money ***(tomui)*** possessed by each matrilineage subdivision of the Tree-Rat clan. Although all such ***tomui*** of all Tree-Rat matrilineages was said to have been discovered by the ancestral ***kupuna*** sisters at their original home, the separate stores of it still extant in 1938-1939 were the exclusive properties of separate matrilineages and were not even lent out among them for any purpose, ritual or otherwise.

Less significant was the dogma, asserted by many Tree-Rat people, that all fellow members had the same pattern of lines on the palms of their hands. However, when contrary evidence was pointed out to one of them, the usual reaction was, "Things are not always as should be."

Like the membership of all other Siwai clans, the Tree-Rats addressed one another as ***imo*** (my-clanmate) when a more specific kin term was not appropriate or known. Moreover, my questions concerning the kind of relationship that prevailed among ***imo*** invariably prompted pious statements about mutual affection and cooperation--even though my informants knew, and knew that I knew, of countless cases of feud and murder among ***imo*** in former years and of political rivalries and personal enmities, including the use of sorcery, among them in 1938-1939. And again, acknowledgment of such realities was usually shrugged off with, "Things are not always as should be." Indeed, the only occasion on which Tree-Rat members per se acted in concert was at Climbing ceremonies, when all those Tree-Rats present tended to ascend the platform at the same time, no matter how distant their residences and ties of clanship.

In fact, despite all the verbal expressions of unity, the most--almost the only--significant social-relational aspect of common clan membership, among Tree-Rats as well as among members of other Siwai clans, was the rule that clanmates should not engage in sexual acts with one another. And although casual sexual affairs reportedly did take place between distant clanmates--always in "distant settlements"--they never resulted in publicly sanctioned marriage. The social condemnation attending even casual affairs was reinforced by the belief that both of the sinners would be killed by their clan spirits unless they promptly performed antidotal rites. In some well-known cases the deaths of the unrepentant principals did not take, place for several years, but when they did finally die the common judgment was that their incestuous acts ***(mo'oturu)*** had caught up with them in the end. (The rule against sexual intercourse between members of the same clan extended in some cases to members of different clans as well--as will be described below.)

By 1938-1939 many Siwai, mostly young males, had been to places

far beyond the borders of Siwai--a few to Christian mission schools but most to European plantations. Some returnees reported to me that they had met up with "clanmates" even from different language regions--Bougainvillians who respected the same totemic animal or possessed identical palm lines. However, I was unable to discover evidence of any regularized interaction resulting from such recognition other than an inclination for friendship--and statements to the effect that one should not engage in sex acts with a "sister" of such a "clanmate."

I turn now to subdivisions of Siwai clans, and again use as reference the case of the Tree-Rat people. As was reported above, the first (mythical) subdivision of the Tree-Rats took place at Motuna, where Noiha, the elder of the ***kupuna*** sisters, provoked the physical separation from her younger sister, Korina, by her selfish action of devouring all of the belly-fat delicacy of a pig intended for both of them. Korina (the story goes) thereupon moved to Rukruk, mothered a number of humans, proscribed the eating of pig belly-fat by herself and by all her matrilineal descendants until the performance of an antidotal rite, and eventually turned into a sacred stone. Meanwhile, her greedy sister, Noiha, remained in the vicinity of Motuna and herself mothered a number of humans, thereby founding a geographically separate matriline.

In 1938-1939 the separate matrilines founded (mythically) by Noiha and Korina were known, respectively, as Left-behinds (because they had remained behind when Korina moved away) and Belly-fats (because of their proscription on eating that delicacy). Using English-language logic, we can call each of them a subclan; the Siwai made no generic verbal distinction between a whole clan and its subdivisions, the word ***noroukuru*** having been applied to them all. Moreover, in the case of the Tree-Rats, although a distinction was made between the two subclans in terms of the eating or not eating of pig belly-fat, there were no other social practices to differentiate them. Neither subclan per se assembled on social or religious occasions. Individually, the members of each subclan expressed more or less exclusive association with their own shared shrine place--Kiaman in the case of the Left-behinds, Rukruk in the case of the Belly-fats--but they did not share distinctive ownership in any other land, in shell valuables, or in ***maru.*** Moreover, neither subclan's membership indicated to me any sentiment about ties of subclanship being friendlier or sexual avoidances stricter than in the case of clanship in general.

Reverting to the Tree-Rat people's stories about their pasts, I am unable to judge which of the episodes marked the transition from their myths--either transmitted in ancient times or recently invented--to

plausible historical facts. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that at various points in those pasts some members resided long enough in specific places to establish territorial claims, either by pioneer settlement or by forceful seizure--claims that in 1938-1939 were deemed valid by most of their neighbors.

But let us return to the Tree-Rat myths cum history. The subclan of the Belly-fats was to become more widely ramified than that of the Left-behinds and hence will better serve the purpose of providing an illustration of how the Siwai conceptualized the mythological-historical past.

After parting from her selfish older sister, the ***kupuna*** Korina settled down at a place called Rukruk and gave birth to several humans. In time men from nearby hamlets (such as Rukarui, Tumuroku, and others) married Rukruk Belly-fat women and took them to their homes, where after a few generations the Belly-fats in each of those hamlets constituted a separate sub-subclan, each with its own shrine, (slightly distinctive) ***maru,*** and shell heirlooms, and in some cases with eating prohibitions of their own. After a while women from those sub-subclans moved to other places, where they founded (with apologies to the reader!) sub-sub-subclans--and so on.

In 1938-1939 the near end-products of all that ramifying were scores of locality-centered matrilineages--so labeled (in keeping with conventional anthropological terminology) because of the circumstance that their more knowledgeable members could trace their common matrilineal descent from a specific, historically credible, and individually named ancestress (or pair of sibling ancestresses) who in most cases was (or were) no more than four or five generations antecedent to a unit's oldest living members. Each such matrilineage was corporate, in the sense that its members shared ownership of a collection of shell heirlooms and one or more tracts of land. The heirlooms were used to decorate members on solemn occasions, to purchase pigs for a member's funerary feast, and--a few shell beads at a time--to farewell a member's corpse during cremation. Such heirlooms were usually identified as being part of the original Tree-Rat hoard, and the rule was that, at the approach of death of a unit's last surviving member, they should be buried in a hidden place rather than transferred to some other individual or social unit--not even a collateral matrilineage.

As for the land, every Tree-Rat matrilineage I knew about owned exclusively, in full title, several tracts of land. In many cases members permitted others to garden on their lands for limited periods (e.g., during the planting, growing, and harvesting of one root crop) and occa-

sionally for "rent"; in other cases a matrilineage's members both owned and exclusively used such land themselves. (Henceforth in this essay the former type of ownership will be labeled ***residual,*** the latter ***full.)*** Unlike its shell heirlooms, however, the ownership of a matrilineage's land was sometimes transferred, "permanently," to another individual or matrilineage--usually in connection with a member's death. Thus, when a person died, it was obligatory for his or her matrilineage mates to recompense with a pork feast all other persons who had attended the cremation. When the deceased's matrilineage mates had to call on outsiders for help in obtaining enough pigs, the deceased's spouse was usually the first to be solicited, but contributions from anyone were acceptable. Moreover, in return for substantial amounts of such help, it was customary for the contributor to be given full title to one or more tracts of the deceased's matrilineage land--which, in most but not all cases, were eventually incorporated in the contributor's matrilineage estate.

Mention was made earlier of clan shrines--places and objects, such as noteworthy stones--associated exclusively with (i.e., owned by) whole clans (or subclans, sub-subclans, and so on). Some matrilineages also owned a shrine or two of their own, but in most cases their times of branching had been too recent (i.e., four or five generations) to encourage conceptualization of that aspect of their corporate unity. That was the case, for example, of the several matrilineages that had branched from the Rukarui division of the Belly-fats subclan and whose members continued to use spring water from the Rukarui (subclan) shrine in conducting their own rites of ***maru.***

Their use of the shrine did not, however, serve to acknowledge any kind of "seniority" to the (collateral) Rukarui matrilineage owning the tract of land on which the shrine was located. In fact, although some authority was attributed to age seniority among same-sex siblings and to Firstborns by their younger matrilineage mates (see below), such ranking did not carry over to relations among segments of a clan. For example, among Tree-Rat people, members of the Left-behind subclan (descendants of elder sister Noiha) were not privileged over those of the Belly-fat subclan (descendants of younger sister Korina), nor among the latter was there any seniority-based hierarchical distinction made between matrilineages of the same sub-subclan.

Seniority did, however, serve to regulate social role among members of the same matrilineage. Every matrilineage included a pair of Firstborns ***(simiri),*** conventionally the unit's chronologically oldest still mentally competent female and male members. It was the responsibility of the female Firstborn to guard the unit's heirloom shell valuables and to

dole them out among members for use on ritual occasions. And it was the responsibility of both of a matrilineage's Firstborns, male and female, to decide on the use or disposal of their matrilineage's land-its temporary use among matrilineage mates as well as outsiders and its alienation to outsiders. In communities dominated numerically by a single matrilineage, its Firstborns and especially its male Firstborn tended to have authority over other community affairs as well, provided there was not a more prominent ***mumi*** (big-man leader) there--either a younger member of the dominant matrilineage or a member of some other matrilineage localized there. (As noted earlier, in some communities the most influential male Firstborn was the most renowned ***mumi*** as well.)

I wrote above that in 1938-1939 matrilineages were "near" end-products of clan ramification; in the case of some of them, that process had proceeded one step further, to the formation of sub- or minimal matrilineages, namely, units consisting of two or three generations of members related to one another through known uterine ties. Although such units had not (yet) become set apart by a separate name, their members often acted together as a separate group on everyday as well as special occasions, and some of them shared corporately and well-nigh exclusively in the full or residual ownership of tracts of land. (As for what would happen to such land in the event of the demise of all its minimal-matrilineage owners, I did not pursue that question systematically, but in the three cases I heard about, such land had passed on to the offspring of their male members and thence to ***their*** matrilineages, rather than "reverting" to the encompassing matrilineages of the original owners.)

Among the eleven hundred or so inhabitants of northeast Siwai (the area of my most intensive fieldwork), matrilineages varied in span from one to four or five matrilines and in size from one to about thirty members--the modal sizes having been twelve to twenty. They also varied, in some cases widely, in depth. As mentioned earlier, the depth of most of them was four or five generations above the oldest living members, but there were several cases in which the unit was said to have been "founded" (as a separate, named, corporate, and communally functioning unit) by an elderly woman or a pair of elderly sisters still alive. And there were a few others that traced their namable ascendants through single matrilines (i.e., without remembered collateral lines) through nine or ten generations. In other words, although (for example) most Tree-Rat matrilineages I knew about were at least sub-sub-subclans, there were two that were sub-subclans. (Unfortunately for the tidy-

minded ethnographer, the structural symmetry envisaged in taxonomic terminology does not always correspond to social reality.)

Having delineated the complexities of Siwai clan ***fission,*** I must add some words about that tribe's processes of clan ***fusion.*** In my inquiries about clan exogamy in northeast Siwai, I came across several instances wherein marriage was declared to be prohibited between persons belonging to different clans. Three kinds of explanation were offered for this unusual phenomenon: (1) "Formerly our ***noroukuru*** (clan or clan segment) used to be the same"; (2) "We both taboo the same totem"; and (3) "One of our male ancestors 'bound' us together."

Exemplifying the first explanation was the rule that Hornbills should not marry Tree-Rats, Cranes, or members of the Eye-roller subclan of the Kingfisher clan. The only reason given for those prohibitions was, "Formerly we used to be the same ***noroukuru."*** None of the clans or clan segments subject to those prohibitions shared totems, not even secondary ones; and even my most inventive informants could not, or would not, go beyond that general explanation.

The second kind of explanation is more easily comprehended in terms of Siwai logic, even though the totems shared in most cases happened to be the primary one for one of the units and a secondary one for the other.

The third kind of explanation derived from the concept of ***nokihoro,*** which meant "agglomeration''--"to place unlike things together" (for example, yams with taro, a knife with an adze, or, in this context, women belonging to different clans). Thus, when a man had had two wives, either simultaneously or serially (say, one a Tree-Rat, the other an Eagle), their respective offspring were considered half-siblings--or, in Siwai terms, "siblings by ***nokihoro"***--and were forbidden to marry one another. In most such situations that I recorded, the prohibition applied only to the direct matrilineal descendants of the "agglomerated" wives, but there were cases in which it had been extended to include whole subclans, sub-subclans, and so on. In general, it was my impression that the evoking of a ***nokihoro*** relationship (with its corollary marriage restriction) was somewhat inconsistent and subject to circumstance. For example, it was sometimes loudly advertised if a man wanted to assert a closer kin tie with a prominent ***mumi*** and sometimes ignored if a man wished to marry a particular "agglomerated" woman.

Two other types of interclan relationship require mention. First, in the northwestern part of Siwai, members of the numerically preponderant Eagle clan were permitted to marry members of any of the five other clans, while the latter could only marry Eagles. The only explana-

tion I could elicit about this arrangement was that the five non-Eagle clans "used to be the same ***noroukuru"***--no explanation having been forthcoming about how they had separated.[10]

The second type of relationship occurred in many pockets throughout Siwai. Reference here is to places where members of two neighboring clans had been intermarrying almost exclusively for so many generations that the practice had come to be regarded as strongly preferential, virtually prescriptive. The explanation usually given for the practice was that "it keeps lands and valuables together" (i.e., in terms both of nuptial transactions and of inheritance). To the best of my knowledge, however, nowhere did the practice involve an omission of bride-price or a direct woman-for-woman exchange (which all the Siwai I discussed the matter with considered to be highly immoral).

Finally, it must be added that, alongside the Siwai's pervasive matrilineally structured institutions, there were signs of incipient patriliny. Mention was made earlier of the practice whereby nonmembers were enabled to acquire ownership of some of a matrilineage's land by contributing pigs or pig-purchasing money--"gifts" labeled ***nori***--to help its members provide an adequate funeral feast for a deceased matrilineage mate. I recorded several cases in which the major contributors to a man's funeral feast had been his wife and children, who used pigs or money in which the deceased himself had owned no share. In most of those cases the land thus acquired was simply added to the contributors' own matrilineage estates. But in a few of them, when the ***nori*** had belonged mainly to the deceased's son(s), the latter had transmitted the acquired land to his own son, rather than to his matrilineage, and so on, thereby founding an incipient patrilineage. During my stay in Siwai there existed several such units, three or four generations deep, all of which owned, corporately, distinct estates in land, and a few of which owned shell heirlooms as well. However, none that I knew of had conceptualized its unity and separateness to the extent of having its own shrine or ***maru*** or totemic emblem, and none had ruled itself to be exogamous. Nor did any of them ascribe authority over the unit's resources to its oldest members as such; short of senility, elderliness was respected in this as in other Siwai institutional contexts, but leadership in "patrilineage" affairs tended to rest with the unit's most renowned male rather than with its age-based equivalent of a matrilineage Firstborn.

With that we can conclude our résumé of Siwai descent and descent-

like units. Readers wishing more details are referred to ***A Solomon Island Society*** (Oliver 1955), but enough has been provided in the above pages to serve for comparison with the descent and descentlike units of the Nagovisi, to which I now turn.

Nagovisi

For centuries and probably much longer, people speaking what has come to be called Sibbe have resided on the southwestern slopes of Bougainville's Crown Prince Range. Directly north of the slopes is a wide, stream-laced, swampy, and virtually uninhabited area that separated them effectively from the linguistically only very distantly related Eivo. East of them resided the Nasioi, whose language was closely related to their own but with whom they seem to have had few contacts during the decades just prior to the 1930s--perhaps because of the high mountainous terrain that separates them. The area directly east of the Nagovisi's southern settlements consisted of a large block of uninhabited mountainous terrain, but some of their southern settlements, located in an area of gentler slopes and plains, were adjacent to those of the Baitsi, who spoke a dialectical variant of Siwai. The Nagovisi's westernmost residences were adjacent to some inland settlements of the otherwise coastal, Austronesian-speaking Banoni, who, however, were relatively recent migrants to the region and who will not figure directly in this comparison.

The earliest, very rough count, made in 1929, put the number of Nagovisi at "about 2000." A more careful count, made in 1938, showed them to number 3,516--plus a reportedly uncounted number of "the very old and the very young." Given the uncertainties surrounding the 1929 figure, it is not possible to know whether the large difference between it and the 1938 figure was based on a sizable underestimation of the earlier count or represented an actual and very accelerated increase. My guess is the former; aside from the cessation of lethal feuding (which seems to have been arrested between 1929 and 1938), no other changes--such as significantly better medical care or the abolition of postpartum sex constraints--could have taken place during that decade to account for such a rapid population increase.[11]

Estimating, very roughly, the area of land used by or claimed by the Nagovisi in 1938 to have been about 80 square miles would yield a population density of about 44 persons per square mile. For the area studied by Nash and Mitchell, in 1969-1973, the population density was consid-

erably higher. By that time, however, the per-person need for land had increased significantly through cash cropping.

During the century or so before World War I, the Nagovisi's contacts with their close linguistic relatives the Nasioi seem to have been less numerous than those with the neighboring Siwai. In fact, many Siwai had migrated into and become "Nagovisi'‘--a movement that seems to have been two-way. Also, it was through Siwai and to a lesser degree Banoni that European influences first reached Nagovisi, beginning with steel tools in the 1880s.

Nagovisi men began to work on European plantations--on Manus, New Britain, and the eastern coast of Bougainville--about twenty years later, but it was not until 1930 that a European--a Roman Catholic priest--established residence in Nagovisi itself. The 1930s also witnessed the beginning of periodic visits by (Australian) Administration officials; these succeeded in suppressing what remained of lethal feuding and in encouraging men to leave home to work. A permanent Administration post was first established in Nagovisi after World War II, and a vehicular road linking the area with the island's main administrative and commercial center of Arawa-Kieta was completed only in 1973.

The field studies on which this résumé is based were focused on communities in central Nagovisi. And although their 435 or so residents constituted only about 14 percent of Nagovisi's total population at the time, their social institutions seem not to have differed markedly from those of the rest of their language mates--Nagovisi having been somewhat more homogeneous, culturally, than Siwai, Buin, or Nasioi.

The Nagovisi's pattern of residential settlement underwent some radical changes immediately before, during, and immediately after World War II, but by the period from 1969 to 1973 (when the Nash-Mitchell field studies took place) they had begun to revert to the precolonial pattern, which consisted of one- to five-household hamlets, which in turn were combined into communities containing several hamlets each.

In my introduction to this essay, I noted that "communities" existed in all four study populations but added that there were differences among the four in the kind and organization of their respective activities. I can describe with some certainty what members qua members of Siwai and Buin communities did and how they were organized. I am, however, less certain about the communities of the Nagovisi (and of the Nasioi). Regarding Nagovisi, which I visited in 1938, but only for a one-month stay:

> To me, coming to this area from [Siwai], the most striking aspect of Nagovisi culture was the extremely rudimentary form of the political institutions [i.e., community leadership]. Club-houses ***(sibbe, raopai*** (singular) = ***motuna, ka·poso)*** are fewer and smaller, with at most two or three slit-gongs, the rest of the space being taken up with benches. Club-houses are not limited to men [as they are in Siwai]; women have a perfect right to visit them. This state of affairs was a shock to my [Siwai] servants.
>
> Feasts are said to be held much less frequently, to be a great deal less lavish, and to attract fewer people than in northeast [Siwai]. Leaders are called ***mu·miako*** [correctly, ***momiako]*** (cf. ***motuna, mu·mi);*** but one of my informants who had married and lived for a while in [Siwai] assured me that there were no really big feast-giving leaders in Nagovisi. Such ***mu·miako*** that were pointed out to me were usually venerable old men far past their prime and who were described as being: "the ***mu·miako*** of such-and-such a moiety" rather than--as in northeast [Siwai]--"the ***mu·mi*** of such-and-such a place."
>
> The unimportance of political institutions is in direct contrast to the [Nagovisi's greater] emphasis upon kinship relationships and activities. (Oliver 1943:57-58)

Other clues to the nature of Nagovisi communities, as they were in the 1930s, are found in writings by Nash and Mitchell about ***momiako,*** which will be quoted below.

Wealth and Renown

As elsewhere in southern Bougainville, wealth consisted mainly of pigs and shell valuables. Pork was seldom if ever eaten at ordinary meals but was indispensable for festive ones. Moreover, pigs were the principal tokens used in several kinds of transactions, but the only statistical data I can find regarding Nagovisi pig ownership are given by Mitchell, who states that, in 1973, "many of the young couples will want to raise one or more pigs" (1976: 135), and that among the seventeen households (containing a total of ninety persons) he surveyed for that purpose, four had no pigs and the remaining thirteen owned pigs weighing a total of 975 kg (1976: 137). Assuming the average weight of a 1973 pig to be about 30 kg,[12] there would have been about thirty-two pigs, an average

of two for each household or about 0.35 per person (compared with the equivalent Siwai figure of 0.82). These figures are of little use in reconstructing the pig population in the 1930s, but it is the only clue known to me. In all likelihood the average sizes of pigs were smaller in the 1930s than in 1973; during that earlier era the proportion of introduced European varieties was probably much smaller.

Mitchell, writing about conditions in 1973, stated: "Pigs are said to belong to women, but men have a good deal to say regarding their acquisition or sale" (1976:35). According to Nash, writing about the same period: "Ideally, the pattern of inheritance . . . is a transfer from mother to eldest daughter. This is the route for currency-type shell valuables and usage rights to individual parcels of land [and] trees. . . . A woman's livestock (pigs, chickens) are not inherited per se but instead may be slaughtered and eaten at . . . funerary feasts" (1974:27).

Based on information obtained during my one-month visit to Nagovisi in 1939, I wrote, "In comparison with [Siwai] there are far fewer pigs and less shell money [i.e., shell valuables in general], in fact, the Nagovisi seem to be poorer in almost every department of material culture" (Oliver 1943:27)--not exactly "deep" ethnography (and certainly not adequate for present purposes)! So again I must draw on information obtained by Nash and Mitchell in 1973, relying on the hopeful and not unreasonable assumption that in this and in certain other domains of Nagovisi culture conditions had not greatly changed since the thirties.

In 1973 ***viasi,*** shell valuables, consisted of span-long strings of beads made of various varieties of marine shells obtained by the Nagovisi by trade with the neighboring AN-speaking Banoni and the neighboring NAN-speaking Siwai (who obtained most of theirs from AN-speaking Shortland and Treasury islanders). The strings varied in accepted value according to the type, size, and color of their shell beads; there were in fact eight "denominations" of them in 1973.[13] Shell valuables also differed in function--some of them having been in common use as currency (e.g., for buying pigs and paying fines). Such currency-type strings were also used for marital transactions: in 1973 for bride-price; in the thirties for dowry. Currency-type ***viasi*** was usually owned by individuals, mostly by women, and was customarily inherited by the owner's daughters, in order of seniority.

Other types of shell valuables served as descent-unit heirlooms ***(wolupia),*** having been used in descent-unit rituals and to ornament descent-

unit members. ***Wolupia*** did not ordinarily circulate beyond its owning descent unit. Moreover, some ***wolupia*** was believed to be imbued with a soul and to have magical "strength."

Concerning the distribution of ***viasi,*** the only estimate available for the thirties is my impressionistic one quoted above, namely, "less shell money than in [Siwai]." As for 1973, we have statements by Nash and Mitchell to the effect that individuals differed in their currency assets--from "none" to "many"--and that descent units ranged in ***wolupia*** holdings from "rich" to "poor."

Marriage

Nagovisi customs concerning marriage differed in two respects from those of Siwai (and of Nasioi and Buin). The first had to do with post-marriage residence:

> Information on residence of couples whose marriages were contracted before World War II shows that about half of all couples were residing uxorilocally, and the rest were divided between virilocal and alternating residence. The latter form of residence can be defined as occurring when a couple either maintained two houses at any given time--usually, one virilocally and the other uxorilocally situated--or when during their marriage they lived uxorilocally for a period of years, then virilocally for a period, again uxorilocally for a third period, and so on. The former sort of alternating residence was practised by Big-men [***momiako***] and the well-to-do and influential in particular, but not exclusively by them. The latter sort of alternating residence was frequently observed by couples whose descent groups owned adjacent plots of land. All those who practised alternating residence appeared to have moved around as circumstances provided or required, e.g., to plan and carry out feasts, because of arguments, fear of sorcery, etc. (Nash 1974:83)

More specifically, in a survey carried out in the Nash-Mitchell study area, it was found that of twenty-nine couples who had married between 1910 and 1943, seven had resided virilocally, thirteen uxorilocally, and eight alternately--while one couple had remained in their common premarriage place (Nash 1974:85).[14] Since the "traditional" type of residential settlement was a hamlet, and one usually located on

land owned by the descent unit to which its resident female members belonged, I assume that the locus referred to in Nash's statements was the hamlet (and not the household, the larger "community," or the Administration-created line village).

The second distinctive feature of Nagovisi marriages had to do with their formalizing prestations--again, I draw on Nash:

> Today the Nagovisi always pay brideprice ***(wolina,*** 'payment in general'). However, according to informants, this was not the case traditionally. In the past, an optional dowry ***(lolai)*** was paid. The statements of my informants are corroborated by H. Thurnwald's information (1938). Indeed, the same rationalization for dowry was given by my informants as [Thurnwald] reports: the purpose of the dowry was to 'buy' the strength of the man--to buy a 'strong hand' to work in the gardens. . . .
>
> Traditionally the mother of the bride (or other ranking females in the lineage or clan) paid a dowry of one or two or even three--according to [H.] Thurnwald (1938)--strands of shell valuables to the mother of the groom or to his clan or lineage. Such payment was called ***lolai.*** Only the well-to-do were able to make such payments, because the Nagovisi say that in the past not everyone had shell valuables. Sometimes, in addition, the mother of the bride and the mother of the groom would exchange identical strands of shell [i.e., identical in size of shell, in color, and so on--in other words, in denomination]. Such exchanges were identical exchanges and were made to promote goodwill between those exchanging them. The family of the groom in some cases made a return of pigs, which were eaten at the bridal feast or perhaps at a later date. The gift of pigs was called ***lolai nogokas*** ('return for ***lolai'). Lolai nogokas*** was not always made, nor was it really considered equal to the ***lolai.*** It did not cancel out the exchanging relation, because the ***lolai*** was to 'buy' the physical labour of the groom, not the pigs. (Nash 1974:93)

The rationalization of dowry as "buying the strength of the man" reflected the circumstance that in most cases the husband moved to his wife's place--to her hamlet and descent-unit land--and thenceforth devoted most of his productive labor to providing food for her and her descent-unit mates (including his own children by her). Even when a

couple resided at the husband's hamlet, he was expected to devote most of his labor to the welfare of his wife and children and not to that of his sisters and their children (who were members of the man's own descent unit).[15]

Matriliny

The enduring core of each hamlet was a closely knit segment of one or another of the Nagovisi's several exogamous matrilineal clans, which were themselves grouped into one or the other of two exogamous categories of kin, or moieties. An individual belonged to the descent unit--clan, and therefore moiety--of his or her mother, and nothing could alter that affiliation.

Unlike the Siwai, the Nagovisi had no generic word for "descent unit" in general. Their language did, however, contain terms that, according to Nash, might be glossed "descent group of indefinite range," as, for example, ***nigonmpo*** (my group), ***lekompo*** (thy group), ***wakampo*** (his/her group) (1974:20).

In the case of the moieties, each was usually referred to by the name of its principal totem, one being Hornbill, the other Eagle. According to Nash, the members of each moiety

> are geographically dispersed throughout Nagovisi and have no common ground or shrines. Members of each moiety refrain . . . from eating or touching their respective totems on pain of illness (specifically, sores, shortness of breath, or wasting away). They consider themselves to have distinctive palm lines, Hornbills having three and Eagles having either two or four. Both sexual relations and marriage between members of the same moiety are forbidden; informants claimed that formerly offenders would be summarily killed by their own horrified moiety mates. . . . All or most members of one moiety never assemble or act in concert. Although they verbally prescribe an ethic of hospitality and brotherhood towards one another, it seems that traditionally, enemies might frequently be members of one's own moiety who belonged to geographically remote clans. (Nash 1974: 22-23)

Again according to Nash, in the 1970s the following symbols were associated with Nagovisi moieties:

	Moiety A	Moiety B
Bird	***Komo*** (Hornbill)	***Mangka*** (Eagle)
Spirit ancestress	Poreu	Makonai
Her offspring	***Langala (Unicomys ponceleti,*** Giant Tree-Rat)	***Paramorung (Boiga irregularis,*** Brown Tree-Snake)
	Barama (Eel)	
	Aiwa (a vine)	
Other animals	Kingfisher	Mynah bird
		Crocodile

Nash's commentary on the above "moiety symbols" is presented not in her 1974 publication (which focused on other matters) but in her unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, from which she has generously permitted me to quote at some length:

> According to the Nagovisi, there is no mythical relationship between Eagle and Makonai nor between Hornbill and Poreu. They seem to belong to entirely different symbolic systems. . . . Both Eagle and Hornbill are thought to be exemplary because they seem to have many human virtues. Both are large, monogamous, make substantial house-like nests, and produce only one offspring at a time. (Nash 1972:69-70)

Continuing from this source:

> There are a number of stories about Poreu and Makonai, both of whom were mythic ***(kobonara)*** spirits ***(mara).***
>
> > Story one: Poreu and Makonai were sisters-in-law. Poreu didn't know about fire and used to lay her taro corms out in the sun to cook them. One day, she went to Makonai's house, where she was served some cooked taro. "This is better," she said, "how did you do it?" Makonai showed her fire. Poreu offered to buy some with a strand of ***wiasi,*** but Bakonai gave her some fire for nothing, saying that fire is not something we should pay for. Variant ending: Poreu did pay for the fire with some ***mEkala wiasi [viasi]*** (sacred shell money that some Eagle female clans and lineages possess) and this is why Hornbill people have no ***mEkala wiasi*** today.

Each had children. Makonai's only son was a snake called ***para-morung.*** He was hacked to pieces by his brothers-in-law, who were revolted by the idea that their sister had married a snake. Poreu had three children, the first of whom was a giant tree-rat ***(langala),*** the second of whom was an eel ***(barama)*** and the third of which was a vine ***(aiwa).*** Poreu people are not to eat ***langala*** or eel. Ingestion of such forbidden foods will cause sores. Snakes in any case are considered inedible. Both Makonai and Poreu cause sores to appear on children who have not had the proper "growing-up rites" ***(mavo)*** done for them, but Poreu is said to be basically evil, whereas Makonai is not. The following stories will illustrate some of Poreu's evil ways.

> ***Story two:*** Once, all the Hornbill people used to live at Simbawa in the mountains. There was a ***mara,*** 'spirit being,' named Poreu who would assume the form of a human female and offer to take care of babies so that their mothers could go to the garden. While the mother was away, Poreu would stab the baby's fontanelle with a flying-fox finger bone. When the mother came back, Poreu would tell her to cook some food. Then she would give the baby back to its mother, and the baby would die. Poreu would then slip away to the bush. She did this repeatedly. The Hornbills tried to kill her, but they couldn't. So they decided to trick her and abandon Simbawa. When she came again to the village, they asked her to go to the spring and fill up a bamboo tube with water. However, Hornbills had removed the bottom from the tube and it did not fill up. Night came, and the tree-toad called to Poreu, "They are tricking you." Poreu examined the tube and saw that it was true. Meanwhile, the Hornbills had left Simbawa, but they put a ***kuauau*** (small bird, species unknown) by the fireside in one of the houses. The bird cried out and Poreu thought it was a human voice, so she followed the sound of the bird. But the people had all gone. When Poreu found the bird, she was so angry that she cooked it and ate it. From Simbawa, all the Hornbills dispersed throughout south Bougainville--to Nasioi, Buin, Siuai, and lower parts of Nagovisi.
>
> ***Addition to migration story:*** When she [Poreu] began to follow the Hornbill people, Lightning saw her and killed

> her, because he was sorry for the people. Poreu's womb then went up into a tree and became a vine called ***aiwa,*** which is common in the mountains. This is how Poreu became a spirit--before that, she was a human.
>
> ***Story three:*** Poreu used to turn into a pig sometimes and ruin people's gardens by digging up all the food and eating it. She would leave her skin on the fence while she did it. This is another reason why people had to abandon villages in the old days.
>
> The reason why Poreu is bad and Makonai is good is because Poreu did not have fire for a long time. (Nash 1972:70-72)

And further:

> There is no mythical relationship between Kingfisher and either Poreu or Hornbill, although there is a "just so" story about Hornbill and Kingfisher, in which Hornbill steals Kingfisher's beak while the two are bathing and thus comes into possession of the large one he now has. Informants told me that there were people in Nagovisi whose totem was the mynah [bird] ***(sigino),*** but they are considered to be essentially Eagles --just a division of the Eagles from Siuai. Crocodile people are a clan who trace real biological connections to people in Siuai; they would appear to be those mentioned in Oliver's work on the Siuai as a division of Hornbill (Oliver 1955:51), the Gurava (Nagovisi) or Kurava (Siuai). (Nash 1972:72)

According to Nash, "What seems to be is that the Nagovisi system cannot accommodate more than two intermarrying groups" (1972: 73).[16] Moreover:

> The idea that moiety exogamy is somewhat natural was expressed by an individual who claimed that persistent violations of moiety exogamy by the members of any clan would ultimately lead to a change in the clan's moiety affiliation: "People will say that if they [those Eagles] like marrying Eagles so much, let them be Hornbills then from now on." He claimed that such a change had actually happened to certain distant-dwelling groups. (Nash 1972:74)

The accounts I had collected about moiety symbols during my brief visit to Nagovisi in 1939 differ from Nash's in several respects. I quote from a paper published in 1943:

> ***Poreu*** and ***paramorun*** are said not to be the ***names*** nor ***totems*** of the moieties; they are the spirits who founded the moieties and who continue to exert strong influence upon the lives of their human descendants. Both are ***kobo'nara*** (epigeous ancestral demons, equivalent to the ***motuna*** [i.e., Siwai] ***kupuna)***--that extremely versatile species of demon which inhabited the earth before human beings, their descendants, were born, and who are responsible for most culture. During ***kobo'nara***-times ***paramorun*** was a snake ***(Boiga irregularis*** like the ***motuna*** [Siwai] ***ha·noro);*** his wife was ***poreu.*** Later on ***paramorun*** was hacked to pieces by his wife's people, and his body decay dripped away until it became the ocean. That mishap, however, did not appear to affect ***paramorun's*** continuity nor to discourage his matrilineal[!] descendants from marrying descendants of ***poreu;*** in fact, the precedent set by his marriage to ***poreu*** has been faithfully adhered to ever since. His moiety descendants--like Adam's children-in-law, their derivation is not explained--continued to marry matrilineal descendants of ***poreu*** and [their descendants] came in time to populate all of Nagovisi.
>
> The [original] ***poreu*** now dwells in the Taveru River near Sirogana village, and ***the paramorun*** now dwells near Hiruhiru, but there are also separate ***poreus*** and separate ***paramoruns,*** one for every living descendant. "They are all the same," said one informant, "but the ***paramorun*** at Hiruhiru is over all the other ***paramoruns."*** (Oliver 1943:58)

Furthermore:

> ***Paramorun*** is the chief ancestral spirit of one moiety; it is not a totem. The totem of this moiety, the eagle, is said to be matrilineally descended from ***paramorun*** and to be, therefore, taboo to all ***human*** descendants of ***paramorun.***
>
> No sacrifices of any kind are made to ***paramorun,*** who is (or ***are***--sometimes natives spoke of a single ***paramorun,*** at other times of the whole race of them) benevolently disposed towards

> all descendants and would punish them only in the event they killed or ate eagle.
>
> ***Paramorun*** does not seek rapport with descendants, nor patronize wealthy, influential men [as the cognate ***horomomun,*** "demon-spirits," did in northeast Siwai]. "Does each club-house shelter a ***paramorun?"*** I asked one informant. "Why, yes, of course," he answered, ***"paramoruns*** are in all places--that is, in all places where ***paramorun*** people (eagle-tabooers) live."
>
> ***Paramorun*** takes an active interest in the lives of descendants, especially infants, and although never sacrificed to nor petitioned, it helps to protect them against malicious demons.
>
> To ***paramorun's*** main shrine at Hiruhiru the souls of its descendants go after death. (The soul is also said to go to the mountain lake; this inconsistency could not be resolved by informants, who--unlike myself--were not troubled by it.) (Oliver 1943:58-59)

In evaluating discrepancies between the two accounts, the reader should bear the following in mind:

- that Nash's knowledge of Nagovisi was--is--far surer than mine, having derived from a much, much longer stay there
- that the two accounts were collected from informants from different places and during periods about thirty years apart
- that in most nonliterate societies--and even in some literate ones--myths about "origins" tend to exist in many versions
- that the discrepancies between Nash's and my renditions do not becloud the fact that individual Nagovisi believed themselves to be members of one or the other of the society's two "maximal" exogamous descent units

Each Nagovisi moiety was divided into a number of more or less localized clans, whose principal characteristics were as follows:

- There was no generic word for what I call "clan," but each one of them had its distinctive name--which, however, was "just a name" and did not refer to an ancestor, a totem, or a specific place.
- Each clan had its distinctive account of migration to the area its members currently resided in--a mixture of "impossible" myth and plausible history (see below).
- Within each moiety some clans declared themselves to be kin-related to each other through common but genealogically untraceable matrilineal descent or through having traveled together; others ex-

plained their intramoiety connection as based only on "being Hornbills" or "being Eagles."

- Clans were the ultimate, residual or full, corporate owners of all owned land. Although a clan's lands were occupied and used by a clan's subdivisions (see below), when any of its subdivisions expired (i.e., when its last childbearing female member died), the lands belonging to their clan that its members were then using reverted to the clan as a whole and were reallocated to another of its subdivisions (and not to the offspring of its surviving male members). Moreover, all of the lands owned by a clan tended to be contiguous.
- Each clan owned a hoard of nonexpendable shell valuables, which, ideally, was held in trust by a senior female of the clan's ***momiako*** (rich, powerful) lineage subdivision and used for formal occasions.
- Each clan had a common set of ***mavo*** (growing-up rites, cognate with Siwai ***maru),*** which were performed by and for members on occasions such as birth, first washing, first visit to gardens, first eating of certain kinds of foods, first entry to clubhouse (for males, although females were permitted entry), first menstruation (but not for male pubescence--there having been no male "puberty" rites), first marriage, and first pregnancy.

Continuing Nash's account:

> Such [***mavo***] ceremonies were clan affairs and were performed by prominent people on behalf of their first-born children. Generally these ceremonies were performed at the clan holy places. During the ceremony the initiate was decked with shell valuables of the clan, and perhaps the shell valuables of other moiety-mates. Older women of the clan performed ritual oblutions and made invocations to the moiety ancestresses. After the rite, cooked feast food was provided for the guests to take home in coconut leaf baskets. (Nash 1974:33-34)

Nash does not elucidate her reference to clan "holy places"; presumably they were places mentioned in a clan's origin or migration stories. As for the clan-owned shell valuables just referred to, they were, ideally and usually, kept by one of the oldest female members of the clan and used only for formal (i.e., ritual and festive) purposes, not for ordinary exchange.

Other than the above, Nagovisi clans per se had no totems or food taboos of their own--that is, none in addition to those associated with each one's encompassing moiety.

I know of no report, published or unpublished, that provides a comprehensive list of Nagovisi clans. During his 1929 survey of several Nagovisi settlements (whose residents numbered 819), Chinnery listed three "clans": Komo (Hornbill), Manka (Eagle), and Bobo ("a bird"). The first two were the names of the society's moieties, not clans; the third, according to Chinnery, "appears to have entered the Nagovisi organization through marriages with females of Baitsi [i.e., northwest Siwai]" (1924:76).

Turning to the area focused on by Nash and Mitchell, its 1970 residents, numbering 435, were divided into four clans described as "complete," plus part of a fifth clan localized mainly elsewhere in Nagovisi. Membership of the four "complete" local clans numbered 217, 144, 82, and 75--which, according to Nash, likely represented an increase over figures for clan membership in the past (in keeping, presumably, with Nagovisi's overall population increase in recent decades).

As stated above, each clan in the Nash-Mitchell study area had an account of its origin and migrations in which some episodes were obviously fictional and others plausibly historical. Here are the stories, recorded by Nash, of the four "complete" clans in her study area.

> The Biroi people left Sirogana (an area about two miles northeast of the present site of Biroi village) to get away from Poreu, who had again found them and begun to kill infants again. . . . At this time there were no further subdivisions. Some people, who later became known as the Sirogana clan, stayed behind. The reason the migrants took the name Biroi ['with the back side, instrumental or subject of action for back side, ***biro']*** was because they vowed never to return to Sirogana, except with their back sides turned towards it, presumably so that Poreu would not recognize them.
>
> The ancestors of the Lolo people left a place on the beach near Motupena point and walked up to the area they now inhabit. Koniai and Kiau, brother and sister, married a sister and brother from Lavali called Kowia and Narango. Koniai left her walking stick at Tuberuru, the present site of the Lolo Abolede village, and it turned to stone. The descendants of Koniai and Narango are the present-day Lolo people.
>
> ***Version One:*** The Lavali clan are descended from one woman who came here from Metahawa in Siuai. In time, many branches came. ***Version Two:*** Lavali was the name of the first

> man who came here from Siuai. He settled at Pakawoi, the first settlement of the Lavali people. Bero people lived in Siuai near a little spring that gurgled, "bero, bero." When some of them came up here, they went to live with the La'mEko people, who had left the other Lavali people. (Nash 1974:82, 84)

Elucidating the above, Nash writes:

> With the exception of those in the Bero clan, all present-day lineage names refer to named pieces of ground in the area of the clans' present-day holdings. The Bero people, except for the La'mEko lineage, have instead actual relatives in identically named divisions living in Siuai at the present time. Members of these Nagovisi Bero lineages either own land in parts of Siuai controlled by their common descent group or have vague rights to land which, in this time of land-shortage [the early seventies], they are attempting to revalidate by moving back to Siuai. This is evidence that the Bero lineages were the last ones to enter this area, and in fact, the grandparents of some of the members of Bero lineages are said to have been born in Siuai areas.
>
> Some of the clans claim a distant kinship to other clans in geographically remote areas. For example, the Biroi people state that most moiety-mates are related to them only insofar as they are all Hornbills--that is, they all left Simbawa together. (Nash 1974:84, 86)

Significantly, even in the cases of the four "complete" clans (those whose lands were located only in the study area), the accounts traced their beginnings to other places (two in Siwai, one on the coast, and one elsewhere in Nagovisi) and either stated or implied that they had segmented from clans still present in the places of origin (but with which they themselves claimed no active ties of clanship). As for the fifth, part clan, its seventeen members continued to acknowledge their clanship ties with their homeland elsewhere in Nagovisi.

The four "complete" clans localized in the Nash-Mitchell study area in the 1970s were subdivided into what Nash labels "named lineages," whose memberships ranged from one to seventy-nine, with most having from twenty to forty members. Also, in 1970, five of those "named lineages" were subdivided into "minimal lineages," which ranged in membership from ten to thirty-three. In Nash's opinion, the larger of the

named lineages were formerly much smaller and came to reach their 1970 sizes correlative to Nagovisi's overall population increase and as a result of certain (colonial) administrative practices that served to discourage lineage fission.[17]

In the 1970s the label ***wetetenamo*** (their-two-one-grandmother) was applied to what Nash calls a "minimal lineage," which in most cases did indeed comprise the descendants of a maternal grandmother-descendants who tended to co-reside in small hamlets (or in adjacent houses in an Administration-ordered village) and, with their husbands, to "engage in intensive economic cooperation (gardening, working with cocoa, buying and raising pigs, etc.)" (1974:27). Moreover, "should a quarrel involve one's minimal lineage with another group, all members of the minimal lineage must become involved in its support" (Nash 1974:27). It is reasonable to conclude that the named lineages of precolonial times were also subdivided into "minimal" units of this kind, but in the following reconstruction of that era, attention will be focused on the "named" lineages themselves, which, in addition to their having been smaller than those of the 1970s, seem to have had the following characteristics:[18]

- Each of them had a principal name that in most cases was that of the piece of ground, the ***osioko*** (place of origin, source) where a unit's ancestresses resided when they established their discreteness from other members of their clan--typically, by moving apart. Many lineages also had one or more additional names, which referred to sites of former settlement adjacent to their ***osioko.***
- In the 1970s the depth of most named lineages was about four generations "before connections became obscured" (Nash 1974:25). In some cases the "remembered" lines reached back much further--up to nine generations--but with a degree of historical authenticity that Nash dubbed "problematical." It is reasonable to suppose that in the 1930s the same limits and uncertainties prevailed in peoples' memories regarding the generational depths of lineages.
- It is also reasonable to suppose that in the 1930s (as in the 1970s) every owned tract of land was owned, corporately and residually, by one or another clan. Likewise, although members of lineages or part lineages possessed uncontested use rights in specific portions of its clan's territorial estate, when a lineage contained no more females, those rights reverted to the clan as a whole. A male also owned use rights in ***his*** clan's lands, but when he married (and, typically, moved to his wife's hamlet), those rights diminished and eventually became extinct. (A married man had use rights in the land provisionally owned by his

wife and her lineage mates, including the right to continue using it should his wife die and he remain in her hamlet.)

- As mentioned earlier, the more valuable types of shell valuables were owned by clans (and kept for use on ritual and festive occasions) but were usually held in trust for clan use by a senior female member of the clan's ***momiako*** lineage.
- As stated previously, growing-up ceremonies ***(mavo)*** were a clan affair; they were performed for members by member specialists at places sacred to a whole clan. Ultimate responsibility for conducting funerals rested, however, with the deceased's closer lineage mates--hence, in the case of a husband residing uxorilocally (as most of them did), his body was returned to his natal home for burial. Such was the arrangement in the 1970s, and such it probably was in the 1930s.

Two other characteristics of Nagovisi descent units have to do with relations among the segments of a clan. For résumés of these matters I quote paraphrases I made, in another publication, of published statements by Nash and Mitchell; the facts reported referred specifically to conditions in the 1970s but are, I assume, just as applicable to those of the 1930s.

> The head of each lineage was in most cases its eldest nonsenile female member, called ***tu'meli*** ("firstborn"). It was this woman who served as trustee of the [clan] heirlooms, who had final say over distribution of use-rights of lineage land [i.e., of clan land held provisionally by the lineage], and who in general made the final decision regarding use of clan valuables and regarding the marriage of younger lineage members.
>
> In some cases, however, the authority of a firstborn was superseded by that of a ***kaskelo,*** a more junior but richer and more aggressive woman--a ***momiako*** (the label which was applied to both men and women who had achieved wealth and prestige through interpersonal and managerial skills). (Oliver 1989: 1033-1034)

And regarding the important matter of clan stratification:

> Lineages were ranked within each clan: both in terms of seniority and of wealth and power. The lineage tracing its descent from the eldest daughter of [a clan's] legendary common ancestress was also labeled "firstborn," and its members were owed deference from members of the junior lineage branches, called

> ***vidaruma*** (i.e., "descendants of younger sister[s]"). In some cases a clan's firstborn lineage was also its ***momiako*** one (richest, most powerful); however, even a junior lineage could become ***momiako*** through success in raising pigs, acquiring shell money, giving feasts, and waging war. The lowest status among a clan's lineages was reserved for those that were both junior and poor (hence unable to give feasts or finance their own defense). These were called ***nangkitau*** ("chattels"?); it was reported that their members could be killed with impunity by other clanmates and that their children were sometimes bartered to outsiders for axes and other objects. (Oliver 1989: 1034)

I conclude this summary of Nagovisi descent units with two more paraphrases of published accounts by Nash and Mitchell.

> [M]ost Nagovisi land was identified with particular clans, because of [a clan's] residual rights in all of the tracts in which [its] component lineages held uncontested usufructuary rights. In fact, those use-rights were exercised by individuals [with the help of their household mates], namely, by the lineages' older women, and were transferred to the latter's daughters--usually the eldest--when the mothers died or became senile. (A woman's own expendable shell money and food-bearing trees were also transferred in this way, but not her pigs, which were eaten at her funeral feast.) (Oliver 1989: 1034)

And, finally, a word about Nagovisi males:

> Where did men fit into this kinship system composed largely of "official" statuses occupied by females? A male also belonged to a lineage (and a clan and moiety), but what was the nature of that membership?
>
> As already stated, in most cases a man moved to his wife's hamlet upon marriage; and after doing so he was expected to devote all or most of his energies to the well-being, physical and social, of [his] wife and children and to ***their*** co-residential lineage mates. Even if a wife moved to her husband's natal home --to ***his*** lineage hamlet--the [usual] proximity of it to her landholdings made it possible for him to carry out his obligations, that is, to spend most of his labor on them rather than on his own lineage lands (which were gardened by the husbands of his

sisters and of other female lineage mates), (Oliver 1989: 1034-1035)

I turn now to the Nasioi, whose language is more closely related to that of the Nagovisi than is that of the Siwai, but who in the decades (or centuries?) before the 1930s had had fewer direct personal contacts with the Nagovisi than had the Siwai.

NOTES

[This is the first of two parts. Part 2 will appear in *Pacific Studies,* Volume 16, Number 4 (December 1993) --ED.]

1. In earlier writings about this region and its people, I transcribed their label as "Siuai," but bowing to the more common spelling, I now throw in the sponge and write "Siwai"--although I still *think* of them as "Siuai"!

2. Wickler and Spriggs 1988; Wickler 1990; referring to which Spriggs stated more recently, "Only one Pleistocene site has been excavated in the North Solomons, indeed in all the Solomons, and earlier sites may yet be found" (1992:279).

3. AN languages were presumably introduced into this area, beginning some three millennia ago, by peoples and cultures now identified with Lapita and post-Lapita archaeological complexes. Both Lapita and post-Lapita sites have been found on Buka (Spriggs 1992:279-280).

4. I use the term "tribe" most reluctantly, being aware of its semantic ambiguities (see Fried 1968). My reason for doing so is that it is less cumbersome than such equivalences as "ethnic unit" and "language unit," and less ambiguous than, for example, "society," "people," or "population." In any case, "tribe" as used herein does *not* mean "political unit."

5. I write "renown" because the connotations of the relevant vernacular words are closer to (American) English "renown" than to, say, "prestige"--as given, for example, in *Funk and Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary*.

6. A "span" was the length between the finger tips of a man's outstretched arms. The measure included several distinctively labeled intermediate-unit lengths--e.g., from finger tip to wrist, to elbow, to shoulder, to breast bone, and so on. Nearly every linear kind of entity was measured in this way, including the girth (i.e., size) of a pig. The fact that men differed in length of span seems not to have been a matter of much concern.

7. In Western Siwai, however, *horomorun* was believed to be an ancestral spirit associated not with an individual *mumi,* but with the whole of the Eagle clan--as was his Nagovisi parallel, *paramorun,* with the Eagle moiety. See below.

8. The following résumé of clan mythohistories and other aspects of Siwai matriliny is much longer than the discussion devoted to the topic in the sections on matriliny in Nagovisi, Nasioi, and Buin. Some of that unevenness is due to indigenous differences in

social emphasis, but much of it is due to my knowing more about Siwai than about the other three tribes. This résumé and other versions of Siwai clan origins reproduced in this essay are based on Oliver 1955:46-62.

9. During my stay in Siwai it was customary for birth to take place in a house in the presence only of females. Thereafter the infant was kept in the house--in "Hiding"--until it was considered "strong" enough--i.e., invulnerable to harmful forces, including gratuitously malicious spirits and human-activated sorcery--to be taken outside to be publicly "Washed" by means of *maru*. During the infant's Hiding--a period usually lasting four to six weeks--no male over toddler age was permitted inside the house, and even the infant's father was said to be ignorant of its gender and name. During Hiding it was the father's responsibility to provide enough food, including at least one pig, to feed the relatives and neighbors gathered to witness the Washing, including especially the women who had attended the mother during birth and Hiding.

10. According to Nash, some Nasioi she knew believed that the residents of northwestern Siwai (whom they called "half-castes") had moieties like themselves (pers. com., 1992).

11. Such an acceleration did, however, take place after World War II, owing largely to changes described in Nash 1974 and Mitchell 1976.

12. This assumption is based on guesswork. I can find no published figures on weights of "Melanesian" pigs. The only ones I ever weighed were about two months old and weighed twenty to thirty pounds each; I feel quite certain that some of the largest ones I saw weighed over two hundred pounds. What Melanesian ethnography needs is not more theory, but an easier method for weighing pigs! (See Rappaport 1968.)

13. According to Nash, the Nagovisi she knew said they had never used the low-value, virtually unshaped bits of mussel shell common in Siwai. They knew about them but considered them to be *piapia* (rubbish) (pers. com., 1992).

14. For reasons I will not attempt to list here, by the time of the beginning of the Nash-Mitchell study, in 1969, the pattern of marital residence had become even more preponderantly uxorilocal (after a brief period of virilocality immediately after World War II). Thus, of the eighty-seven couples surveyed, the "permanent" residence of seventy-one of them was uxorilocal and only seven virilocal--the remaining nine "others" having included some neolocal and some "unsettled."

15. Interesting to note, the post-World War II increase in uxorilocality was accompanied by a change in marriage transactions from dowry to bride-price. For analysis and possible explanations for this seeming inconsistency, see Nash 1974:93-99.

16. According to Nash, the Nagovisi "tend to see their neighbors, the Nasioi, as dual organizational, like themselves." Her informants "repeatedly insisted that the Nasioi were basically dual organizational although no one could agree on what the moiety symbols were" (Nash 1972:73).

17. According to Nash, "A local government councillor explained to me in 1969 that all people, except for government employees, must live in line villages, and that in order to establish a new village--officially known as a 'half-line' of some neighboring established village--there must be a minimum number of five households. Thus, it is no longer possible for two sisters and their families, for example, to move away to a new piece of ground, which in the past was apparently the first step to fission" (1974:23-24).

18. "There are clues that the internal segmentation of moieties may have changed somewhat since [European] contact; for example, the existence of individual names for lineages, the absence of names for *wetetenamos* (as well as the lack of a generic term for lineage and presence of one for descendants of a maternal grandmother) and the lack of sociological uniformity of lineages could be mentioned in this connection. When coupled with the knowledge of certain historical trends since contact . . . e.g., nucleation of settlements, end of tribal warfare, and so forth, a hypothesis on lineage formation can be offered. According to this hypothesis, in pre-contact times, lineages were *wetetenamo* groups--that is, *wetetenamos* lived in relative spatial isolation from one another and had specific names which they took from the piece of ground they were inhabiting. Because of changing conditions . . . lineage names have become 'frozen' at a position they probably held some time before 1930. No new lineage fission occurred, even though there has been sufficient population increase to warrant it. But pressures have not acted to change the importance of the *wetetenamos* as an interaction group; therefore, it still exists, submerged, as it were, within larger lineages" (Nash 1974:81).

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